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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

N° 68A

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43<sup>e</sup> législature

Jeudi  
20 avril 2023

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 April 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 avril 2023

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prières / Prayers.*

ESTIMATES

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I have a message from the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by her own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2024, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENT  
OUTCOMES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION  
DES ÉCOLES ET DU RENDEMENT  
DES ÉLÈVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 19, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care / *Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.*

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Good morning, everyone. It's my pleasure to rise today, on behalf of the people of Ottawa–Vanier, to debate Bill 98. As a former school board trustee in Ottawa, it is a pleasure to be here and to say that, from where I stand, I see in the bill many improvements and a positive impact on the functioning of our school boards. This does not mean that I don't agree with the criticism my colleague from Ottawa South made yesterday. In fact, he did bring up some valid questions as to how the government would be using the new powers it's giving itself again in this new bill and about the lack of investment, and I'm with him on that.

But like many others in this House, I was a school board trustee before coming to Queen's Park—including as chair of my board, a francophone board—and I have experienced first-hand some of the challenges involved with the transfer of school properties between school boards, the problematic conduct of certain trustees, the importance of having an accountability mechanism for the

director of education, and the importance of accountability and transparency on funding expenditures, for example. I see those challenges being addressed in the bill, so it gives me hope that maybe the government has been listening.

I am not saying that this bill, called the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, is delivering on all the needs of our education system. As my colleagues from the NDP side have indicated abundantly, appropriate funding is the bottom line when it comes to being able to accomplish anything.

Comme on dit en français : c'est le nerf de la guerre.

There are a number of measures in this bill that are aimed at making school boards function more effectively, and I support these measures.

For example, I cannot disagree with the fact that bad behaviour by school trustees can negatively affect the operations of a school board. So the requirement for a code of conduct for the board of trustees, with an enforcement mechanism through an integrity commissioner to resolve complaints, is something that has been needed for quite a while.

A performance appraisal process for directors of education is also a necessity. Directors of education, as we know, play an extremely important role within a school board, essentially acting as a CEO and overseeing the operations of the school board. If we want our students to succeed, then we need to have well-functioning school boards, and that requires strong leadership. That said, I think it is equally important to not only properly evaluate the performance of the directors of education, but also to ensure that they have the support, professional development training and resources that they need to do the best job possible.

Similarly, board members also must be supported when it comes to training and professional development so that they can effectively represent their communities and improve education for children in Ontario. As we know, elected officials like us, but also including school trustees, are not required to have a specific profile or expertise to be able to put their name forward. Elected board members usually come from different backgrounds, without necessarily having an in-depth knowledge of the education system. While they bring valuable different perspectives representing their communities, providing relevant training could help everyone contribute with a better understanding of the system. Therefore, if Bill 98 can outline and support needed training for board members, I consider this to be a step in the right direction.

The curriculum is obviously another extremely important part of our education system. Unfortunately, it

is not updated as often as it should be, in my opinion. I have always said that our education system needs to be modernized, that we should be ahead of the game when it comes to responding to changes in society. The education we provide to our children needs to reflect the current work market demand but also prepare them to become independent members of society, with a critical mind. We should also make efforts to respond to the reality that kids learn differently. Why don't we take this more into consideration in our teaching methods? But whatever changes the Minister of Education may decide to implement, I would ask that in doing so, you consult with the school boards and give them sufficient time and notice and resources so that they can effectively and efficiently implement positive changes. Not doing so means that school boards are struggling and are forced to implement less-than-perfect measures.

Speaker, while there is good material in this bill, I am concerned with the new regulation-making powers that Bill 98 would give the minister by allowing him to make requirements on school boards and trustees without consulting them. The bill gives the minister regulation-making powers in a number of areas, including curriculum updates, training for board members, apprenticeship learning, requirements for board communication and reporting and more. While I'm not necessarily opposed to the minister having these powers, I am concerned that they may be abused. Stakeholders in the education sector have already expressed their concern with the lack of prior consultation for Bill 98 itself. I am concerned that the minister will take a similar approach when exercising his regulatory powers. Our school boards have expertise and knowledge of the local realities that are important for the minister to hear and understand. He must take the time to listen and give those perspectives adequate consideration. It is up to this House and the people of Ontario to hold the ministers to account when they abuse the powers given to them. I promise that I will do my part to ensure that the Minister of Education does not abuse these extra powers by simply placing requirements on school boards without any prior consultation.

**0910**

Maintenant, madame la Présidente, j'aimerais prendre un peu de temps pour souligner des enjeux spécifiques auxquels font face les conseils scolaires de langue française dans cette province. Ces conseils scolaires sont en pleine croissance, tandis que le nombre d'étudiants dans les conseils scolaires de langue anglaise est plutôt à la baisse. C'est une réalité. Les conseils scolaires anglophones ont donc souvent des bâtiments qui restent vides ou qui sont peu utilisés. Il est alors souvent le cas qu'un conseil francophone cherche un bâtiment pour mieux servir son nombre croissant d'étudiants, mais que le conseil anglophone de la même région qui dispose d'une école vide refuse de la vendre au conseil scolaire francophone.

C'est une situation qui est inacceptable et injuste pour nos apprenants francophones. Il nous faut un meilleur moyen d'employer nos actifs immobiliers pour satisfaire aux besoins de tous les conseils scolaires dans une région particulière.

Le projet de loi 98 s'attaque précisément à cette problématique en éliminant certaines étapes du processus de la vente d'un immeuble pour le rendre plus efficace et en donnant également au ministre le pouvoir d'obliger deux conseils scolaires à collaborer. Cependant, une fois de plus, madame la Présidente, il est important que le ministre n'intervienne qu'après avoir écouté l'avis des conseils scolaires et considéré les besoins particuliers des étudiants francophones.

Les conseils scolaires francophones font également face à une forte pénurie de main-d'oeuvre, et ça, ça dure depuis des années. Nos écoles francophones ont besoin d'un grand nombre d'enseignants qualifiés pour répondre à la demande accrue pour une éducation en langue française. Ce projet de loi a le potentiel d'aider les conseils scolaires à mieux servir les familles et les étudiants de cette province, mais si on n'a pas assez d'enseignants, ça ne servira, à toutes fins pratiques, à rien. Alors, j'encourage le ministre de travailler avec la ministre des Collèges et Universités pour augmenter le nombre de diplômés en enseignement francophones chaque année.

Speaker, as a whole, Bill 98 is a positive step in the right direction, and I support many of the measures included in it. However, all these changes will not be effective without adequate funding to accompany them and without meaningful and timely consultation. Our school boards, our teachers, and most importantly, our students need more support from this government so that we can reduce class sizes and ensure students have the resources that they need to succeed.

I thank the minister for bringing forward these important changes. I encourage him to back it up with real investments in our students.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):**  
Questions?

**M. Andrew Dowie:** Je veux remercier la députée d'Ottawa-Vanier. C'est très encourageant, vos commentaires sur ce projet de loi.

J'étais très intéressé par les circonstances que tu avais décrites, que les conseils scolaires anglophones n'étaient pas préparés à vendre les écoles fermées aux conseils francophones. Est-ce que tu peux détailler un petit peu le pourquoi? Quelles étaient les raisons pour lesquelles ces conseils ont refusé?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** En fait, c'est un problème réel auquel j'ai fait face quand je faisais partie du conseil scolaire. Alors, un voit un conseil anglophone qui a une école qu'ils doivent vider, parce qu'il n'y a pas assez d'étudiants; ils seront transférés dans une autre école. L'école devient vide. Le conseil scolaire francophone a des écoles dans la proximité qui débordent et ils demandent au conseil anglophone d'obtenir cette école-là. Par contre, le conseil anglophone refuse de transférer l'école en disant qu'ils risquent d'en avoir besoin dans un futur éventuel.

Alors, ce n'est pas une collaboration qu'on voit. Ce n'est pas justifié et ça crée vraiment des injustices pour les apprenants francophones qui sont entassés dans des écoles avec des portatives et qui ont, à toutes fins pratiques, plus d'espaces communs comme la bibliothèque ou même la



caféteria. Alors, on voudrait vraiment voir plus de collaboration. Dans le projet de loi, il y a une possibilité d'obliger les conseils à collaborer. Je pense que c'est une bonne chose.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** J'aimerais demander à la députée—elle a bien expliqué le cas des écoles francophones qui ont besoin d'avoir plus d'espace mais qui ne sont pas capables. Mais il y a également la pénurie grave d'enseignants francophones pour nos écoles. On voit en ce moment que la quasi-majorité, sinon toutes les écoles francophones, ont du personnel non-qualifié pour enseigner parce qu'elles ne sont pas capables. En ce moment, en Ontario, on a besoin de 1 000 nouveaux enseignants ou enseignantes francophones par année. Est-ce que vous voyez quelque chose dans le projet de loi qui va nous aider à renflouer la pénurie d'enseignants/enseignantes francophones pour s'assurer que chaque enfant francophone a accès à une éducation de qualité? Ça, ça passe par des enseignants/enseignantes francophones qualifiés.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Merci à la députée de Nickel Belt pour la question. C'est effectivement une réalité que j'ai mentionnée : non, il n'y a rien dans le projet de loi qui adresse cette problématique-là qui est très importante. Pour moi, c'était le message au gouvernement, au ministre de l'Éducation, qu'il doit porter attention à cette question-là qui, vraiment, affecte de façon négative la qualité de l'enseignement que nos apprenants francophones reçoivent dans nos écoles.

C'est dommage qu'il y ait eu un groupe de travail qui a été établi par le gouvernement, en collaboration avec les associations scolaires, pour développer des recommandations et des solutions, et que ces recommandations-là ne soient pas mise en oeuvre. Alors, j'encourage le ministre à travailler avec la ministre des Collèges et Universités pour créer plus de postes d'enseignants.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** My question to the member opposite: We know there's going to be a significant population increase and we need to use all the tools in our tool box to build more schools and more opportunities—both English-language schools and French-language schools. I just wanted to see if she's supportive of building more schools in this province, including in many places like her own riding.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Yes, absolutely. We know that there is a deficiency in the number of schools. I think one of the first reasons that I volunteered to become a trustee is that I saw it being totally unacceptable to have schools with portables. Schools are brand new, and a year after you see portables. So there is a real need for more schools. We have a growing population. There are more kids. And I think that the government needs to invest more in building appropriate schools for all students.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** It's a pleasure and an honour to stand in this House on behalf of hard-working

Brampton Centre families and offer strong support for both the Minister of Education and our government's necessary and comprehensive legislation, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

Speaker, I'm addressing this chamber as the elected member for Brampton Centre, as a graduate of the Peel District School Board, as a mother of five children currently or previously enrolled in the public school system, and as the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. That said, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Education, not just for updating the curriculum and taking action to ensure schools are safe and welcoming learning environments for all students, but for advancing the cause of women's education in Ontario.

As my colleagues are well aware, our province is facing a very real shortage of skilled trades labour. In just a few years, it's estimated that one in five jobs in Ontario will be in the skilled trades, yet the average age of people entering the trades is 29. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma attached to careers in the trades, especially among young women.

Women make up 47% to 48% of the Canadian labour force but hold fewer than 4% of jobs in the skilled trades and less than one quarter of jobs in the tech sector. Clearly, we are missing out on a talented demographic that could impact our province's long-term future. So I applaud the Minister of Education for encouraging young women to take a good look at lucrative and rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

I also applaud him for signing an agreement with Shoppers Drug Mart to distribute free menstrual products to schools in all 72 boards. That's a perfect example of taking action to make sure our schools are more welcoming and inclusive learning centres.

**0920**

As I mentioned a moment ago, our province is experiencing a profound shortage of skilled labour, so it is critically important that we update the curriculum to ensure it aligns with the ever-changing needs of the job market.

On many occasions, Brampton families have said to me that the education system really needs to get back to basics. Parents in the riding I'm proud to represent support the minister's focus on more math, more science, more financial literacy, and greater exposure to the skill trades, but they believe much more needs to be done and that school boards are not accountable to families. We recently saw that in my own community for years, students and parents voiced their concerns about widespread anti-Black racism, discrimination and inequities that were preventing hundreds of Black students from graduating on time. But they were systematically ignored by the Peel District School Board, forcing the province to step in and take action.

Speaker, Ontario's \$27-billion education system is overseen by about 700 trustees who do not always possess a consistent set of skills, training, or a standard code of conduct. The majority of school trustees are diligent and

caring public servants, but this system of local governance is badly in need of reform.

If I may, I'll quote the 1994 Royal Commission on Learning that was created by then-Premier Bob Rae and chaired by former Liberal cabinet minister Monique Bégin and long-time New Democrat Gerald Caplan: "Trustees are elected by a tiny proportion of the electorate, if indeed they don't win by acclamation. It might be embarrassing to discover how many constituents know their trustees' names. Board agendas too often reflect matters that are light years away from what happens in their schools; anyone who has sat in on a meeting of a school board knows that it can be a truly surrealistic experience."

That royal commission outlined a number of deep-seated problems in education that have been with us for a very long time.

It's clear that if we want to truly reform the education system to prepare our young people for the jobs of tomorrow, we need to take legislative action.

Speaker, in the event that our legislation is passed, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will increase accountability, giving parents new tools to navigate and understand the education system and establish basic qualifications for the directors of education who manage school boards.

The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will also allow the minister to establish key priorities to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need, especially in areas such as reading, writing and math.

Many of my colleagues are incredibly happy and proud that this act is going to mandate a handbook for parents that would outline their rights and responsibilities within the education system. Just imagine: If you didn't go through the Ontario public education system, or if you moved to Ontario from elsewhere in search of a better life for your family, you would not have the experience of how best to navigate this system for your children. That is why a handbook is such a game-changer. One of the best ways to hold school boards accountable to families and taxpayers is to remind or even in some cases inform parents that they have rights when they deal with their local board. A handbook for parents is a great idea that is long overdue for our province.

But the act goes further than mandating a handbook.

Our legislation will ensure that trustees have the knowledge and the skills they need to perform their duties, and that their conduct is held to provincial standards. The act would amend the Education Act to require mandatory training for trustees, as prescribed by the Minister of Education. It would create a standardized trustee code of conduct that would be binding on all trustees and set clear expectations for how trustees should discharge their duties.

Speaker, the media has at times publicized some high-profile disputes between trustees—and we did see that in Brampton a couple of years ago. Such disputes are costly, time-consuming, and they erode the public confidence and detract attention from a school board's primary duty, which is to promote student achievement.

Our legislation would establish a transparent and impartial process for resolving trustee code of conduct complaints through integrity commissioners who would be empowered to conduct investigations, dismiss complaints made in bad faith, determine whether or not the code of conduct has been breached, and impose binding sanctions on trustees.

I'm pleased to add that the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act also includes several other accountability and transparency measures for school boards. The act would enable the minister to require school boards, twice a year, to report publicly on their spending. It would strengthen the minister's authority to direct and/or prohibit board participation in activities that could place the board at financial risk. It would allow for the appointment of professional corporations to investigate a board's financial affairs when it is in distress. And it would establish the minister's authority to prescribe financial policy and accountability matters for board-controlled entities.

Speaker, these reforms are very much in line with the royal commission's recommendations from nearly three decades ago. To again quote the report, it said, "We recommend the transfer of several key responsibilities away from boards. We believe that determining the level of each board's expenditures, for example, should be the ministry's job...."

"The primary responsibility of school boards would be to translate general ministry guidelines into viable local practice. Their job is to make local policy consistent with both provincial policy and local realities. They set clear expectations and guidelines for their schools and work with them to make sure they're progressing towards those ends."

That's what the royal commission said nearly three decades ago.

Speaker, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act is thoughtful, comprehensive and incredibly sensible legislation that will help our kids prepare for the jobs of the future and empower parents, and make Ontario's 72 school boards more accountable to families and taxpayers. That is why I, as a mother of five, am proud to rise in support of this bill.

I would like to share my time with the member from Carleton.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** We will go to questions.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** There has been a lot of talk this morning from the member on accountability, but this government needs to look themselves in the mirror.

You are not accountable to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. You are fighting all the way to the Supreme Court—with taxpayer dollars—the ability for taxpayers to see the mandate letters, which will say what your government is trying to do with their money.

In fact, now what you're doing is meddling with democratically elected trustees.

There's a quote I would like to read from an article: "Conservatives' approach has been to interfere with other levels of government whenever they can, micromanaging,

dictating, limiting consultation, ramming through legislation, and generally making a mess as they go.”

You did not consult with parents. You did not consult with educators. Here you are trying to impose all kinds of rules on trustees, when you yourself do not provide the funding and do not hold yourself to the same standard.

What do you have to say to parents and to people who realize that this government is not walking the talk?

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** That was a loaded question.

After consulting with parents, being a parent, and listening to parents question what is happening to the taxpayer dollars that they work hard for, what is happening when schools are being misrepresented in communities and the trustees that have committed these breaches of code of conduct are being dismissed by integrity commissioners—we need to hold our boards to a higher account, as we are members in the public eye. We are doing that by having boards explain to us what is happening with the hard work and tax dollars that—so many families work hard to put their children through school for an education and for a better future. That’s what we’re doing with this act.

I commend the minister and our government for making these changes and holding boards accountable to parents, taxpayers, and so many other families who are coming into Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. John Jordan:** Having worked for a school board for over 16 years early in my career, I’ve attended many board meetings and witnessed a very high-functioning board, the Ottawa-Carleton Catholic School Board.

However, like the member from Ottawa-Vanier, I think we can do better, governance-wise.

To have a standard of care like the minister has in his bill and the training to ensure that that standard can be maintained is very important. I’m wondering if you could tell me the components of that training that you think would be most important for a school board.

0930

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** Thank you to my colleague for that question.

When you are elected to a new position, you do not get extensive training on how to do this work. Many people who are elected as trustees, as councillors or as members don’t have experience even in following Robert’s Rules of Order or any of the structures that these boards have. This is why a training program and making sure that our trustees know what their roles are in the community is extremely vital and very important, because it helps them know how to be able to represent their students and how to be able to support their students.

Also, the code of conduct piece is very important. We have seen in the news parents who are really frustrated with how their children are being cared for and how some of these members are conducting themselves in the community.

So this is a benchmark, and I think it’s important that we have this go through.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** To the member opposite: I was also a trustee, and there was actually training on Robert’s Rules of Order.

I’m just wondering what training anybody in this House had specifically on becoming an MPP and the standing orders in this place.

So I don’t think that’s a valid argument.

You’re talking about excluding a lot of people—parents. I was a parent when I became a trustee. You don’t want to hear their voices.

There is mention of mental health in this bill and these school boards educating and supporting children with mental health. Yet, in this province, the wait-list is well over 28,000 children long—to get mental health supports.

What are you doing to support—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. The Associate Minister of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** Actually, when you are elected as a trustee, it doesn’t always follow—the training that trustees get, that even councillors get. I was an elected councillor, as well, and I worked alongside many trustees.

Also, I worked within the mental health field. I used to go into schools and had a lot of difficulty getting into—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you to the minister.

Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I’m happy to have a few minutes to talk about Bill 98. I want to start with a few letters that I got from my constituents.

I’ll call her Carole—Carole wrote to me: “I am a school bus driver.... Every day I strive to provide safe and timely transportation for students in my community. Due to a funding shortage, we have been forced to cut back on the number of buses and routes in our region. That means that often, despite” all “my efforts and those of my colleagues, students are late or not picked up at all. It’s frustrating to be in this situation. We are doing everything we can but the system is under extreme pressure and it may buckle at any time. Please, for the sake of the students across this province, give the system emergency funding so that I can do my job and” I “won’t leave kids stranded.”

You have to realize that I represent 33 small northern communities, most of them far apart. Many of them do not have a school in their community. Kids have to be bused long distance to get there, and when the school bus doesn’t come, that means that the student does not go to school. Is that fair? I don’t think so. We all want our kids to have the best chance in life, and that means getting an education. To get an education, you have to get to school. But when there is no money to hire drivers, to pay them a decent wage, to make sure that you have enough routes, then kids in Nickel Belt miss day after day.

I have another; I’ll call him Manfred. He wrote to me: “I am a constituent in your riding—I work as a bus driver ... and I need your help! Ontario’s student transportation

sector is in crisis. School bus delays and cancellations are plaguing the system, leaving students and parents stranded. Parents are being forced to take time off to drive their kids to and from school—if they have a car. “As a professional driver who takes great pride in driving a school bus, I want this to change.

“Ontario school bus operators, many of which are small ... businesses”—and where I live, they’re small businesses—“are struggling to make ends meet in what is the hardest jurisdiction in our province “to do business. As an employee of”—and he names his employer—“this worries me as I am committed to the company and the sector. Drivers are not paid adequately and without proper funding from the Ministry of Education, the situation will only get worse.”

I fully agree. We need a good, safe transportation system. None of this is in the bill that we are talking about.

I would like to talk about l’École Notre-Dame du Rosaire, à Gogama. L’École Notre-Dame du Rosaire a presque dû fermer ses portes parce qu’il n’y avait aucun enseignant ou enseignante pour aller à Gogama. À Gogama, on parle, quand tout va bien, d’un minimum de deux heures de route pour se rendre à l’école la plus proche à Sudbury, ou d’un minimum d’une heure et demie de route pour se rendre à l’école la plus proche à Timmins.

Gogama a besoin d’une école. On a l’École Notre-Dame du Rosaire, mais la pénurie d’enseignants francophones, elle se vit au quotidien dans le nord de l’Ontario et dans le Nickel Belt.

Le gouvernement a mis en place un groupe de travail sur la pénurie des enseignants et des enseignantes dans le système de l’éducation de langue française. Ils ont donné des recommandations, mais aucune de ces recommandations-là, qui ont été demandées par le gouvernement de M. Ford, n’a été mise en place.

Ça, ça veut dire—on s’entend tous : on a besoin de 1 000 enseignants/enseignantes francophones supplémentaires par année. On a une stratégie pour se rendre là. Le gouvernement a demandé à son groupe de travail de leur donner une stratégie. Et qu’est-ce qu’on fait? On les ignore. Ça, ça veut dire que l’année prochaine, ça va être encore la même chose.

Les jeunes de Gogama risquent de ne pas avoir d’enseignants dans leur école. Si on regarde l’école Notre-Dame, à Foleyet, on est dans la même situation. Foleyet, c’est, minimum, une heure et demie—une heure et quart, si tu vas plus vite que la vitesse—pour te rendre à Timmins. Même chose : une heure pour te rendre à Chapleau. Ce n’est pas raisonnable de demander à un enfant de quatre ans, cinq ans, d’être en autobus pendant une heure et demie de temps pour se rendre à l’école. On a besoin d’écoles à Foleyet, à Mattagami, à Gogama, partout dans le Nickel Belt, mais s’il n’y a pas d’enseignants/enseignantes, ces écoles-là sont à risque de fermer. Pourquoi? Parce qu’on n’a pas suffisamment d’enseignants. Le gouvernement le sait, a mis un groupe de travail en place, a des recommandations qui ont été faites pour eux, et qu’est-ce qu’ils font? Ils les ignorent. Ce n’est pas acceptable.

