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of Debates
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des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 15 April 2008

Mardi 15 avril 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 15 April 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 15 avril 2008

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GYPHY MOTH INFESTATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Time is running desperately short for the Ministry of Natural Resources to come to the table and help affected municipalities and property owners fund a gypsy moth spraying program for 2008.

As you may know, gypsy moth caterpillars are particularly dangerous pests because they are known to attack more than 300 different plant species. In 2006, about 12,000 acres in the Niagara and Hamilton area were defoliated by gypsy moths, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources' own statistics. That area, sadly, more than doubled to 31,000 acres in 2007. Arborists who have studied these affected areas expect the infestation to grow even more in 2008 unless decisive action is taken now. Spraying must be done in early spring in order to be truly effective.

I applaud the efforts of municipal leaders in Hamilton, West Lincoln, Pelham and other areas for their initiative in working to create their own cost-shared spraying programs. However, the cost of fighting this infestation cannot be put squarely on the backs of small municipalities and the affected property owners alone. Glanbrook residents like Dan and Barb Arbuckle and Anne Dunham, and West Lincoln residents like Scotty Bakalar, cannot fight this infestation on their own.

The ministry had previously funded a joint spraying program. If the minister wants to protect southern Ontario's natural resources, she must help support a funding program today.

ADEENA NIAZI

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It is my honour and privilege to introduce one of Ontario's most distinguished citizens and resident of my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, Adeena Niazi. Ms. Niazi was awarded Ontario's highest honour, the Order of Ontario, in January of this year. This is the most recent in a long line of prestigious and much-deserved awards and decorations, including the Persons Award by LEAF, the Legal Education Action Fund; the Vincent Kelly Award of the Centre for Refugee Studies of York University; and the YWCA's Women of

Distinction Award 2004 for global action for women's rights.

The cornerstone of Ms. Niazi's career has been the creation of the Afghan Women's Organization, which has helped countless girls and women both in Ontario and in Ms. Niazi's native Afghanistan to become empowered citizens of our global community. Ms. Niazi also had the extraordinary opportunity of developing initiatives in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and was elected to the Loya Jirga, which was the council charged with the responsibility of designing a new Afghan government after the fall of the Taliban, and led to the government of Hamid Karzai.

My time here is far too brief to share with you all of Ms. Niazi's outstanding contributions to our province. However, I am pleased and proud to announce that Ms. Niazi is with us today, and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce her to this House.

BOB PRINGLE

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Chatsworth dairy farmer, former Grey county warden and my good friend, Bob Pringle, on winning the 2008 Tommy Cooper Award.

Bob received this award at a dinner in Elmwood on Friday, April 4, after being nominated by the Grey County Women's Institute and the Grey County Dairy Producers committee. It is quite an honour to receive this award, as it recognizes an individual's outstanding contribution to farming and rural life.

The award honours the late Tommy Cooper, a provincial government agriculture rep for Grey. It has been presented since 1959, in recognition of contributions made to the betterment of agriculture and rural living. Tommy Cooper helped found the Grey-Bruce Livestock Co-operative and is credited with helping local farmers adapt to new scientific and mechanical innovations.

Bob is a staunch supporter of supply management and a strong advocate for a better deal for area municipalities around provincial funding for the farm tax rebate. In his words, "All of Ontario should be paying for the benefit of having good, safe food, and that would mean that the higher populated areas would help." I agree with Bob, and I think we need more people like Bob who are hard-working, honest and passionate about the land.

Congratulations again to Bob on his well-deserved award, and congratulations to the seven nominees, including Brian Wiley of Meaford, Wilma Jeffray of

Wroxeter, Christopher Hilt of Annan, Bob Brassington of Markdale, Wayne Caughill of Conn, Murray Emke of Elmwood and Robert Emerson of Ripley. All of you are excellent role models for our future farmers of Ontario.

LAW WEEK

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to draw to the attention of members present that this is Law Week across Ontario. On Law Day, which will be take place on April 17, the Ontario Bar Association organizes events and activities across the province that celebrate the rights and freedoms Canadians enjoy. Hundreds of volunteer lawyers in communities across Ontario will give of their time to ensure the success of the many programs and activities that occur through this important week. During Law Week, lawyers, judges and thousands of students across Ontario participate in activities, including courthouse tours, elementary and secondary school mock trials, career panels, poster and photo contests, and charity events.

This year's theme is justice, reflecting the right of every Canadian to have equal access to information about the law and legal institutions in Canada. I'm pleased to tell this House today that the chair for Law Day, 2008, is Oakville lawyer Virginia MacLean.

As Ontarians, we're privileged. We live in a province that respects the rule of law, where the law applies to everyone and everyone is equal under the law, where we understand that our justice system is a cornerstone of our society. Many around the world are not as fortunate as we are.

I offer my encouragement and support to the Ontario Bar Association as they carry this important message forward. Please join me in extending best wishes to all those involved for a very successful Law Day, 2008.

SCHOOL POOLS

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I rise in the House today to remind the Minister of Education that when she was a trustee with the Toronto District School Board, it was very important to her that school programs remain open. Minister Wynne, as school board trustee, stated that she "hoped the board and the community would continue to work together to persuade the provincial government to provide funding for swimming pools in schools." I wonder what has changed for the minister between her time as a board trustee, and now, in her role as Minister of Education.

The McGuinty government is displaying a shocking degree of double speak on this particular policy. In 2006, and again in 2007, this government gave \$900,000 from the Ministry of Education and over \$100,000 from the Ministry of Health Promotion for a Swim to Survive program in the very pools they now want to close. This is yet another example of a government with no concept of how to create and follow a plan.

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The minister said, "It is so important that every child learns how to survive in the water. By partnering with the Lifesaving Society, we're helping ensure children stay healthy and safe."

I can't imagine how confused their stakeholders, community groups and boards of education across this province must be with all this doublespeak. The truth is, this government simply doesn't care, and expects all of us to look the other way when they double back on their promises.

SCHOOL POOLS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Last night, I attended a meeting in my riding held at Riverdale Collegiate. Students were there and parents were there, and they were angry that school pools are facing closure; angry that pools built with the contributions of citizens over decades were going to be wasted; angry that prize-winning athletes were going to lose their training facilities; angry that this government, which talks about health promotion, fighting obesity and protecting our children's health, is going to let these pools close; angry that young people are not going to be taught the fundamental skills needed to survive safely in the water.

They have a simple request: that the Premier meet with the mayor of Toronto and with the chair of the Toronto District School Board and that everyone, including the Premier, bring money to the table so that the problem is dealt with once and for all.

Today, many of those students and parents are with us here in this chamber. I urge this government to listen to their simple request to take action for the protection and promotion of the health of our young people and to hold onto these extraordinarily valuable pools.

DAVE WILLIAMS

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'm excited to share with this House that on Monday, along with Dr. Peter George, Dr. Kevin Smith, Dr. John Kelton, Dr. Orovan And Dr. Anvari, we welcomed Dave Williams, a physician and astronaut who has logged a Canadian record of almost 18 hours performing spacewalks. He has landed in the city of Hamilton as a physician scientist for McMaster University and St. Joseph's Healthcare.

Dr. Williams trained and worked as an emergency physician in Toronto and Kitchener before joining the Canadian Space Agency in 1992 to become an astronaut. He has taken part on two NASA space shuttle flights, in 1998 and 2007, as a mission specialist. During the most recent one, he took part in a record three spacewalks, working on construction on the International Space Station. He also trained as an aquanaut, participating in two NASA missions to the world's only underwater research laboratory, Aquarius, in the Florida Keys.

Dr. Williams has an extraordinary career and has been a great ambassador for Canada and for medical sciences,

both on and off the planet. The recruitment of Dr. Williams, an internationally recognized physician and scientist, illustrates the leadership role that we in Hamilton and Ontario have cultivated in the development of state-of-the-art medical robotics research and technologies. We are immensely proud to welcome Dr. Williams to Hamilton.

CORNWALL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Mr. Jim Brownell: On April 2, I told the House about the commitment of the constituents of my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry towards improvements to Cornwall Community Hospital. This dedication has been manifested through their hard work and generous donations through fundraising and the Corus Caring Hearts Radiothon, which happened last Wednesday. The event took in over \$120,000 in support of their hometown hospital.

To my great pleasure, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and my good friend Minister George Smitherman also renewed their commitment to health care in my riding and to the province by announcing on air, during the radiothon, the letter of tender which will allow Cornwall Community Hospital to proceed with their main redevelopment project. With this announcement, this government has once again displayed its dedication to the health care renaissance in my riding and across the province. To date, we have had three redevelopment programs and projects in my riding alone, including Cornwall Community Hospital, approved and moving through major capital redevelopment.

This news only solidifies the fact that the McGuinty government cares about the health and well-being of all its citizens.

Thank you to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and to my riding's three Corus radio stations for their tireless efforts in support of health care. Most of all, I would like to thank our citizens of my riding who have opened their hearts and their wallets to help ensure good health care to our community. To all, well done.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to speak about the investments our government is continuing to make in health care in Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We are expanding access to primary care by creating the Atikokan Fort William Clinic and the Dilico Family Health Team and working diligently to lower wait times.

Yesterday we announced \$5.4 million in new hospital funding for my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We are improving long-term care for our seniors. There will be a new long-term-care home accommodating 336 new beds and 132 new supportive housing units, creating 110 new jobs.

The Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is now providing angioplasty services for residents in north-western Ontario, a personal commitment of mine in the

2003 election. This critical service ensures close-to-home treatment for up to 500 people, allowing families to remain together, eliminating family expenses for travel and creating approximately 40 jobs in the process.

I must highlight our government's commitment to ensure PSA testing in Ontario. I introduced two private member's bills to have PSA testing covered through OHIP, and I would like to thank everyone for including this policy in our election platform and for announcing it in our budget, indicating we'll begin funding this procedure in January 2009.

Many people helped to make this happen and some are as follows: Cliff Huber, Bill Vantour, Ron Speck, the Atikokan support group, Steve Dychko, the Thunder Bay area support group, Greg Sarney, the Prostate Cancer Research Foundation of Canada and Thunder Bay seniors.

I'd also like to recognize all of my colleagues in this Assembly for supporting this push to make this test insurable for Ontarians.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

M. Shafiq Qadri: Je demande la permission de déposer un rapport du comité permanent de la politique sociale et je propose son adoption.

I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on social policy and move its adoption, and send it to you by way of page Bethany.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 8, An Act to Amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

APOLOGY ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LA PRÉSENTATION D'EXCUSES

Mr. Oraziotti moved first reading of the following bill: Bill 59, An Act respecting apologies / Projet de loi 59, Loi concernant la présentation d'excuses.

Mr. David Oraziotti: I beg leave to introduce a bill entitled the Apology Act.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. David Oraziatti: The bill provides an apology made to or on behalf of a person in relation to any civil matter and does not constitute an admission of fault or liability by the person or an acknowledgement of liability in respect of a claim in relation to the matter, and does not affect the insurance coverage available to the person making the apology, and is not admissible in any civil proceeding.

Similar legislation has been passed in three Canadian provinces and 35 US states. The initiative is important as it would allow people to communicate compassion—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business:

That Mr. Colle and Mr. Sorbara exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Colle assumes ballot item 16 and Mr. Sorbara assumes ballot item 75; that Mrs. Sandals and Mr. Arthurs exchange places in order of precedence such that Mrs. Sandals assumes ballot item 24 and Mr. Arthurs assumes ballot item 72; and that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 15 and 16.

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

Agreed to.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Hon. John Gerretsen: Today is Environment Industry Day at Queen's Park, and I would encourage all members to attend this event later on this afternoon in committee rooms 1 and 2 and meet some of the men and women who are making Ontario's environmental sector such a growth industry and who are so instrumental to its success.

Ontario's environment industry now contributes almost \$8 billion a year to our economy. Our province is nearing the \$1-billion mark in environmental exports, a

market that can only grow and gain in importance. Our province is now responsible for almost half of Canada's environment industry revenue. Approximately 60,000 highly skilled and dedicated professionals are working here in Ontario to help shape the green economy of the future.

I would like to acknowledge and applaud those dynamic business leaders who are here today, and I see them in various places in the gallery. Why don't we give them a round of applause?

Applause.

Hon. John Gerretsen: It is this dedicated group of experts, their associates and companies that they have built that are helping us create the green economy we need to ensure Ontario's future health and prosperity.

Addressing the challenges associated with climate change and our finite resources is this government's top environmental priority. At the same time, the demand for products and solutions that create sustainability is growing rapidly here in Ontario and in the world at large.

We know that Ontario's environment industry has the potential to be a world leader, and we're contributing the essential funding and investment to make that possible. Premier McGuinty recently announced the creation of Ontario's Next Generation of Jobs Fund. This fund provides \$1.15 billion for companies, institutions and individuals to encourage the innovation and invention process for green technologies.

Our environment sector deserves our full attention, and our encouragement must be a wise combination of financial as well as legislative support. We're not waiting for somebody else to come up with the next generation of low-energy light bulbs, better solar panels or better water treatment. We simply want that to happen right here in Ontario.

A culture and an economy of innovation, with sustainability as its goal, is the key to Ontario's future. The Ontario Environment Industry Association is helping us build a greener, healthier, more prosperous future. It is the kind of future we all want to see—and we want to see it here in our own province, most of all—for our communities, our children, and our children's children.

Again, I encourage all members to take the time to meet with the many members of the Ontario Environment Industry Association on this special occasion later on this afternoon.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm very proud to rise in the House today to speak about our government's commitment to make innovation a driving force in Ontario's economy. Specifically, I'd like to speak about Ontario's commitment to creating the next generation of high-value jobs in advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing.

Innovation and ingenuity are not new to Ontario. They are embedded in this province's shared conscience and in our DNA. That's why we've made innovation a key part of our five-point economic plan: to ensure that our

province and our people are equipped to continually reinvent ourselves to a new level of prosperity.

Ontario has all the key ingredients to make this happen. We have world-class researchers, savvy entrepreneurs, an exceptionally skilled workforce and some of the best research institutions in the world. And now, through our \$1.15-billion Next Generation of Jobs Fund, we're taking a bold, focused approach.

We are working at the speed of business. Companies that submit eligible proposals to our ministry will receive an answer within 45 days.

We are the only jurisdiction taking this kind of aggressive action focused on sectors where Ontario punches well above our weight in research, industry and innovation, where we already are or can become global leaders.

One of those areas is Ontario's biopharmaceutical sector. It is among Ontario's most research-intensive industries, investing more than \$550 million in Ontario in 2006 to enable the discovery of innovative new treatments and therapies.

A significant portion of this investment goes to Ontario's universities, hospitals and public research institutions, where some of our brightest minds are working together to discover better antibiotics, new vaccines and more effective cancer treatments—efforts that will enhance and save lives.

Ontario's pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors together employ over 15,000 Ontarians in very high-quality, high-paying jobs, and there is potential for much, much more.

I was pleased to join the Premier, the member for York Centre, my parliamentary assistant from Mississauga—Streetsville and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care this morning to announce that we are moving forward quickly with the Next Generation of Jobs Fund.

Our government is investing some \$13.9 million as part of Sanofi Pasteur's \$101.5-million expansion, which includes the construction of a new \$80-million, state-of-the-art research facility and the growth of its research activities in Ontario over the next five years at the company's North Toronto research park.

The project will create 30 new, permanent, high-value jobs and help develop vaccines for diseases like whooping cough and various forms of cancer.

Sanofi already employs 900 employees in Ontario who research, develop, manufacture and market vaccines to Canada and the world. They have a simple vision, the good people at Sanofi Pasteur and Sanofi-Aventis: They have this vision that they want to vaccinate everyone in the world for every preventable disease. What a tremendous aspiration and how wonderful it is that this company is investing even more in the province of Ontario.

These are high-value, high-paying jobs with an impressive multiplier effect whereby for each new position that is created, other industry-related jobs will be created to service the demand.

Our investment has secured—and I want to be clear on this—on behalf of taxpayers, a jobs guarantee and a sustained research guarantee, and it will ensure that Ontario is on the leading edge of vaccine research and development, positioning Ontario to capture a greater share of the global market.

Today, we are joined by two distinguished visitors. I would like to introduce Mr. Mark Lievonen, who is the president and CEO of Sanofi Pasteur Canada. The chap beside him is Mr. Wayne Pisano, who's the CEO of Sanofi-Aventis, which is the parent company of Sanofi Pasteur of Canada. We are delighted that both of you are joining us today. Welcome.

I would like to quote Mark Lievonen, president of Sanofi Pasteur Canada: "Ontario's contribution was an important factor in our ability to attract this investment to Ontario."

The choice in the Sanofi world was to invest this money in Ontario, Pennsylvania or France, and Ontario won that competition to secure these jobs and this investment in our province.

This project, as well, will create some 300 immediate jobs in construction. They are building an \$80-million global research and innovation centre.

Sanofi Pasteur represents the kind of health-related, innovative company that we want to foster and retain in Ontario. Our investment is a statement of our government's commitment to ensure the continued growth of industries like the biopharmaceutical sector that will shape our future and create Ontario's next generation of high-paying jobs.

I believe that we have the talent and resources in this province to compete and to win in this important sector. After all, we in this province are standing on the shoulders of some of medicine's biggest discoveries.

Dr. Frederick Banting discovered insulin just down the street. Stem cells were discovered four decades ago by Dr. Ernest McCulloch and Dr. James Till, two of our most renowned researchers at the Ontario Cancer Centre right here in Toronto. The world's first pacemaker was developed in Ontario.

I'm proud to say that today's investment will help us to continue to build on this legacy of innovation and ingenuity. We are making Ontario the best place to develop new, innovative ideas.

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Just as important, we're making Ontario the best place to translate these ideas into value-added products and services that we can sell to the world and benefit from right here in Ontario. It's part of our government's plan to ensure that Ontario will attract the most investment, create the best-paying jobs and secure the healthiest, brightest future for our families and children.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to respond, on behalf of the official opposition, to the statement made by the

Minister of Research and Innovation. I also want to thank the representatives from Sanofi for investing in Ontario and being in the Legislature today.

There's no question that not only do we agree it is vital that we be a part of research and innovation technologies, but also that our motivated and talented people deserve a lot of credit from the province of Ontario. We're glad they are being recognized and that investment is coming here today.

It's certainly the government's job to work to ensure there is a climate in the province that forward-thinking companies and investors are going to take notice of and consider for the future.

I would like to add a couple of comments. Despite what the ministry may say, this is not a new announcement. I think this has been announced three times.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Three times?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, three times in the same year, which also relates to the other ministerial statement—the recycling of old announcements. It was mentioned in the budget and in press releases long before today. I know that our friends from the environment industry are here today, and recycling may well apply to some of what they are here to discuss, but I don't think the re-announcement of old announcements is the kind of recycling they are really looking to pursue.

If I'm not mistaken, I believe the Minister of Research and Innovation stated some time ago, with respect to waste diversion, "We have an amazing plan." Of course, we're still waiting to see that plan, but I'll let my colleague the critic for the environment take that forward.

The other point I want to bring forward is: Where is the investment money coming from? I know that the present McGuinty government likes to repackage government monies from other levels. Given their history of doing this, I wonder how much of this money is from federal coffers, from the federal community development trust fund. I'm hoping the minister can answer this.

Thirdly, we have also seen this government, in past investments, show little ability to ensure that grants, loans and programs are used as promised. I know that the turnaround in this proposal is to be 45 days. We're going to wait and see that this does come forward and that the minister does share with us more information as to the effectiveness of this program.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: I will respond to the Minister of the Environment. On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I would also like to welcome our guests from the Environment Industry Association who have come to the Legislature for Environment Industry Day.

Ontario's environment industry represents more than 2,400 companies. They contribute well over \$7 billion to our economy and, as we heard earlier, close to 60,000 jobs. I had the opportunity to meet with ONEIA this morning, and I remain impressed with their continuing work to promote environmentally friendly solutions to

the challenges we face. One good example is the climate change adaptation fund proposed for municipalities. Our minister didn't make mention of that, so stay tuned on that one.

As society's attention turns ever more to the impact we have on the world, and at the same time this government passively watches rapidly emerging signs of economic downturn, it's important to recognize the potential of industries like the environmental industry. They will provide us with opportunities to address these challenges in new and beneficial ways.

A healthy environment and a growing economy are not only compatible but also mutually beneficial. The environment industry can create and deliver the new technology and the products that are in demand both here and around the world. They also have the ability to support traditional manufacturers as they become more environmentally efficient.

