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**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 28 May 2009**

**Jeudi 28 mai 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 May 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 mai 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CORONERS AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT  
LA LOI SUR LES CORONERS

Mr. Levac, on behalf of Mr. Bartolucci, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coroners.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** It's an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Minister Bartolucci. On October 23 last year, he introduced Bill 115, the Coroners Amendment Act. I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to support the legislation, which, if passed, will significantly strengthen Ontario's death investigation system.

Ontario's coroners and forensic pathologists make a vital contribution to the safety of all Ontarians. The motto of the Office of the Chief Coroner sums up the contribution quite eloquently: "We speak for the dead to protect the living." And so they do. They provide important answers for families, as well as communities, about the circumstances of a loved one's death, and they provide recommendations on how to prevent deaths in similar circumstances, not to pass judgment. However, public confidence in our death investigations system has been shaken to the core as a result of previous history. This government is committed to restoring that confidence, and this legislation is an important step—a step—in that process.

The proposed amendments to the Coroners Act are part of our ongoing efforts to ensure the quality of Ontario's death investigations. We want to make sure that the system has appropriate checks and balances to prevent the tragedies and miscarriages of justice that led the government to call for a public inquiry on this issue. The Honourable Justice Stephen Goudge published his report and recommendations from that inquiry on October 1,

2008. And 21 days later, our government introduced Bill 115 to address all of the legislative amendments—all of the legislative amendments—recommended by Justice Goudge, which we understand he was quite pleased to see.

Progress to date, however—this legislation is not just about responding to the recommendations of the public inquiry. The legislation represents the vital next steps in the process that started several years ago, to ensure that the highest quality of death investigations in Ontario take place. Since 2003, a great many changes have been made to the death investigation system in this province, and it's important to ensure the quality of death investigations, especially in criminally suspicious cases. The chief forensic pathologist has developed detailed guidelines for the conduct of autopsies in criminally suspicious cases. All criminally suspicious autopsies now undergo a peer review process to make sure that everything that should be done has been done, and has been done correctly. Now, when a pediatric autopsy is required, it is performed in one of four centres: Hamilton, London, Ottawa or Toronto. This ensures that the most experienced and knowledgeable pathologists conduct complex pediatric autopsies. There's a difference between the two.

In June 2008, we appointed Dr. Andrew McCallum as Ontario's chief coroner. Dr. McCallum, along with chief forensic pathologist Dr. Michael Pollanen, have embraced the challenge to lead Ontario's death investigation system through this period of intense change. I've had conversations with both, and both are extremely professional.

As well, work continues on the project to develop the new forensic services and coroner's complex. Just last week, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and Infrastructure Ontario released a request for proposals to design, build, finance and maintain the new facility. I recall, back in 1999 when I was first elected, speaking in this House about that need. The previous government started a process and didn't complete it, but I will say that everyone in this House agreed about the complex that was needed.

When completed, the complex will house the Centre of Forensic Sciences, the Office of the Chief Coroner and the provincial forensic pathology unit under one roof. It will provide state-of-the-art technology and laboratory facilities to meet the province's forensic needs now and into the years to come.

By moving this project forward, we're addressing Commissioner Goudge's recommendation that a new, modern facility is needed to house the Office of the Chief

Coroner and related forensic sciences in up-to-date facilities.

Bill 115 is the next step, and it has very clear objectives. If passed, this legislation would lay the foundations for a death investigation system that (1) has greater oversight, (2) improves public accessibility, and (3) is more transparent and with stronger accountability. Those three points are very laudable and important to providing us with the best system that we can possibly have.

Each of the proposed amendments for the Coroners Act meets with the intent of the legislative framework recommended by Commissioner Goudge's report and builds on the progress our government has already been making to strengthen Ontario's death investigation system.

I'd like to spend a few moments reviewing some of the key elements that we are proposing. Defining the death investigation itself: For the system to be transparent, it's important that people understand why a death investigation is held and what it's designed to achieve. The legislation before us would set out in statute the purpose of the death investigation.

In clear and simple terms, each investigation is conducted in the public interest to find five basic answers to the questions about a death: Who died, how did they die, when did they die, where did they die and by what means did they die? The answers to these questions determine whether recommendations are needed to prevent similar deaths or whether the death requires the additional public scrutiny of an inquest. Once the investigation is done, a decision is then made as to whether or not an inquest is necessary.

Establishing effective oversight, the next objective: It's clear from Commissioner Goudge's report that establishing effective oversight of the death investigation system is key to winning back the public's confidence in this system. That's why the proposed legislation would create a death investigation oversight council. The new council would oversee the work of the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist and hold them accountable for the quality of death investigations in Ontario. I believe this was supported by all parties.

Members of the council would be appointed by the Ontario Lieutenant Governor, based on the expertise and the experience needed to effectively advise and oversee the chief coroner and the chief forensic pathologist. To ensure transparency, the council would be required to submit an annual report to be tabled before this assembly, as recommended in the amendments during committee.

Strengthening the complaints process is another objective. When a death is investigated, we must never forget that it means a family has lost a loved one, and usually friends and neighbours. This is a time of great stress and anxiety for families. Some never get over it. And while our coroners are experienced professionals, there exists a risk for misunderstanding and miscommunication in such situations.

A strong death investigation system is a transparent death investigation system, a system that is not afraid to

listen and respond when a family expresses concerns over how the investigation into their loved one's death was handled. Under the proposed legislation, a new complaints committee would be established that would report to the oversight council—another added transparency system. The committee would track complaints made about the conduct of a coroner or pathologist and would deal directly with complaints about the chief coroner or chief forensic pathologist—one more system.