Je vois que le temps passe quand même assez vite. If you look at what happened to our education system since

the Ford government came into place, you will see a \$1,200 decrease in budget per student since the government came into power; you will see four less educators—teachers—per 1,000 students since the government came into power. Now they’re telling us, “We will increase the number of teachers for reading.” Yes, there will be one new teacher for every 2,850 students. If you take every kid from, I would say, Levack, Onaping, Cartier—go all the way to the watershed, Gogama, Mattagami, Foleyet, Ivanhoe Lake—all of this, they don’t make 6,650 kids. Who came up with those ratios? How is this supposed to help the people I represent? The kids in Nickel Belt deserve the same amount of support as everybody else. And yet, we have a government that comes up with ratios that, frankly, need to be looked at.

Put a bit of a northern lens on what you are doing. The people of the north are Ontarians. You were elected to look after everyone, not just the people who voted Conservative—the 18% of Ontarians who voted for you. You were elected to look after 100% of Ontarians.

When you come forward with changes like this, I can assure you that the people of Nickel Belt feel like we were left behind, and this is wrong.

**0940**

We have to fix the school bus problem. Not a day goes by that there’s not a route in Nickel Belt that gets cancelled because they can’t find a driver, because there isn’t enough money to pay them a decent wage, and they have had to make changes and take other jobs.

Don’t get me wrong; it is not hard to find a job in Nickel Belt. We have new mines opening all over the place. We have lots of opportunities for people to make good wages. Do you know why? Our mines have been unionized for a long time. The unions fought really hard to get good-paying jobs with good benefits. It’s not surprising that people will go to those good-paying jobs.

But we still need bus drivers. This is an important job. This is a job that makes sure that the kids in Nickel Belt get to go to school. You have to look at all of those small, rural schools that are at risk of closing and bring forward action that could change all of this. Unfortunately, none of that is in the bill.

When you talk about maximizing the assets that you have, well, have a look at what it looks like to run a French school. All of them have portables. All of them have more kids than the school was built to serve. All of them are looking to expand. We are looking at the English school boards, which often have schools that are half-empty, and which could be better used for all of our students. None of that is clearly stated in the bill. There’s a lot that needs to be urgently done so that our kids have the best chance in life.

This is what makes Ontario so good. We have a top-notch education system, but in the last five years, under this government, we have seen a steady decline. The competitive advantage that we have in technology, in knowledge, in business comes from the fact that the people in Ontario have access to a good education. Under your watch, all of this is going downhill, and we will all pay for

this for a long time to come. You have a chance to do better. Don't let it go by.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** Since we're talking about acting for all children, all students, all citizens, let us remember that the workforce is constantly changing and our education system needs to adapt in response. It's 2023, and our curriculum should reflect this, particularly in math, science, literacy, and civics.

If left with a Liberal government, aided and abetted by the NDP, our curriculum would be left just as outdated as those parties are.

To the member opposite: Does the opposition really believe that curriculum should stay stagnant and become irrelevant, or should it change with the times? What does the member opposite say about that?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Does the curriculum need to change? Absolutely. I represent many First Nations, and they have shared their stories with me. They have shared their stories with the people of Nickel Belt about what the real story of Ontario is, through the eyes of Indigenous people. We had a working group that was going to make recommendations so that every child in Ontario knows the story of what happened to Indigenous people in Ontario, but this government stopped this working group and never implemented the Indigenous curriculum that has needed change in our province for a long time. Yes, the curriculum needs to change and make sure people know about Aboriginal—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sarah Jama:** Thank you to my colleague from Nickel Belt for her contribution to today's debate.

In your opinion, what are some of the ways this bill and this government continue to leave disabled students and students with learning disabilities behind in Nickel Belt?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It's a very good question.

We all need different supports to make sure that we attain our full potential. For some students, that will mean that they need one-on-one support. For other students, that will mean that they need a quiet place to be able to write their exams.

We have the knowledge and the skills to do an assessment of every child to meet their differences and put a plan in place for them to thrive, for them to achieve their best potential, but when there are no resources on the front lines to be able to have an educational assistant to support that child, to have an ECE to support that child, then it is all for none. We can do the assessment, we can put a plan together that will allow them, but there is nothing in that bill that will guarantee that the specialized needs of disabled children will be met in schools. This is shameful.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I was listening intently to the member's speech, and I want to thank her for her comments. The member always makes very insightful speeches.

Every school board usually puts out their scores and ranks when it comes to math, STEM and literacy. I'm just wondering what the ranking is in the member's riding, if she's aware of that, and what challenges they've had, and what parents have told her about the importance of making sure that STEM and literacy, especially financial literacy, are also improved in the education system. And will the member support this bill, which focuses specifically on improving STEM and math and literacy?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** STEM is something that is really important where I come from. You will know that Nickel Belt is known for the nickel mines. A lot of what can happen in a mine will only happen if you have a trained workforce to do this, and it often comes through math and education and through the STEM programs. I would say that even through my riding, the six high schools that I have in Nickel Belt—most of them offer a STEM program.

When I hear some of my colleagues talk about discrimination against the trades—where we come from, where I come from, trades have always been something that people look positively towards.

I can tell you that my youngest daughter is an electrician. She went and did a trade. She has a good job working for Vale, has all sorts of opportunities, has good benefits, and belongs to a strong union. Those are all things that are built from our education system.

Yes, STEM is important, and it is available in Nickel Belt.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I want to congratulate my colleague and talk about school bus drivers. Very few people talk about school bus drivers and how important that job is, as they, quite frankly, take our children's lives in their hands every single day, particularly in the north, I would think, with the highways and roads they have in the north. But I want to be clear: It's not just a north problem. It happens in my riding. I get lots of calls about school bus drivers and the fact that they can't find drivers, they're cancelling bus routes, they're low-paid.

My question is pretty simple: What do you think we need to do to attract more school bus drivers—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question, please.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** —and maybe that will stop the attack on that job.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I can quote one of my constituents: "As a driver, I know my operator and the association, School Bus Ontario (SBC), has written to the Minister of Education requesting an increase to the transportation portion of the Grants for Student Needs for the 2022-23 school years." The response was, "We are working on it."

The 2022-23 school year is coming to an end in a couple of months, and they are working on it.

It is clear that drivers need a pay increase. The operators in my region are getting between a 0% and 2% increase per year. The price of gas and diesel has gone up about 100%, but they're getting a 2% increase.

Treat bus drivers and the entire school bus system as an integral part of our education system. In Nickel Belt and in many parts of Ontario, kids cannot go to school if there isn't a school bus. We need school bus drivers in order for that to happen. Let's respect them.

**0950**

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. David Smith:** After decades serving as a school board trustee in the largest school board in all of Canada, I have seen many of these situations that this bill is recognizing here today and as this debate continues. The opposition had a chance to make positive change, but unfortunately they did nothing. We have witnessed the negative impacts left by the opposition, and we are committed to improving them.

The new legislation we are introducing is a step in the right direction. It's the first of many steps aimed at getting students back to focusing on the fundamentals.

We are determined to see the graduation rate and EQAO scores improve, and better student outcomes.

I beg the question: Why were these priorities not addressed—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il y en a qui vont se souvenir qu'il y a très, très longtemps que nous avons eu un gouvernement néo-démocrate en place. Je peux vous dire—je suis très fière de dire—que lorsque l'Ontario avait un gouvernement néo-démocrate, nous avons ouvert le Collège Boréal, un collège francophone à Sudbury, pour desservir les francophones du nord de l'Ontario.

Ça faisait des décennies que les francophones de l'Ontario demandaient d'avoir leur propre collège. On avait le Collège Cambrian qui offrait des cours en français et des cours en anglais. Mais les francophones veulent une éducation pour, par et avec les francophones. Le gouvernement néo-démocrate a financé le Collège Boréal, qui a été un succès phénoménal et qui continue d'être un succès phénoménal.

Je peux vous dire qu'un gouvernement néo-démocrate financerait également l'Université de Sudbury pour s'assurer que les francophones du Nord aient accès à une éducation pour, par et avec les francophones à Sudbury.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** On behalf of hard-working Ottawa families, it's a pleasure for me to stand up and provide my strong support for the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

There's no question that the world is changing, and we had better change with it, or we risk getting left behind.

The Minister of Education has been doing an admirable job of modernizing Ontario's curriculum, to ensure that it prepares our young people for the world of tomorrow. This has meant focusing on STEM learning and math, including financial literacy and digital fluency, and encouraging kids

to take a good look at rewarding careers in the skilled trades.

It's an honour for me to represent the people of Carleton, and I take every opportunity I can to listen to the concerns of hard-working families. My constituents are respectful and polite, but they're also pretty firm about wanting value for money. Families in Ottawa understand the critical role that public education plays, and they nearly always like their children's teachers, but they also see their school board as a big and impersonal bureaucracy and believe the education system must do a much better job of preparing young people for the workforce.

The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act will, if passed, provide parents and taxpayers with some long-overdue accountability, and it will assist the minister in making the education system more responsive to the changing needs of the job market.

Our legislation, if passed, will drive provincial priorities and expectations for Ontario's education sector from the province through to Ontario's classrooms to enhance accountability and transparency.

Our legislation will enable more effective governance through reforms for education sector boards of trustees and directors of education.

Our legislation will help to maximize the considerable real estate assets of school boards.

It will ensure Ontario's teachers are trained for the needs of today's and tomorrow's classrooms.

And our legislation will provide the information and tools necessary to ensure consistent information and approaches to student learning, including student learning about mental health and well-being.

Madam Speaker, there are certain parts of the legislation that are very, very important and are very critical, not just in Ottawa—but specifically in my riding of Carleton.

The fact that our legislation will enable school boards to maximize the considerable real estate assets of school boards make me think about Munster Elementary School, which was shut down years ago by the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP. While it's in perfect condition, Munster Elementary School has remained closed, and the school board has no intention of reopening it. In fact, the school board has tried to sell this asset several times—something that I have prevented, because it makes no sense for the school board to not utilize Munster Elementary School to its full potential.

This bill allows the school board to collaborate—whether it's with other school boards, whether it's with the municipality—to come up with some sort of solution that will allow parents in Munster to send their kids to a local school, but also give the option of making sure that the building is used to its maximum capacity. Whether it's as a hybrid community centre or whether it's dual school boards, the opportunities and the possibilities are endless, and this legislation provides that opportunity. This legislation provides that hope to the community of Munster, the people of Munster, that perhaps once again they can send their children back to Munster Elementary School, a local school. That's why I'm proud to support

this important piece of legislation, and I look forward to working with the parents and the community of Munster to come up with various solutions and work towards how we can get Munster Elementary School opened.

The bill that we're discussing is quite wide-ranging and includes a number of much-needed reforms. I'm not going to list them in their entirety, but I will briefly mention a few that I'm especially excited about.

The big item is, of course, the provincial information for parents that will spell out their rights, roles and responsibilities within the educational system. This is very important, especially in the city of Ottawa, where in the past month there have been some contentious issues in the news with school board trustees, and parents have been left wondering what their rights are to get involved, what their rights are to ask questions. This legislation will ensure that parents will know what their rights, roles and responsibilities are within the education system.

As I mentioned earlier, many parents across the province view their local school board as a big and impersonal bureaucracy that does not feel a need to listen to the concerns of families. I experienced this myself when, last year, the parents in Findlay Creek who had their children attending Vimy Ridge Public School reached out to my office because they felt like they were getting nowhere with the school board and their trustee. When they were telling the school board and trustee that there were too many kids and that they needed to build a second public elementary school in Findlay Creek, the school board simply ignored them and kept on adding more and more portables until, finally, the school board said they're going to start busing new students to other communities. Instead of accepting that they needed to build a second public elementary school, the school board just ignored the needs of parents.

**1000**

The parents came to me, and we worked hard. We created a petition. I spoke with the Minister of Education—and that's probably the fastest school I've ever managed to get funding for, to get built. When I heard about the issue, it was in October, and the day we received funding was, I believe, sometime in mid-April—so eight months.

I was very, very pleased to work with the parents and families of Findlay Creek to make sure that they got funding and that the school board prioritized building a second public elementary school in Findlay Creek. But they shouldn't have gone through me; they should have been able to deal directly with the school board and their school board trustee. But you know that when parents are reaching out to their local MPP to get assistance on a school board matter, there's an issue there with the system.

Our government understands that parental involvement is crucially important in a child's education, and we believe in empowering parents, not in telling them to sit down. Providing each parent with information that outlines their rights and responsibilities will enhance parent-teacher conversations and encourage more parents to voice their opinions and get involved in their children's education.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues on this side of the House strongly support this legislation, because it includes a number of measures to make school boards more accountable to families, and I agree with all of those measures.

I'm especially impressed by one amendment to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996, that would allow student victims of alleged sexual abuse, child pornography or a criminal sexual act by any teacher to receive funding for therapy. At present, the provisions require there to be a direct relationship between the student and teacher, which is limiting for victims of abuse. I applaud the Minister of Education for including that measure in the bill.

When young people enter the public education system, they are in our care, and they deserve every protection we can afford them.

Clearly, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act is a thoughtful and comprehensive bill that will help protect young people, empower parents, and make school boards more accountable to parents and taxpayers. With this legislation, we are telling parents in Ontario, we are telling the communities of Munster, of Findlay Creek, Riverside South, Stittsville—all across my riding of Carleton, across the city of Ottawa, including Manotick, and across the province that our government is here, our government is listening.

Our government has always supported parents, and we will continue to support parents, because ultimately it is their children in the public education system, and it is our responsibility to make sure that children and families are supported.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** This bill states right in the title that it wants to achieve better outcomes for students.

Right now, in Niagara, 16 schools can't operate their nutrition program—and they can't even operate it because of the funding. The kids are going hungry because this government hasn't increased funding as food prices skyrocket.

Does this member and the Conservative Party think that hungry children perform well at school?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I appreciate the member's question.

It's so important that all children are supported, but ultimately the nutrition program is run by the municipality, and so the school boards have to work with the municipality to ensure that nutrition is being provided in schools—and this bill allows school boards to do this. So I encourage the school board to work with the municipality, and I encourage the member to work with his municipal counterparts to resolve this situation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further question?

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** Speaker, we know that student success is very, very important, and I know that all members agree that students need to be given every opportunity to succeed in the workforce—ready to go forward with rewarding careers, whether they go to post-

secondary by way of university, college, a trade, or another path.

Our government announced that, starting with students entering grade 9 in September 2024, they will be required, toward their Ontario secondary school diploma, to obtain a technological education credit. This is just one example of our government supporting all students for the jobs of tomorrow.

How does this bill further support student learning?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Thank you to the member for that very, very insightful and important question.

Madam Speaker, our government is making an historic investment in Ontario's schools by providing a projected \$27.6 billion in public education for the 2023-24 school year.

Along with the funding for school board operations, targeted initiatives will support student achievement and well-being. The proposed legislation would, if passed, refocus Ontario's education on student achievement, prioritizing skills development in reading, writing and math, and hands-on learning. It advances a vision for the system that is centred on preparing students to succeed in life and work, putting highly qualified educators in the classroom while strengthening the voices of parents in their child's education.

That's why I'm proud to support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I was very interested in the example the member from Carleton mentioned about getting a new school in Findlay Creek. I don't know if she knows, but school boards establish their priorities for new schools, and these priorities are then submitted to the Minister of Education, who actually makes the decision and approves which schools might be built. So the fact that schools don't get built is not the fault of the school boards.

I really wish I had the power of the member to get a new school built in my riding.

My question to the member is, what do I need to do or tell the minister so I can get a new school built in eight months in my riding?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Thank you very much for the question.

This is the challenge—when you're asking a question about a situation you know absolutely nothing about and assuming that the member doesn't know what they're speaking about.

In that particular situation in Findlay Creek, the school was actually not on the capital priorities list. The school board had other schools on the capital priorities list, even though Vimy Ridge Public School had 24 portables at the time and the population was doubled. Even though the school was overpopulated, the school board refused to add a second public elementary school to their capital priorities list.

I worked with the community of Findlay Creek, we created a petition, and we petitioned the school board to place a public elementary school on their capital priorities list and, in fact, they listed it as their top capital priority. As soon as they did that, the Minister of Education, during

the next round of funding, provided funding to approve the top capital priority. But that was something—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Further questions?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I find it interesting that the member for Carleton says people shouldn't be commenting when they don't know what they're talking about.

The nutrition program at the school my colleague was talking about is actually funded through the province—so I suspect that you're going to go to the minister, then, and tell him that he needs to provide the emergency funding to feed those hungry children.

Speaker, my colleague from Nickel Belt talked about students with special education needs not getting the supports they need in schools. As a trustee, I can tell you, for many decades, through consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments, every single board runs a deficit when it comes to supporting students with special needs. The special-ed funding is insufficient and has been for a very long time.

I'm going to ask the member from Carleton, is your government, in this bill, going to provide the special education funding that the school boards need in order to actually be able to provide supports to students with special-ed needs so that they can thrive and get the education and the learning experience that they deserve—because currently, under your government, they're not. In fact—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Response?

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question.

One thing that our government will do is, we will always respect and value the unique and diverse nature of Ontario's communities, Ontario's students and Ontario's families, because they're just one piece of what makes our province great.

Our school boards must be able to tailor education delivery to local contexts and needs. The school boards have a responsibility to use the funding that they receive responsibly and appropriately.

**1010**

That's why not only are we making historic investments in our education budget, not only are we spending \$27.6 billion in education, but we are also making sure that school boards are being held accountable for the money we are giving them. Ultimately, we want to make sure those dollars are getting into the classroom, where they belong.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Thank you to the member for her presentation.

I know that the riding of Carleton—similar to my own riding—has a wide variety of schools and school boards, mixed urban and rural. That represents all of what Ontario has.

We have a variety of school experiences. There are four unique, publicly funded school systems, 72 district school boards, over 3,900 elementary and 870 secondary schools.



In Toronto, there are schools with more than 2,000 students. In northern and rural Ontario, there are schools—including some in my own riding—that have less than 200 students. While each of these schools use the same curriculum, the learning experience is vastly different.

This proposed legislation includes one set of priorities for all school boards for all students. Can the member talk to us about how this will be beneficial for the boards and, more specifically, how it will be beneficial—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. The member from Carleton.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** At the end of the day, all school boards have a common responsibility to promote student achievement. Our goal with the proposed legislation is to reinforce this responsibility. Through the proposed measures, we would ensure that everyone, from leaders across Ontario's 72 district school boards to the province's classrooms, is working toward the same goal of improving student outcomes and are held accountable to students and parents.

Our government values school boards' knowledge of and connections with their local communities. They will be able to continue leveraging their expertise in these areas to deliver the province's priorities in a way that is responsive to local needs.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick question, quick response.

**Ms. Sarah Jama:** In a press conference this week, the Minister of Education talked about provisions which would potentially allow for the purchasing of school properties for the development of long-term-care homes. Given the crumbling private long-term-care system, I just want clarity around whether these properties would remain in the public long-term-care system.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I'm sorry; I had trouble hearing the question. It was a little bit muffled.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** You'll just have to try to answer the question. It was about long-term care.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** Okay. The legislation makes it very clear, and I discussed this in my speech, that a school board's priority is to ensure that the school is being used for its purpose. Then, they are supposed to reach out to other school boards and work with the community. Then, if there is no reasonable plan or feasibility, that's something that can be discussed. But the point here is to support and promote education—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thanks so much.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### EVENTS IN KITCHENER SOUTH- HESPELER AND KITCHENER- WATERLOO

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** The month of Ramadan is coming to a close now—late Friday, early Saturday.

I have had the opportunity, as many of us have, to attend a number of Ramadan events and community iftars. I've also been to several Ramadan bazaars and Eid bazaars; some have seen the henna on my hand.

What I wanted to comment on, as far as my community, is, first of all, a couple of the bazaars I have been to. These are organized shopping events, basically, that are focused on jewellery and clothing and handbags. They are real community events. One of the things I noticed when I was there is how many female entrepreneurs this really gives an opportunity to. When you go there, most of the sellers are women, and it's this incredible community.

I also had the chance to go to an iftar held by the organization Muslim Social Services of Kitchener-Waterloo, and I really wanted to give them a shout-out. They are filling a really important void in the mental health space, which is, offering mental health supports that have a cultural sensitivity that would be otherwise missing. Understanding that socio-religious background is very important when it comes to building strong societies, and they're absolutely essential in that space. I wanted to thank them for inviting me to iftar.

## ENERGY CONTRACTS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** OPG is currently in talks with New Brunswick Power over the ownership and operation of the Point Lepreau nuclear plant. I asked the Minister of Energy last week what he would do to protect Ontario from taking on debt or financial risk in any deal related to the plant. His assurances were just boilerplate; they were not comforting.

Since then, media reports from New Brunswick indicate the power company there is looking at a number of options.

One article noted, "That could include giving up direct ownership and management of some power generation so that outside companies absorb more of the cost and the financial risk."

I think that's a pretty clear statement.

New Brunswick Power has over \$5 billion in debt and says the status quo can't continue. Last year, poor operations at Point Lepreau cost New Brunswick Power almost \$400 million in losses.

New Brunswick Power is also talking about the option of a partnership arrangement with OPG that some say could shield the deal from New Brunswick regulators and allow OPG to take on financial risk.

Speaker, the people of Ontario have no interest in taking on someone else's debts and losses. Our hydro rates are high enough; we don't need to subsidize another province's power company.

The Minister of Energy should make sure OPG is focused on looking after Ontario and not signing agreements that put us in harm's way.

### PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

**Mr. Dave Smith:** The Peterborough Regional Science Fair conducted its 54th annual event last Tuesday. This

fair is held at Trent University, bringing in hundreds of bright young students. These students showcase their experiments and compete for the Canada-Wide Science Fair. It's encouraging to see students explore scientific explorations this way—shaping our youth to promote a better future.

From this year's fair, four projects will be sent to the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Edmonton next month, from May 14 to 19. Peterborough's very own Isabelle Young will be representing Peterborough at the national level, after coming in second place with her project. Her experiment specializes in forensic sciences. Isabelle is only in grade 9, but her passion for science began at a young age, and she's now able to explore it nationally. As a finalist, she's paired with a master's student from Trent University to tweak and finalize her project.

Speaker, this is an exceptional way of connecting our future scientists at all different levels of education.

Congratulations, Isabelle. I wish you good luck in Edmonton. I know I speak for everyone in Peterborough city and county when I say how proud we are of you, to have someone with your passion for science. We look forward to cheering you on as you contribute not only in Edmonton but also as you progress throughout your journey in the field of science.

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This week is National Volunteer Week, and it is a time to recognize all of our hard-working volunteers who make our services and programs in our communities possible. Volunteers are really the fabric of our community, so it is only fitting that this year's theme is "Volunteering Weaves Us Together." Through working together and sharing their time, the interconnected actions of volunteers strengthen and support our communities.

There are countless volunteers in Hamilton Mountain who make our community what it is, whether it's running Coldest Night of the Year, operating the food bank, driving seniors to appointments—and the list goes on. In fact, 52% of people in Hamilton volunteer, which is higher than the national average. The one thing they all have in common is their dedication to helping others in any way they can.

I am thankful for the volunteers who have come out to support me over the years, because the work we do here is not possible without them.

Volunteers help our children, our seniors, our neighbours, our families, our friends, our pets, and the environment. The list is endless.

I want to say thank you to all of the volunteers out there, because your selflessness and willingness to dedicate your time to others is worth being celebrated.