However, while the industry has made strides, I do hear from industry representatives about a need for a real partnership with the Ontario government to cut through the regulations, to cut through the red tape, to unplug the logjams for project approvals which may prevent many of these companies from moving forward on the kind of good work that they do. Quite simply, one year after our then-environment critic Laurie Scott stated, "This minister and this Premier refuse to move forward and have the courage to make the types of decisions that good leaders make," that does not bode well for the environment.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Research and Innovation, I think no one in the room would deny the benefits of 30 new jobs in Ontario, but I have many questions. I think the minister did not give us all of the facts, and I'm hoping he will.

The question that comes to my mind is that, at the cost of \$13.9 million, this works out to \$463,000 per job. At that cost, what guarantees, if any, did the minister get that the jobs would remain in Ontario? He talked about job guarantees but he would not reveal exactly what those guarantees were. What did the government get in terms of the longevity of those jobs? How long are they going to last? We know in the past that when monies have been given to some companies, the jobs are very fleeting indeed.

What guarantees did he get that Ontarians would be hired for the jobs? We do know, in other circumstances, especially with the branch plant economy, that they often come from offshore; they often come from parent companies or other branch plant facilities around the world. How many of these 30 jobs will actually come to Ontarians who are looking for them?

The second set of questions I have involve what is happening to the 200,000 people who have lost manufacturing jobs in the province of Ontario. This government—although they have a plan today for 30 jobs, they have no plan to assist the economy. They have no plan to

assist the companies or the workers in the key manufacturing sector who have lost their jobs. They have no plans to help reduce the cost of electricity in manufacturing or in the forest industry. They have no plans for manufacturing investment tax credits, which surely would save jobs. They have no plans to have a Buy Ontario plan.

Although we in the NDP welcome these 30 jobs, we have to ask the questions. Welcome, the 30 jobs; we only have 199,970 to go.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to respond to the comments from the Minister of the Environment.

First of all, of course, I want to salute the people here from the Ontario Environment Industry Association for the work they do. But I have to say that the nerve of the minister in the statement he made was quite extraordinary. The environmental industry will grow dramatically in this province if we actually take on things like climate change.

The minister said that fighting climate change was the top environmental priority for this government. Graham Murray, in Inside Queen's Park, just recently noted that it was 10 months since the Premier announced his climate change plan and there was still no climate change plan before this Legislature.

When the budget came down, the money was not there to meet their inadequate targets. That's what environmental groups said who reviewed that budget. The Minister of the Environment—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I think I may have hit a nerve, Mr. Speaker. I hit a nerve.

A few weeks ago, the Globe and Mail reported that this minister, in a conversation, said it would be two or three months before a climate plan would come out.

No legislation has come before us. None is on the order paper to advance a climate protection agenda. This is a government that says that climate change is its number one priority? God help the low-priority items; they will never make it anywhere.

It's no wonder. When I was in Pittsburgh a month ago, I heard from the government of Pennsylvania that they have wind-turbine factories being established there, and solar photovoltaic factories, and they're establishing a plant to make the batteries for hybrid electric vehicles. Are we competing there? Are we taking on those sorts of establishments?

Why is it that ARISE solar technologies has gone to Germany? You could read about it in the Report on Business. Germany actually understands where the future is. Germany is actually willing to make the investment. They are willing to put in place the legal framework; this government is not.

I'll take it down to a very small example. A number of years ago, this government gave itself the power to

legalize clotheslines. I know that clotheslines are pretty hot and heavy—not necessarily the key to saving the world, but they can't even get that one done. Maybe they're holding it for Earth Day so they'll have a big announcement then; I don't know. But to claim that fighting climate change is your top priority—man, “chutzhpah” does not quite cover it.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES ET L'AFFECTATION ANTICIPÉE DE CRÉDITS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 44, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1411 to 1416.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Dickson, Joe	Mitchell, Carol
Albanese, Laura	Dombrowsky, Leona	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bentley, Christopher	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Qaadri, Shafiq
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldip	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Takhar, Harinder S.
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Van Bommel, Maria
Chan, Michael	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Colle, Mike	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Craitor, Kim	McGuinty, Dalton	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those opposed.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce

Chudleigh, Ted
DiNovo, Cheri
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy

Kormos, Peter
MacLeod, Lisa
Marchese, Rosario
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill

Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Sterling, Norman W.
Tabuns, Peter
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Yakabuski, John

grandmother; and Katie McCrae, a friend of the family. Welcome today.

As the Speaker is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, I would like to remind the members of a reception today here at Queen's Park with the University of Western Ontario from 5 to 7 in room 230. We invite all members to come and enjoy a great time at the finest institution in the province.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 64; the nays are 33.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the bill carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I would ask that the bill be referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a number of guests with us today. I would just remind our guests that we welcome you always to Queen's Park to observe our proceedings. As much as you may be tempted to partake, applaud, cheer etc., we ask that you leave that for the Legislative floor and you not partake in that aspect.

On behalf of the member from Perth–Wellington, we'd like to welcome Carol Shannon and Joan Shannon from Marmora in the east members' gallery. Joan is the member's mother-in-law. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member from York South–Weston: Her brother, Michael Albanese, is in the east members' gallery. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member from Parkdale–High Park: parents and children from Fern Avenue Public School, Keele Street school and Ursula Franklin Academy in the west members' gallery. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member from Toronto–Danforth: in the west public gallery, Shane MacDonald, Alex Bojin, Kendall Wright, Michael Aleksic and Anthony Nguyen. They were gold medalists in the Ontario provincial swimming championships from Riverdale Collegiate.

The following pages have guests with us this afternoon. In the east members' gallery, on behalf of Marco Bellissimo: Anna Bellissimo, his mother; Gianluca Bellissimo, his brother; Christina Bellissimo, his sister; Giuseppina Bellissimo, his grandmother; Maria Figliano, his grandmother; Domenico Figliano, his grandfather; Antoinette DeLongis, his aunt; Rita Aceto, his aunt; Daniela DeLongis, his cousin; Michael DeLongis, his cousin; Michael Aceto, his cousin; and Angela Aceto, his cousin. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

On behalf of page Marcus Glennie, in the west gallery, we'd like to welcome his father, Mike Glennie, here today.

On behalf of page Michael Louws, in the west members' gallery: Neil Louws, his father; Rita Louws, his mother; Kate Louws, his sister; Gay Mostert, his

ORAL QUESTIONS

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, one of the goals of the Smoke-Free Ontario strategy is "to prevent smoking among Ontario's children, youth and young adults." Minister, I know you are aware of an illegal smoke shop in Caledonia operating on provincial land within metres of an elementary school. We've had reports of children on their bicycles leaving the shop with cartons of cigarettes on their handlebars.

Minister, given your responsibility—don't look elsewhere—for health promotion, do you believe it's appropriate for this store to keep operating and putting children's health at risk?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I have to refer this question to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Clearly, our government has been very proactive when it comes to ensuring that we educate the public so that we will diminish the opportunities for people to smoke. We have been very successful. We will continue to advocate and be very strong proponents. In fact, I have to say that there has been more originality coming from this government with regard to smoking cessation than from most governments, and I'm very, very proud of that.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm going to try again. To the missing-in-action Minister of Health Promotion: A study conducted by the Canadian Convenience Stores Association says that 24% of students who smoke are smoking illegal cigarettes—untested, no warnings. According to your own website, Minister—if you've taken time to read it—each year, 90,000 kids in Ontario try smoking. That's an alarming statistic, but an even more alarming fact is that those kids are smoking cheap cigarettes with no idea of what's in the tobacco and no idea of the health risks.

Minister, in good conscience, how can you sit by silently and imperil the health of children, all in the name of political correctness?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: It's really, really mind-boggling. One day, they're supporting cigarettes; the next day, they're saying that we're not doing enough for causing cessation of tobacco. I have to be perfectly

honest that we are committed to reducing the demand for tobacco. We understand that it's crucial that we do that.

I'm pleased to hear from my colleague Minister Best that tobacco consumption in Ontario fell by 31.8% from 2003 to 2006. That's 31.8% from 2003 to 2006. That equals over 4.6 billion less cigarettes. I think that's something that this government should be very proud of and you should be supporting.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I'm glad the minister is hearing from the Minister of Health Promotion because no one else is. The reality is that the so-called Minister of Health Promotion is no such thing. She's like a false front of a building—nothing behind the facade. She won't even respond to concerns in this place, concerns we've raised about kids' health, and instead refers to someone who fills the air with meaningless rhetoric.

Once again I direct my question to that minister: Will she stop playing politically correct Russian roulette with kids' health? Will she stand up, do her job and fight for the closure of illegal operations threatening children's health? Or will she just simply admit that she's window dressing, step down, and save the taxpayers a salary?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I think it's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, I'm not stopping the clock.

I'd just ask that we can take the opportunity to—we can get frustrated with members for answering or not answering questions, but we do need to, as much as possible, maintain an air of civility within the place. I ask all members to be conscious of that and keep that in the back of their minds.

Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: One of the lessons that my father taught me a long time ago is that when you're losing an argument, call names. I have to tell you that I am very, very critical of the Leader of the Opposition and the references that he's made to my fellow minister.

But let me talk about this issue. This government is committed to ensuring that tobacco cessation takes place in Ontario. We will continue to work at that. We are committed to ensuring that that happens. I have to tell you that we need the help of everyone in this House to make sure that happens. That type of rhetoric is not healthy for anyone, and you should be ashamed of yourself.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is for the Minister of Education. Last week, I raised the issue of the closing of Phelps elementary, a rural school, and that young kids were now going to be bused at least three hours a day. Today, we learned that Fitzroy Centennial will be the third school to close in the West Carleton board. Yesterday, the issue of school buses was raised in this House, which is of particular concern to these parents whose kids

will now be on longer bus rides because their rural schools are closing.

Minister, will you please address the issue of funding for school transportation?

1430

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd actually be happy to address this issue, because we have been working with our education partners, including the Ontario School Bus Association, and we've been increasing funding and in fact have been the first government to reform the transportation funding formula. We've implemented a successful reform and we have boards across the province now working in consortia so that students are getting better service, and school boards are working together.

We've provided \$10 million to provide a wage enhancement for school bus drivers. We've also provided \$15.4 million as a benchmark increase to address cost pressures like fuel, and we're adding an additional \$1.7 million to allow boards to address cost pressures associated with increasing enrolment.

We know that the needs for buses don't go down when enrolment goes down, so we've been increasing funding to transportation across the province.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: We know that this government is refusing to specifically designate funds for school buses, and as a result, funds that should be going to buy new buses or increase bus drivers' meagre salaries are being redirected to other areas within the boards.

If you do not intend to keep your promise to keep rural schools open, will you at least commit to specifically designating funds for school board transportation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I met with the Ontario School Bus Association last week. We had a very good exchange. We have an ongoing dialogue. In fact, they are very happy to be working with a government that's willing to listen to them about their issues. They're also very happy to be working with a government that is increasing funding and is willing to work with them on the issue of wages, for example, which is a very important issue, especially with small and medium operators. They're also pleased that we are going to address the issues of small and medium operators, that we're very, very concerned that those operations stay in place.

We've increased funding for wages, we've increased funding on cost benchmarks, and boards are working together to provide better and more efficient service for their students.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: It is clear that the McGuinty government did manage to see fit to throw some one-time slush fund money in the direction of school transportation. They gave them a mere 10-cent raise, from 83 cents to 93 cents a litre. That increase was no doubt welcome, but cold comfort to those operators who are paying \$1.30 per litre for diesel, with no decrease in the offing for gas.

So, Minister, why won't you envelope school bus funding and address the cost pressures faced by these school bus operators?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It makes me very proud to be part of a government that is paying close attention to all the services that are required by students in our system, including transportation services, because there have been governments in the past that did not pay attention to those services to help kids get to school, to make sure they had the services that they want.

As a result of the transportation reviews that we've been doing, there are nine boards in the province that have enhanced funding even since those reviews began.

As I said previously, the Ontario School Bus Association is very pleased that we are working with them, that we are addressing the issue of their wages, and that we understand that the cost benchmarks—which is why we did the cost benchmark study—have to be increased. That's why we continue to increase funding even though enrolment is declining.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Roughly \$20 billion of health care spending is on illnesses that are largely preventable. One in four kids are overweight, and close to half of all Ontarians are obese. Obesity costs Ontario \$1.6 billion annually.

One of the most effective ways to prevent disease and fight obesity is for people to be physically active. When will the Ministry of Health Promotion live up to its name and provide the resources needed to maintain and improve sports and recreation programming and facilities?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health Promotion.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: The Minister of Health Promotion works with our partners—community organizations, public health units, other ministries and other levels of government—to help public understanding of the common factors that lead to type 2 diabetes. These risk factors include unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, overweight and obesity. That is why our government has committed \$190 million over three years for a new chronic disease prevention and management strategy, starting with diabetes.

In June 2006, our government launched a \$10-million healthy eating and active living action plan. As part of the plan, we partnered with the Dietitians of Canada to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Premier and Minister of Health Promotion cannot deny that sports and recreation facilities across Ontario are crumbling. In Sudbury, it's the Barry Downe arena and the Falconbridge school that have closed; in Hamilton, it's the Chedoke ski hill and the rugby field; and in Cornwall, the wading pools.

Today, with parents, children and concerned citizens, the NDP proposes a Communities at Play fund to provide annual and reliable funding towards sports and recreation facilities. Will the Premier acknowledge that our sports and recreation facilities are in crisis and commit to long-term, sustainable funding through the Ministry of Health Promotion?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Our government is committed to promoting healthy and active living in Ontario. Through the communities in action fund, we provide \$7.5 million annually to community recreation organizations to help increase opportunities for more people to become active. Over the last four years, approximately \$25 million in CIAF grants have been awarded to over 800 organizations at the provincial and local levels. Approximately one million Ontarians have benefited from this program to date. Our government's investment will increase participation in community sports and physical activities and help remove barriers to participation for priority groups.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We are talking about sports and recreation assets, facilities. They were originally funded with significant help from the province. Back then, it wasn't a "community problem" to maintain those facilities, like the government claims today.

Across the province, 50% of our recreational assets are approaching the end of their useful lives. In Sudbury, Mayor Rodriguez says, "Our existing recreational facilities are aging and our operational costs are increasing. This NDP proposal would help to bring some much-needed assistance."

Will the Premier make Communities at Play a reality and invest not \$5 million but \$75 million annually in sports and recreation programming and facilities through the Ministry of Health Promotion?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Our government is committed to promoting healthy, active living. That is why over the past two years we have put our money there and we have invested a total of \$136 million in 77 sports and recreational infrastructure-related projects. Our investment in sports facilities supports our Active 2010 strategy, a comprehensive plan to increase sports and physical activity participation by at least 55% for adults by the year 2010.

As part of our government's municipal infrastructure investment initiatives in 2008, we committed \$61.5 million to 29 sports and recreational infrastructure projects in Ontario.

MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, in response to the tragic overpass collapse in Laval, Quebec, which killed five people, the Quebec government decided to assume the responsibility for municipal bridges in communities of less than 100,000 people. You would know that the city of Timmins' council has endorsed this Quebec policy and the notion is gaining support among small communities across this province.

1440

Since your government has refused to create long-term sustainable funding programs to municipal infrastructure, will you, as Premier, at least consider this modest Quebec proposal?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I thank the Premier very much for appropriately sending the question to me, and I thank the member for asking the question, because it's a good question. Many of his questions are very good.

I have to say, first of all, that you will be aware that this government has transferred literally millions of dollars to municipalities for the purpose—

Hon. David Caplan: Hundreds of millions.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Hundreds of millions, my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal tells me—for the purpose of dealing with bridges and roads and municipal infrastructure as a whole. We will continue, as a government, being a full partner with those municipalities. You will note that this year there was some additional funding, because I think there was a recognition that there were some major challenges in places such as Timmins. In addition to that, other municipal infrastructure programs are available for them in order that they're able to access them for funding to assist in the refurbishing and establishment of new bridges and roads.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You'll know that a lot of municipalities, because of downloading of provincial highways onto municipalities, are having to maintain bridges that they did not have to pay for before. I raised in this House yesterday the situation on Highway 67 where you've got a bridge that connects Highway 11 and Highway 101, two provincial highways, and here we have a situation where the bridge is down to one lane because it's unsafe.

So I say again, the province of Quebec has understood that municipalities don't have the capacity to maintain these types of bridges. I ask you very squarely again, will you do what Quebec did and at least re-upload the maintenance of bridges for municipalities with less than 100,000 population?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As the member would be aware, there is a dialogue going on at the present time between municipalities and the provincial government, and that dialogue—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's all water under the bridge.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member from Hamilton Centre intervenes. I don't know whether I should answer the question. Former Premier Davis was here the other day at an event. He had the tactic of answering the interjection instead of the original question and, by the end, there was no answer to the question. But I will try to answer the question.

You know that there's a dialogue going on, that there's an agreement that is going to be reached between municipalities and the provincial government, led by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. At that table, I can assure you that topics such as responsibility for bridges and various roads are right on the front burner of the discussions taking place. I wouldn't want to pre-empt the final results of those discussions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You will know that the front burner is getting a lot closer to the kitchen than you realize. In Chatham-Kent last week, we had a bridge that collapsed. If we wait any longer than we have to—and I don't have a lot of confidence this is going to be a quick fix by your minister—we will be in a situation where bridges in this province may be unsafe and a danger to the public.

The province of Quebec was clear. They said, "Municipalities under 100,000—re-upload the responsibility to the province." I ask you again, are you prepared to upload the responsibility for bridge maintenance for municipalities under 100,000 as a safety concern for the province of Ontario and to help our municipalities?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As I just stated to the member, I'm one who believes that when you have negotiations going on—and you're familiar with your former responsibilities, dealing with collective agreements—I think it's very unwise to try to predict what's going to come out of those negotiations.

You mention the city of Chatham. I think it was two years ago, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal tells me, that they received the funding for that very bridge. There are other municipalities. I have a long list—I won't go through them—of municipalities that received funding for these bridges, and many of them are in opposition ridings. I assure you that is the case.

I want to compliment the member because I think he has raised a very legitimate question in the House. As a result of the discussions taking place with municipalities, I hope this matter is resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned.

DISCLOSURE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is also to the Minister of Transportation. It relates to the fact that his ministry has apparently been collecting personal medical information on Ontarians, whether they hold a driver's licence or not.

Anna Medeiros, as reported in the news today, never applied for a driver's licence but received a notice from his ministry saying that her licence was suspended for medical reasons.

What is happening? We know that physicians have an obligation—a mandatory obligation—to report, but the intention was always that that be for drivers, for people who hold drivers' licences in this province.

Instead, his ministry is collecting private medical information on people who were never licensed and may never be. I want to ask the minister if he believes it's appropriate. And if he does, will he refer the matter to the privacy commissioner of Ontario for her opinion?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can say first of all to the member that he would know that for some period of time now it is compulsory for members of the medical profession to report to the Ministry of Transportation on medical conditions that would be such that a person would be incapable of driving, in the opinion of that

particular person—that is, the medical professional—and they have been doing so for some period of time.

This is always very difficult. I know that the member, as a former minister—it's fair enough to say I've heard your conversations, where you've been genuinely concerned about that aspect of things. It's always difficult when information is provided and people are informed that they cannot drive any longer. That's a great concern to them. It's understandable. On the other hand, the ministry has an obligation to ensure that all who have an affliction of some kind that would prevent them from driving are not behind the wheel of a car until they've been cleared.

Mr. Frank Klees: I have no argument with the mandatory reporting of medical conditions. I am a strong supporter, as we all are in this House, of safety on the roads and for the protection of those who have medical conditions that challenge their driving ability. This is about an issue, though, that I believe the minister has a responsibility to address, that the regulations are clearly unclear about the fact that that reporting should be for individuals who hold driver's licences.

Not every condition should be reported to his ministry so that perhaps at some point in the future his ministry is holding information relating to a medical condition that has nothing to do with driving and that may well be used against an individual at some point down the road.

Will the minister—in the interest of doing the right thing—refer this matter to the privacy commissioner of Ontario for her opinion so that this matter can be resolved?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As the member would know, this is not something that occurred yesterday or the day before. This has been ongoing. This policy, for some period of time, has been ongoing.

The member would know that when information is provided by medical authorities to the Ministry of Transportation, it is done because there are a number of people who, at the age of 16, are eligible to become drivers. It is the opinion of the members of the medical profession and the ministry officials that it is valuable information to know that if someone is seeking to have a driver's licence, they in fact are able to meet all the provisions of that driver's licence by having information which is available to them about their medical condition.

I know that's always a difficult thing to do. We will consult widely on this particular matter, but I want to assure the member that this is not something that happened overnight. It's been in process for a long period of time.

1450

SCHOOL POOLS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Premier. Last year, 11-year-old Michaela Larrondo-Mioceovich personally asked the Premier to do something to keep her pool open at Fern public school.

His response was, and I quote: "Sweetheart, I will personally look into what your pool needs."