#### 0910

Recognizing forensic pathology services is the other issue. In his report, Commissioner Goudge identified the vital role that forensic pathology plays in Ontario's death investigation system. Several of his recommendations were directed at improving the oversight of forensic pathologists, defining their roles and ensuring quality within the system. The proposed legislation addresses those recommendations and would, for the first time in Ontario, establish in law the roles and responsibilities of a forensic pathologist in the death investigation system, as well as establishing the framework needed to hold pathologists fully accountable for their work.

Roles and responsibilities needed to be defined. The proposed legislation would establish the chief forensic pathologist as the head of forensic pathology in the province. This would allow him or her to ensure the quality and consistency of services being provided by pathologists in the death investigation system across the entire province. There will be no patchwork here.

Ontario Forensic Pathology Service is another one of the goals. To further ensure consistency, accountability and oversight, a new service, the Ontario Forensic Pathology Service, would be created. Reporting to the chief forensic pathologist, the new service would bring together all of the province's forensic pathology services. These services are currently decentralized and run by regional forensic pathology units and other hospital facilities where autopsies are performed.

The register of pathologists was another recommendation. The chief forensic pathologist would also be responsible for maintaining a register of pathologists authorized to perform coroner's autopsies in support of a coroner's death investigation in Ontario. To be included on the register, a pathologist would have to demonstrate appropriate qualifications and credentials and continue to meet the strict performance requirements set out by the chief forensic pathologist.

#### *Interjection.*

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'm sure that we'll just keep it moving right along for the member from Niagara.

Another important area of a death investigation that requires clarification is that of retained organs and tissue samples. Retaining organs and tissue samples, including whole organs, is a critical part of the death investigation process. Testing done on retained tissues can help determine the cause of death and can contribute to public safety after investigation. The proposed legislation would formalize the current policy of the Office of the Chief Coroner dealing with organ and tissue retention and ap-

appropriate family notification through regulation. That's something that wasn't happening.

An independent death investigation system: There have been several recent cases where families who have lost loved ones have called upon the minister to direct the chief coroner to call an inquest. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services currently has that authority under section 22 of the Coroners Act. While these cases are undoubtedly compelling and gut-wrenching, the decision to hold an inquest must be based on factors set out in the Coroners Act.

In a death investigation system based on the principles of professionalism and accountability, there is no place for political considerations, however well intentioned and requested. There are two schools of thought on this. One is that it be retained for that purpose, and the other is to move in the direction that this government has chosen. It is the chief coroner who has the experience and expertise to decide when a death investigation warrants an inquest, and the chief coroner should be free to make that decision without any political intervention. That's why the proposed legislation would repeal section 22 and so remove the power of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to order inquests.

This was controversial. The decision was made. We fell on the side of the other option that others were presenting. That's not to say that a decision regarding an inquest cannot be questioned or reviewed. Decisions on inquests routinely undergo three levels of review within the Office of the Chief Coroner. This includes the local investigating coroner, the regional supervising coroner and the inquest committee. The chief coroner can review the case if the family of the deceased is unhappy that an inquest has not been called after these three separate and independent processes are used. The chief coroner's decision regarding an inquest could still be the subject of a judicial review if there was a desire to seek a review of the particular ruling that the coroner made.

It does not mean that we will not still do inquests. Every child in any kind of public custody will receive an inquest automatically. Anyone in police custody will receive an inquest automatically. Any death in a correctional facility will automatically receive an investigation, and the coroner will decide if an inquest is necessary after that.

Northern First Nations and other remote communities were brought up in the inquest. When we talk about a strong death investigation system, we mean a system that delivers a consistently high-quality service to everyone in Ontario regardless of where they live in this province. In his report, Commissioner Goudge recognized that delivering a consistently high-quality service is challenging in areas of the province. The current shortage of doctors in northern, First Nations and remote communities can result in long response times in the event of a death, and sometimes coroners are unable to attend a death scene at all.

As recommended by Commissioner Goudge, the new legislation would provide for the appointment of individ-

uals other than medical doctors to perform a coroner's duties. This provision would provide coroners with the flexibility to meet local needs and provide improved services to northern and remote communities, as well as any other community that might benefit from a more flexible death investigation model. For example, paramedics or nurse practitioners might be appointed to fulfill that role. It is important to note, however, that all death investigations would continue to be supervised by the regional supervising coroner to ensure quality and consistency: the very purpose for this bill being introduced.

Focusing resources on public safety: Making the best use of available resources is of paramount importance to the delivery of public services, and death investigations are no exception. Coroners' inquests can make significant contributions to public safety; however, they are time-consuming and costly. It's important that they are held only in cases where there is a reasonable expectation of meaningful recommendations to prevent similar deaths, which indeed is the purpose of doing an investigation.

The proposed legislation makes several changes to the circumstances that require an inquest to be held. An inquest would no longer be mandatory in the case of an adult who dies of natural causes while in the custody of a correctional facility. Such cases rarely result in meaningful recommendations. However, inquests would now be required for individuals detained in psychiatric facilities or in secure treatment programs who die while being restrained—something that was offered as an amendment by the opposition, which we accepted. And there would be no change in the requirement for inquests into deaths in police custody; there will be inquests under police custody. These changes would allow coroners to better focus their resources on those complex cases where an inquest could result in meaningful recommendations to make Ontarians safer, and that's the job of the chief coroner.

Just to clarify: Coroners would continue to have the discretion to call an inquest in any case where they believe it is warranted; all deaths of adult inmates in correctional facilities would continue to be thoroughly investigated by a coroner, who would still be required to call an inquest in cases where he or she believes a person may not have died of natural causes—no changes there; as well, all deaths in police custody or of minors held in secure-custody facilities would remain the subject of a mandatory inquest.