Congratulations, and happy volunteer week.

#### DUNCAN MCPHAIL

**Mr. Rob Flack:** I rise in the House today to honour a friend, a colleague and an exceptional leader from my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. Last month, on March

11, sadly, only two weeks before his 70th birthday, Duncan McPhail passed away. He was an active farmer and egg producer. He grew up and spent his life on his family farm, where he also raised his own family. He was also a great customer of my former employer, Masterfeeds.

#### 1020

A strong community advocate, Duncan also served as West Elgin's mayor. I believe it's fair to say that Duncan McPhail was the voice of West Elgin.

Duncan was a man of honour and integrity, and he was truly loved throughout Elgin county.

Duncan served on council from 1988 to 2002, and he returned to politics in 2018. In 2000, 2001, and 2019, Duncan served as Elgin county's warden. He also served as deputy warden last year, in 2022. This meant that Duncan had an unmatched wealth of knowledge.

I certainly appreciated his advice and guidance in the time I was fortunate enough to work alongside him.

His experience, wisdom and sense of humour were appreciated by all in Elgin county.

We have lost a steadfast leader, and I know that Duncan McPhail will be greatly missed by his family, his community and the many, many people who called him friend.

#### ALLAN CUP

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** There was some exciting hockey on Tuesday, and I am not talking about the pitiful Leafs first playoff game. In my riding, the Allan Cup, which is Canada's oldest national hockey championship, is being hosted, and that hockey is exciting. The Allan Cup, the national senior hockey championship, really is the oldest national hockey championship in Canada. It began on April 17, in Dundas.

After three long years of COVID hiatus, the Real McCoys are happy to welcome all the great teams from across Canada back to the beautiful Grightmire Arena in Dundas. Teams and their fans are coming in from Newfoundland and Alberta to compete in this prestigious competition, and the community is very excited. Don Robertson, the well-known president of the Real McCoys, is among the most excited. He said that he felt it was so important to keep the Allan Cup going and this brand of hockey alive. Don Robertson, himself a Gold Stick honoree, said that hockey has such an important place in our history.

This week, Canada came to Dundas. It will be the third time the Real McCoys have hosted this Canadian, local, iconic championship.

The Ontario Hockey Association said, "We are proud to be bringing this event back to Ontario.... It only seems appropriate that the oldest hockey association in Canada is hosting the oldest hockey championship in the country...."

Let me thank the volunteers. Let me thank the teams.

The cup is being awarded this Saturday, and if I had to pick a winner, I'm going to go with the Real McCoys.

Go, Real McCoys, this Saturday.

## HOMELESSNESS

**Mr. John Jordan:** Speaker, this government heard loud and clear during pre-budget consultations that homelessness is not only a huge problem in urban areas, but it's also an issue in rural areas, like my riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

Thanks to this Ontario government and the great Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, millions of new dollars were invested in this year's budget—and for years to come—to assist our exceptional local organizations that lend a helping hand to the most vulnerable people, under the Homelessness Prevention Program.

I spoke with Emily Hollington, the director of social services for Lanark county, who said, “We are pleased to see the ministry's increased financial commitment to the Homelessness Prevention Program.” Knowing the need, Emily is very thankful for this new funding. Lanark county will receive a total of almost \$2.5 million in 2023-24, which includes an additional investment of nearly \$1 million. The additional Homelessness Prevention Program funding will help the county address the complex needs of people experiencing homelessness and will enhance our initiatives in preventing homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's 2023 budget is supporting those who have fallen on hard times in Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston and across the province—people who are experiencing or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

This government will continue to take action on homelessness prevention and provide more people with not only a place to call home, but hope for a better future.

## RIDING OF DON VALLEY EAST

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** Mr. Speaker, the people of Don Valley East have, as of late, unjustly had their voices silenced, discounted and cast aside. I'm referring to a string of decisions made about us, without us.

First, the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission issued an unanticipated recommendation to eliminate DVE as a riding. The response from my constituents has been clear: They were not offered community consultation, they do not want this change to happen, and they know it will be reflected at the provincial and municipal levels. Arbitrarily dividing up our riding will tear apart neighbourhoods that are politically, socially and culturally intertwined.

Cutting and pasting ridings together negatively impacts people who rely on organizations, services, and uniquely tailored political representation.

Don Valley East is a distinct part of Toronto. It needs more than just representation; it also needs a soul.

The Ontario Science Centre is one of the crown jewels of Toronto, promoting culture, employment, prosperity, education, and recreation. Meanwhile, the government has been planning its demolition without a shred of consultation. The Minister of Infrastructure's feeble machinations about a so-called “business case” fool nobody—and

the Science Centre Station is the very definition of a bait and switch.

The people of Don Valley East deserve honesty and a chance to be heard, and the province is taking notice. On their behalf, I say, you will not tear down and relocate the Ontario Science Centre without a fight. It is a community institution, an architectural wonder, and the protector of our cherished ravine lands, which you must not pave over with so much new housing already being built in the area—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Members' statements.

## RAMADAN AND EID-UL-FITR

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** The month of Ramadan is ending. From dawn till dusk, Muslims fasted to purify souls and practised staying away from wrongdoings for 30 days. This week, they will gear up to celebrate Eid-Ul-Fitr, a joyous occasion where the faithful offer gratitude. On this day, prayers are offered, kinships are strengthened, and charity for the unprivileged is given. Mouth-watering feasts are held and shared with family, friends, neighbours, and just about anyone in need. It is believed that absolutely no soul shall go unfed on the day of Eid.

Fasting brings soul-cleansing, self-discipline and focus. Fasting makes one empathetic and sympathetic, to understand the pain of hunger and starvation.

Mr. Speaker, on this Eid, I feel pain for the Islamic Society of Markham in my riding, who faced an unwanted incident during Ramadan. I also met with the leaders of the mosque. I commend the resilience and perseverance of our Muslim brothers and sisters.

Our government protects religious freedom. Everyone can practise their faith and beliefs without fear and intimidation in our beautiful province.

I wish the Muslim community a happy Eid. Eid Mubarak.

FLAMBOROUGH CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE OUTSTANDING BUSINESS  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** I want to take the opportunity this morning to congratulate the 2023 Flamborough Chamber of Commerce Outstanding Business Achievement Award winners. Each year, the Flamborough chamber honours the best in corporate excellence and community service at its Outstanding Business Achievement Awards gala. This year, six local businesses and individuals were recognized for their exceptional service.

The Waterdown Village BIA received the Community Service Award for demonstrating exemplary business practices and its dedication to involvement in the community.

IG Wealth Management took home the Large Business Award.

The Small Business Award went to Birmingham Consulting.

Benchmark Plumbing was awarded Entrepreneur of the Year. This award recognizes an individual who shows extraordinary energy, inspiration, leadership and innovation in their business practices.

The Lifetime Achievement Award went to former Hamilton city councillor Judi Partridge.

Christina Birmingham received the FCC Award, which recognizes a Flamborough business that has made an outstanding contribution to the Flamborough Chamber of Commerce.

This was the first time in three years that everyone could get together in person. Flamborough Chamber of Commerce executive director Matteo Patricelli made a point of thanking the local businesses who worked together to make this gala evening a success.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'd like to welcome to the House Caleb Lyons, the son of Charlie Lyons, our chaplain. It's nice to see you here.

1030

**Mr. Adil Shamji:** This morning, I rise to welcome Michau Van Speyk from the Ontario Autism Coalition.

Welcome to the chamber.

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** I welcome to the assembly today, in the members' gallery, Remi Ferreira, who arrived in Canada from Guyana in 1952—married for 69 years to Inge. He makes the community of Guildwood in Scarborough his home. He was a successful businessman, retiring as executive vice-president from Stafford foods company after 38 years.

Welcome, Remi Ferreira.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I wish to welcome to the House Jason Stevens.

I also want to give a warm welcome to the Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Institute of Canada, who will be having the event this evening.

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I'd like to welcome some wonderful constituents from Mississauga–Streetsville: Seshagiri Pingali, Srilakshmi Koduri, and Richita Pingali, the family of today's page captain Kundanika Pingali.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My office decided this week that we would call today "bring your family to work day." So with us today, I have my executive assistant, Jess Beaupre, who brought her parents, Margaret and David Beaupre, to work today. And, proudly, I have my daughter, Destinee Taylor, and her boyfriend, Jeff Cooper, here with us today.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** It's my pleasure to welcome my friends Mr. Scott Johnson, director of education for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, and Amy Janssens, associate director of corporate services.

Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I would like to formally acknowledge that page Kate Demczur is serving as page captain today. Well done.

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** I want to welcome Steve McKenzie, a friend of over 40 years to the House today, and nine-year-old political enthusiast Lucas Atienza.

Welcome to Queen's Park, buddy.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I have the privilege of welcoming two wonderful guests to the Legislature today: my beautiful wife, Keri, and my son, Sullivan. They are in the members' gallery.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), 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 House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, April 24, 2023, for the proceedings of orders of the day.

### DECORUM IN CHAMBER

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I also need to take this opportunity to remind members of one of the rules of decorum in the chamber. There has long been an understanding that members are not to use props, signage or accessories that may express a political message. This also extends to members' attire, where logos, slogans, advertising or symbols associated with campaigns or causes are not permitted.

Laptops and other devices that members visibly make use of in the chamber are subject to the same standards. I mention this since I have recently noticed that some members have added stickers or decals to the covers of their laptops. I urge all members to consider the statement that they may be making and ensure that any personalization of their devices does not become a distraction from the work of the House. This could include taking precautions such as using a cover on the device while in the chamber or other measures to ensure that their belongings do not convey visible political messaging.

As a closing reminder, the expectation in this chamber is that political points should be made during debate rather than through the use of props.

I thank the members for their attention to this important matter.

### QUESTION PERIOD

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Premier.

After five years of Conservative rule, our schools and our students are struggling more than ever—overcrowded

classrooms, fewer in-school supports, and a school repair backlog that gets bigger and bigger every year.

Now, after three years of start-and-stop learning disruptions, this government has tabled a funding package that fails Ontario kids yet again. It won't stop pending layoffs, and it won't give students the extra support they need to graduate as skilled and engaged citizens.

To the Premier: Why should families believe this government's promises on education when they've continually shown just how out of touch they are?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To respond, the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** We're committed to continuing to invest in publicly funded schools—\$693 million more for the coming school year, a 10% increase in funding to school boards over the last four years.

The member opposite speaks about staffing. Then, she should ask her caucus why they opposed every single hire—8,000 additional education workers and teachers in our publicly funded schools, because our Premier and our government have invested in what matters most. We just announced an additional 1,000 educators to promote literacy and math, an additional 1,000 teachers to help with the destreamed courses, and the opposition have already asserted that they will vote against that investment.

We also brought forth legislation to improve better schools and better outcomes. I will note that the members opposite have yet to disclose one substantive concern with the legislation, the first overhaul of the Education Act in a generation. You would think the members opposite would find an opportunity to work with government to improve outcomes, accountability—

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, this government likes to say it's going back to basics like math, but that's a little ironic, because their math here just does not add up. The reality is, when adjusted to inflation, education funding has plummeted \$1,200 per student, per year, since this government first took office.

Again to the Premier: When will this government stop shortchanging students, restore funding, and get kids the support they need to succeed?

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** Let's hear what the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education had to say, as opposed to the rhetoric from the members opposite: "We commend the province of Ontario for launching this initiative that will help to ensure young students can build successful careers..."

Alicia Smith from Dyslexia Canada said, "Dyslexia Canada sees today's funding announcement as a positive and necessary step that will help Ontario school boards shift their ... practices."

The head of Community Literacy of Ontario said, "The changes that the Ministry of Education is making to the current" school system "directly addresses literacy and aims to support children building" their critical skills.

The head of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association said, "Today's announcement of significant

additional resources in support of improved student math ... and literacy skills are welcomed and very much appreciated."

The head of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations said, "These additional supports in the fundamental areas of math and literacy that will get students back where they need to be."

We are investing more, and we are expecting more for Ontario's publicly funded school system.

I ask the members opposite to support this bill, to expect better for Ontario children, lift standards, lift the ambitions and the outcomes for kids in Ontario.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, they're patting themselves on their back while they're letting kids and their families down. It has been five years—five years. It's time to take some responsibility.

Teachers, education workers, parents do not have faith that this government will fix the crisis in our education system, because they all know that there are four fewer high school teachers per 1,000 students now than there were five years ago, even with their additions. I'd like to encourage this government to do the math. That is a net reduction in the teacher-student ratio—not to mention the planned upcoming layoffs of thousands of education workers.

To the Premier: Is this the legacy you want to leave Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. Members will please take their seats.

Minister of Education.

1040

**Hon. Stephen Lecce:** It is ironic—NDP math. There are fewer students and more staff—8,000 more in Ontario schools—and yet somehow the opposition, with a straight face, could declare there's less going in the publicly funded school system. We increased staff by 8,000 more front-line workers—EAs, ECEs, and teachers in the school system. We just announced an additional 2,000 front-line teachers focused on what matters most: boosting reading, writing and math. We introduced legislation to get back to the focus.

I noticed that some of the members from the Leader of the Opposition's caucus, when they were trustees, called for the very provisions in the bill today. The member from London West, the former chair of Thames Valley, called for school boards to establish a minimum code of conduct for trustees. She called on the minister to do that. She called on the board of trustees to approve a multi-year strategic plan. She called on school boards to report annually to the public. She called on us to undertake more effective governance of school boards. That's exactly what the bill does.

Instead of your ideological opposition to progress and to change, vote for this bill. Expect—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Government side, come to order.  
Restart the clock. The next question.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Premier.

Yesterday, the Minister of Infrastructure told Ontarians that it was “much more expensive” to repair the Ontario Science Centre than it would be to just tear it all down—much more expensive than tearing it down, refurbishing the pods, building a whole new building, and then moving all of those jobs out of Flemingdon Park and next to the Premier’s new, elite, private spa. But when she was asked how much more expensive, she couldn’t or wouldn’t say.

So, Speaker, I would like to offer the Premier a chance: How much will it cost to remove the Ontario Science Centre from its heritage property in Flemingdon Park?

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

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I was correct. But what our government is doing is saving the science centre. We are going to get a brand new, modern home with new exhibits—a new home at Ontario Place, which will be redeveloped so that families can enjoy it.

I wonder what the member opposite was doing for years when they let Ontario Place and the science centre deteriorate—a lack of investment.

Mr. Speaker, we will invest in the science centre, and we will continue to invest in Ontario Place.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I guess we’ll find out the real cost in 2028.

The minister also referred to a business case for this whole scheme. Considering that there has been exactly zero consultation with local communities, no transparency as to how this whole plan came together, and with this government’s very dubious track record when it comes to land deals, I think it’s on the minister to show her work.

Back to the Premier: When will you show Ontario the evidence that this scheme is actually in the public interest?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Mr. Speaker, we did show our work just two days ago, with the Premier and Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, when we presented the holistic vision for Ontario Place. We are investing in site servicing in order to prep the site for our brand new tenants, which will be Therme, Live Nation, and, of course, the science centre.

Mr. Speaker, those members over there have let Ontario Place deteriorate. It is flooded. It is eroding. It is not safe.

It is this government that is investing in the science centre and investing in Ontario Place to make it a wonderful place for families to enjoy for generations to come.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South and the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, come to order.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, companies controlled by the DeGasperi family, long-time Conservative Party insiders, bought 60 acres of land next to the current science centre less than a month before this government announced there would be a subway stop there. By the way, that subway stop is called Science Centre Station; I guess they’re going to have to find a new name for it. These are the same developers connected to the costly Highway 413 project, who hosted the Premier in an elite NHL suite in Florida, benefited from this government’s greenbelt tear-up, and own the historic foundry site bulldozed for a parking lot.

Back to the Premier: What role did Conservative-connected developers have in this decision?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The members will please take their seats. Order. Official opposition, come to order.

To reply, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Let me just get this straight: The Leader of the Opposition’s main concern is that we might have to change the name of the brand new subway station that we’re building—across the \$30-billion infrastructure program to bring subways to the city of Toronto, in an area that is being redeveloped, that is saving the science centre, bringing tourists back to Ontario Place, that they allowed to destroy, in co-operation with the NDP. The number one concern that the Leader of the Opposition has is, we might have to change the name of that subway stop. That’s it.

I’ll tell you what. I will give the Leader of the Opposition a victory: We’ll change the name of the subway stop for them.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier.

Without any consultation, Premier Ford announced plans to tear down the current Ontario Science Centre building and build a smaller, new building at Ontario Place, where large parts of the site are also being privatized with no consultation or transparency.

The Ontario Science Centre is an important architectural landmark and a vital place for the communities of Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park. Tearing it down is a bad idea.

The Premier says that the plan is to build housing on the site.

Has the public land where the Ontario Science Centre sits—land that belongs to the city of Toronto—already been promised to a developer? If so, who?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Our government made a commitment to the great people of Ontario that we would bring Ontario Place back to life, and that is exactly what we are doing.

We made a commitment to build public transit in the city of Toronto—expanding the subway system by 50%. That is exactly what we are doing. We are bringing the

transit system up to Thorncliffe Park, which I know will truly benefit the community, as it will others, as well.

We have a wonderful opportunity before us. We have a wonderful asset at the waterfront that is not being utilized, that is not enjoyed by the public. They closed the doors in 2012. We will open the doors and welcome families to come to Ontario Place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question. The member for Spadina–Fort York.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** The Minister of Infrastructure has said multiple times that an environmental assessment is under way at Ontario Place, but she failed to mention that the assessment doesn't include the site of the private Austrian spa because the government weakened the Environmental Assessment Act. The project involves cutting down 850 trees and destroying habitat where beavers, minks, foxes and endangered birds live. It also plans to attract more than 10,000 guests per day without any assessment of how that will impact transit, traffic or infrastructure.

Why is your government sidestepping its requirement for an environmental assessment for the majority of the redevelopment of Ontario Place?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much for the question.

We are following all of the processes before us. We are following everything that's required of us by the Minister of the Environment through legislation that has been in the House, and we are following the city process with the development application of Ontario Place.

While I love the fact that the members opposite are talking about transit, we are the government that led the way in transit expansion. We will be connecting Ontario Place with public transit, with the subway line, so that people can have greater access to the site because, once again, we are bringing Ontario Place back to life so that everyone can enjoy this wonderful landmark at our waterfront.

1050

## HOUSING

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** My question this morning is for the Premier.

Over the coming decade, Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people, and many of those people want to call the beautiful riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore home. But as Ontario's population continues to grow, housing construction has historically not kept pace.

Now, like much of Canada, Ontario is facing a housing crisis that is freezing individuals and families out of the dream of home ownership. With each year that passes, we know that thousands of newcomers to Canada will settle in Ontario, and many are skilled workers looking to potentially buy or rent a home. Simply put, Ontario needs to build a lot more homes to meet the rapidly growing population.

Can the Premier please explain how our government is taking action to increase the pace of new home construction?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** I want to thank the great member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for that great question.

Our government remains committed to delivering on our promise of 1.5 million homes. You saw Stats Canada a couple of weeks ago—445,000 people landed here in Ontario. That's the fastest-growing region anywhere in North America. We're going to make sure we have homes and rental homes.

As you saw, housing starts in the GTA rose by 7.7% last year—the highest level since 2012. Year over year, total housing starts in Ontario are up 4.5%. Rental starts are double what they were the same time last year because of Bill 23—the minister did an incredible job.

We're cutting red tape. We're making sure we get shovels in the ground. We're going to make sure it doesn't take five years for a municipality to issue a permit. We're getting homes built for the newcomers and people who have been here for years. We're going to make sure we have affordable, attainable homes for everyone.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I want to thank the Premier for his response and for his leadership in building a stronger Ontario.

But, Speaker, more can be done and should be done when it comes to addressing our province's housing crisis and the affordability crisis that's affecting all regions of Ontario. For too many Ontarians, including young people, newcomers and seniors, finding the right home is still too challenging. It is essential that our government implements measures so that local interests and demand for housing are considered when it comes to building housing to accommodate community and region-specific needs.

Can the Premier please explain how our government is promoting collaboration and partnerships in responding to diverse housing needs?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Thank you for the question, once again.

Multi-unit construction in Ontario has increased by 7.6% since February. We're seeing this continue to grow—the largest increase in the country, over any area in the country. We saw a 25% increase in condo permits, also the largest increase in the entire country. There's a reason. Everyone heard the stat—and this goes back many years. We've created the conditions and the climate for companies to come here and build. We have more cranes than LA, New York, Chicago, Washington and Boston combined. They're building because we've created the climate.

We're cutting red tape. We're getting shovels in the ground. We're making sure that municipalities are held accountable for the first time ever—they're being held accountable. We're going to make sure we have condos and houses for people who may not be able to afford it.

It's very simple—the Liberals and NDP have never understood it for decades—it's called supply and demand, and we're going to have to supply the demand.

## INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** My question is to the Premier.

Ontario is allowing mining claims across Treaty 9 territory that affect the rights and interests of First Nations without their free, prior and informed consent.

In a recent letter to Ring of Fire Metals, Neskantaga stated that no other government or First Nation can rewrite history to take away our rights and our homelands.

Why is Ontario undermining Neskantaga's rights and interests in their own territories?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** To the contrary, we're working with Neskantaga First Nation, as we are working with First Nations communities across northern Ontario on various resource projects and on various pieces of legacy infrastructure which will enhance the social, health and economic opportunities that are available to their communities.

We take our section 35 responsibilities seriously with respect to the duty to consult. We'll continue to engage and work with communities to build consensus, to provide an opportunity for a better life for people in Indigenous communities across northern Ontario.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker.

We're not talking about programs and services or funding. We're talking about rights.

Speaker, last week the Chiefs of Ontario made a strong statement against Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. They named Ontario's lack of meaningful consultation and lack of recognition of crown responsibilities.

Neskantaga and other affected nations have not given, again, their free, prior and informed consent to what this government is doing in Treaty 9 territory.

Will this Premier cease and desist all exploration activity in the Ring of Fire until the free, prior, informed consent of Neskantaga and other nations has been given?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats.

The Minister of Northern Development.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** We will continue to talk about rights. We'll talk about the rights of young Indigenous people to get a good job, to work in land use planning, to work on studies surrounding the Ring of Fire and across resource projects and legacy infrastructure in northern Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, he quotes FPIC here. There's been a lot of discussion about it; fair enough. It's not the law of Ontario. However, we have built consensus into the Far North Act. We continue to work with Indigenous communities. It just can't be that one community wants consent and the others want a project to proceed. That begs us to build consensus. That begs us to work with Neskantaga, Webequie First Nation, Marten Falls, Eabametoong, Kasabonika. Name those communities and I will tell you about people who

want opportunities for a better way of life in their communities—including legacy infrastructure: roads, electricity—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question. The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

I understand that the minister recently returned from New York, where he promoted Ontario's economic interests and showcased the best that Ontario's innovation ecosystem has to offer. As one of Ontario's strongest trading partners, New York is ripe for business opportunities, and as one of the world's largest tech centres, it is also full of firms looking to invest internationally.