This Premier has broken his promise to Michaela. Why is this government doing nothing to keep Michaela's pool open, or other pools across Toronto?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm delighted to take the question; I think I owe Michaela the courtesy of a response. I don't recall the exact conversation, but she remains a sweetheart nonetheless.

The issue had to do with whether or not the provincial government, on behalf of Ontario taxpayers, is going to provide extraordinary funding for Toronto District School Board pools. I want to be direct to Michaela, to her parents, to all students and the community as a whole that we are not prepared to do that, and I'll tell you why.

There is nothing more important to me personally than the education of our children. We have two million of them in over 5,000 publicly funded schools around the province. We've increased funding dramatically during the course of the past four years, in the face of declining enrolments. We think we've provided the Toronto District School Board with an abundance of funding. They've got to make some important choices as to whether or not they want to maintain pools as a special feature of the education they offer within the city of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Premier, prior to 1998, Toronto school pools were paid for by the citizens of Toronto. These pools are now under your responsibility, your control, and in my view, it is your job to keep them open. The Premier must keep his word to Michaela, who remembers the discussion very well, and must assume his responsibility. Will the Premier honour the investment that generations of Torontonians have made, and save the Toronto pools by adopting our \$75-million Community at Play plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, if we look at what we've done specifically for the Toronto District School Board, notwithstanding the fact they have 31,000 fewer students, we've increased funding by 18%—that's \$359 million more. We have in place 1,175 new teachers since 2003. We have 2,423 school repair projects either completed or under way. We think we've provided a fairly dramatic injection of new funding to the Toronto District School Board in the face of declining enrolment. The TDSB must now make an important decision as to the priority they wish to attach to their pools under these circumstances. We think we've done, in fairness, what we should do for the Toronto District School Board, which is to dramatically increase resources for it.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Mining is considered one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. Every day, workers put themselves at risk going underground to extract salt, nickel, gold, copper, platinum and other materials. I

understand that the Mines and Aggregate Safety and Health Association is holding their annual health and safety conference in Sudbury from April 15 to 17. Conference speakers will talk about how the mining industry, employers and employees continue to work together to find new ways to ensure a safe work environment. Would the minister tell us what the government is doing to ensure that workplaces are safe for Ontario miners?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for Huron–Bruce for the question and for the interest she has in this particular topic.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with representatives of the Mines and Aggregate Safety and Health Association, as well as the Ontario Mining Association, including Rowland Howe, from Sifto Canada Corp., which I understand is located in the member's very riding. I want to assure the member and all members of this Legislature that I and this government understand the importance of mining workplace health and safety.

The ministry continues to work with labour and industry representatives through the mining legislative review committee to advance workplace health and safety by improving and updating existing legislation. To that end, the ministry has enhanced mining regulations and updated training regulations to reflect developments in this industry. The ministry's inspection strategy identifies major hazards to workers in underground and surface mines and rigorous compliance. It's an issue of great importance to this government.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Thank you for that information. I do want to commend the minister and the ministry staff for the excellent work they are doing to ensure that all workers in Ontario are in safe working environments.

I want to reiterate that the hard-working men and women who work in this industry, the dedicated employees who are also constituents of mine, put themselves at risk going underground every single day, and I want to commend them for the work they do. Considering the changes to the regulations and the ministry inspection strategy, would the minister tell us how this has improved safety?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member again for her question. I think all members of this Legislature recognize the long and proud history that mining has had here in this province.

I want to report to the Legislature that fatalities have dropped nearly 50% since the previous decade. That's a very dramatic improvement—a very dramatic improvement indeed. Last year we had four fatalities. I think every one of us would suggest that's four too many, so we still have more work to do, and we look forward to working with the mining industry to improve that even more.

I would also like to point out that lost-time-from-injury rates for miners have dropped 56% since 1995. Again, that's a very dramatic decrease in injuries to miners across this province. At the same time, we still have more work to do.

I want to commend the mining industry for the work they've done, in partnership with our government, in reducing injuries in the mining industry.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier: As you know, this fall taxpayers will receive a triple whammy of property assessment increases all at once. This of course is courtesy of Dalton McGuinty's cynical move to freeze assessments until, coincidentally, after the last election. Today, the Coalition After Property Tax Reform and the Waterfront Ratepayers After Fair Taxation released a report by respected real estate firm Cushman and Wakefield LePage to determine the likely outcome for Ontario homeowners. The result: Homeowners can expect up to a 154% increase in their assessments this fall. In light of this dramatic news, Premier, will you agree to cap property assessment increases to protect Ontario homeowners?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We don't share the same view as the opposition on capping. No, we won't do that. That would have the effect of shifting the property tax burden from high-growth areas to low-growth areas. We don't think it's the right answer over time.

In fact, even the member himself has said that this was a problem his government created. And in the St. Catharines Standard, March 2006, the member sitting behind him, Mr Yakabuski, when asked if the former government under Premier Harris bungled the property tax evaluation system, said, "Yes, it seems apparently so."

We agree with Mr. Hudak and Mr. Yakabuski that in fact they bungled the system. We think their proposal now would in fact make it worse. We don't support capping. In fact we have a four-year assessment phase-in which we think will help the average Ontario property taxpayer manage assessment changes.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister well knows that for assessments at that level, if you phase it in over years, that's up to a 40% increase per year. Your Toronto-area MPPs are going to be quite alarmed at assessment increases, predicted to be up to 102% in St. Paul's, 51% in Willowdale. Minister, this means whether they live in Grimsby, Ottawa or London, homeowners can expect high double-digit or triple-digit increases in the property assessments this September. The Homestead Act is before the Assembly today. It would cap skyrocketing assessments at a maximum of 5% a year. Given this result from the real estate firm, will the minister agree to cap assessments before taxpayers get hit with a triple whammy this fall?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: No, we won't. Just to be very clear, what the member is suggesting, we simply do not share that view. In fact, assessment changes don't necessarily lead to property tax increases.

But you know what he could have helped us with? Today, just an hour ago, he voted against a property tax grant for seniors: \$1 billion dollars over five years. He

voted against it, and every member of that caucus just voted against it. And they voted against the senior property tax credit grant not on one occasion but three occasions. You messed the system up. We're certainly not going to rely on you for advice now. We reject capping, and why wouldn't you have voted to give our senior citizens a billion dollars in property tax relief over the next five years? You guys just don't get it.

1500

SCHOOL POOLS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion: The closure of 23 Toronto school pools at the end of this school year and another 16 pools in June 2009 should be a very real embarrassment, not only to this government, but to this ministry. These school pools are this government's responsibility. The city and the Toronto District School Board pools service a total of five million swimmers per year. Some of those swimmers are in the gallery here today. How could the minister say that she is focused on health promotion when she is helping in the shutdown of the pools for which Torontonians have paid very dearly over a great number of years?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I'll pass the question to the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows very well that the community assets—these pools—were paid for by Toronto tax dollars, and that's why I've been saying for many days that the Toronto District School Board and the city of Toronto need to have this conversation about their city infrastructure.

Over the last four years, despite the fact that the Toronto District School Board has 31,000 fewer students, we have increased funding by nearly \$360 million. In fact, we put in place a grant—\$5.4 million this year in the program enhancement grant—to apply directly to sports programming and arts programming. If the Toronto District School Board were to make that a priority, they could take that money and apply it to the swimming pools.

The other reality is that there are 90-plus schools that are surplus in the Toronto District School Board that could be leveraged for capital dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion: This morning, parents and children from tens of schools across this city came to a press conference to ask to save their school pools. In my hand, I hold 15,000 signatures from citizens across Toronto asking to save their school pools. We have signatures from Fern, Malvern, North Toronto, Ursula Franklin, Earl Beatty, Weston, R.H. King, Downsview Secondary, Gordon Brown, Queen Alexandra, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Bowmore, Deer Park, Glenview, Duke of Connaught, D.A. Morrison, Glen Ames, Earl Grey, Swansea, Annette, Fern, Winona, St. Andrew, Williamson and many others.

Minister, will you turn your back on these students?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Far from turning our backs on the students of Toronto or anywhere else in Ontario, we have been investing in publicly funded education, including the infrastructure of our schools, since we came into office. We have invested \$4 billion in publicly funded education since we came into office. I would just remind the member opposite that it is this government that has increased funding in the face of declining enrolment. It is this government that has put in place a program enhancement grant specifically to address the issues of sports programming and arts programming.

I think that absolutely the opposite is true in terms of our support for students. We are committed to making sure that kids in this province have the healthiest experience at school that they can. Our daily physical activity, our nutrition guidelines—we are committed to making sure that kids have the resources they need.

The Toronto District School Board, if they choose to make this a priority—I believe that, within their resources, they can—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

FLOODING

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, as we move to spring after an unusually wet and snowy winter, many communities across the province have been experiencing flooding. My community is being warned that water levels along the Trent River are increasing rapidly and are expected to keep rising over the next couple of weeks as the northern snowpack continues to melt. These conditions will affect some of my constituents, particularly those living in the low-lying flood plain areas from Rice Lake to Trenton.

Clearly, flooding has the potential to have devastating effects, including property damage and public safety concerns, particularly if people aren't adequately warned. Minister, can you outline for the House what steps our government has taken to prepare and adequately warn communities that are at risk of flooding?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: I thank the member for his comments and also for his support, because I know the city of Belleville is currently undergoing some strain with flooding.

What we did—first time ever—is put in place a website where you can go to get up-to-date information through the MNR site on pre-flood, flooding and post-flood: what to do in the event, who to speak with, and in the event of emergency.

What we've also done: I wrote to every member of Parliament, regardless of politics, who had concerns in their areas, to identify those concerns, to ensure that they, as well as every reeve and mayor in municipalities, were aware ahead of time. That happened about a month ago.

Since that time, we've been working with our conservation authorities, ensuring that all flood warnings,

whether high advisory, flooding or potential, are identified and go out to those municipalities. We have people on-site working with the emergency response, and we are currently monitoring through 4,000 monitors in 1,200 stations across this province.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I understand that the Minister of Natural Resources is responsible for flood forecasting and that flood advisories and warnings are then communicated to municipalities and local conservation authorities, which have plans in place to deal with flood situations.

However, I'm also concerned at various reports of critical flooding in communities surrounding my riding, such as Belleville and Peterborough. I can certainly empathize with the many residents who are experiencing the inconveniences and disruption to their lives that flooding brings.

Minister, can you outline to the House what our government's role is in a situation when a state of emergency is declared and if there are any programs in place to help affected communities?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: One of the first things we did, for example, in Belleville, was that we had people on the ground—we have 14 field officers. We work very closely with the emergency management folks to ensure that they have up-to-date, current information along with their municipality. We've given them 20,000 sandbags, and there are another 15,000 on the way.

In addition to that, we work with the other ministries. We're on the management side, but there is assistance through housing and also through emergency response in the event that flooding is severe. So we do the management and we work with the conservation authorities. When we're asked for emergency response, we respond immediately, and then we bring in the necessary tools we need to help those communities deal with very severe flooding.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Your government's principal representative at the Six Nations negotiating table—this is according to the Bradford Expositor and the Tekawennake—visited the Six Nations Confederacy last week and proposed a halt to development along parts of the Grand River in return for an end to native protests.

Minister, is it true that your government has now proposed a two-year moratorium on development for certain no-go properties to be selected by Six Nations?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The parties are certainly always talking—continuing to talk. I've spoken with developers affected on this issue and with the mayor, and obviously the member for Brant continues to try to facilitate.

Yes, there are discussions as well with Haudenosaunee Six Nations. All parties are seeking a solution that would be to the satisfaction of the Haudenosaunee Six Nations, the province and municipal representatives. And yes,

we'll continue to pursue that, and the moment there is a decision by all three parties, certainly this House will be the first to know.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, your government already froze development on 10 properties owned by the Ontario Realty Corp., not only at DCE but also the Burtch Correctional Centre, Sprucedale correctional centre, a horticultural research farm, a former OPP detachment at Simcoe, two MTO yards, the Cayuga courthouse and two provincial parks in Haldimand.

1510

Land dispute protesters have killed many projects and subdivisions along the Grand River, certainly in Brantford and Haldimand county. The operative phrase locally is, "If you build it, they will come."

I realize you have a PR problem with ongoing protest, but your proposal now is to stop development. Is this your version of militant greenbeltism? What does this tell future builders and investors? Why do you negotiate with lawbreakers?

Minister, my question: Will you now stop negotiations until this protesting stops?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Our approach is the approach recommended by the Ipperwash commission. The Ipperwash commission made recommendations coming out of a public inquiry. It was a public inquiry that not only dealt with what happened in 1995 but also made consideration of what was happening in that region that the member is speaking of, and generally.

Those recommendations say, first and foremost, that all parties need to be engaged in negotiations, the goal being an agreement, an agreement that could see the community, the townsfolk of Caledonia and the people of Haudenosaunee Six Nations get back to where they have been for most of their history, which has been a time of living in harmony, working together, going to school together, shopping together. We're going to continue to try and achieve that result again.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. Today, the Coalition After Property Tax Reform released a report showing that in a number of neighbourhoods in Toronto, house prices went up over 50% in just three years, between 2004 and 2007.

Those on fixed incomes, including a great many seniors, simply can't afford to be hit with three years of price increases that will come their way this fall. The \$250 in the budget simply won't cut it. The NDP has proposed a freeze-til-sale assessment model that would take the volatility completely out of the system.

Will you continue doing next to nothing, the doing next to nothing that puts people at risk of losing their homes, or will you commit to something that really works, like a freeze-til-sale system, today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We disagree with the member's proposal to freeze assessments. We have brought in a four-year reassessment phase-in.

What the member opposite alleges would occur is in fact the opposite. In fact, it would create inequities right on blocks within communities and across municipalities. We don't think that is the right way to go. We believe that the four-year phase-in that we have proposed, coupled with the tools that municipalities have available to them, can help address the issue, and that these assessments won't in fact necessarily lead to increases in the property taxes of residents.

Mr. Michael Prue: This is an answer that is rich coming from a party that before the last election froze the assessments for two years to get you over that hump.

According to Bob Topp of the coalition, "Phasing in the increases may help ease the pain, but it doesn't heal the wound." And the wound he's talking about is the extreme volatility in any market-based assessment system such as Ontario's.

On this side of the House, in the NDP, we believe that seniors and others on fixed incomes shouldn't be forced out of their long-time homes by the arbitrary volatility of property markets. You must think so too because you put something in the budget.

Will you commit to freeze-til-sale today, or will you continue to allow many people to be at risk of being forced out of their homes by a deeply flawed assessment system?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite is wrong. Our system will not create volatility.

What is rich is a member who one and a quarter hours ago voted against a \$1-billion package of property tax relief for seniors that kicks in this year. Why did you vote that way an hour ago? Why didn't you support that clause in our bill? I would say to him. And I would remind the member that he also voted against the senior property tax credit in the 2006 budget and the 2007 budget.

This government has set about to bring stability to property taxes, stability to assessments, to give predictability for our seniors and to give them property tax relief; 550,000 seniors across this province will benefit from a \$500 grant next year, and you, sir, voted against it one and one quarter hours ago. Shame on you. Support this government's property tax reform.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Mr. Monte Kwinter: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Pharmaceutical companies are important contributors to research and innovation in Ontario, spending \$550 million in R&D in 2006 and providing nearly 15,000 highly paid jobs to Ontarians. These companies invest in Ontario's universities, hospitals and other public research institutions where some of our brightest minds are working together to discover better antibiotics, new vaccines and more effective

cancer treatments, efforts that will enhance and save lives.

In my riding of York Centre, Sanofi Pasteur employs more than 900 people who research, develop, manufacture and market vaccines in Canada and around the world. Our government has launched the biopharmaceutical investment program as part of our \$1.15-billion Next Generation of Jobs Fund. Can you please outline how this investment is creating and securing high-paying jobs right here in Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I'm delighted, and I want to thank the good member for York Centre for being part of our historic announcement today where we are taking our global research excellence and converting it into the next generation of excellent Ontario jobs right here in the province that we love.

The good member has a long history with both his riding and the company in question, and I want to applaud him for his advocacy. I'm proud to say that we're investing some \$13.9 million as part of Sanofi Pasteur Canada's \$101.5-million investment in our province in regard to new global research for vaccines. This will include the construction of a new \$80-million, state-of-the-art facility and the growth of its research facilities in Ontario over the next five years at the company's North Toronto research park. This project will immediately create some 300 new construction jobs, secure over 900 jobs that are existing, add another 30 high-value jobs, secure over—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I was pleased to join the Premier and the minister to make this announcement this morning. Minister, Sanofi Pasteur has four sites around the world where it conducts R&D. They have many choices as to where they can expand, and the competition for expansion is stiff. In making decisions regarding where to invest in new R&D, they consider factors like the availability of skilled workers and resources. They also take into account broader factors such as the overall business climate.

Ontario's new biopharmaceutical investment program is making Ontario's business climate even more attractive. Mark Lievonon, president of Sanofi Pasteur, who was here earlier today, said of Ontario's investment, "Thanks to the partnership, we have been able to increase the footprint and impact of our investment. Ontario's contribution was an important factor in our ability to attract this investment to Ontario." Can you please outline what we're doing to bring jobs and investment to Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: As I was saying, we secured over half a billion dollars' worth of research and development over the next seven years by our good friends at Sanofi Pasteur. We know on this side of the House that that cutting-edge research is the greatest advantage we have if we're going to land the new commercial opportunities of turning those vaccines that they're working on—a new vaccine for pertussis,

whooping cough; a new vaccine for colorectal cancer; a new vaccine for melanoma, skin cancer. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we discovered here in Ontario that the jobs to serve mankind are right here in Ontario because of the leadership of members like the member from York Centre?

I was talking to my friends opposite. Their leader, Mr. Tory, had said that our approach is flawed, but their critic came in here today and congratulated us. I appreciate the fact that in front of the CEO of Sanofi Pasteur, they actually applauded it. If only our federal cousins would actually applaud what we're doing in this province, standing up for Ontario and the jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1520

ANIMAL PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, recently you introduced Bill 50, the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, which you hailed as an act to regulate roadside zoos. We're starting to get a few mixed messages on Bill 50.

Minister, can you explain to the House what impact, if any, this bill will have on those citizens participating in hunting and angling and what impact, if any, Bill 50 will have on farmers and farm animals?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I think we were very clear at the press conference when we introduced the legislation that other acts would obviously not be tampered with. We have to ensure that farm animals are regulated by OMAFRA.

We will ensure that what we're dealing with is the care of animals. We will state what our mandate is. We will ensure that we have the toughest laws in Canada. We will ensure that finally, with the bringing of age of the animal welfare act, we will be able to illustrate and promote legislation that is the best in Canada.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, I can't find any local federation of agriculture that is even aware of the contents of this bill. They only heard about it on the day that you made the announcement. As recently as last evening, at an Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters reception here at Queen's Park, I was informed that OFAH has some real concerns about this bill and has had very little input.

My question to the minister is: Will you commit to this House today that during the drafting of regulations relating to Bill 50, you will include representatives from hunting, fishing and agricultural organizations and use their expertise in drafting the regulations for this bill?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: That's a legitimate question. It's a question that deserves a legitimate answer. Certainly, we had great input from all different stakeholders in Ontario with regard to that. That's why we got back the following endorsements.

From the World Society for the Protection of Animals: "For years, WSPA has witnessed and fought against the suffering of countless animals in roadside zoos.

"We look forward to working with the government in this positive new direction."

The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, chief executive officer Kate MacDonald: "We are pleased that the government has recognized the need to modernize and toughen animal welfare laws and create stiffer penalties for those convicted."

We were very inclusive in our consultation. We will continue that as we work through this legislation.

FLOODING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. It's regarding the fact that the Liberal McGuinty government has very little going for it in terms of a plan to deal with all of the flooding that's happening across this province as we speak.

I have to say that the city of Hamilton experienced a similar flooding problem back in 2006, and this government did absolutely nothing to help them out with that problem. Now we hear earlier today that the government thinks that 14 monitors and 30,000 sandbags are enough to deal with the problem, but that is not a plan.

Will this minister offer up a proper flood relief plan or will she once again leave flood victims and municipalities holding the bag—or should I say "the bags"?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: It's unfortunate that the member wasn't listening. In fact, there are—

Interjection.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield: If she would be quiet, she could listen now.

There are 4,000 monitors in 1,200 stations across this province. They work through the water monitoring station in Peterborough. What I was referring to was that on-site there are 14 people in Belleville dealing with a flooding situation now. So we work very closely.

I would be more than happy to take the member through the plan.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to thank Trinity United Church in Beeton for sending me this.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I agree with this petition and I’m signing it.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition of over 104 names from SEIU and the people of Thunder Bay.

“Whereas the Ontario government has continued the practice of competitive bidding for home care services; and

“Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario’s health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

“Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

“Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termination rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract; ...