In summary, the proposed legislation builds on the significant progress our government has already made to strengthen Ontario's death investigation system. If passed, the legislation would lay the foundation for further improvements. Therefore, I ask for the support of all parties in this House for the legislation so that we can create a more effective, more transparent and, above all, more accountable death investigation system that Ontarians demand and deserve.

I appreciate the work of the minister, I appreciate the opportunity to follow this through the system and I appreciate the opposition's recommendations and the discussions we've had in committee. Thank you very much.

0920

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I will be speaking myself in just a few moments, so I just want to point out—I've got a few comments to put on the record, but our party will be supporting Bill 115. We do have some concerns with it—but I will be speaking in a few minutes myself.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for Welland.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I listened carefully to the passionate and exuberant comments of the parliamentary assistant. I do want to make note of the fact that he, of course, did all the heavy lifting. The Solicitor General was nowhere to be seen while this bill was winding its way through the legislative process but will undoubtedly take credit for its successes and leave its failures to be borne by his parliamentary assistant.

I too will be speaking to the bill this morning. I had hoped and anticipated that the bill would have passed, but the lengthy discourse by the parliamentary assistant may have made that an impossibility in terms of this morning, because, of course, we can only sit until 10:15. His House leader may well want to speak with him about his frustrating the passage of the bill in a rather speedy manner this morning.

I have some things to say about the bill. It's not the be-all and end-all. The parliamentary assistant appeals to the opposition and says—he knows we're supporting the bill. For Pete's sake, stop that; stop that. We've been on the record from the get-go. He wants to create the impression that somehow his oratory and his exhortation have prompted us to come over onside. He knows we're supporting the bill. The bill's going to pass. What's remarkable is that it's taken this long and that this government has been so lax in responding to the critical matter that the bill, in fact, in itself responds to.

I do have some very special concerns about the repeal of section 22, and that's something that the parliamentary assistant didn't address. Maybe he's going to in the time allotted to him in his response.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's always interesting to listen to the member for Brantford—and of course he did a job of the heavy lifting, as the prior member said, to bring this bill to where we find it today. Speaking passionately about it: As you bring something through like that, you have an extra attachment to it, so it's kind of interesting, listening to the member speak.

Where this bill is going to end up today, I'm not sure.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Oh, you're not?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Well, we may help the government out on this one.

**Interjection:** Yes?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Yes, we may help the government; we may not. It depends; it depends on where we come out on this. But we do have some time available for people to express their interests on this bill.

The Coroners Act, of course, is a very, very important part of Ontario's legal system and in our system of confidence in the government and the system, especially when we have state-sponsored health care. The Coroners Act is very important to ensure that the health industry in our province is working in the way in which it should, and the coroner's department is one that is very, very important to that end—to make sure that people remain confident in the system we have and that diagnosis, treatments, the way people are treated in hospitals, the way people are treated in retirement homes and nursing homes and old-age homes are appropriate and are done with the kind of care and attention that all Ontarians hope to have. The coroner is the one who ultimately justifies those actions.

I look forward to the rest of the debate on this bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

The member has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'm glad I got everyone's attention. It's really important for me to make sure that everyone understands the depth and importance of this bill, so I really do appreciate the comments made by my colleagues opposite—the member from Simcoe North, the member from Welland and the member from Halton.

To respond directly to the member from Welland, I'm glad we were able to spend some time together during this bill and receive all of the information that was required, but he would be very interested to know that I was briefing and discussing with not only the staff, but the minister, on an ongoing basis, who did show an interest in this bill and did show me that he was concerned as much as anyone else was about ensuring that this was done in a way that represented his beliefs. He takes his job seriously. I'm sure the member would accept that as fact because that's what I'm telling him. That's exactly what it is.

Having said that, I do look forward to the comments from both of the opposition parties. As I said earlier, there were two schools of thought on this particular issue, and we wanted to see which side people were falling on on section 22. I happen to believe that the decision the government is making in the circumstances with regard to section 22 provides for the chief coroner and his complete team to come to the most professional, the most practical and the most accountable decision when it comes to doing an inquest.

Having said that, I definitely appreciate all of the feedback that I've received throughout the coverage of this bill. There were some very good deputations, and I'm sure that both members will make some references to those. Some of those deputations brought to light some issues that we did end up dealing with in the bill, and I believe all of those people deserve credit. The biggest group of people that deserve credit are those who had to suffer during the process of the unfortunate circumstances that we found ourselves in around Dr. Smith. Having said that, to those families and to any family that has lost a loved one and that requires the Coroners Act to

kick in, we offer our condolences, obviously. Hopefully, when we continue to rise in this House, we continue to offer legislation that continues to make us the greatest place to live, work, play and raise a family.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm very pleased to rise today to comment on the third reading of Bill 115, the Coroners Amendment Act. First of all, I want to thank all the people who came to the committee hearings. Any time we can have open committee hearings and people are allowed to come and voice their concerns on a particular piece of legislation, it's what this place is really all about.

One of the things that I wanted to put on the record is that when we listen to the depositions that are made at the committee hearings, quite often, from my perspective as critic for community safety and correctional services, I like to take the opportunity to listen to their proposed amendments, and if I agree with those proposed amendments, I like to put them in the form of an amendment that the government can at least consider. We've seen that with a number of the deputants.

I talk to, in particular, people like Terence Young, who was here. He made a deputation and in fact, he has written a book called *Death by Prescription*. It should have been launched between the time we had committee hearings and now. He is a former member of this House and now an MP up in Ottawa. He talked about what he dealt with in his life and his family's life when he lost a daughter—I believe it was right at the kitchen table.