Will the minister please share with this Legislature an update on his trade mission to New York and what we can expect as a result?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, as they say in New York: Start spreading the news. Ontario is home to North America's fastest-growing tech market. That was the message in New York as we met several companies in the fintech and life sciences sectors. With two-way trade between Ontario and New York valued at \$37 billion, there's no shortage of opportunity. And with over 300 New York-owned firms already operating here in Ontario, we are their natural choice to expand. That's why the two companies we met with—Cockroach Labs and Globant—recently announced new offices in Toronto. Globant alone is creating 200 jobs right here in Toronto, and we know that is only a start for them.

Speaker, Ontario has everything that companies from around the world need to succeed, because Ontario is open for business.

1100

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the minister for spreading the news and for his answer.

Ontario's technology sector is poised to continue leading the digital revolution, with homegrown breakthroughs in the life sciences sector occurring daily. For Ontario to capitalize on these successes, the world needs to know that Ontario is at the centre of the work that is propelling these fields. That's why trade missions like the minister's mission to New York are critical for this province.

Will the minister please explain what the businesses that he met with had to say about Ontario and its competitive edge?

**Hon. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, our long list of meetings included companies like Crowdbotics, Fever, Thought-Focus, Justworks, Synechron and Citibank. They all agree that Ontario is a global innovation hub. We have 26,000 IT firms and over 400,000 IT workers. That's why Ontario leads the country in venture capital investments. A record-breaking \$8.4 billion came into Ontario in 2021 alone.



That's why our tech sector is growing 350% faster than Silicon Valley. With a highly skilled workforce and world-renowned innovation, Ontario continues to be tech's favourite place to be.

By reducing the cost of business by \$8 billion every year, Ontario is the jurisdiction for businesses to invest and grow.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is for the Premier.

Operating rooms at the Riverside campus of the Ottawa Hospital have been leased to a private, for-profit corporation on Saturdays for the last while. The 26 surgeons running this for-profit corporation have been hiring nursing staff from the Ottawa Hospital's public OR rooms. Nurses are being offered twice their normal salary. The surgical equipment for this clinic is shipped in from Toronto. On the surface, it doesn't seem to make sense. But what has also never been clear to me is how this for-profit clinic was approved in the first place.

Can the Premier clarify if this clinic was given his government's formal approval to operate?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, from the very beginning, as we put forward an almost billion-dollar three-year investment to expand surgical innovation and to deal with surgical backlog, the Ottawa Hospital, under the leadership of CEO Cam Love have been doing exactly what we asked. I'm going to quote CEO Cam Love: "Such concerns raised by" the member opposite "are unfounded, and the innovative model used by AOA has resulted in more orthopaedic surgeries being completed faster."

This is about people. This is about 40 people who needed and were waiting for hip and knee surgeries, who got that surgery faster as a result of innovation that's happening at the Ottawa Hospital. I am incredibly proud of the partnership that they have been able to manage and work through with AOA, and as we see more of these innovations coming forward, we will continue to fund them through a program that—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The supplementary question. The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Back to the Premier: We all know that the privatization of orthopaedic surgery and the poaching of staff from our public hospitals is exactly what this government wants to do with Bill 60. But section 4 of the Ontario Public Hospitals Act is very clear: Leasing any space in a public hospital requires the explicit written approval of the Ministry of Health. You can't even put a Tim Hortons in a hospital without ministerial approval. The law in Ontario is clear: The Ottawa Hospital cannot lease its operating room without the explicit written approval of the Minister of Health. I hope the Premier knows that.

When will the Premier investigate the apparent breach of Ontario laws by the for-profit corporation leasing operating rooms at the Ottawa Hospital?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, that tells me everything I need to know about the NDP. They worry about process—we're focused on people. We want to ensure that individuals who are waiting far too long for hip and knee and cataract surgeries have that opportunity to get it in their community, closer to home and faster.

There is no doubt that Ontario leads the Canadian jurisdictions in making sure that people have fast access, but we can do better, and we are doing better. And we're doing that with Bill 60 and with Your Health, because it means that those expansions can happen—in non-urgent, regularly scheduled surgeries that can happen in the community. I am incredibly proud of the work that we've been able to put through with Bill 60.

If the member opposite would focus on individuals in her riding who are desperate for that surgery to happen sooner, she might have a better chance of getting more NDP members.

## SERVICES FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES LAND USE PLANNING

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** My question is for the Minister of Health

Speaker, Meals on Wheels is the largest meal-delivering service of its kind in Ottawa. It serves seniors and people with disabilities with great needs. This organization is vital in addressing the food security crisis in Ottawa. It should be noted that Meals on Wheels remained open through the entire pandemic, the terrible weather events in Ottawa, and the truck convoy. Yet, because of the skimpy 2% increase they are receiving from the province—which is totally out of touch with inflation and certainly not the very substantial increase that the minister described—the price of meals for their clients has not doubled or tripled but is now four times more expensive.

The minister said yesterday that organizations like Meals on Wheels have endorsed the government's investments, but surely that cannot mean that they consider it sufficient—otherwise, why are they writing to us?

So my question is, how can the government justify such a limited increase despite food costs increasing by over 10%?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** The member opposite would know that in our most recent budget there was a substantial increase to the home and community care service sector. Why? Because we understand that as we build up hospitals and build up long-term-care facilities, we also have to build up our home and community care sector, which is why the investments have been made.

Speaker, \$560 million is going to make a difference to organizations such as Meals on Wheels. We understand that they are doing exceptional work, making sure that our seniors, our most vulnerable, our individuals who are recovering from surgeries get that support in their home and are not then needing more complex care in hospitals or long-term care.

We'll make those investments, and I hope when you look at that line item in the budget, you'll say, "This is important for the city of Ottawa, and we will be supporting it."

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I don't see the impact of those investments. I hope it's really coming.

Speaker, I am deeply concerned about this government's actions directly contributing to the erosion of our food security and increasing costs for families struggling to make ends meet. Insufficient funding to help our community organizations is one thing, but adding to that the paving over of valuable farmland is a recipe to leave Ontarians to suffer through rising food prices. The reduced land available for agriculture can only result in less food production. Since food insecurity is a significant driver of poverty and inequality, this will have ripple effects across various sectors, including health, education, and social welfare.

It is time for this government to start prioritizing people over short-term economic gains.

My question is, how is the government planning to grow more food to address the food security crisis?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** In Ontario, our farmers are the very best, and year after year, their yield is increasing. We have an ample supply of amazing, quality food.

But we need to accept facts for what they are—and that fact is, the main contributor of rising food costs in the province of Ontario and across Canada is the carbon tax.

Here are some examples.

I have an energy bill from a chicken farmer from east of Toronto. From March 2 to April 1, his federal carbon charge was 26% of his entire energy bill. This is unacceptable.

It's that ripple effect across the food value chain that's driving up the food price in Ontario—

*Interjections.*

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

The House will come to order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The government side will come to order. Thank you.

Start the clock. The next question.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Today, I'm excited. We heard the Minister of Economic Development talk about how this is a jurisdiction to grow and invest, and we heard the Premier saying we're going to build 1.5 million houses.

But my question here is for the Minister of Transportation—because do you know what? We talked about the GTA becoming home to over two million people, because this is the place to grow and raise a wonderful family. We have to make sure we can build the

transit to meet that population need. Unfortunately, the reality is that our transit networks are already strained. People are looking forward to greater transit routes that are accessible and convenient, through the proposed Ontario Line, and that will deliver relief to the city's core and to the people in Etobicoke south.

The reality is that, unfortunately, the Liberals didn't do anything. Just like they neglected Ontario Place, they neglected our transit line. They did not put any meaningful investments in badly needed transit infrastructure.

I'm wondering if the Minister of Transportation can provide an update on the progress of the Ontario Line.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South come to order. The member for Kitchener—Conestoga come to order.

The Minister of Transportation can reply.

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Thank you so much to the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore for the question. I'm very happy to provide the update she's requesting.

Just recently, our government reached another significant milestone on the Ontario Line. We released two requests for proposals to design and build new stations, the Pape tunnel and the elevated guideway. To break it down, the elevated guideway contract will help deliver a three-kilometre-long elevated guideway with emergency exit buildings and five above ground stations for riders. What's more, the Pape tunnel contract will transition the Ontario Line's track from above ground to underground, will deliver three kilometres of twin tunnels with stations at Cosburn and Pape, and will connect the all-new Ontario Line to the existing line 2.

While the NDP supported the Liberals who failed to build new transit lines, our government is delivering transit relief, and we are getting it done.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I want to thank the minister.

Ontario is such a wonderful place to grow, and after 15 years of disastrous rule by the Liberals, not investing in anything, it is so important that we are getting shovels in the ground and, at the same time, we're building the Ontario Line and other major transit networks that will not only benefit the riders of Etobicoke—Lakeshore but will benefit all Ontarians.

Ontario cannot afford to hold back our economy. Now it's time to build. Now it's time to move ahead with critical investments in our transit infrastructure needs. We need to continue building highways, roads and transit infrastructure that is needed to keep Ontario moving.

Can the minister please elaborate on our government's actions to ensure that this critical transit project is delivered?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** I thank the member for her question.

It's true; after 15 years of Liberal neglect, Ontarians have a hard time believing that we actually can build transit in this province. But I am glad to let the member

and Ontarians know that the Ontario Line is going to be delivered. Construction is already under way at Exhibition station and for the future Corktown and Moss Park stations, as well as in the joint rail corridor east of the Don River. Once complete, the 15.5-kilometre-long Ontario Line will enable nearly 400,000 trips each day, bringing much needed rapid transit to more GTA communities.

Speaker, to the member's point: This game-changing project will benefit Ontario as a whole by supporting over 4,700 construction jobs each year during construction, by cutting overall fuel consumption by more than seven million litres a year, and by generating an estimated \$10 billion to the local economy.

Under the previous Liberal government, the proposed UP Express was a relief line for them. Instead of building a true relief line—

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

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** My question is to the Premier.

A London-area family recently received the horrifying assessment of sarcoma after an ultrasound showed a mass in their child's leg. In order to properly diagnose, the oncologists ordered an MRI. But children who need an MRI at London Health Sciences Centre have to wait. Children who should have that service within 28 days are waiting, on average, 299 days—waiting for almost a year. How is this acceptable?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Well, it's not acceptable, which is exactly why our government has made additional investments in MRIs across Ontario, including at London regional health sciences. We are building a system that, frankly, has been ignored for far too long by previous governments that didn't make those investments, whether it was in health human resources, whether it was in capital.

Speaker, 50 different hospital projects are being renovated, built or expanded in the province of Ontario, under this Premier's leadership. We are making those investments to ensure that families who need those services can get them in the appropriate timeline.

As I said, the MRI in London is in the works because our government approved it.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Speaker, it's clear that this government's claimed investments are not reaching patients.

My question is back to the Premier.

I can't imagine the level of stress and anxiety while patients await this important step in their child's health care. It's necessary for diagnosis and potential treatment, and kids can't wait.

This new Conservative government normal is not okay. While the government ignores its health care responsibilities, the family have even resorted to calling a hospital in Michigan, who got back to them right away with a price tag of \$2,200 cash.

Is it acceptable that in a province such as Ontario, cash for health care access is okay?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, the member opposite is making the case for Bill 60 and our plan, as we have articulated under Your Health. Making sure that we have access—whether it is surgical clinical units, whether it is diagnostics in community—means that families will not have to wait. As we see these investments pay off, we've had expansions that happened—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** The member opposite, who served for 15 years in a government that did nothing for health care, is suggesting that we're not moving fast enough. I am suggesting, respectfully: Show me the 50 capital hospital projects that happened under your watch. Show me the thousands of new health human resources staff who are working in our communities. Show me the 49 new MRIs that are operating in the province of Ontario because we have made the—

*Interjections.*

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

The next question.

#### GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** My question today is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Ontario's Great Lakes help make our province a great place to live—and I've had such a privilege to live steps from Lake St. Clair growing up, and even today. The resources of the Great Lakes provide us with drinking water, energy, food, and recreational opportunities. It is of the utmost importance that we continue to protect, conserve and restore the health of the Great Lakes and support the well-being of communities that rely on them now and for generations to come.

Our government understands that for Ontario's Indigenous communities, the Great Lakes hold deep spiritual and traditional significance. Respecting and recognizing traditional knowledge will only help in strengthening our shared understanding of the Great Lakes.

Can the minister please explain how our government is collaborating with Indigenous leaders to help protect and restore our Great Lakes?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Thank you to the member for Windsor—Tecumseh for that question. I know he, like I, very much values our Great Lakes, enjoys the tourism and economic opportunity—the important work we have to do, as stewards of the Great Lakes, to protect our water.

I was proud, just last week, to co-chair the Great Lakes Guardians' Council with a man I have great respect for, Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe. He has been such a

strong leader for Anishinabek Nation. He and I had the opportunity to chair it. We heard powerful stories from Indigenous youth; from Ducks Unlimited, a group we funded at great length to support our Great Lakes.

It was prior to that event that I announced, on behalf of the government of Ontario, under Premier Ford's leadership, over \$1 million to support Indigenous-led projects to conserve and protect our Great Lakes. I can't wait to get out to the Thames River to meet with Indigenous youth to see first-hand the work they're doing, thanks to this funding from the government of Ontario.

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

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**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Thank you to the minister for that response. It truly is welcome news to hear that the minister is working collaboratively with Indigenous partners to protect and conserve the Great Lakes. I've seen this first-hand, so thank you, Minister.

In his response, the minister spoke about a fish safety project in the Lake Superior basin, which is just one real-world example of what this funding means to Indigenous communities.

Our government must remain focused on making investments that will help build Ontario and preserve our natural heritage for generations to come.

Can the minister please elaborate on how investments made by our government will help First Nations communities across Ontario?

**Hon. David Piccini:** We're protecting our Great Lakes for our next generation, like the many great students who are here today, so that they can have cleaner bodies of water to enjoy for generations to come.

I took some notes which I'd like to share. While at this announcement, I met with Brandon Doxtator. He's a councillor from Oneida Nation and the community's environmental consultation coordinator. He told us that the impact of this funding is going to go toward funding 13 Moons Land-Based Learning camp, a weekly four-day camp for Oneida youth to learn wilderness skills and cultural language and practice.

Speaker, part of my role in this Legislature and one of the things that I love in this job is that I get to learn every day. I can't wait to go out and meet with Oneida youth to learn about the important work that they're doing, thanks to investments that this Premier is making to grow a more prosperous Ontario—homes for everyone; critical infrastructure, including water and waste water infrastructure, we need; working in partnership with Indigenous communities.

I can't wait to join Brandon and Oneida Nation this summer.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, my question is to the Minister of the Environment.

This week, Superior Court Judge Marie-Andrée Vermette issued a decision on a legal challenge filed against Ontario

by seven young Ontarians for the weakness of its climate targets. She found that Ontario's target "falls severely short" of what the scientific consensus requires and that this increases the risk to Ontarians' life and health.

Why won't the minister act to protect the life and health of Ontarians?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, we welcome, certainly, the ruling that said what we know: that the will of this Legislature to ensure that we move beyond the regressive green energy practices, a carbon tax that was punishing our next generation—and what is this government responding and doing? This government is working with industry to electrify the arc furnace, taking two million cars off the road. We're building electric vehicles, empowering men like my grandfather, who came here to work in the steel industry. Now that industry has ensured we're building the cleanest steel for generations to come. We're building electric vehicles, clean vehicles for tomorrow. It's backed by a Critical Minerals Strategy that's bringing prosperity to the north, working in partnership with Indigenous communities.

All of this has been validated to show that Ontario's greenhouse gas reduction is leading the nation. We're on track to meet our 2030 goals. And we'll continue doing that, working in partnership with all Ontarians.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, Ontario's goals are completely inadequate, and that was noted by the judge. She listed the dangers the people of Ontario face, from more heat waves and diseases, to more frequent and powerful floods to more forest fires. She said that in order to actually comply with the global scientific consensus, international goals, and to provide further protection for the health and lives of the people of Ontario, the targeted reduction of greenhouse gases should be 52% by 2030, not the target of 30%. The target that is set will not protect life and health.

What will it take for this government to actually protect the health and lives of the people of this province?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, I like that member, and I respect him. But he hasn't offered a single contribution to what we could actually do. When we issued over seven billion green bonds, the record for this province, he voted against it. When we made a historic investment in public transit to better connect people to places, taking millions of cars off the road, he voted against it. When we said we're going to build modern, updated waste water and storm water to ensure cleaner water for generations to come, he voted against it. When we said we're going to invest in clean steel, empowering men like my grandfather and the thousands of immigrants who choose Ontario for a better future, he voted against it. He offers nothing but misery—a carbon tax on farmers, a carbon tax on single families, a carbon tax on men and women of this province. We'll say no every time.

#### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Housing.

Recently, our government introduced a new housing action plan: Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. Introducing this legislation means we've fulfilled a promise we made to Ontarians: bringing forward a housing action plan every year to help address the housing crisis Ontario is currently facing.

While this is positive news, constituents in my riding have raised questions and concerns regarding what actions our government can take to protect them as tenants. They've heard reports about questionable evictions due to renovations, demolitions and conversions that happen in housing units and apartments.

Can the associate minister please explain what additional protections will take effect to support tenants if our latest housing bill is passed?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I really want to thank the great member from Whitby.

Speaker, nobody should be forced to move out of their homes. Ontarians work hard to pay their bills to keep a roof over their heads, so it is our job to ensure nobody is treated unfairly, which is why our latest bill, if passed, will give tenants and landlords the opportunity to resolve cases at the Landlord and Tenant Board up to six months after a renovation has been completed, to prevent unlawful evictions, and to work together to create a repayment agreement when a tenant falls behind on their rent.

We're also proposing to double the maximum fines to \$100,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for corporations to help prevent and deter bad faith evictions.

We will continue to listen to and protect tenants and landlords to ensure everyone who is looking for a place to live can find one that meets their needs and their budget.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you to the associate minister for that response. It's great to hear that our government is listening to both tenants and landlords and looking at ways to strengthen measures to prevent unlawful evictions.

Renters and landlords want a stop to antiquated and, yes, confusing regulations.

Our government must ensure that rules surrounding rental housing are fair, reasonable, and enforced in a timely manner.

As we enter the summer months, and with rising temperatures, individuals and families who live as tenants have raised questions about what rights they have to install air conditioning units.

Can the associate minister please explain how the proposed housing bill will address tenants' rights to install air conditioning units?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Thank you once again to the great member for his question.

Yes, my colleague is right—on days when temperatures go above 30 degrees, having an air conditioning unit can be essential, especially for those who have underlying medical conditions relating to warm weather.

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Our proposed legislation, if passed, will provide a clear road map for tenants who wish to install an air conditioner in their apartments. For example, they must give written

notice to the landlord, and they can be charged a seasonal fee based on the electricity usage.

Our proposed changes reinforce existing laws and would provide tenants with additional supports so that they can assure that they have a safe and comfortable place to live.

We're fixing the Landlord and Tenant Board—a need we hear about so often from both landlords and tenants alike.

I call on the opposition to stop standing up for the status quo, start standing up for Ontarians, and vote with us on Bill 97.

## LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Sarah Jama:** My question is to the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Over 1,300 university students in Hamilton have signed a petition to “demand that elected provincial and municipal politicians repeal the unwanted urban boundary expansion in Hamilton and protect greenbelt lands.”

This government broke the greenbelt promise and also overrode the municipal decision in Hamilton to save, not pave, farmland.

Students who wrote this petition would really like to know: When will you repeal this unwanted boundary expansion and return our greenbelt lands?

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

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I really want to thank the member for the question.

Speaker, Ontario is expected to grow by more than two million people by 2031, with approximately a million and a half living in the greater Golden Horseshoe region, including Hamilton.

The federal government has also announced that Canada will increase immigration to about a half a million newcomers by 2025. Ontario takes the brunt and most of the immigrants, because Ontario is a great place to live, to work, to raise a family, and to open a business.

Ontario's population reached a historic 50 million last year, and it's our expectation that construction will begin on all of our lands, because we desperately need housing, we desperately need people to come here to work.

We're getting it done. We're building the infrastructure. We're building the hospitals. We're getting health care in the communities that need it. We will build the housing for all Ontarians.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question? The member for London West.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Again to the Premier: Abiola is a grade 4 student from my riding. She wrote to me with some important questions about this government's plans to build housing on the greenbelt. She asked: Does the government know that they will ruin that piece of protected land? Why is the government harming the natural resources of the province? When there is plenty of available land outside the greenbelt, why do they choose to build houses on a more important piece of land?

Speaker, why does a grade 4 student understand the environmental harm of this government's greenbelt carve-up but this Premier does not?

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

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I do want to thank the member opposite for the question. Speaker, we've heard it time and time again: Ontario is the greatest place to live, to work, and to raise your family. This is why so many people wish to come here, which is why many of our children and our future generations will need a place to live.

Do you know what's great to hear right now? It's that we are reaching all-time highs in history for purpose-built rentals, something that has never happened before. Why? Because the Liberals, when they were in government for 15 years, chose to ignore the sector. We did not have enough housing for people who needed to rent. We did not have enough housing for people who moved here. But do you know what, Speaker? This government will get it done, under this Premier and this municipal affairs and housing minister.

#### SERVICES FOR SENIORS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. Seniors and people with disabilities often face additional barriers in most aspects of their daily lives. This includes using public transit, finding employment, and accessing buildings.

Under the leadership of the Premier and this minister, Ontario needs to remain committed to helping seniors and people with disabilities stay active and socially connected. Our government must continue to lead in providing a more accessible environment for living, working, and learning.

Can the minister please explain how our government is taking further action to make Ontario more inclusive for everyone?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Thank you to my good friend the MPP from Burlington for that question. She is a tireless advocate and strong representative working so hard in her community.

Through our Inclusive Community Grants, we are making communities across Ontario more accessible. Since 2018, this government has funded over 60 community-based projects. These include accessible benches in London, accessible beaches in Kenora, refresher driving courses for seniors in Chatham-Kent, and an inclusive waterfront in Collingwood. These grants are an excellent way for local communities, big and small, to become more accessible. We are building a more accessible Ontario together.

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

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** Thank you to the minister for that response. It's reassuring to hear that through investments made by our government, seniors and people with disabilities are encouraged to participate in all aspects of community life.

Last month, I had the pleasure of joining the minister in my riding for the Inclusive Community Grant announcement. These much-needed funds will bring portable beach mats to Burlington and showcase our riding as an inclusive and accessible community. Can the minister please elaborate on this initiative and how it will bring greater accessibility to Burlington?

**Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho:** Project by project, community by community, we are advancing accessibility.

I was proud to award \$30,000 toward the Inclusive Community Grant project in the city of Burlington. Through this project, Burlington will be able to purchase and install portable beach mats to provide a barrier-free path of travel to the edge of Lake Ontario at Beachway Park. This will help older adults and people with disabilities enjoy Lake Ontario.

Projects like this strengthen local communities to promote healthy, active lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities. This is just one of the ways this government is working for all Ontarians.

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. John Vanthof:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Proposed changes in Bill 97 and the PPS allow for increased residential lots on agricultural land. Ontario also has specific minimum distance separation standards that determine setback distances between residential lots and livestock barns, manure storages, and anaerobic digesters—and for good reason.