“We call on the government of Ontario:

“(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

“(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients’ needs.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to page Ida.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: “A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Central East local health integration network board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System’s deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas, despite the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, its largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, this plan now calls for the ill-advised transfer of 20 mental health unit beds from Ajax-Pickering hospital to the Centenary health centre in Scarborough; and

“Whereas one of the factors for the successful treatment of patients in the mental health unit is support from family and friends, and the distance to Centenary health centre would negatively impact on the quality of care for residents of Ajax and Pickering; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service to our Ajax-Pickering hospital, which now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham, and that the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain the badly needed 20-bed mental health unit.”

I affix my signature to that and give it to page Jordynne.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition given to me by Helen Forster of Warton. I know there are a lot of people with petitions. I’ll just read the preamble.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from daily proceedings in the Ontario Legislature; ...

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I have affixed my name thereto.

SCHOOL POOLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas school pools play an important role in the lives of students by making a recreational and athletic facility available to everyone; and

“Whereas programs in existence funded by the Ministries of Health Promotion and Education will be enhanced if students are more physically fit; and

“Whereas pools were municipally built and financed before the amalgamation process made it virtually impossible to continue operations; and

“Whereas the funding formula needs to be amended to allow for the continued operation of school pools;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to work with the Toronto District School Board and the city of Toronto to ensure that our pools are not closed.”

It is signed by Cori Skuffham and 555 students of Malvern Collegiate. I am in agreement and would affix my signature thereto.

1530

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have a petition from residents of York South–Weston. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk for respiratory illnesses including asthma,

bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood; and

“Whereas the Ontario Medical Association supports a ban on smoking in vehicles when children are present, as they have concluded that levels of second-hand smoke can be 23 times more concentrated in a vehicle than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space; and

“Whereas the Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network indicates that eight in 10 (80%) of Ontarians support ‘legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present’; and

“Whereas Nova Scotia, California, Puerto Rico, and South Australia recently joined several jurisdictions of the United States of America in banning smoking in vehicles carrying children;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children 16 years of age and under.”

I agree with this petition and have affixed my signature to it, and I will give it to page Thomas.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I have here a petition signed by several hundred people from the region of Waterloo.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord’s Prayer from its daily proceedings;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe;

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord’s Prayer as part of its daily proceedings.”

I’m pleased to attach my signature.

HOME CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: I’m proud to present this petition from the Niagara region.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has continued the practice of competitive bidding for home care services; and

“Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario’s health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

“Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

“Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termination rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract;

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

“We call on the government of Ontario:

“(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

“(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients’ needs.”

I agree with this petition and I hereby affix my name to it.

DISABLED PERSONS PARKING PERMIT PROGRAM

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I have a petition signed by hundreds of people from across the province of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there currently exist problems of exposure to theft and the weather when displaying a disabled person parking permit on a motorcycle while parked in a disabled parking space;

“We, the undersigned, petition our members of Parliament to promote the development of a special, fixed permit as proposed by the Bikers Rights Organization, for use by disabled persons who ride or are passengers on motorcycles, even if that requires an amendment to the Highway Traffic Act.”

I agree with this petition. I thank the Bikers Rights Organization, and in particular Michael Warren from Iron Bridge.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of the community of Bowmanville, and Bowmanville Baptist Church specifically, who have given me a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its rightful place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I’m pleased to sign this in support of it and give it to Prakash.

ROUTE 17

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I have a petition that comes from residents of Prescott and Russell.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que l’ancien gouvernement de l’Ontario a transféré la responsabilité de la route 17 aux municipalités, la ville d’Ottawa et des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell;...

« Attendu qu’en 2001, l’administration des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell a estimé à 21 000 véhicules par jour la circulation en semaine sur la 17 à l’entrée de la cité Clarence-Rockland et que depuis, ce chiffre a augmenté à 25 000 autos;...

« Attendu que les membres du personnel du MTO régional avaient recommandé et accepté tel que présenté par la commission de révision régionale en date du 27 avril 1992 que la route 17 soit retenue comme une route collectrice provinciale suivant l’achèvement de la route 417;...

« Attendu que la population de l’est de l’Ontario exige les mêmes services de sécurité routière;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons au ministère des Transports de l’Ontario de reprendre immédiatement la responsabilité de la route 17/174 et de procéder à son élargissement de la cité Clarence-Rockland à la ville d’Ottawa. »

J’y ajoute ma signature avec fierté.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition here from Rev. Lloyd Reaney of the Whitewater Wesleyan Community Church and his parishioners.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it to the table with Marcus.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Central East local health integration network board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System’s deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas it is important to ensure that the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, a \$20-million expansion that will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum (LDRP) birthing rooms and an additional 21 postpartum rooms added by October 2008, will not cause any decline in the pediatric services currently provided at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas, with the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, it is important to continue to have a complete maternity unit at the Ajax hospital; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for the Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding; and

“Whereas the parents of Ajax and Pickering deserve the right to have their children born in their own community, where they have chosen to live and work;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service; and

“That our Ajax-Pickering hospital now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain its full maternity unit.”

I hereby affix my signature and pass this to Marco, our page.

1540

OSTOMY SUPPLIES

Mr. Toby Barrett: “Ontario Needs to Increase Funding for Ostomy Supplies.” That’s the title of a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“Whereas there are thousands of ostomy patients across Ontario, many of whom are on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the assistive devices program currently funds \$600 annually for ostomy supplies, which in some cases is merely a third of the annual cost;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request the McGuinty government increase funding to those who must purchase ostomy supplies in order to survive.”

Signatures are coming in mostly from Simcoe, Port Dover, St. Williams, Hagersville and Jarvis, and I readily affix my signature to these petitions.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before we go to Orders of the Day, I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has give notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship concerning assistance for convenience store operators with new regulations. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services concerning the collection of cigarette taxes from the smoke shop located on government-owned property on Argyle Street in Caledonia. This matter will be debated after 6 p.m. today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(SPEED-LIMITING SYSTEMS), 2008LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(SYSTÈMES LIMITEURS DE VITESSE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 14, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 41, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in relation to the use of speed-limiting systems in commercial motor vehicles.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to join in the debate today on Bill 41, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, (Speed-limiting Systems), 2008.

Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Minister of Transportation, for that round of applause.

When I responded initially, when the legislation was introduced about a month ago, or a few weeks ago, I made the point that the trucking association and I had had discussions in 2006, and I had brought forward a private member's bill at that time, which was debated in the Legislature and passed. Unfortunately, it had not gone to committee before the Legislature rose for the election of 2007.

It's very nice to see that the government saw the private member's bill, listened to the Ontario Trucking Association and many other supporters of this legislation, and brought it in as government legislation. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to join in the discussion, like we did a couple of years ago. I would say that from the beginning of the debate in the Legislature—I think yesterday was the first lead-off—

Hon. James J. Bradley: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I neglected, when I made my statement on the

bill, to commend the member who is speaking for her initiative with her private member's bill, and I wish to commend her now. It was an oversight on my part. I was not aware of it. I should have been aware of it and was not, and I want to take the opportunity to commend her on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's not technically a point of order, but we appreciate the information from the Minister of Transportation.

I return to the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who has the floor.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I appreciate the Minister of Transportation's standing and acknowledging that. I know that all members of the Legislature work very hard, and Private Members' Public Business is a time in the Legislature when we get to bring pieces of legislation that we hope the government of the day will adopt. In this situation, it has been a couple of years, but we appreciate the fact that the legislation has been brought forward by the present government. For those watching at home—

Hon. Jim Watson: Who?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Who? Well, probably my mother. But thank you, Minister.

For those watching at home, this was brought in as speed-limiter legislation. Sometimes I explain that it's like a golf cart: You can only go so fast. There's a chip that has been installed in trucks produced since 1995, I think, but I'm getting ahead of my facts and figures, so I'll catch up. Basically this is being brought in on commercial vehicles.

It's simply a matter of physics. You use less energy when you reduce speed. It certainly reduces greenhouse gas and smog-causing emissions. By slowing trucks down on our highways, we reduce the amount of fuel they burn. What a reduction in fuel consumption means is quite straightforward. I know we've talked a lot about climate change in the Legislature, even today with the environmental industry being here. That is certainly something that will decrease greenhouse gas emissions and help our climate.

There was some opposition on the government side when the private member's bill was introduced a couple of years ago. I know that the member for Huron–Bruce said yesterday that she had seen the light and changed her views on that.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: So yes, Minister of Transportation, you've done a good job of getting everybody onside.

Whatever our differences, I think what matters is that we're starting to take action now rather than later. We're hoping that this will go to committee in a relatively quick fashion because I know that when I introduced it, and I have to be honest, there were certainly some people in the communities who had opposition to it. I think it's only fair that they are able to have that opportunity to come to committee to air their concerns about the legislation. That is part of the democratic process. I hope that the government does that.

I think that the Ontario Trucking Association and the industry are key examples. They came forward with this idea. They're willing partners in the industry. They came forward and said they wanted to partner to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce consumption of fossil fuel. Using speed limiters to reduce trucking speed is a strategy that is supported both by the trucking industry and by environmental experts. Sometimes that's a hard combination to get together, but they did so in this situation.

I know that our critic for transportation, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, spoke yesterday—I'm sorry; Newmarket–Aurora is his riding now. He had some concerns, expressed them eloquently, and was hoping that committee will help air the concerns and maybe improve on the legislation before us here. So, I think that it's safe to say, and the minister did in his initial comments, that there's a fairly good consolidation of the Legislature in bringing this forward.

The delay of two years—we can get over that; the trucking industry and the environmental groups coming together, and it's the challenge that we have.

I would say that most of the truckers out there are responsible drivers. Safety is an issue. I know we just saw an accident, I think yesterday, on the 401, where we had some pigs that escaped. And we've had some cattle—for those of us in agricultural ridings and for those in that setting coming to the city, it does clash. All of us have been watching the news. But things happen, and that is what you see on the news.

People are looking for pieces of legislation to help protect them. When they bring in speed limiters, they see more safety is involved in the trucks. You see environmental groups supporting this, that this is good that we're acting in this respect.

The original legislation was supported by a host of other safety organizations, and I'm going to list a few of them here. The Canadian Automobile Association, the Canada Safety Council, the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, the Ontario Safety League, Road Watch, the Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario, the Insurance Bureau of Ontario, the Markel and Old Republic Insurance Companies and Smartrisk all came out then, and I'm sure they're still here today, to say that speed limiters for trucks will make our roads safer.

There will always be, as I said, those who were in the Legislature—maybe the Minister of Transportation was—when they brought in the seatbelt legislation, and when there were mandatory helmets for motorcycles. Certainly, we saw some pushback on those issues at that time when they were introduced. I'm sure we'll have a little pushback on this, but the main thing is that we're acting appropriately and enacting sensible legislation. Substantive input has been done and is going to be further searched out.

The amount of emissions—and I'm just looking for my figures here—that is going to be reduced certainly is something that we cannot forget, the elimination of 140 kilotonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year. That's a

step forward, and a step forward that we need to do as a province.

1550

There is some discussion among the trucking companies about competitiveness, but when I see that the Ontario Trucking Association and the American Trucking Association have been supporting bills in this manner—I think we've seen the province of Quebec also do that—when the industry itself is saying that we're all on the same playing field, then it should not be an issue. There are concerns out there about that, but I think with the industry behind this legislation, that certainly can be overcome.

We talk about fuel savings. We've all been up to the gas station recently. The price of fuel just keeps going up, and we wonder, "Will it ever stop?" They're telling us it may not stop any time soon. The fuel-savings prediction of up to 10,500 litres of diesel fuel per truck per year—an annual savings of probably \$8,400 per truck per year—is a huge amount of savings. So I say to the truckers out there who may have a few problems, I think you have to look at the savings in the cost of fuel that you're going to incur and say, "There's the time factor," but 105 kilometres per hour—which isn't quite in the legislation, but I'm sure will be coming in the regulations—is what has been recommended, and that has been arrived at with much discussion and much consultation.

So the mandating of a speed of no more than 105 kilometres will certainly be a safety factor and a fuel-saving factor, and of course the connection with the environment that I mentioned before.

I mentioned speed coinciding with crashes. We've mentioned a few recent crashes that we've had. There's no question that we live in a time where we've got the technology. I think most of the trucks since 1995, if I can remember correctly, have had these chips placed in them, so it's just a matter of activating them. Fifty per cent of trucks operating in Ontario and 74% in the United States are already governed without harming their ability to service their customers. So this has already been proven and just needs to be enforced for the rest of the percentages in Ontario and the United States.

Truckers are used to coming back and forth through different jurisdictions, with different rules and regulations. They've certainly done that with different parts—axle weights etc.—and they've been able to accommodate. I know there were some issues in respect to that which I think we can deal with. As I say, the industry is out there to help those truckers who do have some concerns.

When we talk about the safety issue—and I know that in the last few weeks we've been speaking about illegal smoking and second-hand smoke effects, banning it in cars. We've been talking in the Legislature and asking questions of the Minister of Health Promotion with respect to illegal smoke shops that we know of and the dangers to young children who are close to these smoke shops and who are buying these hazardous, untested

products. That is a health issue too. We've just announced that we're going to have a late show on that, so I know that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and I will be addressing that in a little bit deeper involvement. We're all looking at safety issues, and the illegal sale of tobacco on government-owned property is something that you just can't ignore any longer. I know that we're going to be speaking about that later on.

The critic for transportation brought up some good points yesterday when he was talking about enforcement. I know that he speaks a lot with enforcers. I know that the member for Simcoe North, our critic Garfield Dunlop, has done great work with our Ontario Provincial Police in his capacity as critic for community safety and correctional services.

There's no question that resources have to be placed into enforcement. I think that that cannot go without some time spent on it today. We can bring in laws, but if we don't give the tools to the enforcers, what good is it going to do? So we have to look at the resources that are adequate enough for the speed limiters and educate the police on how to check to make sure speed limiters are activated and check that appropriate speed limits are being met. I think that the member for Newmarket–Aurora made some good points yesterday in respect to enforcement and education. I don't want that part to go unnoticed.

Legislation is brought in, as in Bill 41. You can see, for the people at home, that it's not very many pages. Lots of details are in regulations, which is the same with many bills. It's in those regulations that we get down to the nitty-gritty, the details. I'm sure that will be done in a good and open fashion. As I mentioned, I don't believe that "105 kilometres" is stated within the bill. That would be brought up in the regulation, and feedback would be gotten in that matter.

On some of the quotes from the time, the Canada Safety Council—I want to read a quote from them in respect to the speed limiters at 105 kilometres per hour: "We are convinced that mandating speed limiters, especially at this time, will be most successful—the end result being a reduction in the number of road collisions ... with an accompanying reduction in greenhouse gases."

Pollution Probe "strongly endorses the adoption, compliance and enforcement of this policy, which will have positive health benefits for the population of Ontario," reinforced by Dr. Chiotti, air program director and senior scientist at Pollution Probe.

I mentioned that the CAA had worked very closely with the Ontario Trucking Association; many letters of support, speaking not only on encouraging safe driving among members and congratulating the Ontario Trucking Association on this initiative, but also in relation to climate change, which "is one of the Canadian Automobile Association's"—the CAA's—"four national priorities." They're saying, "In studying" this speed limiters bill, "we support your initiative because it would result in reduced emissions from trucks. Our conclusions are supported by research commissioned by the United States

Environmental Protection Agency, who found that truck fuel economy drops significantly as their speed rises above 55 mph."

The Canada Safety Council is "a strong advocate and supporter of truck industry safety initiatives." As I mentioned several times before, when you see an industry bring forward changes they'd like to see—and I've worked with environmental groups—that's usually a good sign that they've done the research; they see the support out there. It's up to us to bring in legislation and to educate.

The Canada Safety Council "strongly encourage the Ontario Trucking Association and its members to proceed with the campaign to promote and mandate speed limiters on trucks. We are convinced that mandating speed limiters, especially at this time, will be most successful—the end result being a reduction in the number of road collisions across Ontario with an accompanying reduction in greenhouse gases, another public health and safety concern."

Just a few examples. I think I mentioned them a couple of years ago. I'm quite sure I did when we introduced legislation. Those views haven't changed. The issues are still out there. I know that the former Minister of Transportation, Ms. Cansfield, was in constant dialogue with the Ontario Trucking Association also. She has moved on to the new ministry. The minister mentioned that he hadn't realized the private member's bill was before, but that research was obviously passed on from staff to staff as the ministers changed and elections came and went.

1600

We appreciate the fact that this legislation has been brought forward. It's going to go to committee to flush out some things, as we always have to take a double look to make sure we've got things right, not just in technical wording but maybe in some other things that we just can't think of as legislators.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Of course. But we have to have our own here.

I know the committee will do a good job. I'm looking forward to the fact that it will go to committee, and I'm hoping that within this session we'll have some good dialogue.

I have a few names of people who want to come forward to give their advice and considerations. They're front-line truckers and they have some good input. I drive a lot in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. It's just shy of 10,000 square kilometres, and certainly it's a few hundred kilometres from Toronto to different parts of the riding. I'm on the roads quite a bit but they're on the roads day and night, and they put in long hours, and they have books to fill out and checks and balances and safety concerns and traffic jams and weather to deal with. They're on the front lines, and they should be involved in giving the input. I know some of them don't belong to the Ontario Trucking Association—and I mentioned them several times, that they were the leaders in

bringing this legislation and this input forward—and they should have their air time also.

I appreciate the time that I've been able to take this afternoon to debate the speed limiters bill. I look forward to questions and comments from all sides of the House. I don't think it's one that's going to be hotly debated in the Legislature for once.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's certainly my pleasure to make a few comments on the speech that the member just gave. I have to say that she has done an excellent job, and she has done an excellent job because she is very intimately knowledgeable about the issues involved with this bill because she has done some work on a similar piece of legislation herself, which I believe was brought in as a private member's bill in the last term.

In remarking on that, I think it's also appropriate to mention how pleased I was to hear the Minister of Transportation so graciously acknowledge the work of the member. That sometimes doesn't go on around here. But we always know that the Minister of Transportation is a person who respects the hard work that members do in this chamber, and I think his acknowledgment speaks well to his character as well.

On the bill itself, I think the member raised a number of issues, and I think that those issues are ones that the government would do well to heed. There are some that I agree with very much, and I expect that my colleague from Beaches–East York and I will be raising them ourselves as we have the opportunity to debate this bill this afternoon as well. But the most important piece that was brought to the discussion was the issue of ensuring that this bill has some time in committee, because certainly there are implications. There are particularly implications for people who earn their bread and butter, if you will, through the trucking industry, and I think that includes both truckers and the companies they work for, and perhaps those two entities are affected differently by this legislation. Nonetheless, I think that there's an important principle in having bills go to committee so that those stakeholders who are directly affected have an opportunity to have a voice. That is what was being suggested and that's something that I also support.

I look forward to bringing some more specifics around my concerns on this bill a little later on.

Mr. Dave Levac: Let me begin by indicating that I support the legislation and that I thank the Minister of Transportation and, as pointed out by my colleagues opposite, respect the fact that the minister has always been level-headed about how he introduces legislation.

Indeed, if you check the record, you'll find out that as government, we've sent these types of bills to committee on a regular, ongoing basis. There have been very few bills on this side that have not gone to committee, sometimes even at the request of the opposition, because they found that it was not quite as easy as everyone thought it might be and requested that it get sent to committee, and it did indeed do that.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—and I know that's a different name than it used to be, but that's just the nature of this beast—had indicated some of the good points that were mentioned.

I want to mention a couple of important points myself: first of all, my relationship with the president of the Ontario Trucking Association, Dave Bradley, whom I've worked with in the past, even when I was in opposition back in 1999. He indicated a desire to move trucking forward.

I have to start by paying a compliment to the truckers of Ontario. I have found no people on the road who know how to drive better than the truckers. There's an awful lot of criticism out there that they are the ones who are causing—we did research behind that, and there is a lot of research to indicate that they are the safest people on the highways this side of our OPP officers. So I want to congratulate the truckers and thank them for the good work that they do.

We do know that introducing speed-limiter legislation is their request. There will be a committee. There will be some people who are not necessarily in favour of that: independents. Some of the individuals who are affected directly as an independent or just as a single trucker will want to come to this committee and give their rationale. We welcome that and we'll invite it.

I would also say that studies show that casualties would be reduced by 7% for every one-kilometre reduction in the average vehicle speed. That means everything to me.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I would like to commend the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for her remarks—very erudite and to the point.

I would like to support this bill as well, with the changes that we'll probably see in committee in the amendments. I did some research with some individuals, and one of the big things I see with this is cutting down collisions on our 400 highways. Road safety is reason enough to support this. Over 50% of the trucks operating in Ontario today, and 74% in the United States, are already governed and it doesn't seem to harm service to their customers. The 105 kilometres that we're looking at is not excessive. So I can see that that would be alright too.