We had also in attendance Tim and Barb Farlow. Tim made a presentation to the committee, and I applaud him for his deputation. I know that when we originally had done second reading debate, Tim and Barb were in the House. They had lost a little girl at Sick Kids. She'd passed away at 80 days of age, and they're wanting answers in the death of that child as to exactly what happened. I put that all on the record in second reading debate. Tim Farlow was good enough to come to the committee and voice his concern again about the types of amendments and what some families have gone through.

One of the things I noticed that I thought was very, very important about the committee hearings was the fact that it was a very, very emotional time. A number of people had a difficult time coming to those hearings, voicing their concerns, putting on the record what their families had gone through. I think, as parliamentarians, this kind of legislation is often difficult to accept, and the committee hearings are difficult to put up with, because you relate to your own family all the time when you're listening to some of the tragedies that some of the folks have gone through.

**0930**

At the very beginning of this process, we felt that we would be supporting this legislation. Our party will continue to support the legislation. I wanted to put on the record, though, that we cannot agree on section 22. We think it is a mistake to repeal the section. I think everybody who came to the committee hearings felt the same way. No one said this was the right thing to do. They

thought it was an opportunity for the minister to dodge some responsibility. So, although we will be supporting the bill, we think that the section should not have been repealed and that the minister should still have that responsibility.

The comment coming from the government was, "We've only used it one time." But, you know, there might be an opportunity where that could happen next month or six months from now, when you might have that circumstance, when you might want the minister to intervene. For that reason, we felt that that section should have been left alone.

However, our party made 18 amendments to the bill. I thank the government for allowing at least three of them to be accepted, with a couple of minor modifications. We put a lot of effort into it; we take this legislation very, very seriously. I know that in my own office, my executive assistant, Gaggan Gill, put a lot of effort into research. She worked with Sarah Ellis, from our research department. These two young ladies did a remarkable job of listening to the concerns of those who made deputations to the committee.

We took those concerns and put them in the form of amendments. We felt they were very well-thought-out and well-researched amendments that made a lot of sense, and for every one of the amendments, we put on the record the reason for the amendment. Although as an opposition we don't expect the government to accept every one of our amendments, I think the government and the ministry staff would at least look at the amendments as though they were professionally done.

I know that when the parliamentary assistant addressed the amendments, he always came back with a lot of reasons why the amendment would not be acceptable to the government and the ministry. We accept that that's their job and their responsibility. But in the end, they're not wishy-washy amendments; these are amendments that made a lot of sense, and a lot of thought was put behind the drafting of the amendments. So I thank Gaggan Gill and Sarah Ellis for the hard work they've done on the bill. I'm very proud of the work that they did.

With that, I'm not going to speak all morning on this or spend a whole hour on it. I want to leave the rest of the time to the third party. I know they'll want to use the rest of the time. However, our party congratulates Justice Goudge for his work on this, for his recommendations, and we look forward to implementation of the bill. Any regulations that will have to be drafted, we look forward to seeing implemented as quickly as possible. As I say, our party will be supporting Bill 115.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Yes, I will be speaking to the bill in short order. Unfortunately, the lead is an hour and we're going to adjourn at 10:15. That creates some problems—I suppose not for me, but for the government. But there's lots of time. They've filed motions for midnight sittings, and I suppose we could sit until midnight tonight, or even Monday night. I know the government members look forward to that.

I know that from time to time those midnight sittings tend to get rather raucous, because people, after they eat their dinners, are upset by what they ate or they're fuelled by what they ate, and things get pretty wild and woolly in here on midnight sittings. We don't have the pages here, because it's not one of those—it doesn't get the G rating. It's a more adult-focused type of sitting, which doesn't diminish the public's interest in it, because of course it's televised.

So as I say, in short order, in a few minutes' time after we hear Mr. Dunlop's response to these questions and comments, we'll embark on the NDP participation in third reading of this bill, which undoubtedly is going to pass. Make no mistake about it: The bill will become law as soon as the government proclaims it once it receives third reading. Third reading may not be today; it could well be on Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday of next week. In fact, because the House is adjourning on June 4, the bill can always be held over. There's going to be a motion to preserve legislation in the event of a prorogation. A prorogation, of course, is when the Premier joins Michael Bryant on a lifeboat and looks to sort of renew the branding of the Liberals in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me a chance to comment on the speech from the member from Simcoe North. I think it's a very important piece of legislation, as he mentioned. I'm glad to see the opposition supporting this bill. I'm also glad to see the government put some kind of qualifications in place in terms of hiring pathologists and coroners who are qualified to practise in the province of Ontario. I know he has a comment on making sure that everyone practising in the province has certain qualifications in order to make sure the job is done in a professional manner. It's also important to remove the power from the minister, being like—

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Because you can't trust him.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I guess the member from Welland doesn't want to hear or listen. I guess he's having fun. That's very good.

I want to congratulate the member from Simcoe North.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Now he gives up; he surrenders.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm not surrendering.

I think it's important to remove section 22. To give them power from the minister is not, I think, the professional manner. When you give it to these chief coroners, who have special qualifications to do their job, it's important, because we know that exactly no political influence will be put on the onus of the minister or any one government in place. It's very important to have a qualified person who decides when we call for inquests or who inquires on any important issues, and also to allow that the council be appointed by this bill, if this bill passes, to oversee the context of the investigation. It is very important to make sure everyone in the province of Ontario has a right to express his or her feelings.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Again, speaking to the bill, our member from—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Simcoe North.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I knew it was Simcoe North.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It's time for a GPS. You need a GPS.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** You need a GPS to get to Simcoe North.