Planners are raising concerns that there is a conflict developing—particularly Wayne Caldwell, professor of rural planning and development at the University of Guelph: “On a typical concession block the proposed new PPS will allow at least 30 residential lots. With minimum distance separation, there will be virtually no space left for growth in the livestock sector. Indeed we should ask the question, is this the beginning of the end for animal agriculture in Ontario?”

That question needs to be asked. When someone decides that they're going to build a new dairy barn, hog barn, and there's a residential lot within the minimum separation distance, what's going to happen?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to share, through you to the member opposite, that we have taken very thoughtful approaches to how we look to increase housing opportunities—not only in intensifying in urban areas, but also along our rural roadways.

Earlier, this winter, the Premier and I met with dairy farmers from Elgin county, and we talked specifically about the importance of minimum distance separation. We also very much appreciate and respect the ag impact.

That's why I'm pleased that our ministry worked so incredibly well, not only with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, but with the Premier's office, to make sure that when we look to increase housing opportunities—primarily to address farmers' requests, in terms of having an extra lot for their son or daughter or an

employee to live close to the farm—we're taking that into consideration. We're going to be okay, because again, we're thoughtful, and we're respecting the MDS as well as ag impact.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our question period for this morning.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the government House leader under standing order 59.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Let me just thank all members for another productive week, on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario.

On Monday, April 24, in the morning, we will begin at 9 o'clock with third reading of Bill 69, Reducing Inefficiencies Act. In the afternoon, it will be opposition day number 4, then third reading of Bill 69.

On Tuesday, April 25, in the morning, we will start with third reading of Bill 69. In the afternoon, we will continue with Bill 69. And in the evening, we will have a PMB standing in the name of the member for Carleton, which is Bill 93, Joshua's Law.

On Wednesday, April 26, we'll have third reading of Bill 60 in the morning. In the afternoon, we will begin debate on a government bill, which will be introduced. In the evening, there will be the member for Sarnia-Lambton's private member's notion number 48. In the night sitting, we will continue debate on a government bill which was introduced.

On Thursday, April 27, in the morning, we will continue debate on a bill that was introduced by the government. We will have third reading on Bill 60. In the evening, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke—we'll have a debate on Bill 96, the Ministry of Correctional Services Amendment Act.

Whilst there will be a more fulsome opportunity for members to express their gratitude, I think I would be remiss if I didn't also take the opportunity, briefly, to thank the Clerk, who recently announced that he will be retiring at the end of June, for his extraordinary 42 years' worth of service. As I said, we'll have a better opportunity—

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1143 to 1300.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today, the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 20, 2023, of the Standing

Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## PETITIONS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I have a petition here called "Stop Ford's Health Care Privatization Plan."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

"Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones are trying to privatize parts of health care;

"Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

"Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to further privatize Ontario's health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

"—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

"—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

"—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

"—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

"—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward."

I fully support this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with one of the pages.

### SCHOOL BOARDS

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I'd like to table the following petition:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas parents expect that school board trustees and staff be qualified, accountable and focused on putting forward a plan to boost student achievement; and

"Whereas Ontario's education system should offer the full accountability, transparency and responsiveness expected by families to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow; and

"Whereas currently, Ontario's 72 school boards set their own priorities, creating inconsistencies in student outcomes across the education system; and

"Whereas training for school board officials, including trustees and directors of education, to ensure they are

unified in their respective roles to help students build skills they need to succeed; and

“Whereas a trustee dispute mechanism should be put in place, saving precious time and countless taxpayer dollars by building a provincially appointed roster of qualified integrity commissioners to quickly and effectively adjudicate the disputes;

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

“To urge all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the passage of Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023.”

I’ll affix my signature and pass it to page Dominic.

#### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I’m very proud to stand to present this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

““Whereas two-spirit, transgender, non-binary, gender-diverse, and intersex communities face significant challenges to accessing health care services that are friendly, competent, and affirming in Ontario;

“Whereas everyone deserves access to health care, and they shouldn’t have to fight for it, shouldn’t have to wait for it, and should never receive less care or support because of who they are;

“Whereas gender-affirming care is life-saving care;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the reintroduction of a private member’s bill to create an inclusive and representative committee to advise the Ministry of Health on how to realize accessible and equitable access to and coverage for gender-affirming health care in Ontario.”

I will proudly affix my signature to this petition and send it to the centre table with page Nicholas.

#### SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** The petition that I’m reading is entitled, “Demand Fair Funding for Provincial Schools,” and it reads, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial schools for the deaf and blind provide high-quality education in an accessible, supportive and affirming environment; but

“Whereas under successive Liberal and Conservative governments, these schools have been faced with deep cuts and are under constant threat of closure; and

“Whereas these cuts have led to fewer teachers, support staff and less specialized support and resources for students with disabilities; and

“Whereas provincial schools for the deaf and blind have seen programs, resources, staff and services cut and downsized to a skeleton staff while key infrastructure like pools and heating systems are left in disrepair; and

“Whereas deaf and blind children are being denied access to services and programs, or forced onto growing

wait-lists for services from the resource department, including painful waits for psychological and psycho-educational assessments; and

“Whereas parents of students at the schools have been forced to advocate in the media and at public rallies because the ministry has not addressed their concerns;

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

“Call on the Ontario government to immediately increase funding for services, staffing, infrastructure and resources at the provincial schools, and act to improve transparency and accountability while improving the working and learning conditions at the provincial schools.”

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

#### ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, I’d like to thank Lynn Mayhew and Paul Embury for this very important petition to the Legislative Assembly to “Extend Access to Post-Adoption Birth Information....

“Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

“Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption ... information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted” parents “from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend ... post-adoption birth information (identifying information) to next of kin, and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and pass it to page Senna to deliver to the table.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I’d like to present a petition to raise social assistance rates, and I want to thank the amazing New Vision Advocates from Community Living London for collecting these signatures.

“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 \$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 ... (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 couldn't agree more with this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Leonard.

### CHRONIC PAIN TREATMENT

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “National Chronic Pain Society petition,” and it reads, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas one in four Ontarians over the age of 15 suffer from chronic pain, with 73% reporting that the pain interferes with their daily lives and more than half reporting issues with depression and suicidal thoughts; and

“Whereas pain is the most common reason to seek health care, with chronic pain making up approximately 16% of emergency room visits and 38% of frequent visits, adding to the already lengthy wait times and delaying treatment;

“Whereas the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) is proposing to limit the number of nerve block injections a pain sufferer can receive to 16 per year, regardless of the severity of the patient's condition or the number of injections needed, and seemingly without any consultations with patients or health care workers; and

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“Whereas the most common treatment for pain provided by family doctors and hospitals is opioids, despite the current national crisis leading to an estimated 20 opioid-related deaths in Canada every day during the COVID-19 pandemic;

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

“Prevent OHIP from applying a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of chronic pain, and allow for consultations with health care workers ... to determine the best way” forward “to treat chronic pain....”

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

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of your wallet;

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Sylvia Jones say they're planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of” public health, “making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

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

“—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

“—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

“—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

“—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

I support this. I'll give this to our page and sign it.

### LAND USE PLANNING

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** The petition I'm about to read is entitled “Protect the Greenbelt and Repeal Bills 23 and 39.” It reads, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government's latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing wealthy developers to profit over bulldozing over 7,000 acres of farmland;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats, prevent flooding, and mitigate from future climate disasters with Ontario losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

“Whereas the government's Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt, showcasing that Bill 23 was never about housing but about making the rich richer;

“Whereas the power of conservation authorities will be taken away, weakening environmental protections, and preventing future development;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bills 23 and 39, 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 support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Kundanika to the Clerks.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I'd like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for sending me this petition. It's titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates” and it reads, “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” many “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” of Ontario “to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

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

#### LAND USE PLANNING

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition entitled “Stop the 413 GTA West Highway.” It reads, “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is pushing ahead with plans to build Highway 413, a redundant and wasteful 400-series highway through the greenbelt that would cost taxpayers an estimated \$10 billion or more; and

“Whereas according to a TorStar/National Observer investigation entitled ‘Friends with Benefits?’ powerful developers and land speculators with political and donor ties to the Premier and the PC Party of Ontario own thousands of acres along the proposed highway corridor and would” benefit “from its construction, suggesting that this \$10-billion taxpayer-funded highway is about serving the private interests of the Premier’s friends and donors, not the public interest; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s expert panel concluded in 2017 that Highway 413 would be a waste of taxpayer money that would only save drivers 30 to 60 seconds on their commutes; and

“Whereas that expert panel identified less costly and less destructive alternatives to new highway construction, such as making better use of the underused Highway 407, just 15 kilometres away; and

“Whereas Highway 413 would pave over 400 acres of greenbelt and 2,000 acres of farmland, destroy the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and pollute rivers and streams; and

“Whereas building more highways encourages more vehicle use and increases traffic and congestion; and

“Whereas the highway would cause significant harm to historic Indigenous sites;

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

“Stop the plans for building Highway 413.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Leonard.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### BETTER SCHOOLS AND STUDENT OUTCOMES ACT, 2023 LOI DE 2023 SUR L’AMÉLIORATION DES ÉCOLES ET DU RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend various Acts relating to education and child care / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l’éducation et la garde d’enfants.

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** It’s always an honour to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the residents of Parkdale–High Park and today, this afternoon, to speak to Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

First, I want to talk about the title of this bill, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. The president of OECTA thought that maybe the title of the bill should be “the failed Conservative government keeps on failing students act.” The official opposition critic, the MPP for Ottawa West–Nepean, suggested a different title: “the micromanaging school boards as a distraction from the underfunding of schools act.” I think both of these names are better suited for this legislation than Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

Now, members of this House know that yesterday I had a group of students, participants in the Girls Government program, here at Queen’s Park. They attended question period. They met with you, Speaker. They met with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions—thank you very much for your time—and they watched question period. Through their learnings and from their day at Queen’s Park, they had a number of questions from what they observed. One of the questions that a student had was, why is it that the government was claiming that the opposition voted against certain measures that sound good? That was the question.

I explained to all of the students that oftentimes there are a number of tactics that the government side, in particular—the Conservatives—employ to make it seem like they’re actually doing something about an issue that needs to be addressed, but not really. A good example is naming pieces of legislation, naming bills, with titles that make it look like they’re doing something really meaningful and bringing in change, but the content of that bill, or the actions that the government is taking through the legislation, may not be what is required, may be a plan or an approach that doesn’t work, or falls far short of what needs to be done.

**1320**

So I think that this bill, with this title—Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act—is actually a very clear

example of what the student was asking and the example that I gave, which is the legislation, the content of the bill, doesn't match the title. The title should be instead what I suggested earlier from our education critic and the OECTA president's suggestions.

Now, this bill: Does this legislation really lead to better schools and student outcomes? No, not really. Because what do we need for better schools and student outcomes? We need better funding. We need proper funding of our schools. We need proper funding of students. This bill not only doesn't do that; this bill doesn't fix a systemic issue, a root issue, which is that the funding formula that doesn't work.

The government recently brought in the 2023 budget, and in the government's budget, the funding for education doesn't even keep up with the inflation. Everybody knows the cost of everything is up, and when budgets don't keep up with inflation, it amounts to a cut. With this government, we have seen education budgets be cut year after year.

Now, on the government side, particularly through the Ministry of Education, the spin is that this is the largest education budget ever in the province's history, forgetting to mention that a good percentage of that funding is for child care for the national child care program that is being funded by the federal government. So the largest budget that the government is claiming includes federal dollars, because child care falls under the Ministry of Education.

As well, we all know that the impact of the pandemic continues and that means higher needs in terms of learning for students and other supports, such as mental health. Now, during the pandemic, many school boards, including right here in Toronto, the Toronto District School Board, had to spend money from their reserves to pay for costs that were associated in order to follow the directives given by this province. The government forced our school boards, the TDSB, to tap into their reserves. And so, what has that led to? That has led to the complete depletion of reserves of the TDSB.

I'm going to quote from a letter that was sent by the chair of the TDSB and the director to the Minister of Education. It reads, "TDSB now faces a deficit of approximately \$61 million for the 2023-24 school year according to the board's preliminary operating financial position. We have depleted any working reserves and used reserves put away for other purposes. If the pandemic costs incurred by the board were reimbursed by the ministry, the TDSB would have additional funding to support its current financial shortfall without having to reduce programs and services for students."

Did the government reimburse the TDSB? No. Instead, the government's response was that they were not going to bail out school boards—Speaker, "bail out." That term is so inappropriate because it's as if to say that the boards were mismanaging funds when we know not only was there not enough funding provided by the province but that the province is quite prescriptive when it comes to how boards need to spend the funding that they receive. The minister and the government know very clearly that boards

are not allowed to run deficits. So now, without this reimbursement, with a deficit of \$61 million and the government's refusal to fund properly our schools and students, it is going to result in more cuts to staff, more cuts to programs, larger class sizes, unable to address the violence that we're seeing increase in our schools, no support for students with special needs, no mental health supports—in fact, the Girls' Government group yesterday came here to Queen's Park asking for more mental health supports in our schools—and so on.

This bill, inappropriately titled Better Schools and Student Outcomes, does really nothing meaningful in order to support our students, in order to support the teachers, the education workers, the school community and families.

I hope that I get an opportunity—I don't have much time left—to present our solutions and also talk about the direction that this government is heading in with this bill, because, really, in a nutshell, it is a power grab. It's a power grab that allows the province to override local democratically elected school boards.

I can see where the government is heading with this, and it raises serious questions. I want to ask the government: Is your intention to appoint people to run our school boards? Is that where this is ultimately leading?

Speaker, I cannot stress enough in the remaining seconds that I have, if we want better schools and student outcomes, fund our schools and students properly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions?

**Mr. Rick Byers:** I thank the member for her comments.

I appreciate the thoughts on school boards and a lot of the elements involved in this bill, but I want to comment that our government prioritizes growth and we've made significant progress in expanding educational infrastructure, including schools, teachers and child care facilities, to meet the growing needs of our communities. Our track record has been very positive. We've generated momentum and created opportunities for students and families in Ontario. This bill, if passed, will further promote growth and provide even more opportunities for students and families across the province.

My question to the member is, will you take these factors into consideration as you consider whether to support this legislation?

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** I'd like to thank the member for his question. Don't get me wrong; capital projects are absolutely important and needed, especially where there are communities that need schools. However, there's also no money allocated in the budget for school repairs. Now, I can tell you, speaking as a representative from Toronto, we have many schools that are old, over 100 years old. The school repair backlog in this province is at over \$16 billion. We have kids who go to school who need to wear a coat in the winter to learn. We have schools where kids can't drink the water from the fountains because it has lead. We have kids who go to school and can't use the washrooms because the door locks are broken. This is the state of many, many schools, and we need the government to invest in repairing the infrastructure so that kids are not learning in crumbling schools.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Next question?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I asked this question this morning to the Conservative side, so I think it's fair and reasonable to ask it to the NDP side: This bill states right in the title that it wants to achieve better outcomes for students. Right now in Niagara, 16 schools can't operate their nutrition program. The program and the kids are going hungry because this government hasn't increased funding as food prices skyrocket like in every other province in Canada.

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Does the member think that hungry children perform well at school?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Thank you to my colleague from Niagara Falls for his question. I have to say, the member has been such a strong advocate for the students, the teachers and education workers and the school community of Niagara Falls, so thank you for your work on that.

To answer his question, absolutely not. When kids go hungry, they are not going to be able to learn but they're not going to be able to do anything, because that is all that the student physically—and it has an impact mentally as well. It's going to overtake them, in terms of the need for the students. It's so important, and we have to take a number of different measures, from ensuring that school nutrition programs are well funded and run and in place in every school for every student that needs them, but also that the families are not living in poverty, that they're not being—not only where the cost of living is increasing, but prices of basic things like groceries are being gouged. Rents are through the roof. On so many fronts, it has been so difficult to keep a roof over your head, to feed your children, and now, with the government taking away student nutrition funding, you are not going to get better outcomes—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

Further questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Very quickly: The vast majority of teachers in this province are outstanding, but there are always a few bad apples in the barrel. We think that there should be accountability. So my question to the member is, does she believe there should be accountability?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Speaker, I believe that accountability needs to happen everywhere there is power involved, and I think it would be a great example if the government led the way and showed accountability.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's an honour for me to rise and add the voices of the great people of London North Centre to debate on this bill that we have on the floor today, Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act.

The first thing, like the member for Parkdale–High Park, that I would like to focus on is the title itself. The title, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, clearly puts students as secondary. They're not even at the beginning of the title of this bill—and it's not even about students; it's about outcomes.

When you take a look at this bill, it's very clear that the well-being of students in Ontario is not a concern for this government. Had that been a concern for this government, there would have been collaboration. There would have been communication. There would have been consultation with the people who know students best. Those include education staff, parents. But instead, we have not seen any consultation. We've seen that this government has bullied forward with this piece of legislation, and there will be consultation after the fact, which makes it a mere exercise for the actual democratic process.

This is also what some would say is a smoke-and-mirrors exercise for a government that refuses to properly fix or fund the education system. It's hard for people in the province to trust this government. Since 2018, we have seen tremendous attacks and cuts on our schools. In 2018, there was the overt attack on the health and phys ed curriculum. We saw the government set up a snitch line. We saw a bogus consultation process, and we also see a shell game that they have enacted with privatization of education, quite frankly, making sure that private schools had the rapid COVID tests before our publicly funded schools.

So the public is really less likely to trust this government as being the protectors of public education, because they also decided to launch this legislation as a surprise attack on a Sunday.

ETFO correctly points out that this was the second time in two days that ETFO was caught off guard by Ministry of Education announcements, demonstrating clear lack of consideration and respect for education stakeholders. OSSTF's Karen Littlewood said that this legislation "has very little in terms of supports or resources for students, despite its misleading title.... This legislation seems primarily focused on how school boards operate, and not how on we can better support students and make up for the learning loss experienced during the pandemic."

This legislation, Speaker, sees students used as pawns.

Mental health shows up a total of four times in this bill, and it's only in terms of policies and guidelines; it's not in terms of actually making sure mental health supports are there for our students when and where they need them. Despite the claims of this government, it is not in the bill.

The Ontario Public School Boards Association, in the pre-budget consultations stated, "A continued increase in the number of school-based mental health professionals (social workers, psychologists, guidance councillors, child and youth workers, school mental health workers) to address the significant increase in the number and severity of students requiring support," yet we don't see the government funding this properly.

And from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association, Barb Dobrowski says, "Since coming to office in 2018, the government's agenda has been gutted by ideology rather than evidence. Policy decisions have been made with little thought, foresight or genuine consultation with stakeholders and experts, the consequences of which have been to destabilize public services. Enough is enough."

Barb also goes on to state, “misleading statements that government officials offer in public, like when they claim to be making historic investments in education while conveniently ignoring that funding does not keep up with inflation”—it’s shocking, Speaker. We see this very calculated, very concerted shell game. We hear the government claim that they’re making tremendous investment, but yet we actually see funding going down. We see that students are now receiving \$1,200 less per year, per student, because of this government’s cuts.

We heard at the standing committee in the pre-budget consultations that this government is also trying to create a crisis in education. Everyone remembers back when John Snobelen was caught on a hot mike saying that they needed to create a crisis in education, and the same is true now. This bill purports to refocus Ontario’s education system, but we don’t need a refocus. We need to make sure that schools have the resources that they need. In the government’s own materials, they contradict themselves. They state that Ontario is among the top-performing education systems nationally and internationally, and then they go on to say that they want to overhaul the system. It’s disturbing, Speaker.

I also want to return to some of the focuses of this bill, because this bill does seem to focus—or the government will claim this bill focuses on trades and apprenticeships, when it doesn’t get pointed out in the bill frequently or at all, and remind this government that it was the Mike Harris government that ripped trades classes out of schools. They destroyed that program so that grade 7 and grade 8 students would have that experience of working with their hands, of understanding that this was a viable and very rewarding experience, to build, to create. And it was continued by the Liberals, because that was never returned to schools. That is a loss. Expecting students that are going to be exposed to this in high school—it’s too late; it’s too late, Speaker. Students often are faced with a choice. They choose arts or music or trades as one of their electives. It’s incredibly unfortunate.

But also, this government seems to undermine the very nature of what education is itself. I’d like to also consider that in the creation of Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, this government has not even abided by the skills that students need in Ontario’s classrooms. We hear a lot about leadership, about collaboration, about communication and critical thinking, and this government has displayed none of those things. They have not communicated. They have not collaborated. They haven’t even shown critical thinking by talking to the very experts in education. Instead, they’re bulldozing forward with their plan.

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David Moscrop from TVO says that the government is hoping to “reshape the province’s education plan, gearing it toward ideas that are more reminiscent of plans for an early 20th-century ... factory than a contemporary society.” He also goes on to talk about the immortal poet William Butler Yeats, who is frequently cited in education circles, who stated that education was not the act of filling

a bucket, but of lighting a fire. It’s about inspiration. It is about showing students what is possible. It is about igniting curiosity and showing them the skills that they have. As a former educator myself—a teacher librarian, in fact—I could see the difference: When you could get the right book into a student’s hand, it would change their life.

It’s just incredibly shocking that this government is bulldozing ahead with this without any real consultation, any real collaboration. They simply don’t understand what’s necessary.

The members from Niagara Falls and from St. Catharines have talked about the students going hungry because of this government not funding school nutrition programs. We’ve seen it in the London area as well. In London and Middlesex county, there’s a program, the Ontario Student Nutrition Program, which feeds 25,000 students at 89 schools weekly. They’ve seen an overall increase of 900 students and four schools over the previous academic year. Not only that, Danielle Findlay, who’s one of the organizers of the program, pegs the cost of a healthy snack around \$2.50 per student. Do you know what the province pays, Speaker? Just 75 cents.

Just to conclude, I want to again, in the brief time I have, return to the words of David Moscrop, who says, “The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act should be thrown into the wastebasket and forgotten, and the government should take its boot off the neck of local school boards. If the government wishes to improve education, it can spend more on teachers and reduce class sizes. That’s a fine way to make space for learning that will pay all sorts of dividends to a free and democratic society.”

Speaker, this ham-handed, lacklustre, ineffective way of addressing the crisis in our education system is shown in Bill 98. We need more mental health care workers in schools. We need to address violence in schools. For heaven’s sake, Speaker, Bill 98 does not mention violence once, and we know it is something that is happening everywhere.

It’s time for this government to put on its big-boy pants, and to do the right thing and fund education properly.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):**  
Questions?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you for the comments that you made. I have a question for you with respect to mental health and addictions. Do you believe that treatment should be taking place in the schools? If not in the schools, should it be taking place in the community?

This government put forward \$425 million to be spent on mental health and addictions, to address the issues of mental health, not just of adults but also of children and youth. How do you feel about that? Should we be spending more time, more energy and more money in the school system to provide these treatments, or should the treatments be taking place in the community, where they should properly be taken care of?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** In my time as an educator, I remember when we would hear over the PA system a code yellow. A code yellow is when the teachers are meant to lock their doors because there is a threat in the hallway.

Then, what every student in those classes would hear is a child being dragged from the school, kicking and screaming and swearing and yelling. It was not that child's fault. That child was clearly not getting the assistance they needed. However, it affected everyone in the school.

Schools are places where there should be a social worker who can deal with folks. Kids need help, and we need to make sure they get it when and where they need it. Part of that solution is in schools. For this government to wash its hands and to claim that there are going to be services in the community is yet another finger-pointing exercise where this government does not want to fund education properly.