I think on the question of fuel economy and conservation, another issue right now is that operators are working at close margins, so this should also be a bill for them and their bottom line when they are doing their calculations for their contracts.

Trip times: It seems that the trip times are marginal. Some people have calculated that the difference in arrival time from Toronto to Windsor is 10 minutes; Toronto to Montreal, 15 minutes; Toronto to Halifax, 45 minutes. So all of those are things that we can work with.

Fuel savings—to touch on that—of up to 10,500 litres a year per truck in diesel would work out to an annual savings of approximately \$8,400 per truck; an elimination of greenhouse gases, according to the calculations, of 140 kilotonnes of GHG emissions per year; and

also, I go back to the reduced risk of severe crashes. So for all those reasons, I also would support this bill.

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed a privilege and an honour to stand and discuss the debate by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. It takes me back to that day in the Legislature a couple of years ago when I was hearing the private member's bill. I remember at the end of the private member's bill, after hearing what she had to say and looking at the copious amount of information that she had sent to each and every member of the Legislature, as it then was, she sent me a package that I think is unparalleled in the entire history of private members' bills. Not only was it an explanation of what was contained within the body of her bill; there was scientific and environmental information, there was information from truckers associations, there was information from police and law enforcement agencies. There was information from literally everyone who would have a say in it. Having read the information, that was probably more than I have ever had before or since on any single private member's bill.

I know, from that, that she was extremely passionate in getting this particular measure passed by the House. It did not happen in the last Legislature. It died on the order paper, as I believe virtually every private member's bill did. But I have to commend the government for bringing forward a good idea. Although you would not adopt it during the last session, the government has the good grace, the good sense, through this transportation minister, to recognize a good idea and to bring it back.

We all believe that what is contained within the four walls of this bill is appropriate. I don't know how much debate time is going to be spent, with all parties agreeing. I have not yet had an opportunity to hear anyone who spoke against the provisions of the bill. All that everyone is saying at this point is that the bill needs to be studied. It needs to go to committee. We need to hear from all groups involved. We need to understand that what is contained in the bill will last the test of any court appearances. And with that, I commend the speaker.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments, and the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to thank the members who did questions and answers: the member from Hamilton Centre, the member from Brant, the member from Sarnia–Lambton, and the member from Beaches–East York, who has a very good memory. He remembered from a couple of years ago how many pieces of paper came with the background on the bill. I appreciate your acknowledgment of that and all the hard work of the associations and the staff in my office in compiling that.

We made the points a few times that the commercial trucks that have been built within the last 10 years have already had this electronic device that has been put in and that the technology has been there for quite a while, the preparatory work. It's now just a matter of the legislation,

working with the industry, and working with the enforcement of how we are going to do that.

We have certainly brought up the safety issues, and the environmental aspects of this bill. When I introduced the bill and commented on the private member's, bill—I got some phone calls and a little bit of pushback, not just some of the members. It didn't go through with unanimous voting from the last Legislature. We had a few people who did not vote for it. But I think we've got more information out there now. Some of them have changed their minds. We now need to talk to the remaining independent truckers or other organizations that want comment on this bill. That's why we have the committee process, and we'll look forward to the fact that that will go to the committee process.

The member from Brant certainly brought up the safety issues and the numbers there. Absolutely, there are statistics out there on that factor alone. The new member from Sarnia–Lambton has done a great job in the Legislature, and we're thrilled that he is over here on our side speaking and doing such a good job. And the Minister of Transportation for the acknowledgment of the work done before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's certainly my pleasure to make a few remarks this afternoon on Bill 41.

I don't think I'm as optimistic as the member from Kawartha Lakes–Haliburton–Brock. I don't think there are probably that many people watching today, but if there are, that's great and welcome and thank you for tuning in to the legislative channel. Of course, if they all knew who was sitting in this House this afternoon, everybody would be tuning in for this titillating debate on Bill 41.

I have to say that our caucus has reviewed this legislation, and as mentioned by my friend from Beaches–East York in his response to the previous member's debate, it is likely that we will be seeing our way to supporting this legislation.

However, we also agree and believe that there do need to be some public hearings. Again, it's something that we fundamentally believe in: the opportunity for people who will be affected by any legislation that goes through this place to have a voice, to raise issues, and hopefully—I guess “theoretically” really is the better way to put it—affect the legislation itself. I say “hopefully” and “theoretically” because oftentimes many good proposed amendments come forward during committee process, and unfortunately, most often the government doesn't see fit to accept amendments of the opposition.

However it is a new day, it is a new session, it is a new term of government, and perhaps that is one thing that we will see change over these next couple of years: that the government will see fit, in the spirit of the kind of thing that the Minister of Transportation did, which was to bring forward a bill the idea of which came from an opposition member. Perhaps in the spirit of that kind of acknowledgment that members on all sides of this House

have valuable information, and have valuable pieces to contribute to the drafting of legislation, we will see more of an opportunity for the government members to be truly thinking about and providing an opportunity for a real debate and discussion in committee whereby, at the end of the day, some of the amendments that are put forward are considered more as a real opportunity for positive change, as opposed to just a pro forma requirement of getting through the committee process, which unfortunately is what we've seen all too often over the last couple of years.

The bill essentially requires, through amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, that commercial motor vehicles be fitted with speed-control devices that mechanically prevent a truck from exceeding a particular speed limit. The bill itself does not set out what that speed limit is, but the minister has been very clear that through regulation, I guess, they will set that speed limit at 105 kilometres per hour. Although there is no indication that that is actually part of the bill, certainly that's the expectation that has been set by the government, and I wouldn't expect them to deviate from that, considering that that's what they're claiming in all their written materials in regard to this particular piece of legislation.

The other thing the bill does is prevent tampering with said device. Basically, it says that those devices not only need to be in place, but that they cannot be tampered with, and also that if a truck is pulled over for speeding and the 105-kilometre-per-hour limit is actually exceeded, then the expectation will be that there has been a violation of the system that's been put in place by the legislation. As a result, the police would of course be given authority to search the truck and seize any tampered-with device that limits speed on that truck.

This is certainly something that has been discussed previously in this Legislature, and I think that all parties generally see it as valuable. There are, of course, a couple of issues that come to mind in regard to how to make it work effectively. Those issues range from inter-jurisdictional issues—for example, if a truck is crossing the border from the United States, which has different speed limits than are in effect in Ontario, what happens? What's the situation with those trucks? Do they still have to be at the same speed limit, even though they're not required to have a device? Are they required to have a device, regardless of the fact that their company of origin is in a different jurisdiction? There are many pieces to be ironed out in that regard. Even interprovincially within Canada there are similar issues and concerns that arise.

So we urge this government to enter into dialogue with the federal government to ensure that at least in areas where we have some common jurisdiction with other transportation-type companies or providers—for example, the Canadian transportation system—the Canadian government, as well as the provincial governments, particularly those that surround us, are likewise engaged in this discussion and have similar legislation in place, which eases our ability to implement this new system and doesn't create all kinds of problems and barriers to the

moving of goods. That would be the one issue that I think is important: that we actually deal with federal and provincial counterparts to ensure we don't have negative impacts on trade as a result of this legislation.

There are other issues that came up in the discussion of this bill in its previous form by the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I was speaking to someone just today about possible ways of getting around this particular law that don't involve tampering with the device. I was actually interested to hear that there are safety concerns being raised by people within the industry who are concerned, for example, that if a truck is cruising along on a gradual incline and they reach a peak or precipice and begin a decline or downhill, they can easily put their transmission in neutral and cruise on the downgrade and the speed will go up far above 105 kilometres an hour, but it won't affect the device because the engine won't be engaged because they'll be in neutral. If, on that downgrade, there is something that would require the truck to brake or to reduce speed quickly, it becomes problematic. It becomes a safety issue because of course they cannot then use their engine brakes to be able to reduce their speed in a quick, reactive way, because they're in neutral.

1620

It will take some time to make that adjustment. This causes some concern about safety, particularly if these truckers are trying to either gain speed or further reduce fuel consumption by cruising down a downgrade and disengaging their engines by putting them in neutral. So there's one thing that needs to be considered in terms of the possible outcome or the unintended consequences or the potential for unintended safety consequences. I'm sure these kinds of details and these kinds of specifics will be much more fulsomely explored at the committee level. That's just one example that was shared with me today, as something that might need to be considered in terms of this legislation.

Another issue came up where someone was describing to me the possibility of, for example, a truck or several trucks, along with cars, driving along a highway, and the highway is for all intents and purposes a two-lane highway but then it expands to an extra lane for passing. There is perhaps one truck that's not quite doing the 105, maybe doing 95, and there's a truck behind that truck that's going a little slower; that truck decides it's passing-lane time, so let's pull out into the passing lane and pass that truck. The maximum speed that that passing truck can attain is 105, so the length of time to actually pass the slower truck would be considerable, because the amount of speed that you can gain is very small compared to the vehicle that you're trying to pass.

Again, a potential unintended consequence of such a situation, if played out to the end—if there is a considerable amount of traffic on the road, for example, if there are a number of vehicles that have been anticipating that passing lane coming up because there are lots of trucks on the road and perhaps there are cars or other trucks that want to get through on that passing lane, and the entire

distance of the passing lane is taken up by the two vehicles that I just described in this scenario, then there's a possibility of frustration growing. There's a possibility of road rage ensuing or other kinds of stresses or frustrations of other vehicles.

I, unfortunately, have to drive the highways often, as many of the members of this House do, and my route is from Hamilton, along the QEW to this wonderful place. I have to tell you, there are times when one just shakes one's head at the kinds of behaviours that are demonstrated on the road. I really don't believe people have a good understanding of their obligations and responsibilities as drivers sometimes. I wouldn't say people generally, but there are often people—you just watch what they're doing on the road and you think, "Wow, I can't believe that guy did that thing."

Usually I'm not that polite. Usually I don't say, "Wow, I can't believe that guy did that thing." I'm not going to tell you what I say, but I can tell you it's not usually that polite. But it is true.

The number of times I have seen cars cut off trucks blows me out of the water, cars that cut off trucks not realizing how long it takes or how difficult it is for a truck to gear down or to slow down without jack-knifing. It really and truly is frightening. It's a frustrating thing because you realize, as you spend more time on the highways, that if there was more common courtesy and if there was a greater level of understanding of the challenges and the particularities of various kinds of vehicles that you are "sharing the road with," then we would probably see a lot less accidents happening in the province of Ontario.

It reminds me of a sad story. When I was a young woman, I was finishing high school and I had the opportunity to take driving lessons. I have three siblings, so there were four of us in the family. My dad had to make sure that we all took driving lessons because we would all be driving his car. We couldn't afford four cars. So we all dutifully took our driving lessons.

I can recall that one of the things my driving instructor was always very concerned about was merging on and off highways. Interestingly enough, I lived in Stoney Creek at the time, so the QEW and that whole area were not too far from where I lived and where I took my driving lessons. He had always told me that one of the most important things to do is to merge properly, whether you're merging off a ramp or onto a ramp, or whether you're in traffic approaching a merge, how you have to be aware of the cars that are trying to get onto the highway and how important it is to be very aware and very courteous, particularly as you are approaching an area where there's an on-ramp on a highway. The unfortunate thing is that I learned a couple of years later that my driving instructor, who taught me those very valuable and important lessons about road safety, was killed in an accident merging onto a highway, an accident with a truck.

It really reinforced with me that no matter how aware you are of the road or how safe you are or how in tune

you are with what your obligations are as a safe driver, it can always be somebody else who can threaten your safety. You really do rely on others who are sharing the road with you and their capacity to understand what their actions will do. When I speak to the issue of people cutting off trucks, I can tell you that that's probably one of the most dangerous situations on the road.

We know that, unfortunately, trucks are abundant on our highways. I say unfortunately because I really do believe that there are other modes of transportation for moving goods and people that we need to focus on in Ontario. I don't think we're there yet.

I know some of the information that the Ministry of Transportation has provided in the context of this bill speaks to the fuel savings in this kind of initiative, so perhaps it's an environmental type of initiative as well as a safety one, and in fact part of a climate change initiative. I've got to tell you, although I support that completely in terms of the theory, there are many more activities that can happen in transportation and otherwise by this government to deal with real climate change policies.

Members here might recall that recently the marine port people were here for a reception and they donated a fabulous ship that sits in one of our hallways now, a beautiful encased model of a sea-going vessel. One of their messages was that bringing more goods onto the waterways is certainly a much greener way to move goods. So I would hope that when we're talking about things like saving fuel with these speed-limiting devices on trucks, we're also looking at other ways of getting goods off the highways and onto more green ways of transportation. I think also about people and the moving of people through mass transit. Again, that's something that needs significant investment.

But you know what? There are so many other things. In fact, just today, during ministerial statements and responses, my colleague from Toronto-Danforth was very critical of this government's lack of attention to a real climate change plan. He has said over and over again in this House that there is no climate change plan, that this government has no climate change plan. He brought a number of examples of other jurisdictions exceeding us by leaps and bounds. In fact, some of our own home-grown companies are moving to other jurisdictions like Germany, where they can get the supports and the investment to continue to develop new technologies. I think he was specifically talking about Germany, and I think the technology he was talking about was the batteries, the ability to store generated power in battery cells. Many other jurisdictions are so far ahead of us in terms of their building of plants that manufacture windmills for wind power, and we are not anywhere near where we need to be in terms of our investment in these kinds of climate change initiatives.

Just in conservation alone, if this government would put its attention, or its money, I guess, its investment, in more conservation programs—for example, one that just jumps out at me immediately is the ability to invest in or

the need to invest in conservation programs for public buildings. Start with public housing; start with government buildings. Find ways to make those places more energy-efficient. Change the windows; green the roofs. Right? Change the heating systems. Some of them are still hydroelectric heating systems in some of those big, old public housing facilities particularly.

1630

These are all really tangible things that can be done by this government if it puts its attention to climate change policies that deal with conservation as opposed to policies where they put billions and billions and hundreds of billions of dollars into just creating more energy through their nuclear strategy, which we think is the opposite way to where they should be going. We don't think it's a matter of continuing to encourage people to just consume, consume, consume more energy, so let's build more nukes and then the sky's the limit in terms of the amount of energy available for people to consume. We think it needs to be the opposite.

We think that if the government can put forward Bill 41, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in relation to the use of speed-limiting systems in commercial motor vehicles, then certainly this government can take a portion of the gajillions of dollars they're spending on nukes and, instead, put that into real conservation programs, into real R&D, into really supporting green industries and fostering that kind of research and development here in the province of Ontario. That's certainly where we think there needs to be some investment.

There's an issue that came forward and that our critic has mentioned in regard to the province of Quebec, the integration of their speed-limiter legislation and the fact that they actually took this initiative as part of a greater climate change plan, as part of a bigger vision, as part of a larger package. We certainly rue the fact that this government did not decide to do it that way—again, not being too overly critical, because we all in this House, I think, acknowledge that the safety factors are extremely important and that the corollary savings of fuel and those impacts are certainly something that are going in the right direction. But in terms of a real initiative for climate change, this certainly doesn't cut it, nor do pretty much any of the other things that the government—and my friend here from London–Fanshawe, who was heckling me a second ago, would know. Even though he's kind of indicating that we have all these programs, I think he would admit that those programs don't exist and they need to exist.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I'm pleased to take a short amount of time in the questions and comments with respect to the speech by the member from Hamilton Centre.

Let me say that I'm particularly pleased that both the third party and the official opposition—both opposition parties—are generally expressing support for the bill. I'm making an assumption that that carries beyond the indi-

vidual speakers who have been up so far and more broadly reflects their position, which should make this process that much easier.

If I could as well, on behalf of my seatmate, who was here and spoke a little bit earlier, and I know he'll be back in momentarily, just recognize Doug Switzer, who is the manager of government relations for the Ontario Trucking Association, with whom he's worked closely over the years, along with David Bradley, the president. He wanted to acknowledge the good work being done by the association, particularly those in those types of roles, those who work with government, as well as the president in his capacity.

Clearly, the legislation sets out a strategy for a higher degree of safety on the roads both for truckers and for the general travelling public as well. If there's any one good reason to have a variety of restrictive measures, whether it be seat belts or speed limiters on trucking, it's to provide a much higher level of safety than we might otherwise be exposed to.

As people have said, the vast majority of truckers, the vast majority of the time, are law-abiding drivers, recognizing the loads they have on behind them, but there are occasions when you or I have been on the highway and a trucker rolls by doing his 125 or 130 on a 400-series highway, and it can be a little spooky as he goes by and your car is being sucked in and then released. So if this happens, this will reduce the number of those incidents, and it will make me feel that much more comfortable.

I hope that the member from Beaches–East York was right in his earlier two-minute comments that the debate will not be protracted, so we can actually get to committee.

Mr. Randy Hillier: There are a few comments that I have on this bill. Of course, it's a well-intended bill, like most other bills that come before the House, but there are a couple of things that I think we have to view and reflect upon.

The first one is this restricting or taking away control and judgment of the drivers and placing it in the hands of technology. That is an important consideration that we have to think of. Do we really want to take away that driver's judgment and ability to control his rig? I prefer putting my faith in the good faith and judgment of trained drivers rather than just technology.

But we also have some other things that I'd like the House to consider. These speed limiters have been available for quite a period of time. They have also, we've heard, been installed on quite a number of highway tractors. What statistics do we have? What data do we have? Have the limiters that have been installed reduced accidents for the ones that they've been installed on, or—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speed kills.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, there are many things that kill, not just speed. But let's look at the evidence. Do we have the statistics? How many accidents have there been in the last year with highway tractors, and how many of those highway tractors had speed limiters and how many

did not? I think it's something that this House should consider and look at.

My last point is, we've heard from the OTA, but we have not heard from the independent owner-operators. They are an important part of our economy and we should give them due consideration.

Mr. Michael Prue: To comment on my friend and colleague from Hamilton Centre, she spoke quite eloquently and I think she put forward pretty much the position that most of our caucus will be giving over the debate.

She has said quite clearly that this bill needs to go to committee. We need to hear from some of those who oppose and some of those who have other ideas. We need to hear from the truckers. We need to hear from the trucking association. We need to hear from safety experts. We probably need to hear from lawyers and others in order to come to a firm rationale and to craft a bill that will work for all Ontarians.

She did, quite correctly, point out some of the hazards that are on the road. It was one of my difficulties, as a young driver, trying to figure out how everyone was going to merge when lanes went from four down to two in rapid succession. I can think of the 400 leading north out of Toronto as one of those where you had to keep getting over and over and cars were jockeying for position, and the speeds that were taking place. But she brought up something that I think not many people would recognize, and that is the ability of some truckers, when they get to a crest of a hill, to throw the truck into neutral in order to save gas, especially heading down long, winding hills, and the safety involved in that particular manoeuvre. We need to do everything necessary, as she has stated, to ensure that when speed limiters are put on, they are respected. We need to do everything we can within the body of the bill to make sure that when speed limiters are put on, they are not removed or tampered with in any way. We have to make sure that the legislation is strong enough to make sure the bill survives intact.

For that, I commend her for what she had to say and for teaching me a little bit about going down those hills out of gear.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There is time for one last question and comment.

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I'm pleased to join the second reading debate on Bill 41 on speed limiters.

This weekend, I had an interesting experience. I had a young man come in to an open house on Sunday afternoon. He was very interested in recycling and composting. His last question was, "What are you doing for the environment?" I thought about what I was doing personally and spoke about it. But certainly this bill comes to mind as to what we're doing for the environment, and there are benefits to this proposed legislation that I did speak to him about, and he was interested.

1640

Greenhouse gases are something that a lot of young people are talking about in schools. I wasn't aware of the numbers at the time, but it's 280,000 tonnes of green-

house gases that we're taking out of the environment, and that's equivalent to 2,700 tractor-trailers off the road each year. That's a pretty big number; it's a place to start. We expect that it's going to help us achieve a 2% reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions by 2014.

I think we all know that young people in our schools are watching us, and they're asking us to provide some leadership on these issues. It's a place to start. Certainly, the trucking industry is a group of people that we need to consult with as our stakeholders. We need to talk to people who are working their business by going across the border at Windsor. Those are the individuals who are making a living at this industry, and they're the best people to ask those questions of. But we need to consider the people who are going to inherit the world that we're creating right now.

This is part of what we're doing for the environment, so I feel pretty good about this legislation. I'm optimistic about it. The member from Hamilton Centre tried to provide some constructive suggestions. I look forward to hearing what the stakeholders have to say about it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll return to the member for Hamilton Centre, who has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I appreciate the remarks by the member for Pickering-Scarborough East, the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, the member for Beaches-East York and the member for Brampton-Springdale.