It's interesting listening to the member from Simcoe North. Of course, in supporting the bill, he also pointed out that there was one section of the bill that does give us some difficulty: section 22, which was removed from the bill. That section allowed the minister to order an inquest to be made. Why that would be removed, I really don't know. From time to time in Ontario an inquest may not be judged to be necessary in some cases, but the public opinion may demand it. In those cases, the minister would have the authority to order an inquest into that passing.

That would be a very valuable thing to have in the toolbox. It's not something that would be used an awful lot but it's something that the minister would have available to him. Whether this is an attempt to remove the government of Ontario from governing entirely, I don't know. I don't know what the minister's thought process would be. I know that this government seems to be very interested in photo ops and making announcements and a little less interested in following through on some of those photo ops and announcements. Certainly the removal of section 22 would keep in line with the line of thinking this government seems to have. The bill itself is a good one, although I would like to have seen section 22 remain.

0940

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I'll be very brief.

Just to bring some clarity and maybe some straight-forward discussion on section 22, there was a concern raised earlier, and somebody at the committee level had said that the coroner wasn't even in favour of this—and I wanted to bring some clarity to that comment. First of all, it was never made in his report. Number two, once he saw the government's response in legislation, in an interview with the minister and his staff—I wasn't there, but the minister was there—he said specifically that now that the government has responded so fully to the legislation in the recommendations, it didn't matter whether section 22 was there or not. I wanted to make sure that was clear. The chief coroner said that he did not need section 22 once he got the legislative changes he was looking for. Since he got them all, he basically said, then the professionalism and the expertise that is going to be put inside of this legislation and provided for the chief coroner would be sufficient to deal with the concerns raised before.

Having said that, I think it's important for us to stay focused on that. And I don't mind hearing the comments. I really do look forward to the comments from the mem-



ber from Welland on the specifics behind section 22. Other than the bluster, other than the emotional outrage, I'd like to hear the logic of why we would not listen to the coroner in his recommendation. I am allowing him to provide some time, and I'm giving him an opportunity to engage in this. I look forward to that.

As far as the member from Simcoe North—I knew that one right away—I appreciate his comments on the amendments. We did take some, as he noted, and I thought it was a good process.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Simcoe North has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to thank the members from Welland, London–Fanshawe, Brant and my colleague from Halton.

By the way, it's Simcoe North, and it's the freshwater sailing and boating capital of the world.

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Lake Simcoe?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Lake Simcoe, Georgian Bay, Lake Couchiching, the Severn River—500 kilometres of shoreline in my riding. It's a great area, a wonderful area to represent.

As I mentioned earlier, we'll be supporting this bill.

I want to repeat the fact that we support the bulk of the recommendations made by Justice Goudge. We think it was a thorough investigation, a thorough response. It was a tragedy that a lot of families need not have gone through if some of this legislation would have been in place before.

Really, in the end, as I say, we were pleased to take part in the committee hearings. It was one of the most emotional types of committee hearings I've been at in my 10 years at Queen's Park. I was intrigued by the stories that came forward from our presenters and those who told the stories of the loss of their loved ones. The child advocate was another person who came forward and did a very, very professional job in making their comments.

With that, I'm hoping this bill will be passed, and we hope that the bulk of it will be put to good use and it will make Ontario a better place to raise our families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** I'm doing my best to get this into the next 30 minutes. I'm not sure it can happen, but I will do my humble best so that this matter can get to a vote. If the parliamentary assistant, as I indicated earlier, hadn't consumed so much of the morning's time, he may have been more successful at facilitating passage of third reading.

I should compliment the parliamentary assistant, though. I have high regard for him. I consider him a friend. I have great respect for him. I was with him witnessing his carriage of this bill through second reading and through the committee process. Indeed, as Mr. Dunlop has said, it was a very interesting experience. All of us learned, I believe, a great deal. So I do compliment the parliamentary assistant for his carriage of this bill. Of course, he's paid well for doing that, just as he's paid well for praising the bill. He has his script, and were he not to follow that script he would be a parliamentary

assistant for but 30 minutes more today and would find himself over here in the rump with his rumpmates, who aren't even considered important enough to sit with their government backbench colleagues.

So I understand why the parliamentary assistant finds himself obliged to read the scripts. I'm not sure whether I would do the same thing, but far be it from me to judge. I don't want to impute motive to the parliamentary assistant. But he is a very capable member of the Legislature, and I tell the Solicitor General and the Premier—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Please, Speaker, don't give him Hansard recognition. It's the only way he has to get on the record. Were he to participate more actively he might find himself over on the other side.

Enough of my praise for the parliamentary assistant; enough of my praise for Mr. Levac. I should also acknowledge—because people here have been acknowledging the role of various people in the course of the bill's process—Margaret Drent, whom you'll agree on, because she's the research officer. Margaret Drent was just stellar in her assistance to all of us in terms of her research materials. We're all very grateful to her. She works non-partisan; her role is non-partisan, of course.

Look, the elephant in the room is this fellow Charles Smith. The Goudge inquiry was all about this incompetent liar's contribution to the unjust conviction of countless people, many of them parents. I accept the Goudge recommendations. I'm confident because I've heard no criticism of them from the legal community. Members of the defence bar especially, similarly, support the implementation of the Goudge recommendations. But I have serious, serious concerns, notwithstanding what Goudge says. Charles Smith, a liar? Goudge said so. Incompetent? Goudge said so. A bit of a whack and a flake? Goudge said so. Not his words; he used far more judicial language, but I'll put it in language that perhaps we're all a little more familiar with.