Yesterday, the member from Burlington talked about all of the mental health care workers in school. I would suggest to the associate minister that they talk to their own member, and make sure that they get that clarity of message and actually deliver what they promise.

**The Acting Speaker (M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sarah Jama:** Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank my colleague from London North Centre for his contribution to today's debate. The member mentioned failures around the ways this bill addresses consultation of students, labour and stakeholders. My question is this: What are some of the proper and ethical ways consultation can look like to you?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It's an excellent question, to my colleague from Hamilton Centre. Collaboration and consultation can take many forms. There's an opportunity in this digital age for people to not only respond to online surveys; there are opportunities for people to communicate via telephone, via email.

But the government can also travel and discuss with relevant stakeholders. In fact, we discussed the pre-budget submissions with the government. The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs travelled the province. We heard from many education stakeholders who talked about the violence in the classroom. They talked about the cuts in funding that have been experienced under this Ford government.

Quite frankly, it's disturbing to see how this government has turned a blind eye to all of the cuts they have made, all while patting themselves on the back for the shell game of federal funding in the form of child care, as the member from Parkdale-High Park has pointed out. It's really disturbing that this government has really short-changed Ontario families and Ontario students. Students are worth it. Education is an investment, not a cost.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my colleague for his comments on the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act. He was referring to having the proper books and the proper curriculum for our students, and I couldn't agree more, Speaker. I know our government is really taking a serious look at that in updating the curriculum. Under the previous Liberal government, unfortunately, they chose not to do that, and so when our government formed our

first government in 2018, I know our Minister of Education made that a top priority.

And so we are now legislating this review of curriculum, implementing a mandatory curriculum review process: no fewer than three years, no matter who the government is, no matter who the minister is. Does the member opposite support that, and will they support this bill?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** If it were such a priority for this government to overhaul the curriculum, it's a mystery to me why it took five years.

But what I want to get into this government's ear—and I want them to listen to it, and I would hope that they understand, Speaker—is the problem with the funding formula. The funding formula in this province distributes money as if students are the same. It's a cookie-cutter model whereby they all receive the same amount of money, and then purses of money are given to school boards with the hope that they're going to be spent on special education. Even if they are spent on a student, there's no guarantee that they'll be spent in a developmentally appropriate way. There are no guarantees.

The NDP has long advocated for an overhaul of the funding formula, such that this government does the right thing, is accountable, is responsible and makes sure that that funding gets out the door to that student, who needs it, in a way that is appropriate. That's on the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I want to talk about education, as we are doing today, but I also want to talk about the other schools that we are not talking about, which are provincial demonstration schools: the Amethyst school and the Robarts School for the Deaf.

The member just talked about the funding formula and how underfunded the provincial demonstration schools are. He talked about the fact that this bill only contains four mentions of mental health, but no services or resources or funding attached to that. Can the member talk about how mental health services and many other services are affecting the lack of funding for provincial demonstration schools in our province?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from London-Fanshawe for her comments about the Robarts school. You're absolutely right: Provincial and demonstration schools have long been ignored and underfunded by this government. In fact, one of the schools that I was mentioning in the school nutrition program actually was Robarts school.

In terms of mental health funding, OECTA has pointed out that in the 2022-23 GSN documents, they "indicate a \$38-million increase in the Mental Health and Well-Being Grant over the previous year's total," but that figure, as they state, "is deceptive. In reality, \$25 million (or 65%) of this increase is not new funding—the government has simply moved into the GSNs monies that had previously been allocated under Priorities and Partnership Funding..."

Again, we see this government taking credit for other people's money or pretending old money is new money.

It's a shell game. It's deceptive. It's not fair to students. I urge the government to actually listen to the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Office—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

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**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** As I said earlier, and I'll say again, the vast majority of teachers in this province are excellent and awesome and do a great job. I want to call out especially the fantastic teachers at école Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Amherstburg, Ontario.

As we all know, there are always a few bad apples in the barrel. Part of this bill increases accountability. We in the PC caucus believe that accountability for the education system is very important, particularly since it's paid for by the parents in this province. So we think accountability for teachers is important, especially to maintain the professionalism of the profession of teaching, and also for the protection of children. Why doesn't the NDP agree?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** To the member from Essex: I can absolutely agree that Ontario has excellent educators who are dedicated to student and understand the students' needs. It's unfortunate that in the creation of this legislation this government completely ignored the voices of the professionals, of the people who are on the front lines. We see this time and again. We see that this government ignored health care workers when they created Bill 124. We see that they're ignoring education workers and education staff when they created Bill 98.

What also concerns me, Speaker, is that this could just be a smokescreen for yet another land grab. We've seen this happen before, in Bill 23, which is a way to monetize the greenbelt for only certain folks. We see, in Bill 69, the Reducing Inefficiencies Act, the government also grabbing hold of real estate rights. And we see it yet again in Bill 98. This is a government that thinks "father knows best," and they want to dictate to everyone how they should operate.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Their own member said that money given to school boards is not divided appropriately. He knows that the Ministry of Education provides money to the school boards and they divide it based on priorities. He was also an educator so I imagine he would know this. He also claimed a few other things in his speech. Some of the things he claimed in his speech actually addressed section 7. I want to ask him, did he read section 7? Does he support at least section 7 of the bill, or had he not looked into the actual clauses of section 7 of the bill?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Barrie-Innisfil for her comments. It's good to know she was also on the front lines as an educator. I think it's important and I hope that she does also recognize the issues that are apparent with the funding formula and the way in which student mental health has been ignored in the province of Ontario.

We've seen in Ontario's classrooms how educational assistants are provided to schools in a way that makes no

sense. First of all, the money that the government gives to school boards for special education, the school board has to also add to that tens of millions of dollars. Frequently educational assistants will often be shared—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you to member from London North Centre. Further debate?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking Ontario's Minister of Education and, of course, the parliamentary assistant to the minister for all the work that they've put into improving public education for hard-working families across the province.

I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of this proposed legislation. Some of my colleagues across from the government benches will know that for a period of time I was the education critic for the official opposition during Kathleen Wynne's Liberal government. I enjoyed that period of time because there was lots to criticize, lots to offer suggestions about, some of which have found their way into the bill that we're debating today. That's a good thing. That's a very positive thing going forward.

After more than a decade and a half of the previous Liberal government, which closed over 600 schools—just stay with that figure; 600 schools—across our great province, and as part of closing those schools, one of the things they didn't do is consult with the communities. Our deputy House leader is agreeing with that because she knows that. She was at Queen's Park then. We know that there wasn't a level of consultation—not one level—with hard-working families across the province on the closing of 600 schools and the effect of that on their local economies. Can you believe that? But that's what happened.

There's a difference with this government, isn't there? There's a difference with this government because we're listening to parents and we're investing \$15 billion over 10 years to build new schools, some of which are in my riding; improve existing educational facilities; and, important for hard-working families, create new child care spaces.

I also commend the Minister of Education for taking action to ensure that Ontario schools like Willows Walk—and you'll know where that is in Whitby; that's just a little bit east of Anderson Street in Whitby—and Father Leo J. Austin in Whitby are safe and welcoming learning centres, as they should be for all students, and for updating the curriculum so it does a better job of matching to the needs of the modern economy and labour market.

But what does that mean, exactly? Well, it means more math, more science and a greater emphasis on lucrative and dignified careers in the skilled trades. I'm proud of this minister and this government for driving transformational change in public education. There's no question, absolutely no question that this government is delivering for hard-working families in Whitby and across the province. Millions of dollars have been invested in Whitby to construct or refurbish new schools.

But there's only so much you can accomplish without comprehensive and effective reforms. If passed, the Better

Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023, would legislate reforms under four statutes: the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, the Early Childhood Educators Act and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. This bill includes a number of critically important reforms, and we're debating them today because parents and taxpayers deserve greater transparency and accountability and young people deserve better academic outcomes.

Speaker, our legislation is increasing accountability by giving parents new tools to navigate and understand the education system while establishing basic qualifications for directors of education. Additionally, the minister will now be able to establish key priorities to ensure students have the skills and knowledge they need, especially in areas such as reading, writing and math.

Our government's legislation will enact over 20 key recommendations across five themed categories, including accountability and transparency; governance and leadership; maximizing capital assets; teacher training and oversight; and consistent information and approaches to student learning. You'll know, Speaker, from your own practical experience before coming to Queen's Park, the importance of all of what I just stated, understanding the impacts of these changes.

While the parents in Whitby are understandably interested primarily in how this bill will improve their children's education at the grassroots level, I'd like to take some time to discuss some of the improvements our bill will make to governance and leadership within school boards.

**1400**

Excuse me, Speaker. I'm just going to take a little bit of water.

I think we can all agree, particularly on this side of the House, and my members over there as well—

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** This side too.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I was coming there.

I think we can all agree that disputes among school board trustees are costly and time-consuming. I think we've seen examples of that across the province, haven't we? They erode public confidence and deflect attention away from their primary duties of promoting student achievement. Moreover, considering that approximately 700 trustees provide governance over a high-profile, high-impact \$27-billion education system, it's a little surprising to hear that trustees lack a consistent set of qualifications, training and, importantly, even a standard code of conduct.

Elected trustees perform an incredibly valuable service to parents and taxpayers by holding school boards accountable and ensuring that tax dollars are well spent. For that reason, we need to ensure that all trustees within the province of Ontario have the knowledge and skills required to perform their duties and that their conduct is held to provincial standards.

The vast majority of elected trustees are diligent, dedicated and altruistic public servants who care about education and the people they serve. But in recent years, the media has reported numerous incidents of trustees who treated parents less than respectfully and even said things that were completely unacceptable.

To quote from the 1994 Royal Commission on Learning that was established by Bob Rae's NDP government and co-chaired by a former federal Liberal cabinet minister—I'm going to interrupt the quote, Speaker, by saying I move that the question now be put.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Mr. Coe has moved that the question now be put. There has been approximately nine hours of debate on this bill. I'm satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*Vote deferred.*

HELPING HOMEBUYERS,  
PROTECTING TENANTS ACT, 2023  
LOI DE 2023  
VISANT À AIDER LES ACHETEURS  
ET À PROTÉGER LES LOCATAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 18, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing and development / Projet de loi 97, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I rise to speak to Bill 97, the government's latest housing bill. And I want to begin by saying we are in a housing crisis. It's getting worse, not better. It's unacceptable that it now takes a young person 22 years to save to buy a home; that it takes the average minimum-wage worker in the city of Toronto to work 80 hours to afford a one-bedroom apartment; that there are no affordable apartments in many cities across the province, including the one I represent, that a minimum-wage worker can actually find to rent; and 185,000 families on a wait-list to access social housing.

So we have a housing crisis, but sprawl will not solve that crisis, because sprawl is too financially expensive to solve the crisis. This government started their sprawl agenda by opening the greenbelt for development, breaking an explicit promise not to do it. They made changes to the Planning Act, dismantling environmental protections to facilitate sprawl, but now, Bill 97 completely opens the floodgates to it by eliminating the provincial policy statement requirement that municipalities prioritize infill development before resorting to expansion of urban boundaries into farms and forests. Think about that, Speaker.

The bill makes it easier to expand boundaries at any time, instead of a more coordinated approach to land use



planning, like places in Waterloo have done, with the support of farmers to make sure that we protect the local farmland that contributes so much to the economy. The bill gets rid of some of the key hard density targets previously included in planning documents. It consolidates the provincial policy statement and the growth plan, just assuming that a one-size-fits-all solution works for the whole province, which just isn't the case—the challenges in the GTA are much different than in Windsor, Ottawa or Thunder Bay—and it further empowers the minister to override environmental protections in planning policy through the use of ministerial zoning orders on steroids.

So Speaker, people and municipalities simply cannot afford this bill. I don't see how the government can consider themselves fiscally responsible in any way and support this sprawl agenda. Studies show that it costs two and a half times more to service a home for a municipality through sprawl development versus through building within existing urban boundaries. It's \$3,462 to service a home for sprawl; \$1,416 within existing urban boundaries. A study in Ottawa showed that it's costing the people of Ottawa an extra \$465 per taxpayer to service sprawl development in the region versus non-sprawl development. As a matter of fact, homes built within just even gentle density actually save taxpayers money. Not only do they pay for themselves, they also generate an additional \$606 per taxpayer to be used to serve city services, to fund them.

Municipalities can't afford this bill. So it's actually going to delay housing, because they're not going to have the money and the resources to be able to build the sewer mains, the water mains, the roads, the hydro lines, all the things that it takes to actually make a home livable. People can't afford it. Young families can't afford to be forced to drive until they qualify for a mortgage. People want to live in affordable communities where they can afford to buy a home close to where they work, in places where they can live, work and play.

That's why we need solutions that get past this expensive sprawl agenda that gets us beyond this false choice between tall and sprawl, solutions that allow us to build the housing supply we need while protecting the farmland that feeds us, that contributes \$50 billion to the provincial economy and employs over 800,000 Ontarians; solutions that allow us to build homes without paving over the wetlands that clean our drinking water, protect us from flooding, and the forests and the green spaces where so many people love to spend time with their families but that also protect us from extreme weather events.

That's exactly why I've put forward solutions like Bill 44 and Bill 45, which would allow us to build 1.5 million homes within existing urban boundaries in ways that are actually affordable for municipalities—the kinds of homes that are actually affordable for people. That's why we've put forward solutions to get speculation out of the housing market so that homes can be for people and not speculators, and it's why we've been calling on this government to actually start investing in non-profit and co-op housing.

At one time in Canada, we would build 20,000 co-op houses a year. Now, we hardly build any. Those are the deeply affordable homes within existing communities that provide the gentle density and missing middle that allow us to build affordable connected communities that people actually want to live in, not the sprawl that people cannot afford.

1410

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I'm really glad to hear that the member acknowledges that we have a massive housing supply crisis.

I chose Ontario as my home when I immigrated to Canada. I chose to be here.

I just have a very short question: Based on what we put forward in Bill 97, will the member be supporting Bill 97, helping tenants and helping people purchase their homes?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I cannot support a bill that's going to make the housing crisis worse. We already have enough land set aside for development, according to the government's own hand-picked Housing Affordability Task Force, to build two million homes—not just the 1.5 million, but two million homes. And if we do it within our existing urban boundaries—instead of imposing sprawl on municipalities, which this bill does—it will be more affordable for municipalities.

I don't understand; I thought Conservative members understood fiscal responsibility and understood why it is so important to efficiently build within existing urban boundaries.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, we know that with new development there comes infrastructure costs: roads, transit, water, sewer infrastructure, community centres, fire and police services, as well, and facilities. The member talks about that the cost of infrastructure to build on sprawl is two and a half times more than building homes within urban boundaries. London is going to lose \$100 million in development charges because of this bill that the government wants to push through. Can the member speak to how much development charges will be lost in his riding and how municipalities are supposed to make up that income loss?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** So if you take this bill combined with Bill 23—Bill 23 takes development charges away from municipalities, the very development charges that are needed to fund the infrastructure that developers need to build the homes we need. This bill takes it to a whole other level by imposing sprawl on municipalities, Speaker. It costs—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** No, it's not nonsense. The whole bill is about sprawl. It costs \$3,400 for a municipality to service a sprawl-built home. It costs \$1,400—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Ask me about it in the Q&A, please. We'll talk about it. It costs \$1,400 to service a

home within existing urban boundaries. That's just the math. We know it's cheaper. We have to choose the most affordable way of building homes, especially when we're in a cost-of-living crisis and a housing affordability crisis. This is about fiscal—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

Further questions?

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Thank you for the presentation of the member. We believe that this issue is much bigger than only the province. We strongly believe that the federal government should be at the table to address the issue, and we continue to advocate for a fair share of the federal funding to build houses.

Currently, housing needs—44% of them are in Ontario, which is the highest in the country. Now, the federal government's share should be 44%, but they are contributing 38%, which puts Ontario in around a \$480-million shortfall. Will the member support us and call on the federal government to bring its own fair share of the contribution?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I will support working across party lines to call on the federal government to provide their fair share, no doubt about it. I'm also going to stand here, though, and challenge the current government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** No, come on. Just be with me for a second here. The Ontario government used to put money on the table to build non-profit and co-op housing, and the federal government used to. The federal government stopped doing it, and they need to be held accountable for it, and the provincial government stopped doing it. The Liberal government, over the last 15 years, didn't bring that money back. The Conservative government, over the last five years, hasn't brought that money back. We need money to support co-op and non-profit housing, federal and provincial.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I'm delighted to speak to the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, because there's so much of this bill that I see reflected in my home community. I'd say that my journey starts in Walkerville. Walkerville is an incredibly vibrant and picturesque part of my riding. It was built as a company town by Hiram Walker and Sons Ltd. It's the home of Canadian Club whisky.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Yes. For being a company town, really, it is downright beautiful. Wyandotte Street is vibrant with restaurants and stores. The residential streets are lined with majestic trees and large heritage landmarks, like Willistead Manor. Willistead Park is home to the Rotary Club of Windsor (1918)'s Art in the Park every Mother's Day weekend. Usually you can count on rain falling at Art in the Park every year—it just seems to happen that way—but it is a phenomenal event. I encourage all members to drop down our way to see that event.

But in so many ways, Walkerville—I call it a gold standard for urban planning. It's a place where people really want to be, and so the vibrancy and the longevity of Walkerville is, in many ways, facilitated by not just Bill 97, but previously Bill 23.

I want to highlight my friend Sarah Cipkar. I first met Sarah when I worked for the city of Windsor. I led the environmental assessment process for a project called the Central Box. Sarah, to her credit, was thinking of how my presentation, the municipal presentation, was not serving our various immigrant communities very well. I didn't have translators, I didn't have facilitators, and she took it on herself to create her own at the YMCA, which I attended. I was surrounded by a number of translators as I described the technical merits of the environmental assessment. But what Sarah has done with her career is phenomenal. She created Cipkar Development, which creates additional dwelling units in places like Walkerville which have back alleys and which have additional space where there's a density, but we have the capacity to improve.

Another feature that exists in Walkerville is an absence of driveways on many of the streets. The services are provided through the alleys, and so street parking is vitally important, in particular parallel parking. I know that's how I failed my first driving test, but it's certainly important in some neighbourhoods like Walkerville, where parallel parking is the norm.

This bill, Bill 97, provides some good clarity with respect to parking improvements or parking regulations that are required, because previously it was not quite clear whether you could insist on that parking spot on the very first unit. Now, with the changes here, it means you don't have to add unnecessary parking. Walkerville has parking on the street, and that's the character of it, and while certainly you need to provide services for the people of the neighbourhood and access for them, parking doesn't have to dominate the yard under this change. So I think this is a great part of the bill.

I also want to call attention to recent developments in Walkerville near Ottawa Street. There was formerly a church located there. Ottawa Street is what's branded by the local BIA as being "uptown." I think it's a good adage, because there are a lot of great stores, great restaurants on Ottawa Street. This church had reached the end of life. It no longer met building code requirements, and so it came down and was demolished. Initially, there was a proposal to build three homes on the property. Instead, what came back was a proposal to build a 23-unit apartment building. I won't get into the merits of three single-family units versus a 23-unit apartment building, but needless to say, there were many in the community who were against the proposal.

**1420**

To their credit, Windsor city council did support, as they have for a number of recent housing projects. We do need those units in our community as much as possible, and Windsor was ahead of the curve in many ways. They had a community-approved plan for intensification for the downtown especially so that we could use the infill lands.

But what Windsor has reported with some—in one of our previous bills, prior to my election, the More Homes for Everyone Act, there were some accountability measures brought in. Some relief was asked for, because truly, you need to get people on board. You need to hire people and train people in order to process the applications. Bill 97 responds to this challenge, delivers. It means that the refunds of—I call it a noncompliant timeline for processing. They would only apply after July 1.

It's proposed further that the minister have the ability to be nimble in granting some exceptions on this point and exempt municipalities from having to follow through with the fee refund if there was some particular factor that warrants it.

Also, what's part of this is an opportunity to reduce the complications when we are creating residential buildings of 10 units or less. Right now, in planning, you can go to site plan control in many municipalities which allows the municipality to regulate landscaping, architectural materials and ask for on-site improvements to reflect the character of the neighbourhood.

Just having been on the other side of that process, this is something that does slow down development. There are reasons for it. Obviously, the site plan control existed for a reason. But if our goal is building housing, buildings that are 10 units or less are really not imposing in the manner of a larger building, and it's important to make sure that those can come online.

I say that's the story of generally Bill 97 as a whole, because our goal is to build more housing and on a faster basis. We are finding there are roadblocks. When we strive for the moon and really have tough targets, it means that we lose the opportunity to get some low-hanging fruit. So I really appreciate some of the changes that are here, and that includes having the minister's intervention.

Before the last election, in my riding we had the NextStar Energy battery plant. It truly required an MZO. When I heard the criticism from various party leaders about the use of the MZO to secure this major economic development opportunity for our community, what else could I do? I was grateful to be the candidate representing the government, because this development is vital. The news came out today about Volkswagen in St. Thomas. That's going to be transformative for St. Thomas, but the NextStar project is transformative for Windsor. We need the minister to have that ability to make discretionary decisions when it fits, so I appreciate that part of it.

I also wanted to review a little bit about the employment area protections; I know it's important, and I see my time is running very, very low. But we want to make sure that employment areas are protected because many municipalities are running into problems with the factories not finding an opportunity to locate. But housing is still quite important. We are, as part of this, introducing the provisions that limit appeals of municipal refusals and non-decisions.

All that being said, I also wanted to—maybe I'll close out by mentioning my hometown of Tecumseh. It has some rural areas in it. I was on the committee of adjustment for eight years. We constantly got lot severance and

variance applications in rural areas. There was this interesting dynamic that was created where you could sever off a matrimonial home or a family home, and you would rezone the rest so that you wouldn't use up the farmland. But someone else could actually come in and then do that, so the family couldn't do it but someone else could. So the changes that are here in Bill 97 provide more flexibility for rural areas and to allow for families that hope and that opportunity to continue to serve and work the lands that they grew up on.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My riding directly abuts the member for Windsor–Tecumseh's riding. In fact, the only thing that divides us, on the north side of Tecumseh Road, is half a street. Langlois is the divider. So I'm quite familiar with the area, Walkerville, that he's talking about, and there are many historic homes that are in that—of heritage significance for our community.

But if you take a short walk—and I encourage the member for Windsor–Tecumseh to come for a walk with me—into my riding, it takes maybe 10 or 15 minutes, depending on where you are in Walkerville, to walk into where my riding begins in downtown Windsor. There you see right in front of you very clearly the problem with this government's policies. This is where you see the largest homeless population in Windsor in my riding downtown, and we have issues in the west end too.