I have to say that this has been a good discussion so far. I think that every member participating in the debate has been bringing valuable pieces to the table. I think that once again reinforces the necessity for the public hearings process when this bill goes to committee. When we have bills like this, most members or all sides of the House see fit to seeing the value of them in terms of the necessity that they move forward. I think that it is then incumbent upon us to bring forward those constructive criticisms, as the member from Brampton-Springdale described them, and not only from ourselves, but by inviting in the public and having that dialogue with them.

I know that one of the members, I believe it was the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, was particularly concerned about the small operators, the owner-operators who are not necessarily affiliated with the larger companies. He thinks that those people need to be engaged as well. I know that the member who had previously brought this bill forward had also raised the fact that she had heard last term, when she brought this forward, some concerns coming from that sector as well.

These kinds of criticisms or these pieces of input are not to be feared. In fact, they're to be welcomed because there are often innuendos that people who are not in the industry bring; those who are in the industry can bring valuable insights into these bills and create bills that are excellent and meet all of the goals of all of us in this place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the chance to stand again and speak in support of Bill 41, to put speed limiters on the trucks that drive on the highways across the province of Ontario.

I got the chance to speak to this a bit yesterday. Today, I've been given the chance to speak more and to show my support for this bill. I think it's a very important piece of legislation coming before us. I listened to many people debating this bill who spoke in support of this bill. It's refreshing to see both sides of the House, whether from the government side or the Conservative or NDP side, supporting this initiative, because it's very important for all of us. As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, you and I and many others drive on a regular basis on the 401, the 400 or other highways in the province of Ontario. Most of the time we see all the trucks driving on the highways.

As you know, this industry is very important for our economy in this province. I learned not long ago that this industry brings almost \$200 billion on a yearly basis to our economy in the province of Ontario. Alone, this industry contributes more than \$200 billion to our economy. So it's our responsibility to protect this industry and to see how we can create a safety mechanism to protect the drivers and all the people who drive on Highway 401 or other highways, as I mentioned.

In my old capacity, I used to have a distribution company. I used to have two tractor-trailers and eight trucks that drove in southwestern Ontario to deliver goods to many different locations across the province. My message to the drivers was, "Be careful not to speed," not just to protect themselves or my trucks, but to protect the other people who drive on the highways, especially with small cars. As you know, tractor-trailers are huge. As my colleague from Hamilton Centre mentioned, when people try to cut off those trucks, especially small cars, they don't realize that those huge trailers carry probably 11 or 12 tonnes sometimes. They cannot stop easily. Therefore, they have to be careful.

Not long ago, probably about three to four years ago, I was going to my house in London. It was a Thursday afternoon and I had finished my duty. I packed my stuff and went to London. It was a beautiful, sunny day. On my way to London, there were two trailers speeding and trying to race each other on Highway 401. One of them just braked and couldn't stop. What happened was that it moved toward my car, hit the rear of my car and bounced against the median. My car bounced back to the trailer and it dragged me almost 500 metres to 600 metres. I almost got killed because some people did not pay attention. After the accident, I went to see if my car was destroyed and the truck driver told me that some small car had cut him off and he couldn't stop. As I mentioned, when you carry 15 or 20 tonnes sometimes, you cannot stop easily. Also, when you brake, the weight of the truck will give you an extra push, extra speed, probably double the speed limit.

That's why I think it's important for our government and for us in this place to bring legislation and regu-

lations to protect the people in this province. I think these are good initiatives, especially when you learn the importance of this initiative and that you are going to save millions in fuel spread around the province of Ontario. When you speed, not all the oil will be burned but some will be released on the highway. Can you imagine, if every truck drives strictly according to the limit being put by this province, by this legislation, we'll be saving almost \$7,000 to \$8,000 for every truck on a yearly basis. It's a good saving for the operators and also a good saving for the environment and for our economy. It also protects other drivers on the highway, wherever we go in the province of Ontario.

As I mentioned, it's a very important piece of legislation and I hope all the members of this House support it. As I heard from many sides of the House, they are going to support it.

I was listening a few minutes ago to the member from Hamilton Centre, who said, "I know this legislation has an aim to also save the climate and protect our environment," but she doesn't see a plan put by our government to protect our environment.

Last Saturday, my colleague the Attorney General and I had a big event in the city of London, at White Oaks Mall—you know, this program we call Think Globally, Act Locally. We invited about 40 vendors concerned about the environment. They came to the mall, put up booths and talked to thousands and thousands of walkers who walk in the mall on a daily basis. Some of them talked about retrofitting their homes to protect them. They also convinced them to change their windows and their doors. As you know, there is a government program—provincial and federal—to support any person, any household that wants to change their windows or doors to save energy. Also, we gave away more than 2,000 of those efficiency light bulbs. The people commended our efforts. Besides that, we gave away more than 300 to 400 trees, to create some kind of movement, to convince the people to participate and protect our environment by changing light bulbs, by changing their doors and windows, making sure we have efficient homes, and also being a member of the community who works hard to protect our environment.

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I think this bill achieves many different goals—first, to protect the environment, because we eliminate the waste, especially when we speed, and also to create some kind of safety mechanism for the people who are driving the trucks, and also to the people driving on the highway.

Mr. Mike Colle: Especially on the highway near London, right?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Yes, it's very important. All the highways, like London to Windsor, are being updated by our government to make them safer—create more lanes. Instead of two, we have three lanes now. There's still a small part between Woodstock and Kitchener. Hopefully they'll be connected and widened very soon. It's very important to give the opportunity for many cars to go on the highway—

Mr. Mike Colle: Especially when the snow comes.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Especially when we have snow on a narrower road. We will have more ability to accommodate many cars on the highway.

From what I learned when I was asked to speak on this bill, many trucks are already equipped with electronic devices. They can accept those limiters to guard the limit and also to give them the ability to control their speed on the highway. Almost 95% of the trucks in Ontario already have those tools. So it won't cost them much money to be updated. It costs, I think, about \$100. The remaining 5% of the trucks that cannot be updated—I think this legislation exempts them from being asked to put guards on their speed limits or from being regulated for the time limiters or speed limiters.

This legislation is a very important piece of legislation to protect our people in the province of Ontario and also to create some kind of safety mechanism. As I mentioned, it's important not just for us as drivers of small vehicles; it's also important for the company that owns the trucks to make sure the drivers drive carefully and the limit is put on their trucks so they cannot speed or go over the limit; to create safety for them and for the truck.

I want to tell you something very important. Many people who drive those trucks can make a living from driving more miles, or they want to go from point A to point Z in a certain time, and they get a bonus by delivering the goods fast and quick. That's why they think of the speed. They can go and make extra money.

So this legislation puts some kind of limit on their thinking and also gives them some self-control. It doesn't encourage them to speed. Also, the OPP and many different police safety mechanisms in the province of Ontario congratulate the government for bringing such important tools to help them control the traffic and accidents, and also the speed limit on the highways. All of us sometimes face some kind of tragedy when you see a big huge truck hitting small cars or small cars cutting off the big trucks.

This mechanism and these important initiatives will help us to create a safe environment, safe roads and safe communities. That's why I've been listening to many different speakers from both sides of the House. I think it's an important bill. Hopefully all of us in the end will go and support this bill.

I heard so many different comments, of people not fully committed from the Conservatives and the NDP until they hear many people come forward and give their advice. I welcome this idea. Hopefully this bill will go to the committee. We're going to listen to the drivers, listen to the operators; we're going to listen to many experts in this field. It's important to seek advice. It's important to have a strong bill that can be carried for a long time. It is our aim and our goal to create safe roads and to create safety for the people who drive on the highways. It's important for us.

Those industries generate more than \$200 billion on a yearly basis. It's good for our economy. We don't want to jeopardize their business. We don't want to get them

out of business. We want to make sure they prosper, do their job well and are protected, while also protecting other people who drive beside them.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It is always a pleasure to listen. Today the member is talking on a bill that I have some comfort in, with respect to the issue of the speed limiter. Our member Laurie Scott, the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, brought this bill in for the right reasons. I was, at the time, the critic of transportation.

I found there were several contradictory implications here: first of all, that the registered speed limit on our provincial highways is 100 kilometres, not 105, not 110. We could have a whole discussion on whether or not the speed limit should be raised to 105, because that's what the limiters are going to do—or should it be 120 with the design capacity of what the highway is? That's another issue. There's nothing in this bill dealing—they always say it's an environmental bill; it's going to reduce emissions. I'd like to see the reports. They're talking about it, so either they have been given the notes to read—and the member from London-Fanshawe read the notes very well. I'd like to see the reports, not just the notes that he was given by the minister to read.

The inter-jurisdictional issues—in transportation you have inter-provincial and -country issues, where speed limiters may or may not—are they going to be competitive? I've heard in my riding of Durham from independent truckers, who have to pay the fines, and that's an issue for the minister of highways, Solicitor General, of enforcing the rules of the highway, but they have to compete, and that's important too. The independent truckers tell me that this is all supported by the Ontario Trucking Association as a means of putting small independents out of business, making them less competitive.

I would challenge whether or not Chief Fantino is going to argue the enforcement issue on this—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Questions and comments.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to make a few remarks on the speech from the member for London-Fanshawe. I have to say, he shared with the House his previous business and coincidentally, when he became someone who sat nearby me not too long ago, when he got moved to—I guess it's the rump; sorry, member from London-Fanshawe—he got moved to the rump, but he did have the pleasure of sitting beside me, which is good. We did start talking about his previous business. Lo and behold, it turns out that he actually supplied, in his work, a convenience store that was in the neighbourhood in which I used to live. In fact, my father-in-law still lives in that house. We talked a little bit about our commonality—it's like six degrees of separation, as they say—about the fact that that particular convenience store located in my old neighbourhood was one that he used to

supply goods to. I think that was kind of a neat thing that we could find in common.

But where we do disagree, unfortunately, is that this member actually believes, as you heard in his remarks, that the government is doing a great job on climate change. I would have to say, I don't think that a 2% decrease in some—we don't know what the decrease is in; a previous member had indicated a 2% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions—from what year, we don't know—allegedly going to be reduced 2% in the year 2014, which is quite a ways away. All of these statistics and numbers that get thrown out by the government are simply a way of obfuscating the fact that the reality is, they don't have a climate change plan and they don't have a way to assure the people of Ontario that we will have a reduction in greenhouse gases in a significant way in this province, in a way—which I think this member mentioned—that people are demanding in the province of Ontario. It's a pretty sad state of affairs when we look to 2014 for a reduction of some 2% of some number that we can't even identify.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I simply want to enter into the debate on this one. When we have situations on the highways—and, as the member for London–Fanshawe talked about, I know we get intimidated. These are big trucks. They're moving along quickly, and when you're in a small car, it can be a bit intimidating to be there.

But still, on the whole, I want to address this issue because I have a son-in-law who's an owner-operator. He had some very good questions to me about this whole issue. He can't afford, as an owner-operator, to drive very much faster than 100 anyway, because every time he goes faster, the cost of the diesel gets higher, and the cost of the diesel impacts very directly on the bottom line and on his profit.

He does long-haul. He does a run to Alabama every week. It's not an easy life. There's no question about it. It's certainly not an easy life for my daughter and the children either. He's gone for great lengths of time, and she's basically, in a great sense, a single mom during those periods.

1700

When he comes and says to me that he wants a level playing field whereby he travels at the speed limit, he wants the others to do the same. He'd like to be in a situation where his competitors, because he is independent, are travelling at the same speeds and have to travel at those speeds the way he does. For him, a limiter is just an accessory that he probably won't use. We had some question about whether or not those things should be turned off or on, but when I talked to Charlie, he said to me, "When I cross the border, I don't go any faster. The price of diesel is the same or just as expensive over there as it is over here." If he can cross the border and he doesn't have to use the limiter, he will still travel at that speed because he can't afford the diesel.

There is a lot to be said for the independent owner-operators, who feel that this is an important thing for them to level their playing field.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member for London–Fanshawe on Bill 41, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Speed-Limiting Systems). I'm generally supportive of this, but I really want to see it go to committee because I suspect that there are a lot of independent operators out there who are probably completely unaware that this bill is even being debated, and I suspect that there are a few of them who won't necessarily be in favour of it. We've talked about there being environmental advantages and safety advantages and it being good for just about everything, but I think we need to see the facts and we need to give all those who might be concerned with this bill a chance to have their say.

Now, the member from London–Fanshawe gave an example of an accident where he was cut off by a truck that was in fact cut off by a car. I note a recent article in the Barrie Examiner: "Truckers Not Gassed Up Over Speed Limiters." In it, there's a quote: "If everybody was doing the speed limit it would be fine, but all the cars are designed to be so fast these days," he said, adding, "it's the vehicles which weave in and out of traffic who cause the situations." That sounds exactly like the situation that the member from London–Fanshawe was describing.

This bill is certainly worthy of consideration, but I really do think we need to hear from independent operators as well as the big companies, and the general public and safety experts as well, to know that this in fact makes sense. I'm sure there are operators out there who own their own truck and would not be happy about being told what speed they can drive at. If you did the same for automobile drivers, they probably would not be too happy about it.

My other question would be: What is the posted speed limit for? Perhaps we need more enforcement of the regular speed limit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for London–Fanshawe has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I want to thank the members from Durham, Hamilton Centre, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Parry Sound–Muskoka for commenting on my speech.

This bill is very important for the safety of the people of Ontario, especially those in the cities that happen to be on highways, like London, especially in my riding of London–Fanshawe. It happens to be close to Highway 401, and we see a lot of trucks. We examine a lot of accidents and see a lot of fatalities and problems on the highway.

This bill will help to protect the drivers who drive in those trucks. Everybody knows that the limit to drive on the highway, especially the 401, is only 100. This bill is going to make sure those truckers cannot speed if they want to speed, for their own safety and the safety of others who drive on the same highway.

I want to tell many other people who spoke before that it's very important for the environment. The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex spoke before me, and she said

it's very important for drivers, especially if you own your own trucks, to go at the same speed not just across Ontario but across North America, especially when you take goods from Ontario to the United States. You would save energy, you would save gas, and gas these days is very expensive. When you intend to speed, you push more, and then you cannot burn all the gas you are pushing and using, and the engine will spit it out, and it's going to go to waste and harm our environment and also affect the pockets of the people who are operating those trucks.

So, for their own good, for their own safety, for their own savings, it's important for them to drive at a level of speed that cannot hurt others and that will also save money. Because at the end of the day, it's important to create safety mechanisms not just for a certain element of our community but for everyone.

I think it's a very important bill, and I hope all the members in this House will support it. I'm looking forward to hearing more on this topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to enter into the debate on this evening's bill dealing with speed limiters on trucks, Bill 41.

I have a few comments based on what I've heard from constituents, obviously from the Ontario Trucking Association as well, and some comments on the government's approach to this issue.

I echo the comments made by my colleagues from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and Parry Sound-Muskoka this evening that it will be important for this bill to go to committee for close inspection. We haven't heard, for example, from independent operators. They're independent, and they may not have a chance, by definition, to respond with great speed, as the Ontario Trucking Association does, with their point of view. I, as a member of the assembly, would enjoy hearing from independent truckers about their views on this legislation through the committee process.

I want to, from the outset, make some comments and offer a commendation to my colleague from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, if I remember the riding, although I know the riding boundaries have changed. She spoke a bit earlier this afternoon, and appropriately so, because Laurie Scott was the member who brought this bill forward in the form of Bill 115, a private member's bill, back in May 2006. I appreciate the fact that the Minister of Transportation tonight recognized the work that my colleague had done on moving this bill forward. She was a groundbreaker in this respect. I know she received many messages both for and against her private member's bill, but to her credit, she brought it forward in the assembly and pushed it. While we had hoped that we would be on the government side, it is always rewarding when you see a private member's bill taken up by the government, because it does then get more debate time, and hopefully it will get to a third reading debate in the

assembly. Again, I was pleased that Ms. Scott's hard work was recognized by the minister this evening.

On the topic of private members' bills, I certainly do hope, for example, that my private member's bill, the Homestead Act, which would cap property assessment increases at a maximum of 5% a year, would similarly be taken up as a government bill. Granted, it would be nice to have a third reading on that bill and a true up-and-down vote to see where the Liberals stand on the issue of skyrocketing property assessments, but failing that—because last time around, they did not allow a third reading vote to take place—if the government takes this up as their own bill, I would certainly support that just to see the notion of caps brought in.

So we've seen this private member's bill, Bill 115, move forward, and I'd just suggest to my colleague from Mississauga that if the Homestead Act were to move forward in a similar manner, I would enjoy seeing caps to protect property owners in the province of Ontario who are about to see skyrocketing assessments because the McGuinty government—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm just wondering how property assessment relates to the legislation we're debating tonight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Pat Hoy): Member for Niagara West—Glanbrook?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the member for Northumberland. As I was saying, this was originally a private member's bill, Bill 115, by the member from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock. It didn't get to a third reading vote and is now a government bill. So I'm simply suggesting that if you follow that pattern with Ms. Scott's bill, similarly, you could follow that pattern when it comes to skyrocketing property assessments under the Homestead Act. That's clearly how the two are related. Obviously, it would be nice to have a third reading up-and-down vote, which was denied by the McGuinty government in 2006 and 2007.

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Hon. Jim Watson: Shame.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I agree. One of the members says "shame" about that. I agree wholeheartedly. Nonetheless, if it's not brought forward for a third reading as a private member's bill, I would certainly support the government bringing forward caps on assessment as they have followed through with Bill 115 by Ms. Scott.

The thing I worry about, though, when you look back in Hansard when the government introduced this bill standing in the name of the Minister of Transportation Jim Bradley, Ms. Scott replied in Hansard that day, correctly so, "I introduced Bill 115, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, known as the speed limiter bill, to this Legislature," which is very true. She did a lot of hard work on that, brought forward the initiative and was probably one of the first in Canada to begin speaking about this issue as an elected official.

"The Ontario Trucking Association, which is here today"—meaning the day the bill was introduced—"has

been advocating for this very concept and has been a leader on this front, and they've literally been waiting for the Liberals to get on board. So I want to thank them for all the support that we've received. This isn't a new parade, but once again, as we've so often seen before, the McGuinty parade crashers have jumped in front of the parade and pretended to take the lead."

Parade crashers—you might remember from the movie *Animal House* what happened with the parade crashers at the end of that famous film.

She goes on to say that, "Prior to October's election, the Premier travelled all over the province making election announcements on the taxpayer's dime, including a bunch of last-minute environmental items. The minister has asked all members to support this bill, but I think it's also very important to remind everyone here that despite what members of the government are trying to convey now, the Minister of Health himself voted against the legislation when I introduced it."

I find that rather ironic, that the Minister of Health, whom you'd think—I know that they snapped away health promotion to give it to then-Minister Watson for health promotion. Surely that wasn't because Minister of Health Smitherman is against health promotion; I would think not. You would think not, but for some reason he decided to come into the assembly to vote against Ms. Scott's bill, Bill 115, which is practically an identical twin to the bill before the House today—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As long as it's not an evil twin.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's certainly not an evil twin, I'd say to my colleague from Hamilton East. Is a good twin the opposite of evil twin?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yes.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —because the bills are similar in their scope and their impact.

Mr. Speaker, you're a veteran here of the assembly. It's rare that cabinet ministers would come in to vote on a private member's bill. The tradition in the Legislature has been that that's private members' time to discuss bills, to vote in favour or against them and then they would come back to the House, ideally through committee, for third reading.

So it was rather odd that the health minister, in Ms. Scott's words, "rapidly" ran back to his seat from the back room to "voice his displeasure" on the private member's bill, which is the same one that was introduced by the Minister of Transportation. Hopefully, the Minister of Health will take to the floor and explain why, two years ago, he was against this bill and now seems to be in favour of the exact same thing. He may use the evil twin argument. He may very well use that, which is a rare thing in the Legislature but common in soap operas, but I do look forward to his comments—speaking of evil twins.

I think one of the key backroom players on this bill we haven't heard from is Phil McNeely, the member from Ottawa–Orléans. I know that just a few moments ago he was speaking with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing, who, I'm sure, was twisting his arm to support this bill standing in the name of the Minister of Transportation. Folks may remember that one of the most adamant in opposition to Ms. Scott's bill was the very member from Ottawa–Orléans, Mr. McNeely.

When you look back at some of his quotes during debate—boy, oh, boy, there seemed to be nothing that he was more against than speed limiters. I'll direct you to Hansard of June 1, 2006, where Mr. McNeely, the member for Ottawa–Orléans, said, "Interestingly, in Europe, where they've mandated speed limiters, drivers are generally paid on an hourly basis; however, in Ontario, drivers are paid on the mileage travelled, so this initiative would have a real impact on the earnings of truck drivers, who already work long hours for modest pay. The negative impact on independent business is one of the factors that must be weighed against the obvious environmental benefits." That was Mr. McNeely.