This guy Smith, for 24 years, while working for the Hospital for Sick Kids just down the road, lied and bungled his way through countless prosecutions of people charged with injuring and, more tragically, killing children, babies—countless unjust convictions. We're not talking about people who are sentenced to a couple of weekends in the local lockup; we're not talking about people who are sentenced to house arrest; we're talking about people who, almost inevitably when you murder a child, are sentenced to penitentiary time, where they do what is called colloquially “hard time.” Let me tell you, when you're a baby killer, you're pretty darned close to the bottom of the ladder. Even in protective custody, you're a victim. Some of those people have been successful in having their convictions overturned. None of them will ever be successful at having their losses restored.

What bothers me significantly is how Smith could flourish—he did for 24 years. Was his stellar batting record not of some concern to crown attorneys? Was his stellar capacity to indict and convict people accused of killing children not of concern to the police officers

themselves, for fear that they had picked the wrong person to be charged? Was Smith's capacity to find criminal culpability with the named accused not of concern to judges?

**0950**

Smith didn't work in a vacuum. What about the coroner? Wasn't the coroner's office concerned? During the course of, if not the first or the second or third of those 24 years, at least well into the 15- and 20-year range, wasn't the coroner's office a little concerned about how effective Smith was at providing evidence that supported the crown's case and didn't support the defence argument? What about his colleagues? What about other pathologists? What about other people in the medical profession? What about the Hospital for Sick Kids, who kept him in their employ?

Smith wasn't a solo operator, and although Smith has been appropriately condemned—I only wish he could spend a portion of the jail time his victims have—we haven't recognized the culpability of other players in the system. Smith was supported, nurtured, tolerated, reinforced, aided and abetted by any number of police officers, crown attorneys and judges; I have no hesitation in saying that. And bring on the e-mails, folks, because I have absolute confidence in that observation.

He was giving public testimony. He was appearing in front of judges who have heard case after case after case and who, one presumes, were highly experienced. What I find incredibly frightening about this is that it reveals that tunnel vision of the criminal justice system wherein the presumption of innocence is given but lip service. My fear is that Smith could survive 24 years of lying and cheating and misleading because people in the criminal justice system don't really believe in the presumption of innocence. In fact, the presumption is that if you have been charged, you must be guilty, and if not of the crime you're charged with, at least guilty of something: a very dangerous precedent.

Look at the Attorney General's tinkering with jury panels—"tinkering" is putting it mildly—and the Attorney General's office only stops doing it once it gets caught. Don't think for a minute that the rationale for background checks of potential jurors is so that the crown attorney can find the people who are the most neutral and unbiased. Bullfeathers; the crown attorney is looking for the people who are most likely to convict and wants to exclude those people who might be a little more tolerant and a little more inclined to the defence. If you believe anything otherwise, then you're from some other planet than this one.

While Goudge has addressed procedural means whereby we can incorporate oversight, he didn't address the culture in those Bay Street towers—the Ministry of the Attorney General, amongst others, is over there on that side road; is it Grosvenor where the coroner's office is?—the culture wherein these professionals support each other, cover up for each other, cultivate incompetence.

Mr. Dunlop was there; Mr. Dunlop has referred to some of the heartbreaking stories of families who lost a

loved one: daughters, children, partners and parents. They told stories about coroners' offices that were oh, so high and mighty, that dismissed them with a little wave of the hand: "Go away, go away; you're bothering us." Is that a fair observation?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Yep.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** Mr. Dunlop responds. Of course, they weren't speaking about all coroners. We only heard about the bad ones. Nobody came forward—because people aren't inclined to do that—with good stories about coroners or other officials who treated them with fairness, respect and dignity. We heard about coroners' offices that refused to listen to family members who had lost a loved one, who refused to embark on investigations and subsequent inquiries and who had an aloofness, an attitude of, "We know it all, and you're stupid." That's a dangerous phenomenon that Goudge, of course, didn't address.

While it wasn't Goudge's job to indict Smith, he, in a very careful and judicially toned comment, did as much. Goudge wrote: "... Smith was adamant that his failings were never intentional. I simply cannot accept such a sweeping attempt to escape moral responsibility." In other words, the inference that you draw from that comment is that Goudge said these were intentional and that Smith knew full well what he was doing in his zeal to convict people, in Smith's zeal to pander to his bosses, in Smith's zeal to be seen as a caped crusader, in Smith's zeal to be seen as a friend of the victim, and in Smith's zeal to be seen as a friend of the police and the prosecution.

Unless and until we move beyond this and address the culture in which Charles Smiths can be cultivated and can be nurtured, we are going to have more Smiths—notwithstanding all of the oversights that have been proposed by Goudge.

We heard a lot of fascinating stuff. Members who were on the committee will remember Dr. Alexander Franklin, a wonderful, brilliant gentleman, speaking on behalf of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London. Who might they be, you may ask?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Is that really their title?

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** That is the body in Britain, a long-standing one that goes back centuries, that provides training for pathologists. Dr. Franklin came before us speaking about the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London to urge the committee to incorporate into the legislation a requirement that pathologists receive specific training as pathologists, because in Canada there is no formal training for certification process for pathologists. That in itself is pretty remarkable—ain't it?—that pathologists, especially those engaged in forensic pathology, where criminal prosecutions are contemplated or are under way, hold the fate of an accused in their legal pad, yet we don't have any specific training or certification for those people.

I want to thank Dr. Alexander Franklin for his submission. Of course, it wasn't incorporated into the legislation; the legislation couldn't accommodate that recom-

mendation. But I would urge this government to be the first in Canada to consider that recommendation of Dr. Franklin's and to consider the incorporation of standards of certification for pathologists here in the province of Ontario.