So I'm asking the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, do you support rent control for all residential rental units, and why does your government refuse to commit to bringing back vacancy decontrol to protect the affordable units in our shared community?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Really, the changes do protect renters here. I look at the additional 40 adjudicators who are being hired for the landlord and tenant tribunal. I'm sure the member for Windsor West is getting the same calls that I am about landlord/tenant issues in that there is a significant backlog that was created—or largely amplified during the pandemic. So this is quite a more meaningful investment at this moment in time. It doubles the number of full-time adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board. We need decisions. A lot of renters are losing out—and landlords, for that matter, for bad tenants. So this is a key investment that will help renters. I thank you for the question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I want to ask this question—and probably for the benefit for the member from Guelph—because I live just outside of Smiths Falls, have farmland outside of Smiths Falls. Do you know what? If you go past my farm a little piece, do you know what you see in a big field? “Welcome to Ottawa.” Well, you're still about 60 kilometres from Ottawa. So that's a problem for a farmer who has a son or daughter who wants to take over the farm and wants to reside in the community they grew up and in the community where they want to remain and perhaps take over the farm.

So my question for the member from Windsor–Tecumseh is, what is this bill doing for rural development?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Really, rural communities are vital. I'm sure your communities have seen it in your riding, where we've seen a drain in population. Part of that is the opportunity to have, I would say, the life they're looking for, whether it's career-wise or the type of homes. If the family does want to stay together, if the areas around you are not allowing for homes to be built nearby so that the family can stay together, this is something that limits the opportunity that we have for rural Ontario. So what this bill does is it brings forward a couple of reviews to the provincial policies. It invokes the opening up of some areas. It's been described, maybe a bit derisively, as sprawl, but it is making complete communities in rural Ontario and ensuring that families can stay together.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** The government should take the advice of the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force, which said, "A shortage of land isn't the cause of the problem." We don't need to sacrifice farmland—of which we're getting rid of 319 acres a day, prime farmland—or the greenbelt to build housing. We need to focus on building new homes within existing urban boundaries instead of paving over more farmlands, wetlands, natural heritage with unsustainable urban sprawl that makes land speculators rich, but drives up housing costs and taxes in municipalities.

1430

My question is very easy: Do you agree with Premier Ford that we should be building million-dollar homes on the greenbelt?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I thank the member for his question. I'd return to my hometown, where the future of our municipality is actually set for what is presently farmland, but it's been zoned as residential for many years—or at least it has been in the official plan. Municipalities actually have a 20-year horizon for planning for the future, so we already know where a lot of these developments are being mapped out.

Families need a place to live. What I experienced in my municipality is school closures because of the empty-nesting. We have families where the parents are staying in their home but the kids are moving out and they can't find something close by, so the services are being depleted, especially in rural and suburban communities. We need to ensure that we have homes built where they are serving families together.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Madam Speaker, we all know that the purchase of a home is probably one of the largest purchases that people will make in their lifetime. When you're embarking on that purchase, especially as a young person, you embark on that purchase with excitement, but also trepidation, because it involves a lot of money and it's probably the first major purchase you've made in your entire lifetime.

I know that this government is taking steps to protect homebuyers and to make sure that that trepidation and that excitement can be controlled, protecting homebuyers to make sure that the home-purchasing experience is safe. And so, I would like to ask the member from Windsor–Tecumseh: What measures are being taken by this government to protect homebuyers in the biggest purchase they'll probably ever make in their entire lifetime?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member from Essex for his question. Interestingly enough, my very first home, which I purchased at \$205,900, was just sold for \$615,000, and I think that's only been 12 years since I originally bought it. So it shows the tripling of home costs just in my neighbourhood, and I'm sure that's the case across Ontario. It puts housing out of reach.

Bill 23 brought forward a number of protections, including the strictest and most comprehensive fines for bad actors across Ontario and, really, across Canada. Bill 97 has a cooling-off period on purchases of new freehold homes and a mandatory legal review of purchase agreements for all new home purchases.

Ontarians, and especially young Ontarians and those just starting out, deserve to have peace of mind. It is the largest investment that they're destined to make, and now it's even more difficult than ever before. That's why our government is continuing to work hard to protect the investment of Ontarians against bad actors.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question to the member across the way is around protections for tenants. One of the issues that I hear about most frequently in my constituency office is from tenants who are pressured by their landlords. They feel that they have to move out. The landlords use unethical means to get them to move out, because the landlords know that once that tenant is gone, they can increase the rent to whatever they want.

I also hear from tenants who are living in buildings that were constructed after November 2018. There's absolutely no rent control on those units. So why, if this government was genuinely interested in protecting tenants, did they not do something to scrap vacancy decontrol and to remove the exemption of the rent control for post-2018 builds?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I guess we'll have to have a philosophical difference on what measures are effective. I'll speak a bit selfishly: My wife and I, when we got married, we retained her home, and so now we are landlords to a young family that could not otherwise afford a home on their own. I know there are many, many other landlords out there that just are happy to have someone living in the home and offering that opportunity.

As part of the changes here, there is support for both renters and landlords. I mentioned the adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Really, we have very strict laws; as landlords, there's a singular lease which everyone has to follow. So there is already a standardized process, but really getting through the disputes is taking a long, long time, so that's—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I rise today to speak to Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. This is the government's fourth housing legislation in four years. That means four out of four times the government has failed to address the affordable housing crisis meaningfully and it's taking, once again, the wrong approach to addressing housing supply issues. Now, this bill makes changes on two key fronts: on development policy and on tenant protections. I'll talk about the development policy first and then get to tenant protections.

Speaker, this bill fails to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow construction of more affordable housing options—such as duplexes, townhomes, walk-up apartments—everywhere that single detached homes are allowed. This was a key recommendation from the Housing Affordability Task Force report, and it is an idea that the official opposition, the NDP, supports. It was, in fact, part of our housing platform.

The government's previous housing legislation, Bill 23—the infamous Bill 23—included allowing secondary and tertiary suites as-of-right within existing structures, which we support. But according to the government themselves, they expect that this change will deliver only 50,000 new homes over the next 10 years, which is barely 3% of the 1.5 million homes that are needed. Instead of eliminating exclusionary zoning, Bill 23 preserves restrictive zoning rules like two- or three-storey height limits, maximum floor space indexes or minimum setbacks that effectively prohibit what we call missing middle forms of housing. That bill fell far short of what the Housing Affordability Task Force recommended, and now with this bill, Bill 97, it still does not address the shortcomings.

Instead this bill, once again, relies almost entirely on deregulation and tax cuts to incentivize the for-profit private market to deliver 1.5 million homes over the next decade. Speaker, this narrow-minded approach is failing, and we know it's failing because the government's own budget revealed that the projected housing starts in Ontario are going down instead of going up.

Now we in the NDP, the official opposition, have called for a strong public sector role to deliver new affordable and non-market housing that the for-profit private sector can't or won't deliver. There is no provision in Bill 97 to facilitate new non-market housing. This bill, combined with some major changes that the government is making to the provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the provincial policy statement—what the government is doing is further accelerating farmland loss and unsustainable sprawl.

Speaker, doubling down on sprawl is going to make it so much more expensive for municipalities to provide the basic services that these developments are going to need. From roads and transit to electricity and sewage, all of these services are going to cost more, because it costs more to service low-density single-family-home subdivisions than it costs to provide these services and infrastructure in areas that are already zoned for development.

And since it is much more expensive for municipalities to provide these services, Ontarians are not only going to see property tax hikes—in fact, Speaker, folks all around the province and many municipalities are already getting these higher property tax bills now, but they're going to see the tax hikes year after year, coupled with service cuts, because it is so expensive to build this infrastructure and to maintain the infrastructure. Low-density suburban sprawl is a costly and backward approach to planning. It is not going to address the housing affordability crisis or the housing supply crisis.

**1440**

Let me remind the members of the government once again that the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force said that the 1.5 million homes needed to be built in the next decade can be built within current urban boundaries. There is no need to pave over the greenbelt. There is no need for sprawl. That's what I want to cover on the development policy changes.

In the remaining time I have, I want to get into tenant protections. Now, the tenant protections in this bill fall so short of what the NDP and tenants in this province are calling for. It's like the government knows they have to do more to protect tenants and asked themselves what the least is that they can do that will not disrupt the status quo. That's what the changes are in this bill: the slightest of slight improvements simply to be able to claim that the Conservatives are doing something for tenants.

Speaker, I want to talk about the AC use. That's in this bill. Last summer, in the midst of the heat wave, tenants in my riding at 130 Jameson Avenue in Parkdale received eviction notices for using their ACs. Many leases forbid the use of ACs. Their corporate landlords at 130 Jameson said that AC use is prohibited under lease agreements, so either the AC goes or the tenants have to go.

The Residential Tenancies Act mandates a minimum temperature of 20 degrees during the winter, but there is no law on maximum temperatures. Municipalities in Ontario are asking the province to mandate maximum temperatures, including the city of Toronto. So given that there is no maximum-temperature legislation for protection of tenants, the tenants organize in order to be able to keep using their ACs because, in the hot summer months, this is a serious health and safety issue.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission was very clear. In fact, they issued a statement, and the opening line of their statement read, "Access to cooling during extreme heat waves is a human rights issue." Their statement talked about the obligation of housing providers and specifically referenced the case of the tenants at 130 Jameson. They also stated that the current Residential Tenancies Act "leaves many Ontario tenants without protections against extreme heat" because air conditioning is not considered a vital service.

The Ontario Human Rights Commission called on this government to "include air conditioning as a vital service, like the provision of heat ... and to establish a provincial maximum temperature to make sure that ... tenants are protected against threats of eviction" simply for "using

“safely installed air conditioning units.” That’s the background. This is what has led to what’s in Bill 97 today around AC use.

So what does the Ford government do? They prohibit the ban of AC in leases, which is helpful, but it still puts the onus on the tenants to install their own ACs to ensure that apartments don’t get dangerously hot in the summer, and they’re allowing rents to be increased for installing the AC. That’s why I say that the measures that the government has put in place for tenants fall so short. It does the absolute bare minimum.

It’s also a contradiction of an explicit ban that’s already in the Residential Tenancies Act on the use of seasonal fees. So I will flag with the government right now: When the bill is before committee, there has to be an amendment to ensure that seasonal fee ban continues on and that there are no extra charges for AC use. Just as the Ontario Human Rights Commission has called for, we need maximum-temperature legislation. This will also be consistent with the long-standing, already set-out principle that all tenants have the right to reasonable enjoyment of their unit. The temperature of the unit that they live in is an absolutely important factor.

Speaker, there are some other measures in it. I do not have time to go over all of them. All I want to say at the end of the day, when it comes to housing and tenants, is that housing is a human right, and so we need to be able to ensure that every Ontarian has decent, affordable housing that they can call their own, something that really meets the needs of the tenant.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member for a very compelling speech. I appreciate it very much. I always learn a lot when I’m able to hear from you.

I know, given your neighbourhood, you undoubtedly run into more rental circumstances than I would—I’ve got lots of apartment buildings. I know that we as a government have introduced more penalties for bad landlords and taken action to prevent evictions. This bill has measures that will help to provide better protections to tenants in the province, and I’m wondering if you intend to support the measures that are provided in the bill to strengthen the consequences against bad landlords.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his question. One of the measures I didn’t get time to discuss was the increase in fines for bad landlords when they execute what we call unfair renoventions. The thing is this: So far, increasing fines alone has not proven to be effective. We know that because there have been fines that have been issued, and the behaviour has not changed.

There is a very good example that happened, a case that happened right here in Toronto, where tenants were renovented in bad faith. In an unprecedented manner, a decision was made. The landlords—I forget the name of the corporation right now—received a huge penalty, and then they came into my riding and did the same thing. That did not deter them. We need other measures in place, such

as vacancy control, which I hope I will get an opportunity to talk about some more.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park for her excellent presentation. The city of Toronto has a very robust and, I would say, probably the best rental replacement bylaw in the province, if not the country. It actually goes much further than what the government is proposing in this bill. What do you think is the ramification of weakening rental replacement across the province rather than raising the bar so that everybody meets the city standard in the city of Toronto and exceeds it—but rather, we race to the bottom, as the government is proposing?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I’d like to thank the member from Toronto Centre for their question. Like Parkdale–High Park, Toronto Centre has a very high percentage of our community residents who are tenants, as is the case, I think, generally in Toronto. So here’s this: because we have so many tenants in Toronto and because so many tenants are being unfairly evicted—and, you know what, the government’s own numbers at the Landlord and Tenant Board are evidence of that.

We have seen a huge increase in renoventions, a huge increase in own-use evictions, and now the government is weakening rental replacement bylaws that the city has. What it’s going to lead to is more tenants being evicted unfairly. It’s going to lead to skyrocketing rents. And it’s going to lead to more and more people—particularly young people, young families, students—not being able to call Toronto home anymore. They’re going to all be driven out of Toronto. That’s what is going to end up happening.

1450

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Thank you to the member for her presentation. I know that most of your discussion, because you had limited time—sorry, through the Speaker; she had limited time to make her presentation—was about things that are relevant to the Toronto area. I hope that you will recognize that the vast majority of the geography in this province is not actually in Toronto; it is in the rural area.

I spent 20 years as a municipal representative in the rural area, and I can’t count the number of times that rural landowners—a.k.a. farmers—came to me with a challenge: that the provincial policy statement would specifically exclude them from being able to sever a lot to allow for a son or daughter to take it on, possibly leading to succession. This act starts to solve that. Will you admit that getting this ability is actually a good part of this bill?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I thank the member opposite for his question. I apologize; I don’t remember your riding name right now. I don’t have my cheat sheet.

But here’s the thing: If, truly, in good faith, the government wants to bring in legislation that addresses this question, then yes, we can talk about it. We can look at it and examine it more closely at committee. However, this bill, combined with the major changes that the government is making to the provincial policy statement, is expanding

sprawl, is paving over farmland. I would imagine—and we are hearing from farmers too that they are worried about farmland loss. This bill is accelerating farmland loss.

So I would say to the member that there are tidbits in this bill which are helpful. As I mentioned, there was another one where AC bans are not in leases anymore. There are tidbits that are helpful, but overall this bill fails to address the issues that we are facing around housing affordability and around housing supply.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her presentation on Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act.

We look at the title of this, and it talks about protecting tenants, but I do believe that there are quite a number of pieces missing which actually protect tenants. My question to the member is: If this government truly wanted to support tenants, what would they do?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Thank you to the member from London North Centre. That is an excellent question, because obviously I got a chance to point out how this bill falls short, particularly on tenant protections.

The solution, the proposal, is one that actually has been before the House. Last session, the government actually voted it down. It's a bill that I tabled, called the Rent Stabilization Act. The member from London North Centre was a co-sponsor of this bill. That bill, the Rent Stabilization Act, which has been reintroduced and is before this House this session, will close the biggest loophole in the Residential Tenancies Act, and that's the vacancy decontrol loophole. It will ensure that rent control is tied to the unit and not to the person, meaning new tenants will pay what the previous tenants paid, rents are not allowed to be increased to whatever amount it is, and it will ensure that housing remains affordable.

Speaker, just a couple of days ago, I shared with members of this House how in the High Park neighbourhood, rent for a one-bedroom increased by 46%—46%. Do you think that that is manageable? No one can live with such unpredictable increases to cost of living. It's very important we close the vacancy decontrol loophole.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Madam Speaker, the government has committed itself to building attainable and affordable housing, and has in fact introduced four separate pieces of legislation consecutively towards this goal. I guess we would imagine introducing even more. But rather than introducing their own program, the NDP has only made passing remarks at what they imagine to be, in their plan, a government-run corporation to build homes. But we've never actually heard or even seen the NDP plan to build any homes. So I invite the member to take this opportunity: What does your proposed government-run company look like, and how would your government-run company operate?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** To the member from Essex, I will say probably you haven't seen the NDP plan because you just didn't bother to look for it or take the time to read

it. It's actually our housing platform. It was part of the election. Many, many pieces of that housing platform we have introduced in this House as bills, and we will continue to do so, including our push for a public agency to build affordable non-market homes.

Speaker, I don't have much time, but I will say this: The government's own Housing Affordability Task Force has released a report. Start there—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you to the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Further debate? The member from Mississauga—

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Malton.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Malton.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm so proud of this riding, so you know what? Every time I get a chance to speak about its name, I'm happy to speak—Mississauga–Malton.

Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure—

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you for that. It is a pleasure to rise in the House to support the proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023. Madam Speaker, I want to start by saying this, that when we meet people, the residents, and we ask them, one of the big concerns they always talk about is that housing prices in this province are unaffordable. The supply is an issue. Going to the cities and getting the approvals takes a lot of time. When you put these things together and then government stands and up says, “Oh, we have an ambitious goal that we want to make sure we build 1.5 million homes by 2031,” well, yes, you want to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, but it's not going to magically appear. We have to work for it. We have to do things. We have to make sure the policies are in place and the support is available. That's why, Madam Speaker, we set that goal, because we saw a problem, we saw the pain. The hard-working people of this province were suffering after being priced out of the housing market.

I'll tell you an example. In fact, I was talking to one of my colleagues, a member, and they were saying they had to delay their wedding because they took a decision. They wanted to buy the house and then they're going to get married. Think about that situation. You don't have to delay because you want to buy a house. What if the house is within the affordability?

Madam Speaker, I want to wish him to get married soon, have a family, have children, rather than waiting and hoping that by the time he collects—for some of the young people in this province, it takes 20 years to collect that down payment. By the time it is 20 years from now and he has his first child, it looks as if he's going with the grandfather, not the father. We want to make sure that the young people who want to build a family, to start a family and want to buy a house, have support available. That is why it is important to continuously keep working on the housing bills, and that is what this government is doing.

Let's look at the statistics. Ontario had a pre-existing shortage of 471,000 homes in 2021. In fact, if we look at the report from the University of Ottawa-based Smart

Prosperity Institute, it actually talks about how we need 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. The experts are unanimous: We need to increase the housing supply. And in fact, I would say on the other side I've heard the same thing. We all want to make sure that the housing supply increase happens, and that is why this government started taking action.

As you know, actions speak louder than words. We began with the More Homes, More Choice action plan in 2019, followed by More Homes for Everyone in 2022 and More Homes Built Faster in the same year.

#### 1500

Why are we doing this? We are doing this to make sure there is a policy in place so that we can build those homes faster. You will see that we have already seen the result of these policies.

So what are we doing now? Our proposals in the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act are making sure we're helping tenants, landlords and homebuyers. We're streamlining land-use planning policies. We're speeding up approvals to build homes faster. Speaker, it's not going to happen by itself. To build more houses—we want to make sure—we need to have planning policies that are easier to follow.

Let's take a look at it. At this time, Ontario has a provincial policy statement. At the same time, the greater Golden Horseshoe has a growth plan: A Place to Grow. Why do they have these two policy statements? Because the government of Ontario, Ontario as a whole and the Golden Horseshoe believe that we need to make sure the new immigrants or youth or new families have a place to live, a place to enjoy. The focus is the same, but since we have two policies, we have a different set of rules, making land-use approvals cost more time, more money, and sometimes there's ambiguity.

What are we doing here? Simple: the problem has a solution. For the ease of building more homes, we are proposing a streamlined provincial planning statement that combines the best of both policies.

Speaker, we want a policy that supports growth in large and fast-growing municipalities and allows for more homes to be built in rural areas while balancing the need to protect the environment. Under the proposed policy, the largest and fastest-growing municipalities would be required to plan for growth in major transit station areas and other strategic growth areas so that we can build those homes faster and give the opportunity to our communities to enjoy life.

Furthermore, all municipalities could—and it's not only the large municipalities. We're not only talking about the 29 municipalities. If there is a municipality, we are giving them the option: a choice to decide that they can opt in. They could choose to follow the housing supply policies for more development in their own settlement areas. If a municipality wants to expand its settlement area boundaries, they could do it while balancing the need to minimize the impact on farmland and the environment.

Madam Speaker, as the name of this act suggests to not just build more homes, make more homes affordable and

to protect our renters, we are proposing doubling the maximum fines for offences under the Residential Tenancies Act to \$100,000 for individuals and \$500,000 for the corporations. Why are we doing it? We want to make sure that there are no bad actors utilizing this as an option to impact the renters.

Ontario's fines for the residential tenancy offences are going to be one of the highest in Canada, something which we heard from the other side as well. That's something we can see: We worked together to collaborate to deliver the result that Ontarians need.

Madam Speaker, something which we heard multiple times in the past as well: Some of these landlords are taking advantage when they renovate a unit. Now, if this bill is passed, landlords would be required to provide tenants proof that the unit must be vacant for renovations to take place, update on the status of the renovation in writing and give a 60-day grace period to move back once the renovations are complete. We're doing all this to make sure that the renters have the protection that they need.

Another thing we are doing through this bill is what we heard about the LTB. Our government recognizes the critical independent role that the Landlord and Tenant Board plays in resolving housing-related disputes in Ontario. There was a time when our constituency offices—in fact, all the constituency offices—were receiving the concerns and the complaints about the backlog with the LTB.

What are we doing? For every problem, there is a solution: Our government is making an investment of \$6.5 million, hiring additional staff, hiring additional adjudicators to help both tenants and landlords resolve their grievances. By doing it, we're making sure that the government has its ear to the ground and is listening to the people of Ontario.

We're encouraged to keep pushing forward this direction because the results are showing. Take, for example, Ontario's housing starts. You can see in 2022, even with higher interest rates, even with the uncertainty, we have seen the starting housing rate surpass 96,000, the second-highest number since 1988, and it is because of the policies put forward by this government along with all the caucus members for their support. So I just want to say thank you for all you're doing here. As the minister encouragingly pointed out, the purpose-built rental housing starts are currently more than double compared to the same period last year. We have a long-term goal, and we have a long-term plan, and it is working in the face of stiff challenges like unfavourable interest rates, high inflation and other factors that are beyond our control.

This government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, like one cohesive unit to deal with the problem—and I heard it from many stakeholders. This is the government who does not work in silos but works together in collaborative leadership and gives results. That is why, with our latest plan, we continue to lay the groundwork for increased housing supply.

I'm going to support this bill, and I hope each and every member who believes in growth in Ontario is going to support this bill.



**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I want to be clear, from the NDP side, we agree that we need to build 1.5 million homes. As a matter of fact, there's enough land in the province of Ontario that we could actually build two million homes. Your own task force—not mine, not my colleagues', but your own task force—was very clear that you could reach that goal without touching the greenbelt. Yet you continually stand up there for the last couple of hours that I've been here, defending your government on attacking the greenbelt.

You continue to talk about farmers and building homes on farmers' land, but right now, today, right across the province of Ontario, guess what? We're losing 319 acres a day of prime farmland. If you become a country or a province that can't feed yourselves, you're going to be in trouble. Take a look what happened with COVID when we had no PPE because it was all made offshore. Do you remember what happened? People died.

I'm currently standing up to a developer that wants to touch a heritage location in my riding so he can build homes.

So my question is very clear to you guys: Do you agree with Premier Ford that we should be building million-dollar homes on the greenbelt?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** For a moment, I thought the member was going to take the full 10 minutes and I'll be able to answer it next time. But again, thank you to the member opposite for that question. He's actually the member for the honeymoon capital of Canada. Every time we talk about it, he always raises that.