Mr. McNeely goes on to say that, "Another potential issue that this bill raises is the"—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: The riding.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Pardon me? From Ottawa–Orléans. I thought I said that. It should be interesting to see how that conversation plays out in Hansard.

"Another potential issue that this bill raises is the issue of economic competitiveness. Trucking is, by nature, an inter-jurisdictional enterprise, and we compete with various provinces and with the United States. Ontario-based carriers run 25% of their miles" outside of the province, I think he goes on to say, in stating his adamant, hell-or-high-water opposition to speed limiters.

I do look forward to the comments of the member from Ottawa–Orléans, the then-parliamentary assistant to transportation, who really has a thing against speed limiters. I will be curious to see how he reconciles that with his pending vote on Bill 41 before the assembly today. Anyway, speaking of evil twins, I will now leave Mr. McNeely's comments behind and just look forward to his debate on this bill.

As I mentioned, there seems to be a difference of opinion in different trucking associations on this bill. I recall not too long ago being approached by a constituent in a pet food store in my riding while buying some food for our cats, Bogart and Sam. A constituent approached me at that point in time who was very concerned—he's an independent trucker—with the impacts of speed limiters. I hope that whether it's he himself or others, independent truckers have a chance at committee to make their concerns known.

The Ontario Trucking Association, on the other hand, has very strong comments in favour of the legislation. They did a press release on March 19, 2008, in which the headline read: "Truck Speed Limiter Law Introduced in the Ontario Legislature: Major Step Forward for Safety and the Environment, Says the Ontario Trucking Association."

I thought this was cute: The president, David Bradley, they put in brackets, is "no relation to the transportation minister" Jim Bradley. I'm sure there are a few good

jokes back and forth about that. Which one is the smarter and younger brother? I would ask my friends across the way.

Hon. Jim Watson: Evil twin.

Mr. Tim Hudak: More evil twins.

Mr. Bradley the OTA representative, not the minister, “called it ‘a significant step forward for highway safety and for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.’”

The press release by the OTA goes on to note a few of the reasons why they support speed limiters, also known as speed governors in other jurisdictions. They mention, “The activation of speed limiters has been mandated in the European Union for well over a decade, and, according to OTA, at least half of the trucks currently operating on Ontario’s highways” today “have activated their speed limiters. Quebec passed similar legislation late last year and is expected to coordinate implementation with Ontario.” There are other comments that they make about the legislation and why they favour this.

I know Mark Bylsma, who is a constituent of mine—a regional councillor, as a matter of fact, and doing a good job at that on behalf of the citizens of Lincoln in Niagara. His day job, so to speak, is that he runs Spring Creek Carriers, a successful concern in St. Catharines. Mr. Bylsma, I know, is supportive of the OTA’s position. He already says that a lot of his trucks currently have governors that are active, and when they’re traveling through the states, a significant number of those jurisdictions have legislation of a similar nature. As a constituent of mine, he has recommended supporting this legislation.

Mr. Bylsma and those at the OTA and others like the Ontario safety authority—the Canada Safety Council; I should be clear on this one—do note a few important facts. The Canada Safety Council notes that, “A speed limiter, sometimes called a governor, is a built-in microchip that allows a truck engine’s top speed to be preset. Trucks built in the last decade come equipped with this technology. Nonetheless, regulation would ensure all trucks operate at a safe speed. That would reduce highway collisions related to tailgating and improper lane changes,” in their opinion. They also talk about their perception of environmental advantages from this initiative.

And I do recall, too—I think the federal government was looking at, as part of their Kyoto targets, speed limiters across Canada. I’m not sure, Mr. Speaker; you would probably know more than I if this is an area of federal jurisdiction or provincial jurisdiction and what is appropriate, but I know that study does continue.

I assume my colleague from Ottawa–Orleans is in the House, and I look forward to his comments on the evil twin—

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Orleans. Ottawa–Orleans. As I said, “Orleans.”

Mr. Michael Prue: Say it in French: Orléans.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Orléans. I’ll remember it that way—Orléans. Ottawa–Orléans.

The safety council’s document also gives an estimate of fuel savings of up to 10,500 litres of diesel fuel per year for a typical tractor-trailer unit, or 50 million litres in total for all trucks in Ontario. Their estimate is that at today’s diesel prices, this would equate to annual savings of about \$8,400 per truck. That’s what the Canada Safety Council has to say.

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They explain their support for 105 kilometres as well, noting that, “The cruise speed for most trucks will be set at no more than 100 kph”—kilometres per hour—“but a cushion of up to 5 kph will be allowed on the ‘pedal’ speed to enable trucks to pass slower moving vehicles (avoiding long periods where trucks operate side-by-side called ‘elephant races’).”

The Canada Safety Council also notes—as does the Ontario Trucking Association—in most of their material that, “Truck drivers are less likely than other drivers to operate at excessive speed. From small, sporty cars to trucks and SUVs, passenger vehicles on Canada’s roads are capable of very high speeds.” They make the case that truck drivers—largely their members—operate their vehicles with great concern for public safety and try to obey the speed limits where they can. It’s good for the groups to make that point in advocacy of this legislation.

Of course, there’s the other side of the coin. If you peruse some of the letters to the editor that have been popping up, they tell you that not everyone in the industry is in accordance with the Ontario Trucking Association or the Canada Safety Council. Cassey Hiebert, for example, wrote a letter to the editor in the Windsor Star noting, “I had to comment on two items in the Windsor Star on the same day. Re: Truckers Feeling the Pinch of Rising Fuel Costs, March 20, by Diane Fick.

“It is of great concern. Truckers can’t make a living anymore with the price of fuel and I agree with her that something needs to be done.

“Then I read that Ontario’s transportation minister wants to regulate the speed limit on big rigs.

“Although I am all for saving the environment, with the price of fuel, there will be no trucks on the road to pollute.

“Truckers are generally more careful on the road than most drivers and it’s been my experience that most accidents involving trucks are caused by truckers trying to avoid accidents, not cause them.”

There certainly is a point of view, I think very well held, that with the high price of fuel these days, it’s already putting a significant pinch on the transportation sector. When we see the 192,000 or so well-paying manufacturing jobs flee our province under Dalton McGuinty’s high taxes, runaway spending and high energy costs, we should have great sympathy in this assembly for those involved in the trucking sector. It’s often the first sector to show an economic slowdown, and I think most truck operators will relate back to the members of the assembly that they’re experiencing that today with the slow nature of the Ontario economy. I don’t have to remind you, Mr. Speaker, that Ontario’s

economy now, under Dalton McGuinty, is the slowest-growing economy in all of Canada this past year and is projected to be last or second-to-last in the year ahead.

Truck drivers are also experiencing considerable delays at the border. A large part of our business involves international trade and we need to make sure that we properly invest in border infrastructure to facilitate trade and hopefully take our trading relationship with the United States to the next level in order to allow freer shipment of goods and services between the two countries, while concentrating on those that are smuggling contraband across our border.

Similar to Cassey Hiebert, Ed Wesselius writes in the Guelph Mercury a letter entitled "Province shouldn't mandate use of speed limiters on trucks." Mr. Wesselius notes that he's been in the trucking industry for more than 40 years and says, "Most people are misinformed about what a speed limiter actually is and what it does on a commercial vehicle."

He explains a little bit and says, "There's a perception that a speed limiter on a commercial vehicle is often being likened to cruise control on a car. This is misguided thinking since there is a vast difference in their operation and intent. What a speed limiter does is actually take the control of the truck's engine away progressively until there isn't any more power and control of the truck by the driver at the pre-programmed top speed. The similarity to cruise control in a car stops there.

"In fact," he goes on to say "a speed limiter on a truck is designed with the opposite effect as a cruise control. Most modern trucks also have cruise control that can, unlike a speed limiter, be controlled by the drivers."

Mr. Wesselius's letter to the Guelph Mercury is another reason why I think it's important for the minister and members of the assembly to hear directly from those who may have a differing opinion than the umbrella associations, particularly those who may not have the time, right at this point in time, but if there's plenty of notice for committee, will then take the time to present to members for their consideration on this bill.

The last thing I wanted to mention—I heard my colleague from Hamilton East talk about environmental impacts, and as a member for the Lake Ontario, formerly Lake Erie and the Niagara River area—although not many big ships use the Niagara River because of the waterfalls, obviously—I do want to make a promotion for better use of what they call Highway H₂O. I know my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin will be supportive of that, considering the importance of the shipping industry to his riding as well.

Hopefully, both provincial and federal governments will encourage and support the shipbuilding industry and encourage shipping through the Welland Canal and across our Great Lakes. It does remove vehicles from the road, it has environmental benefits, and it also will help create jobs in the riding of Niagara West-Glanbrook, which is always a good thing that I support.

I thank you for your time and rapt attention to my remarks on Bill 41.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: I want to assuage the fears of my friend from Niagara West-Glanbrook. He wondered profoundly what was going to happen to the Minister of Health and what was going to happen to the member from Ottawa-Orléans when this bill finally came to a vote.

I would just like to remember a little bit of history of my own. At Toronto city council, we had a huge debate about the closing down of the Adams mine. I remember the two councillors who spoke most vociferously on keeping that Adams mine open. They were my colleagues then: Bas Balkissoon and Brad Duguid. They were so adamant that the Adams mine was the only option to get rid of Toronto's garbage. You can imagine my shock when they morphed into the members from Scarborough Centre and Scarborough-Rouge River and came into this very House and voted with the government to close down the Adams mine option altogether, stating that it was a wrong thing to do.

I was really quite surprised and pleasantly bemused, but it all becomes a factor of whether you're in the government or not in the government. At Toronto city council they were in the shadow cabinet of the mayor of the day, Mel Lastman, who really wanted it. When they came here, they were on the government side, which really didn't want it. So it was very easy for them to shift and weave and bob.

I want to assuage the fear of the member from Niagara West-Glanbrook that you will see the selfsame thing happen in this particular bill. You will see—and mark my words: The Minister of Health will, if not speak to the issue, dutifully vote for it on the day that it is called in question.

I wait to see whether or not the honourable member from Ottawa-Orléans will do the selfsame. I am looking forward to what he has to say on the bill, but I will guarantee you that, come the day on which we vote, he will be on his feet supporting this government bill with all the power that he has.

Hon. Jim Watson: Before I talk about the specific items that have been raised, I just wanted to take a moment to congratulate two individuals in Ottawa—Ron Jette and Kimothy Walker—who are putting forward a new network to put child sexual abuse on the national agenda. This is something that is very personal to these individuals—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the minister: How does this pertain to the bill that's being debated this afternoon?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. Thank you.

Hon. Jim Watson: I'd like to thank Ron Jette and Kimothy Walker, who have put forward a proposal to establish a new network on child sexual abuse on the

national agenda. This is something that's deeply personal to these individuals, and I commend them for the work that they're doing. It's called the Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Network. It's a non-profit, grassroots organization that brings people, services and research together. I very much commend those individuals and congratulate them on the launch of this particular network.

I'm very supportive of the particular bill for a number of reasons. Let me talk just briefly, in the last moment, on the environmental benefits and give particular credit to my colleague the honourable member from Ottawa—Orléans, because he established Climate Change Awareness Day on April 21. It's going to be hosted in his riding with Chris Day.

This bill will reduce, by 280,000 tonnes, greenhouse gas emissions. It's the equivalent of taking 2,700 tractor-trailers off the road. One hundred million fewer litres of diesel fuel will be used by the trucking industry as a result of this particular legislation.

I think this is becoming a bipartisan piece of legislation, because I commend Laurie Scott for the work that she did and congratulate our Minister of Transportation for bringing it forward as a government bill.

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Mr. Randy Hillier: Clearly some ministers have difficulty following the discussion and debate on some subjects.

It was interesting that during the discussion, after I spoke about how the speed limiters would limit control and take away the judgment of the driver, the honourable member from London—Fanshawe got up and spoke about how drivers get bonuses for driving. He mentioned in his discussion that these speed limiters would limit thinking. He was promoting this, that this would be a good thing if we limited the thinking of drivers. I'm not sure that's really what people had in mind about this bill: limiting people's thinking.

There was also another item mentioned: that these chips will prevent improper lane changes. I know that technology does a lot of things, but how a chip that limits speed is going to prevent improper lane changes is quite a piece of technology.

Anyway, the other concern that I have is the regulatory creep of this Parliament. Of course, under this legislation, the regulations will be crafted up afterwards, beyond the purview of this assembly. I think it's clear that there are some people who would like to see the drivers restricted and actually replaced and put the nanny state in the driver's seat of Ontario trucks.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to make a few remarks about the speech by the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook, now a member representing a portion—a small portion, it may be, but an important portion—of the fair city of Hamilton. I welcome him as a representative of a portion of our great city, and you can see why: because his comments were relevant in regard to this bill and the effect of this bill. I do have to remark that I did think it was important that he remarked on some of the history of voting on this very bill when it

was brought to the House by a member from his caucus not so long ago.

I think it's interesting that the minister who made remarks on his speech just prior felt it necessary to defend that member in regard to some of the other activities he's undertaking in his riding; of course, that was the member from Ottawa—Orléans.

Nonetheless, I think it's very clear that this member has indicated—the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook—that this bill has its merits, and it's had its merits for some time now. Unfortunately, only some people recognized its merits along this journey that it has taken so far. Certainly the Minister of Transportation has acknowledged its merits and still brought it forward, notwithstanding the fact that the initiation of the bill came from an opposition member. That is certainly laudable.

Notwithstanding the allusion to possible evil twins in the speech and a little bit of back-and-forth in a comedic way, the reality is that this is an opportunity for all members to get behind this bill if the government does the right thing and if there is an opportunity for that public discourse through the public hearings process. Pretty much every member who has spoken about this bill thinks there is room for improvement, some room for amendments but certainly some room for public discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West—Glanbrook has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I enjoyed the very interesting responses to my speech. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing talked about two constituents from his riding. I was trying to figure out the connection, although, of course, my name being Tim—"Timothy" is on my birth certificate—one of his constituents is named Kimothy; one letter difference. That was obviously the connection to my remarks.

My colleague from Beaches—East York is right. I had forgotten about the transfiguration machine in the Premier's office that the members for—Scarborough Southwest, was it?—Scarborough—Rouge River and Scarborough Centre, now the Minister of Labour, had gone through, where they mutated into members who were Adams mine opposers and had formerly supported the Adams mine.

I worry about the Minister of Health and the member for Ottawa—Orléans having to go through the transfiguration machine themselves, but I know they're going to fight the power all the way, kicking and screaming through the transfiguration machine, because nobody is going to tell the member for Ottawa—Orléans what to do and nobody is going to tell the Minister of Health what to do.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek said, "I don't know if they're evil twins." I don't know which one is Mini-Me and which one is Dr. Evil. We'll find out later, in the debate and in the vote, where they stand.

To my earlier comments, I think I should note for the assembly that the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association did a release from a place called Grain Valley, Missouri. I've never had the pleasure of visiting Grain Valley, but I've been to the state of Missouri. I think they would know from trucking in Grain Valley, Missouri. They actually announced their opposition to this bill, in conjunction with the Owner-Operators Business Association of Canada. They say that many of the OTA's members might support it, but theirs do not. That's all the more reason for comprehensive hearings to hear from the competing associations about how this bill should move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I wonder if people watching the television, people who are not part of the camaraderie in this place, are wondering why speaker after speaker stands up to speak in favour of the same bill. Although some of the speeches are funny and some of them contain wit and wisdom and past experience and allusions to characters near and dear to our hearts like Dr. Evil and Mini-Me, the reality is that this bill is going to receive pretty much unanimous agreement and be ordered to committee. Really, that's what I want to talk about: the committee aspect and what we should be looking at in committee.

I want to tell all members, I know it's going to pass and you all know it's going to pass. I wonder why we need much more debate—although I do have a few things I want to put on the record and perhaps other members do, too. But this will become less and less obvious as more and more members stand up, because I don't know what else will need to be said.

Having said that, part of the problem we have with the trucking industry and part of the reason that we need this bill is that we have developed a system in North America which is not based on transporting goods from one place to another, solely and exclusively, but transporting them on an hourly, and sometimes by the minute, demand. The goods move back and forth across the province or back and forth across the continent, so that there is same-time or same-hour delivery mandated.

Several members of the Legislature and I had the opportunity to go down to Detroit a couple of weeks ago to look at the situation there: the need for a new bridge, the need to get the trucks moving back and forth across the St. Clair River—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: The Detroit River.

Mr. Michael Prue: Sorry. Across the Detroit River, just at Lake St. Clair. Excuse me. Thank you very much. You're absolutely right.

We looked at the locations. But some of the stories that we were being told by the customs and excise officials in the United States, the customs officials in Canada, and some of the people who were involved in the Canadian department of international trade, were about how many times goods would move back and forth across the river in order to complete a finished product.

One of the stories that fascinated me, of course, the most was about cars and car parts. Parts of a car would be transported, not once, not twice, but up to six and eight times between the first, initial phases of the car being built and its finalization. The car parts, as everyone knows, are built. The same day they are built, they are moved across the river to another location. They are done on an hourly basis so that there doesn't have to be any storage. So, it is built, then it is put in place. We all know that when there is a strike in one plant, quite often the others are forced to shut down because they have no car parts available to them. That's what happens. I'm just giving this by way of anecdote.

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The second one was a canning factory in southwestern Ontario for jams. They took jars from one portion and took them across the river and then they came back on the other—it was really quite fascinating to listen to all of it, but it was an on-hour or on-time rationale for delivering the goods and services. This is part of the problem, because the truckers have the unenviable responsibility of making sure that the goods get there precisely on time, and they have to make up that time. It is not simply a matter of delivering the car part to the other side and putting it in a storage shed where it might be used a week or a month later. It's making sure it is delivered directly to the factory and put on the assembly line. They reload the trucks with more-completed parts to take them back across the river, and the process continues and continues. If it breaks down for even a few hours, it will throw the plant into chaos.

We need to understand that that is what is happening. If we are going to limit, and I believe we should limit, the speed at which the trucks operate, we also have to work with industry to modify the just-in-time delivery schedules that most industries have come to rely upon today.

Having said that, I just want to make sure the minister is aware, by what is here in Hansard, that this is part of what drives the truckers to make up time when and if they fall behind either because of weather, delays at the border, delays in loading or delays in one manufacturer trying to get it to another location, and of the need to look at more long-term solutions in not having just-in-time delivery, but in helping industries to have adequate supplies so that if you are an hour or two hours late or a day delayed because of inclement weather or any other natural or unnatural phenomenon, that industry will not completely fall apart and break down.

The second thing that I wanted to talk about is the fact that in the legislation there is no actual speed limit within the body of the bill. It is allowed for by regulation, so that ministers can change the actual speed limit, which is purported to be 105 kilometres an hour, at any time, either lowering it or raising it. I'm not sure that we should be going down that road. I hope the truckers can come and speak to it. But there should be legislation in place that sets the actual amount, and that legislation should be set in concurrence with Canadian and other provincial standards. The truckers move back and forth

across huge, vast, enormous distances in Canada. To travel from Quebec through Ontario to Manitoba, only that little portion, is into the thousands of kilometres. We need to make sure the bill is articulated in such a way that we are in complete conformity or near-complete conformity with the rules in Quebec and Manitoba and, of course, the rules of our biggest trading partner on the other side of the Detroit River. I'm not sure that that's there, and I'm not sure that the minister needs the authority to set it in regulation. I do believe it should be set by this Legislature, and that if it ever needs to be amended, the entire Legislature should have an opportunity to look at it again.

I believe the province must work with the federal and provincial counterparts to ensure that trade is not negatively impacted as a result of the bill. As I've said, that will require us sitting down with industry and changing the whole reliance on just-in-time delivery.

I believe that we need to address climate change in a way that I do not see within the body of the bill, but I do see the member from Ottawa–Orléans here being very happy in terms of the climate change and his contribution to climate change around this bill. It cannot be piecemeal. It must not be piecemeal. We have looked at what has happened in the province of Quebec, and, quite clearly, they are integrating the speed-limiter legislation into a comprehensive climate change plan. This bill cannot and should not stand alone. If the true goal here, or one of the major goals of this legislation, is to help the province meet the climate change objectives, then it should be part of the plan as well and should not be left to regulation. It should be part of the plan. If the government is serious, then they should also be proud if that's what it's going to do.

I heard one of the members earlier say in the questions and comments stage that this may reduce greenhouse gases by some 2%. Although any reduction is laudable, that seems to be a fairly small amount, given the enormity of what is going on.