**1000**

I was delighted when the government backed off on its efforts to amend section 10 of the existing act. Section 10 lists any number of causes of death that could prompt a coroner's investigation: violence, misadventure, negligence, misconduct, malpractice or death by unfair means. I saw the amendment that says "repeal paragraph B of subsection 10(1) of the Coroners Act," and I said, "Why would we repeal that cause of death by unfair means? Would the brain trust please perhaps tell me what 'by unfair means' means?" Well, nobody knew. Well, hell's bells. Just like we have no business whatsoever passing legislation that nobody knows anything about—and Lord knows that happens often enough; you don't get a chance to sit in committees anymore. But you might well recall how especially government members are just little voting machines who vote as they're told and when they're told, with no idea whatsoever of what they're voting for; none whatsoever. They haven't got the slightest clue. They never read the legislation, never went to any briefings, and sit there doodling, writing love letters, picking fabric samples, nodding off so that the saliva, the spit bridge, forms between the side of their head and the desk. I've seen it, and so have you. And finally, they come to in time for a vote because the whip gives them the old elbow hook in the ribs. They vote, and then from time to time, they vote the wrong way. We've seen that happen too. Sometimes the opposition is accommodating and lets them recall the vote; other times, when the opposition wants to be a little more mischievous, we're disinclined.

But I was so pleased that the government backed off on its effort to repeal the "death by unfair means" provisions in the existing Coroners Act. I have no idea what it means still. I speculated. Nobody was about to refute my speculation, and I still intend to pursue the history of that provision of the act. But, heck, it might be useful at some point in the future, "death by unfair means." If there's such a thing as death by boredom, perhaps when one of the government backbenchers is speaking and an opposition member passes away by boredom, would that be unfair means? If the member, for instance, from London-Fanshawe took it upon himself to finally rise in the House and deliver a rational speech but remain tediously boring and I were to die from that boredom, would that be death by unfair means? I don't know, but I don't want the possibility of that being considered to be excluded from the legislation, and I applaud the government for abandoning that goal.

Section 22: When you talk about what is contentious about this bill, that probably is the target. Section 22, a long-standing provision of the Coroners Act, says, "Where the minister has reason to believe that a death has occurred in Ontario in circumstances that warrant the

holding of an inquest, the minister may direct any coroner to hold an inquest and the coroner shall" etc. etc. See, right now it's totally discretionary on the part of coroners as to whether or not to hold an inquest, and Mr. Levac, the parliamentary assistant, has been told to say that people have access to judicial review should they disagree with the coroner's decision not to hold an inquest, and he's right. The new legislation will provide for judicial review.

Well, let's talk about Jared down in Hamilton. Remember him? We should. He was the little boy who was killed by his father, and then his father was shot by police in a standoff. Two tragic deaths, two very different players—interconnected, no two ways about it, no doubt. But Andrea Horwath and the NDP have, from the very beginning, been pleading to have separate inquests.

Think about this: an innocent little boy, a kid, slaughtered by a parent, butchered by a parent, and his mother's search for justice has to be clouded by the fact that the father's inquest is being held contemporaneously with the inquest into the death of the kid. Is it legal? Of course. The Coroners Act provides for a coroner to use his discretion to join inquests. Is it moral? I don't think so. Is it ethical? I don't think so. Is it productive? I don't think so, nor do a whole lot of people. That an innocent child has the consideration of the circumstances surrounding his slaughter clouded by the consideration of the police shooting of his murderous father is not fair to that child's memory, isn't fair to his mom or his grandparents and isn't fair to the community.

Judicial review would be unsuccessful in that event because, as you know, Speaker—and there are lawyers here in this chamber who will correct me if I'm wrong—a judicial review is capable of determining only whether or not the law was properly applied. A court would have to say: "Yes, the law was properly applied. It's within the discretion of the coroner to join two inquests." That's why we need the discretion of the minister.

What is this bizarre flight from power that's increasingly taking place in government, ministers who increasingly want to distance themselves from the real world, the creation of these arm's length bodies so that ministers can stand up here in the chamber as they do on a daily basis, and say, "Don't ask me. It's at arm's length"?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** "Ask the LHIN."

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** "Ask the LHIN," Mr. Miller says. So when the Niagara Health System anonymous unelected gang of trustees shut down small-town hospitals and I stand in this chamber and put the question to the minister, the minister says: "Don't ask me. I'm not responsible. LHINs make those decisions." It's this flight from responsibility, this flight from power, this flight from accountability.

The Minister of Community Safety, the Solicitor General, was pestered, hectorated, by Ms. Horwath, who repeatedly called upon him, the Solicitor General, to use his—the Solicitor General's—discretion under section 22 to order a stand-alone inquiry into the death of Jared. Response after response consisted of the minister saying:

“The coroner has made a decision. It’s not for me to get involved.” Well, that’s why you’re paid the big bucks. Of course you’re supposed to get involved.

The repeal of section 22 wasn’t part of the Goudge considerations; it wasn’t part of the Goudge recommendations. The repeal of section 22, I suspect, was as much a result of the hectoring by Ms. Horwath of the Solicitor General about Jared as it was about anything else.

The argument, “It hasn’t been used often”—well, good. That means it hasn’t been abused, doesn’t it? That means that ministers haven’t been, willy-nilly, using section 22 to order coroners’ inquests. The minister doesn’t go home and take a walk around the block saying, “Should I use section 22 or shouldn’t I?” The minister makes no decisions, by God, of that nature. The minister, appropriately, relies upon advice given to him by any number of civil servants, bureaucrats, lawyers, counsel, people who have far greater tenure than any politician ever does, people in the ministerial bureaucracy.