So I'll tell you what is happening in this country, in the province of Ontario: Housing affordability is drifting away from our youth, from our young Canadians, from our newcomers. What is this bill doing? We're going to continue to work hard to make sure that everybody who has a dream to have ownership of a home has the ability to have a home. That's why we will encourage everyone to look at the policies we are making sure—and the actions we're taking to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, and we'll continue to work to do it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** In my riding of Essex, we have some very good landlords and some very good tenants, and these very good landlords and very good tenants have contacted me because they have disputes that they need to have settled. In order to settle these disputes, they need to go to the Landlord and Tenant Board, and there have been delays that have piled up at that board due to the pandemic. I'm sure that the member who just spoke also has good landlords and good tenants in his riding who are having disputes that need adjudication at the Landlord and Tenant Board. So my question to my friend is, what is this government doing to help adjudicate those disputes and get them through the system?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thanks to the member from Essex for doing an incredible job for the residents of your riding.

Madam Speaker, it's not a hidden secret that COVID-19 had a lot of impact on our society and our community. One of the things we have seen due to COVID-19, when offices were closed, the number of cases had gone up, and I always talk about when there is a problem, we need to tackle it with a solution, and that is what our government is doing. We're making sure that we are investing an additional \$6.5 million, hiring an additional 40 adjudicators and hiring additional staff to improve the service standards and continue to reduce the active application and decision time frame. That's what we're doing to solve the problem.

**1510**

But what we're doing along with this is, we are actually building and making policies and the impact of the policies is that we are seeing the highest number of new purpose-built rental starts on record in 2022 with nearly—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

Further questions?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** During the election, the NDP had a very clear platform on housing and the details were there. However, the Conservatives did not have descriptions of how their housing plan would roll out. The Premier said he would not touch the greenbelt, and then here we are today. We are talking about homes being built on the greenbelt. But the government member says that they don't work in silos and they talk to people. Which people did you talk to that gave you consent and consultation going forward on building on the greenbelt?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I usually say that when we meet, we talk. When we talk, we discuss. When we discuss, we find out the problems and the solutions together and, right now, the biggest problem we have in this province of Ontario is that we have about 300,000 immigrants coming.

Somebody like me, for example: I came on January 15, 2000, as a first-generation immigrant, and I had the opportunity to buy a house at that time. But somebody new who's coming, a young man or a woman looking to buy a house, they don't have the affordability. They have to wait 20 years.

But as I said earlier, every problem has a solution. What we need to do is we need to build homes faster. That is exactly what this government is doing with all the caucus members, with a single vision and goal to build 1.5 million homes by 2031. We'll continue to work together to have a bigger, better, strong Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Malton, my good colleague and also a hard-working member for that area. Thank you for your advocacy and hard work.

Madam Speaker, this government made a commitment to the people of Ontario that we would introduce a housing supply action plan each year over four years to cut red tape and to speed up the approval process to build 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years.

We have always said that transformational change will be desperately needed to build the housing supply action

plan. Can my colleague please outline how this plan aligns with the commitment we made to the people of Ontario?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thanks to the member from Markham. He has a lot of experience. He was a councillor for 12 years. Thank you for your public service.

But when the member opposite was talking about who did you consult with—look, you don't even need to go beyond this room. We have members with diverse backgrounds with a lot of experience in these fields. But along with that, when we speak to residents on an everyday basis, that's what they tell us, and we believe the housing supply action plan is the largest in a series of steps our government is taking to increase housing supply. Our plan will streamline and simplify Ontario's land use policies under a single document. Through the new planning document, the legislation would help accelerate the implementation of the changes and will make sure that we are actually planning to freeze 74 provincial fees at current levels. The impact is going to be lower cost and building homes faster.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick question?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his presentation. I'd also like to remind the member that the Conservative government got rid of rent control on new rental buildings first occupied after November 2018. I have heard from many tenants, as I'm sure the member from Mississauga–Malton has as well.

My question is two: What do you say to your constituents who face these massive rental increases, and how do you justify removing protections from your constituents?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member opposite for asking a question and in fact talking about the tenants.

Madam Speaker, if you really look at this bill, it's not just talking about building homes faster, building more homes, but it's also helping the tenants. We're doing this by making sure that—one of the things that we heard is that it's taking much longer for the Landlord and Tenant Board—delays—so we're making sure we're investing into that.

We're also making sure that we are putting policies in place so that there is an adequate supply of rental units. And something which I already spoke about: Under this government, we have seen, in 2022, 15,000 new units, which is the highest ever.

This government believes in making sure to help and support all Ontarians, including the tenants.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** It's a pleasure and honour to rise in the House to speak on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre.

Here today, we're debating government Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. Like already pointed out by some of my colleagues, the title of the bill doesn't always line up with the true intention of the

content of the bill, which I think is rather misleading. But we are accustomed to that here, especially as every bill has a nice, benevolent-sounding title, but what the bill does is oftentimes something very different, perhaps less benevolent.

This bill does not do anything to prevent the demolition or the destruction of rent-controlled, serviceable buildings that are currently in the city of Toronto or anywhere else in your communities or right across Ontario.

It actually creates a lot of confusion regarding the rental replacement program, especially for some cities that may have a stronger bylaw than what the province is proposing. So it looks like we're actually going to be perhaps weakening what is municipally provided rental replacement, and of course, that's the wrong way. We want to lift all boats, not sink them.

Neighbourhoods like St. James Town in my community—it's one of the most dense in the country, and now, there is encouraging legislation on the table which is before us, which is what we're debating today, that will actually incentivize the owners, the corporation, to go tear down these older buildings that are protected under rent control.

This bill doesn't do anything to encourage and actually foster the completion or the design of family-sized units, which is what people really, actually want, especially if we're going to intensify to protect the ecologically sensitive greenbelt.

This bill doesn't do anything to address the public sector's role in the provision of affordable housing. Instead, the government is overly relying on private sector developers, which we know is always going to fail to meet the mark with respect to social housing needs. That is just how the market works: They're not going to build you non-profit subsidized units. That's what governments are there to do.

I know, in my communities, that some of the largest, most prominent BIAs as well as the biggest pension funds, which own some of the most significant real estate in downtown Toronto, are asking, every single time, when this government is going to get serious about building public housing. Because they're seeing the chronic homelessness on the street, and they need to have that addressed, and they are not going to build it for you. You will have to do it yourself.

There are so many other challenges with this bill. I think that it's been spoken to before, Speaker, but I want to be able to hit the point around sprawl. Bill 97 does a lot of things, including promote very expensive sprawl, which will ultimately hurt the pocketbooks of every single Ontarian. It will cost more in housing to build very large mega-mansions that are over \$1 million, \$2 million, \$3 million on the greenbelt. It's going to be an environmental fiasco as it pertains to how much you have to clean up afterwards if you're building this sprawl. Infrastructure costs will go up under this bill. Energy consumption will go up under this bill. Road congestion will go up under this bill. Transportation costs, including social fragmentation—all of that is actually being manufactured by Bill 97.

1520

In my community, in Toronto Centre, we have over 80% of our population actually living in high-rise communities. Some of them are in purpose-built rentals that have been there since the 1960s. They're in really great shape; what they need are investments, and the government's bill right now actually de-incentivizes that. Instead, what it does is it actually encourages them to go apply for demolition permits.

I'm facing, and your community will be facing, exactly the same threat. Buildings that have over 250 resident families will be losing their home, as they are at 25 St. Mary's, because a developer wants to tear it down so they can build, perhaps, two luxury apartment buildings as opposed to servicing the building that's there. Those are rent-controlled apartments, and they will not be affordable when the new project is complete.

I'm extremely nervous, and I think you should be as well, about what you're actually going to be doing to communities that right now are struggling to meet the affordability and housing crisis in Toronto, because certainly your bill is not going to help that. We need downtowns and we need all communities right across Ontario to be as diverse as possible. I want to live in communities where we have newcomers, long-time Canadians, students, seniors, people on disability, people of all incomes. That's what makes a vibrant, dynamic community, and that's what we need to design and build. But we're not doing that with this type of legislation, which actually incentivizes only one type of construction, and most of us are not going to be able to afford that.

Diversity is what makes our communities vibrant. It's actually what makes communities successful. But in this government's future, you're not going to be building any of that. We're going to be seeing more people being squeezed out. Whether they be bus drivers, taxi drivers, receptionists, daycare workers, no one is going to be able to live in this Premier's Ontario, to be quite honest, Speaker, and it's going to make things significantly worse.

I've talked about St. James Town, a community that is one of the densest in Canada—it's definitely the densest in Toronto and Ontario. This community is already overcrowded. We have some of the most overcrowded schools, overcrowded and overloaded community centres and libraries, and we need to be able to invest in the social infrastructure so that the neighbourhoods are vibrant, exciting and dynamic, and not actually worse.

That's what your bill is going to be doing: It's going to make things much more expensive. Rather than tearing down what is decent, acceptable, already rent-controlled housing stock—you're actually tearing it down. This neighbourhood has been called by all occasions a world within a block, because it is so diverse.

Residents of my community know that disruption is coming. They see the threat on the horizon. They are following and tracking the government's housing bills very closely, and they keep asking the question: What's in it for them, and how is it going to work? They know that they're asking a lot of questions that they're not getting answers to, including: Where are they going to go when

they're being displaced? How are they going to afford to stay in the city—and your residents will be asking the same thing, to stay in their communities—and how long do they have to wait before they get to return, if they even come back to a community that they recognize?

All of this is happening under this government's watch, and it's not that we don't know what to do; it's just that the government is not willing to do it.

I've spoken to people who are living in apartments in downtown Toronto right now who are facing that imminent threat. Imagine if it was your child. Imagine if it was your kid who goes to you and says, "Mom and dad, my apartment has just been rezoned. I'm about to lose my rent-controlled apartment. Is there anything you can do as a government member to help?" Imagine what they would learn if you were to tell them this is actually going to be building more affordable housing and they know in their gut that it is not. That's exactly what this bill does.

Every day, constituents visit my office. They share so many stories of how they're overcrowded. They talk about the inaccessibility of some of their units. All that means is you invest in the properties that you have. You don't need to tear it down. You don't need to scale it and raze it.

The government likes to talk about building 1.5 million homes. The question is, who is going to afford these homes, and how are they going to be living in these vibrant and dynamic neighbourhoods when there's nothing but homes? Sprawling subdivisions are expensive, and they will continue to be expensive. There's nothing cheap about them. Even if it means an easy, quick profit for the developer, they are much more difficult and much more expensive to service for municipalities.

We should all agree that housing is a human right, and there are so many people right now, especially in our communities, in your downtowns and my downtowns, that are struggling with that. Government supportive housing is something that my local business community, including the financial district—the commercial business district of Canada is asking for government supports on that. The business community has actually identified this as being their number one priority. Believe it or not, it's actually that, that they're asking for more supportive housing than I have heard from activists as well as housing providers.

The business community in Toronto is leading the charge, demanding that the government get back involved with public housing service delivery and making sure that mental health and wraparound addictions supports are there. That's what their ask is. And certainly, for a government that talks about being business friendly, their request is falling on deaf ears.

You may recall that I had a resident come to the House about five or six weeks ago. Her name is Sarah. She's been homeless since she brought her newborn infant out of the hospital. She couldn't return back to the apartment she was living in for reasons that are not her fault. She is plugged into every single housing provider in the city of Toronto, who are all doing the very best they can to help her. Sarah and her newborn daughter are still homeless—still homeless, Speaker.

I wish I could give her a response, I wish I could give her the keys to an apartment, but there is no solution for her. And certainly today, in Bill 97, there's still no solution. Despite the fact that the government likes to brag that they're delivering housing, for people like Sarah and so many others I'm aware of, there is no provision of clean, affordable, decent, safe housing for them, and certainly not coming out of Bill 97.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member for Toronto Centre for her remarks. This is, I would say, an area that I don't see a lot of in my riding. I definitely have buildings, but I haven't run into the same scale.

I know, just last fall, I believe it was the member for University–Rosedale who mentioned that the government had removed rental replacement bylaws as part of Bill 23. Looking at Bill 97, it doesn't look like that's true, because it's right there. The enhanced protections for tenants are there and it allows the government to expand rules around tenant compensation in our communities. So I'm wondering if you can elaborate on this point. I see a bit of a disconnect.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much to the member across for the question. The challenge that we have is that there are some municipalities that have already strong and stronger rental replacement bylaws, and what the government is proposing in this bill actually is less than what some municipalities have. The city of Toronto has had a rental replacement bylaw empowered by the previous governments so that we can develop our own, so we can meet the needs of Torontonians. This bill actually is going to undo that or looks like it's going to muddy those waters.

As you try to lift the boats around other municipalities in Ontario, you're actually sinking the tenant protections in Toronto. That's certainly something that needs to be clarified and fixed at committee, and I really urge you to do that because it's going to make a huge difference in the communities that I serve and, I suspect, in the communities that you serve as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further question?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I would like to thank my colleague from Toronto Centre for their excellent presentation. The member makes a very, very important point, that there are businesses across this province—certainly many businesses in my riding—that have called on all of us as legislators to deal with the problem, the crisis of homelessness, and to make sure that people who are unhoused get access to housing and that they have the mental health and other wraparound services that are needed.

My question to the member is, given that the homelessness crisis is getting worse—the municipalities of Hamilton and, I believe, Ottawa have passed motions declaring a state of emergency on the homelessness crisis—what action can the government take today to address this issue?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much to the member from Parkdale–High Park for her question. One of the things that the government can do today is to declare homelessness a humanitarian disaster and a crisis in Ontario, the reason being is because it is exactly that. When you name something and respond to it with the same type of emergency measures as you did with COVID, that's how we fix a crisis.

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Businesses and BIAs and the most prominent downtown business owners are all calling on the government—this government, in particular—to lead. They know that municipalities can't do it themselves, which is why the biggest cities in Ontario have called on this government to convene a meeting with the Premier to specifically address homelessness, mental health and addictions. And as far as I know, that meeting with the Premier has never taken place.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** As we all know, this government has introduced four pieces of legislation towards our plan to build more homes in Ontario. But we still haven't seen the NDP plan, nor has any member of the NDP taken an opportunity to outline their alternative plan. Now, I asked the question of a different NDP member. I'll offer the same question to this NDP member: You proposed to have a government-run corporation to build homes. It's your idea. What does your corporation look like and how is it going to operate?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you for the opportunity to answer this question. The NDP housing platform is on the website. There's a lot in there. I can't get into it all in less than 30 seconds, but what I can offer you is this: The province of Ontario used to be in the housing business. You used to fund and support the construction of co-ops. The Mike Harris government actually downloaded the provincial housing portfolio onto the city of Toronto, and now we operate it as something known as Toronto Community Housing. But you left us with a massive capital deficit and reduced operating costs. You've shirked off your responsibility.

What I'm saying and what the business community in Toronto is saying is let's get back to business and build affordable housing for those who deeply need it. Governments have a responsibility, and you have the power to end chronic homelessness. This is something that can be done—and it can be done. Finland has done it, so we can follow their lead.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I want to thank my colleague for the presentation. I had already raised earlier the fact that in this bill, there is not rent control for all residential units. That still is a problem. This government is not moving towards vacancy control to control the costs of when a unit becomes empty and new tenants come in.

But I want to talk about another issue where I had a constituent just last week who came in with some very serious concerns about the maintenance of her rental unit and issues with the landlord. When she calls the rental enforcement unit, there's an automated message that sends

her to the website of the Landlord and Tenant Board, who she cannot get a hold of. So the government is talking about more adjudicators, but if you can't get through to file a complaint, you can't actually get to the adjudication process. She has some disabilities that actually make it very difficult for her to go online, something this government is moving more towards and taking the human aspect out of it.

But I've also heard from landlords that are experiencing this same terrible cycle of not being able to get through to the Landlord and Tenant Board, not being able to reach someone to actually file a complaint if they do have a problematic tenant. So I'm wondering if my colleague could tell me, do you see anything in this bill that's actually going to address those issues, whether that's from the tenants' side or from the landlords' side?

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Thank you very much to the member for the question. Unfortunately, the quick answer to her question is no. There's nothing in this bill that actually will alleviate the backlog at the landlord and tenant tribunal. That currently sits at an all-time historic high in the record of this House—over 33,000 cases. It's so bad that the Ombudsman's pending report is going to dive really deep into looking at what is causing the backlog. So either you fix it now and you be proactive before the Ombudsman's report comes out, or the Ombudsman's report comes out and you will be embarrassed into fixing it then.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Madam Speaker, we know that this housing crisis has been a long time in coming. We know that there are a lot of people coming into this country, coming into this province—because this is the best place to live in this country. And we know that that is being supported by the federal government bringing in more and more immigrants to this country and to this province. That's a wonderful thing.

But we also know that the federal government is not providing its fair share when it comes to providing core housing. Right now, the federal government is being propped up by the NDP. So the NDP in this House, with their connection to their federal counterparts, are in a great position to support the government and to support our request to call for the federal government to provide the \$480-million shortfall to provide for homelessness in this province. Will this member support that request?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Member for Toronto Centre.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I thank the member opposite for the question. I think what's really important is that we all get on board in supporting the construction of new housing, including deeply affordable housing, in Ontario. If that means going to the federal government, then darn right, I will go there, because housing is a human right. It's the biggest issue and the biggest crisis facing my community. I will knock on every single government door, including this one, until we start doing our jobs to house people in Ontario.

We have proposed the creation of an Ontario housing corporation that will build and finance about 250,000 units

of housing right here in Ontario over the next 10 years. It's going to be subsidized and it's affordable. We're going to need some support, but that support starts by this government putting their money where their mouth is, so therefore we can then go to the federal government and they can take us seriously by saying, "We're in it for this much money to meet these targets. How can you support us?"

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I appreciated the comments from my colleague and her perspective on the Toronto housing crisis. I wondered what would be the one thing she would like to see the government do that would actually protect tenants in this province—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** We're out of time. Sorry about that.

We're going to do further debate.

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** It's a pleasure to be here and be able to speak on Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023. I'd like to recognize and thank for their hard work on this bill the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to municipal affairs and housing as well. Thank you for all your work in putting through this legislation.

I would like to address our government's proposed legislation to support our much-needed housing supply action plan. Our proposals are crucial to our government's work to get housing built that Ontarians desperately need. That's why I'm pleased to be part of a government that is acting so strongly to support the building of more homes across all areas of Ontario and deliver on our commitment to see 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

Our housing supply action plans have made significant progress in addressing our province's housing crisis, but more needs to be done. Together, we will continue to work diligently to ensure a brighter and more secure housing future for all Ontarians.

Our most recent housing supply action plan is the latest in a series of steps our government has taken to increase housing supply and help more Ontarians find a home they can actually afford. Our policies from More Homes Built Faster: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan provide the growth work for growth, by reducing the bureaucratic costs and red tape that are delaying construction and pushing home prices even higher, by promoting and building up near transit and reforming zoning to create more gentle density, and protecting homebuyers and utilizing provincial lands to build more attainable homes.

Over the past four years, our government has introduced dozens of new policies under our three housing supply action plans. More Homes, More Choice, in 2019, More Homes for Everyone and More Homes Built Faster, both in 2022. These have helped substantially increase housing supply starts in recent years. Our past legislation has seen major support from stakeholders and is moving towards providing Ontario with more affordable housing.

Bryan Keshen, CEO of Reena agrees in his quote, if I could: "Reena is looking forward to working with the

minister on the implementation of this transformative legislation, ensuring that deeply affordable housing will become a reality. By creating waivers of development charges, fees, charges and levies on non-profit affordable housing projects, Ontario is setting the stage for more affordable housing to be built for all Ontarians.”

Yet for too many Ontarians, finding the right home is too challenging. It’s difficult for young people eager to raise a family in a community of their choosing; for newcomers ready to put their roots down and start a new life; for seniors looking to downsize but wanting to stay near their family and loved ones. We are facing a critical issue in our province that requires immediate attention—the growing need for housing.

#### 1540

Ontario is projected to grow by almost 5.6 million people by 2046. The GTA alone is expected to be home to 2.9 million of those people. The greater Golden Horseshoe generates more than 25% of Canada’s gross domestic product and serves as the economic engine for not only Ontario but all of Canada. This growth in population will result in increased demand for major infrastructure investments, the renewal of aging infrastructure and the need to address deficits associated with growth. More growth and more people will also affect traffic congestion, resulting in delays in the movement of people and goods that could cost billions of dollars in lost GDP every year.

Also, the impact of globalization is transforming the regional economy at a rapid pace, making long-term planning for employment more uncertain. This is why we need Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023. This bill will help tackle these pressing issues. It will also ensure that we can get homes built; homes that we desperately need now and into the future.

It’s critical that builders and developers have a clear and streamlined set of rules to follow in our province. In response, our government has proposed this new legislation as part of a comprehensive housing supply action plan.

First, we are proposing a new land use planning policy document which will streamline Ontario’s land use planning rules and encourage the development of more housing. This will make it easier for builders and developers to navigate regulations and get the necessary approvals to build homes for Ontarians.

Second, we are investing \$6.5 million to appoint additional adjudicators. This will improve service standards and reduce decision time frames at the Landlord and Tenant Board. This will support both renters and landlords in navigating the rental market.

Third, we are implementing measures to protect renters and homebuyers, such as expanding the deposit insurance for first-home savings accounts and exploring a cooling-off period for newly built freehold homes. This will ensure that Ontarians have access to affordable housing options and the necessary financial protections.

Fourth, we are working on reducing the cost of building housing. We are freezing 74 provincial fees at current levels. This will help lower overall construction costs and accelerate housing development.

Our government is committed to addressing the housing supply crisis in Ontario by streamlining regulations, supporting infrastructure investments and providing financial protections for both renters and homebuyers. By working together, we can create a brighter future for our province and ensure that all Ontarians have access to the homes they need.

We are currently seeking input on a proposed new land use policy document that would streamline Ontario’s land use planning rules and encourage more housing. We are also proposing several changes to further protect renters while supporting landlords.

There are challenges and factors beyond our control, notably interest rates. Recently, they were increased by another 25 basis points to 4.5%, the highest level since 2007. Our government, however, remains focused on our long-term plan to create the right conditions so that when the economy does pick up, our housing market will also start to pick up. We are working with the private sector to remove barriers on the construction of new homes, streamlining approvals and reducing government costs and delays. Through our Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants plan, we are making it more affordable and incenting the building of homes. We are also eliminating development-related charges for affordable housing units, not-for-profit housing, affordable inclusionary zoning units and select attainable units.

Simone Swail, manager of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, also had some commentary on this bill. “The commitment to waive development charges for all affordable housing developments will have a tangible and positive impact on the ability to develop new affordable co-op homes in Ontario. We also look forward to engaging with the province in order to reduce the property tax burden on affordable housing providers, including co-ops.”

We recognize the importance of addressing the housing crisis and are committed to creating and maintaining a robust housing supply here in Ontario. We will continue to collaborate with municipalities and the private sector to ensure that our province can meet the housing needs of our growing population.

In summary, Speaker, if passed, Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023, would support renters, strengthen homebuyer protections, reduce the costs of building a new home, streamline the rules around land use planning and encourage the development of more housing. So I proudly support Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023. This legislation will help the residents of Ontario and my community in Oakville.

With that, Speaker, I move that the question be now put.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Mr. Crawford has moved that the question be now put. There has been nine hours of debate on this bill. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 97, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing and development.

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

The motion is carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I'd like to refer it to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy.

Orders of the day.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Point of order, Speaker. If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Innisfil is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Do we agree? Agreed.

*Report continues in volume B.*





**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
<b>Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)</b>	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	
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	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	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)	Kiwiwinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	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	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	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
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	
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	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	Kanata—Carleton	