I also note that the truckers seem to have some considerable difficulty with the bill, and we have heard from a couple of groups. My friend from Niagara West–Glanbrook did talk about some of the truckers, and I, too, received a couple of quotations from the major trucking organizations. One was the Teamsters. My information is that the Teamsters oppose this move nationally. They believe that limiters will not actually make roads safer. In some cases, delimiters may increase the likelihood of accidents. For example, they say, some truckers at the top of a hill may be led to shift into neutral—and I guess this is where my friend got this—in order to coast, and this would deactivate the braking system.

The other group is the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association, which is a trans-border US-Canada truckers' organization that opposes the move, stating that it's "a one-sided gift to big business ... disguised as sound science." The association notes that speeding up is often safe and necessary with merging traffic and may result in clogged roads when trucks pass each other.

I believe that we need to send this to committee. We need to make sure that our bill is in synchronization with other jurisdictions, both in Canada and the United States. We need to make sure that we have worked carefully with companies who rely on just-in-time delivery to assist them, on the Canadian side at least, and on the Ontario side especially, to make sure that there are stockpiles available so that just-in-time delivery is not a necessity, so that if someone is delayed, they're not trying to break laws, they're not trying to unhook speed limiters and to drive unsafely, but that they have the option of maybe being an hour or two late without putting other jobs at risk.

We need to work with environmental groups to ensure that this bill will do what's been done in Quebec, and that is, marry the two concepts in integrating the speed-limiter legislation into a comprehensive climate change plan.

I'm not going to use all of my time here today because I don't think it's necessary. I am asking that the government members clearly look at what the opposition is trying to say here. We are saying that we support the bill. We are asking only for a realistic and fulsome debate in committee. We are asking that people who are vitally affected have the opportunity to come forward and present the arguments they want, and we're asking the government to look at other jurisdictions, particularly the province of Quebec, in developing a true environmental plan.

I can see my colleague from Ottawa–Orléans waving a little. I know he has his own plan. I would ask the committee to listen very carefully to what the member from Ottawa–Orléans has in his own plan, because maybe his is as good as that of the province of Quebec. I have not had a chance to see what he has to say yet.

In any event, all of these need to be heard. I look forward to those hearings, and I will listen intently to what my other colleagues in this House have to say on this important bill. But I also would remind other members what my learned friend from Pickering–Scarborough had to state, and I hope he's listening intently to me: that the really important job will be done not so much in the debate that's taking place now, but in the job that is done in committee, when we listen to all aspects and make the bill that was the dream of the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock into a reality and we start going out there to save lives and make the streets and highways of Ontario safer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

1750

Mr. Phil McNeely: I will start off by describing my conversion on the road to Damascus. I know you would realize that this is a very, very busy thoroughfare and there's a whole new perspective on this bill now. When the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock brought this in, she was very convincing, but she wasn't sufficiently convincing that day on the environmental part. So we've done a lot of good work on that. I certainly want to congratulate the minister for bringing

this in quickly. I think it's an extremely important bill. This bill is so much better than what we saw earlier.

I think part of my enlightenment on this whole bill occurred during the campaign, when I so handily won the election in Ottawa–Orléans. I think that had a lot to do with it. I know that the member across was down to my riding a few times to see how well we campaign in Ottawa–Orléans. I think that was part of this change.

I think we have to look at this bill as being extremely important. I think the member for Beaches–East York says it very well, that we have to look at the whole speed limits. If we go back to when OPEC was putting the squeeze on North America with oil, there was a reduction in the speed limit in the United States to 55 miles per hour, which is about 85 kilometres per hour. They don't have the courage to do that today, but I think we have to look at that when we think of our environment, when we think of our climate change plans and when we think of what we want around us.

This is very important. It's very nice to see all three parties agreeing that the bill is important. The truckers brought it forward. They brought it forward to the member who brought in the private member's bill. It's a good bill and I'm glad to see such support for it.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member for Beaches–East York for his remarks. I enjoyed hearing the remarks about the just-in-time delivery. I also live on a border city; my riding is Sarnia–Lambton. That is the St. Clair River, not the “Detroit River at Lake St. Clair.” The honourable member for Beaches–East York had that right. I'm sure that's what he was referring to. He was thinking of Sarnia–Lambton. It's hard to forget about Sarnia–Lambton when you're in the chamber.

I heard the honourable member for Ottawa–Orléans say that he thought that one of the reasons that helped him on the road to Damascus and his change on this bill was the election victory back in October. I never thought about that, but I had an election victory back in October too, and maybe it was part of this bill. I think it must have been the influence of the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock that added to that too. I never really thought about that aspect of it, but maybe it did.

I also think that we need to look at just-in-time delivery. As the member brought up, that forces the transportation industry, and the drivers who are affected by it, to oftentimes have to go out there and try and meet unreasonable schedules. Sometimes they're affected by things beyond their reach: incidents such as 9/11—God forbid we have another incident like that—or crashes on the highway, on the 402, the 401. Our 400-series highways often can cause backups and put people behind the eight ball. As he said, they no longer have storage on-site in factories, so it does cause a lot of issues. Something I was surprised to learn from him was about the number of times a product crosses the border, in car parts or things like that—very interesting.

It's always interesting what you can learn in this Legislature. You can learn about election victories and

about how bills are affected by those as well. I look forward to a spirited debate as the evening goes forth.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have to say that one of the things the member for Sarnia–Lambton forgot is that you learn about the transformation machine that goes on in the Premier's office.

Nonetheless, my remarks are in reference to the member for Beaches–East York. Of course, he brought a number of issues to the table. I think they were appropriate issues that needed review; certainly, the issue of just-in-time delivery and how this bill will affect the industry in that regard, acknowledging the fact that there are many, many pieces to the trucking industry.

In fact, coming from Steeltown in Hamilton, I was surprised to learn that just-in-time delivery is becoming an issue for steel companies as well, which is quite interesting when you think about the size and complexity of those kinds of foundries and those huge operations. Just-in-time delivery is something that I've heard in regard to that particular industry, which is something that I was really quite surprised about nonetheless.

Also, the issue about whether or not the speed itself should be set out in the bill, in the language of the legislation, as opposed to leaving it to a reg: I think that is a very important issue, and I think it not only speaks to the idea that this government is claiming that much of this bill has to do with climate change—and if that's so, then the commitment to that needs to be ingrained in the legislation, not something in a reg that can be easily changed or amended, perhaps in the wrong direction, by this government or another government in the future.

That, of course, brought up the whole issue of whether this bill does enough in terms of an integrated strategy for climate change, unlike what they've done in Quebec, which is something that this government should turn its eye to, with regard to a more fulsome climate change strategy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? I'll return to the member for Beaches–East York, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'd like to thank my colleagues from Ottawa–Orléans, Sarnia–Lambton and Hamilton Centre for their comments. I really want to say that I am pleasantly surprised tonight to hear that they actually listened to portions of the speech. All of them commented on things that were actually said and on what I was trying to get across.

The member from Ottawa–Orléans, though, did speak about his conversion on the road to Damascus. I always like those Biblical allusions. I wish I had been there to witness it, even if it was during the height of an election campaign in the Ottawa area—to see the giant sword in the sky and him falling to the ground and coming up a changed man, because it would indeed have been a sight. I'm just trying to picture it in my mind—a sight to behold. I thank him for his comments and for listening to what I had to say.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton talked about just-in-time delivery. We all need to be aware that this is

becoming almost universal, in terms of people not wanting to put things into storage, not wanting to move it, limiting the amount of workers. If you only have one worker loading the truck and one person unloading the truck, then you don't have a whole warehouse operation and all the costs involved, which is why they're doing it. But it has also put the truckers at increased risk in trying to meet time frames which are sometimes very difficult, and we have to be able to work with industry to do that.

My colleague from Hamilton Centre also talked about that, but she also brought in the whole aspect of what is happening in Quebec and how they are marrying this to an environmental standard, which I believe we need to do in the province of Ontario.

I thank you all for your comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

TOBACCO CONTROL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given today by the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship—was it today or was it last week?

Mr. Norm Miller: Yesterday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize—concerning assistance for convenience store operators with new regulations.

The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or the minister's parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes. I recognize the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to be here for this late show. I'm sure that people watching are probably wondering what a late show is, and I'll just briefly explain that.

1800

I've now asked the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship two questions twice, so that's four questions, about the assistance his ministry is providing for the small businesses, the convenience stores, that are adapting to new rules that are banning the retail display of tobacco products. I've asked four questions, and I've had inadequate responses.

In fact, he referred the first question to the Minister of Health Promotion. I'd like to point out that it's certainly not a health question. It's about assistance for these small operators. I'm completely in favour of all actions to reduce smoking in the province of Ontario. This is not a health question; it's a question about assistance to the

small business operators and the way this government has handled this situation.

The bill was introduced two years ago. The guidelines to implement the new rules came out in January 2008. They have to comply by May 31 of this year.

Picture yourself as a small business operator. You're busy running your store, you're trying to make a buck, and you get these new rules in January—just a few months to try to comply with them.

They're not simple. I'll give an example. Here's a description of what you have to do: "Retrofit devices that cover shelves with a top-hinge 'flip up' cover that closes automatically or immediately by gravity. These must be no larger than 30.5 cm in height by 61 cm in length, and must open one at a time." They go on and on about the restrictions required as to how you have to modify your store to be able to comply with regulations. Let's remember that every store is a little different, and it's not necessarily a simple thing to be able to meet these new rules. The guidelines just came out in January. They're very tricky for small operators to meet.

I note that Dave Bryans, the president of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, points out that they weren't consulted on this.

"'We weren't consulted,' says Bryans. 'The rules were written by health groups that don't understand how to run a convenience store.'" He went on to say that many of the stores just won't be ready because these regulations came out so late.

"Only half of Ontario's 10,000 ... store owners will be ready to comply with legislation banning the retail display of cigarettes, Dave Bryans, president of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, said Monday, citing the 'impossible task' of ... new regulations set to come into effect at the end of May." Not only that; there is not a sufficient supplier of the actual cabinets required to display these cigarettes.

He goes on to say, "The agreed-upon covers will not be available for approximately 50% of the stores, as the final dimensions and decisions were not agreed upon until the end of January 2008, allowing only four months for compliance."

Even those completely in favour of these new rules point out that the government has been very slow to act. Michael Perley, director of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco, says, "These guidelines for how you do this were only brought out by the Ministry of Health Promotion in January, a couple of years after the law was brought in. Why it took so long is a mystery to everyone, and this has given a number of stores headaches understanding exactly how they do this." He makes the point very well.

Every store is different. The convenience store operators are concerned about the fines they will be under if they don't comply. Dave Bryans goes on to say, "We are concerned that the over 200 tobacco enforcement officers will use their heavy-hand-of-the-law approach on small business without any assistance or compassion for the timeline predicament we are in..."

“Our members understand the concept and want to comply.”

The fines are up to \$10,000 for the first offence and \$150,000 for three or more for a corporation.

My question, now for the fifth time: What are you doing to assist the convenience store operators to meet the new regulations banning tobacco advertising? Why did you wait until January 2008 to provide guidelines when the legislation passed two years ago? Will you be flexible in your application of the new law to give business time to adjust? Can you answer me this time?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): In reply, I recognize the minister’s parliamentary assistant, the member for Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: I would like to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. First, let me just say that you represent a very beautiful area that I’ve been to many times.

I’m happy to respond again to the question that the member asked the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship yesterday. There really are two parts to the question: one dealing with health care and one dealing with small business.

First, I’d like to say that this ban is about saving lives and reducing health care costs by preventing young people from starting to smoke and by helping smokers quit.

Smoking kills 13,000 Ontarians and costs our health care system \$1.6 billion each and every year. It is also the number one preventable cause of death in Ontario. That is why, in 2006, our government enacted one of the toughest anti-smoking legislations in Ontario. When the Smoke-Free Ontario Act was first read in this House on December 15, 2004, and was first introduced by my colleague the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, he said:

“There’s another component to this bill that deserves particular attention: our retail display ban. We have all walked into convenience stores and seen elaborate countertop displays promoting smoking precisely at the eye level of young children. Does anyone really believe that it is somehow acceptable for cigarettes to be mixed in with Twizzlers and hockey cards for the benefits of young consumers?”

Our government is doing all we can to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians. That is why, effective May 31, 2008, the retail display of tobacco products will be banned. The ban is about saving lives and ensuring that the next generation of Ontarians do not pick up the habit of smoking.

The second part regarding small business: We have been working with our partners to ensure a smooth transition of the display ban, including the Ontario Convenience Stores Association and the Ontario Korean Businessmen’s Association. As part of the small business community, convenience stores play a vital role as the backbone of this economy. Small businesses make up 99% of Ontario’s businesses and account for more than half of Ontario’s jobs. Small and medium-sized busi-

nesses in Ontario also generate approximately \$230 billion in economic activity.

I would like to take a moment to recognize Ontario’s hard-working convenience store owners, who devote their time and energy to providing convenient products at convenient times for the people of Ontario on an ongoing basis.

Small businesses in Ontario contribute to innovation, investment and job creation in every part of the province. Convenience stores are especially important to job creation as they alone employ over 100,000 people, and we thank them for this contribution.

The Ontario Convenience Stores Association recognizes that we are listening to their concerns and are working with them. In fact, the president of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association did send a letter, and part of it was read yesterday in this House. He writes:

“I would like to take this opportunity to briefly thank you for all the help and support that you, your cabinet colleagues and the Premier have given to Ontario’s independent family-run convenience stores.... As I have said in the past, all OCSA members will comply with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.”

We are working with our partners and we have been working with them for the last two years, and they are preparing for this ban. We will continue to work with our partners until the ban becomes effective on May 31, 2008. Since January of this year alone, public health officials have visited 5,500 tobacco vendors, informing them and talking with them about our display ban.

We are committed to promoting and protecting the health and well-being of all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the first adjournment debate.

TOBACCO CONTROL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 37, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services concerning the collection of cigarette taxes from the smoke shop located on government-owned property on Argyle Street in Caledonia.

I’m pleased to recognize the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

1810

Ms. Laurie Scott: My reason for this request, pursuant to standing order 37(a), is that I’m unsatisfied with the answer received to the question I posed yesterday in the House to the Minister of Revenue, who then sent the question over to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Dodged and weaved.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Dodged and weaved again.

The question related directly to the Minister of Revenue’s responsibilities, and I quoted from the Minister of Revenue’s news releases in the Legislature

here and referred to the Minister of Revenue's public website. The question was certainly not out of the minister's realm of responsibility to answer. It's relating to a vendor operating on government-owned land, selling illegal cigarettes to children and young people and not collecting or claiming their share of tobacco taxes.

In the Ministry of Revenue, there are no less than 17 members who are employees who get paid salaries well over the \$100,000 list. Their job titles are focused on tax appeals, tax revenue collections, tax advisory, tax avoidance specialists. So she has a large group of people working for her that could have supplied the answer.

Why she didn't answer the question, I don't know. I hope it's not a trend for new ministers, that they avoid the questions and pass them off to other ministers.

Is there any coincidence the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka just did the late show? He wasn't happy with the question to the minister of small business and he asked for the late show there.

In the past two weeks, both myself and my colleagues have asked a number of questions with respect to the no-smoking laws, as well as the regulations and the effects on small business. We provided clear examples of where there are serious violations for those regulations—no response from the government on addressing these issues, which is why we're here tonight. We've heard excuses, unrelated statistics and rhetoric, mostly from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The reason for my question to the Minister of Revenue yesterday, along with my colleague from Thornhill, was to clarify: Is there a double standard? We're asking, is there a double standard when it comes to enforcing the Ontario revenue regulations?

Her own ministry lists numerous examples of revenue officers seizing illegal tobacco products, including fines to convenience store owners and vendors across Ontario for not filing the proper taxes on the tobacco products they sell. Yesterday, she couldn't pass the question off fast enough. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services quoted all these statistics again that didn't have any relation to the question.

My question is, why is the Minister of Revenue allowing an illegal smoke shop selling illegal cigarettes to young people without identification? It's a hazardous product. They're not paying their fair share of provincial tobacco taxes. They're operating on government-owned property. It's unbelievable that they are—an illegal smoke shack operating on government-owned property.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Say it isn't so.

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is so; close to both an elementary and a secondary school. Where's the minister of infrastructure renewal on this? He's responsible for the Ontario Realty Corp, the crown land. There are quite a few ministers involved here. No one's answering the question. Is the vendor, is the owner of the illegal smoke shop actually paying rent to the taxpayers of Ontario? Because Ontario Realty Corp, the province, owns the property.

On April 3, I asked the first opposition question ever to the Minister of Health Promotion. She's the minister responsible for this health promotion, a children's Smoke-Free Ontario Act. We've spent millions of taxpayers' dollars on this.

She was asked the question—lots of posters, but “Do as I say, don't do as I do,” is it? Yes, I think so. That would be the term. So duck and pass the buck is the theme that has gone through here, in not answering the questions. Thirty per cent of cigarettes sold in this province are illegal, amounting to about \$600 million a year that the government should be taking in taxes.

The Minister of Health Promotion refuses to protect young children in places like Caledonia from the evils of smoking. The Minister of Revenue refuses to ensure that the smoke shop on crown land selling illegal tobacco products to young people without proper identification—she refuses to have those products seized and ensure that a vendor is paying proper taxes, like the thousands and thousands of hard-working, law-abiding convenience store owners and business owners in this province. Add to this that you have the minister of small business, who never ceases to be out in left field on this entire issue. He refuses to stand up for these small businesses and the double standard that they are faced with.

Let me quote a recent article in the Cornwall Standard Freeholder with respect to the question from my colleague from Thornhill last Thursday—I guess I can't because I'm out of time, but my point has been made.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre to reply.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for her comments.

Our government is committed to combatting the problem of illegal cigarettes. Since October 2003, Ontario has taken many steps to attack illegal, contraband cigarette sales, including the Tobacco Tax Act. Convictions under that act doubled between 2005 and 2007.

Over the past two years, Ministry of Revenue investigators have seized 28 million contraband cigarettes, 177,000 untaxed cigars and large quantities of fine-cut tobacco.

In reality, our government strengthened enforcement against contraband tobacco in our 2004, 2006 and 2007 budgets and, if passed, our 2008 budget. Both parties sitting opposite voted against increasing enforcement by voting against our budgets.

The role of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, through the Ontario Provincial Police, is to ensure that the community and its residents are safe. In fact, last week, near North Bay, in one instance alone, the OPP confiscated—

Interjection.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: If the member opposite is not going to hear the answer, then I don't know why we're doing the late show, so I'll go back.

Last week, near North Bay, in one instance alone, the OPP confiscated 15,000 cartons of cigarettes, valued at \$450,000; and the week before that, the OPP seized

\$410,000 worth of contraband cigarettes in two stops along Highway 401.

Don't tell us that the OPP isn't doing its job. Our government is proud of the work being done by the fine women and men of the OPP.

It is nevertheless true that our government does not interfere with the operational decisions of the OPP or any other police service in Ontario. We take the recommendations from the Linden report very seriously. We are very clear on recommendation 71: The minister's role is clear-cut and "does not include directions regarding specific law enforcement decisions in individual cases." All members of this Legislature are fully aware of this well-established division between public policy and operational matters.

We have full confidence in the police across the province, and we would hope that the opposition shares this confidence.

Let me remind the members that it is the primary responsibility of the federal government to protect Canadians from cross-border smuggling, including tobacco smuggling.

The RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency are the two federal agencies responsible for matters related to cross-border smuggling.

The RCMP is the lead agency that manages Canada's international border enforcement teams known as IBETs. The OPP is a strong partner in the work of these teams, targeting cross-border criminal activity like tobacco smuggling. These teams enable law enforcement agen-

cies in the US and Canada to ensure that our borders are secure and open for legitimate business. These teams are a major enforcement success.

In addition, last week, law enforcement officials in eastern Ontario announced they are joining forces to crack down on speeders, contraband tobacco smugglers and impaired drivers on the region's roads and highways. This partnership will consist of the OPP, the Ministry of Transportation, the RCMP and the Canada Border Services Agency.

We know that enforcement and tax policies alone are not enough. We know that smoking cessation is key to long-term success. The McGuinty government has been aggressively implementing smoking cessation programs since taking office. The Smoke-Free Ontario Act has been hugely successful.

Our colleague Minister Best confirms that tobacco consumption in Ontario fell by 31.8% from 2003 to 2006. That equals over 4.6 billion fewer cigarettes.

Our government believes that reducing the demand for tobacco is crucial. Although some people may be concerned about lost tax revenue from illegal cigarettes, our government is concerned about lost lives from all cigarettes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to have been carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1819.

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cookville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (ND)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader of the Official Opposition, Opposition House leader / Chef de l'opposition officielle, leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	

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Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Kevin Flynn
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney,
Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio, Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jerry Ouellette
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Kim Craiton,
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch,
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo,
Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qadri,
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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