It is extremely troubling. Section 22 is a safeguard. Section 22 allows the public interest to be given effect from time to time, and for the life of me, I don’t know what’s wrong with that. Surely politicians, elected people, should be pursuing the public interest rather than what is necessarily prescribed or proscribed by the law at any given point in time.

#### 1010

We are very concerned about the repeal of section 22. And make no mistake about it: It’s never going to be re-enacted—is it?—ever, ever, ever. Increasingly, politicians, especially those who are in the executive branch, want to keep themselves pristine by not having to do anything, which means doing nothing, not having to worry about dirtying their hands or having to roll up their sleeves and make decisions that reflect the assumption and the recognition of some responsibility on their part.

The stonewalling by the minister around Jared was, in and of itself, frustrating. And then the Solicitor General’s solution—oh please; it’s not the Solicitor General, I give him too much credit; it’s the Premier’s office—the Premier’s office’s solution is to simply repeal the section so that Mr. Dunlop will never, ever, in the course of his parliamentary career—and I expect it to be lengthy; I’ve been up in his riding—be able to stand up on behalf of a constituent who’s been denied an inquest by the coroner and appeal to the Solicitor General to “Please, use your discretion.” Never will Mr. Levac, the member from out Brantford way, the riding of Brant—and I’ve been in his riding; I expect he’ll have a similarly lengthy political career. I have no doubt that not all of it is going to be spent over on that side, and when he’s a member of the opposition and has a little more freedom to act for his constituents and he’s compelled to stand here and appeal to a Solicitor General to “Please, use your discretion under section 22 so that the public interest—so that justice can be obtained,” why, it won’t even be a question that’s in order because there won’t be a section 22. I would expect that he’ll sit here in silence, biting his tongue, swallowing the blood and saying, “I can’t even

ask that question because, oops, in 2009, the Liberal government repealed section 22”—section 22, which has never been abused, has been used very, very cautiously. Indeed, there was only one instance in recent history where it was used—and very effectively, I might add; very effectively. You recall the boating incident where there was a suspicion of death and where, in fact, the coroner’s inquest determined that nobody had died—a not at all inappropriate role for the coroner’s inquest to perform.

We’ll be voting for the legislation. I suppose we might as well get it done and over with. I’ve already laid too much blame for delay at the feet of the parliamentary assistant. I don’t want him to be hauled into the Premier’s office or, even more worrisome, into Ms. Smith’s office, the House leader, where the beating he’ll take will be far more severe than anything that the Premier’s office could administer. But I’ve got to tell you, I don’t look forward to the occasion when government members are called upon by their constituents to appeal to the Solicitor General around a tragic death in their own communities, only to realize that they’ve repealed that very section that gives them the final appeal in terms of obtaining justice for, oh, maybe a dead kid or a dead wife or a dead grandma or a dead husband. I truly rue this day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr. Levac has moved third reading of Bill 115, An Act to amend the Coroners Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** It being 10:16, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I’m pleased to welcome and ask all members to welcome the citizens of the town of Innisfil, who will be here shortly to witness question period and particularly, the issue around their boundary.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I’m pleased to welcome a guest, a good friend of mine, Jordan Goldblatt, in the members’ east gallery. I ask that members join me in welcoming him on his first trip to the Legislature.

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I’d like to welcome to the House long-time residents of south Mississauga—over 40 years—most recently now in Clarkson: Ms. Sonya Banquier and Mr. Jeremy Beaty. Welcome to Queen’s Park and thank you for being here.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I wish to welcome Mr. Shahram Khorramshahi, parliamentary secretary of international affairs, the Parliament of the Federative Republic of Brazil, to the east gallery.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I’d like to introduce Bernard and Marlyene Brooks, who are from my riding and are down visiting. We’re delighted to have them here

today. I'll be having lunch with them and giving them a bit of a tour, so we'd like to welcome them.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** Hanane Bouji is doing some work part-time in my office for the summer, and she's here watching question period for the first time.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the Minister of Education and page Mariah Palantzas, we'd like to welcome her mother, Eleni Palantzas, to Queen's Park today, sitting in the members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'd like to introduce Royston Simon from my community, who's with us today and hasn't arrived yet, but will be here in a moment to watch question period.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to introduce my constituency assistant, who is here observing today: Mr. Andrew Lauer.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the CBC reported that another of your government agencies has been playing fast and loose with taxpayers' dollars and spending money like it grows on trees. Premier, can you explain to overtaxed Ontarians just why Sarah Kramer, the CEO of eHealth, your appointee, receiving a salary of \$380,000 a year, was able to give herself a \$114,000 bonus after only three months on the job?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the first question. I know my colleague Minister Caplan will speak to some of the details in the supplementaries.

Let me say at the outset that the very reason that we want to move ahead with an electronic health record system in Ontario is to deliver better health care by finding greater efficiencies and being more respectful of the Ontario taxpayer dollar. I know that all my colleagues would agree with the importance of that, just as we would also all agree that as we set up this system we should be, throughout, respectful of the Ontario taxpayer dollar.

I know that there are some facts that have been brought to the fore which do not sit easy with us in government, as they do not with my colleagues opposite. I understand that the auditor is taking a look at this. We welcome that observation. If he wanted to come out with recommendations sooner rather than later, we would welcome those as well. I just want to assure my colleague that this is a concern to us as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** I think most people assume the government is responsible for safeguarding tax dollars. This is your appointee; this is your agency. To say you're concerned is cold comfort, I would think, to hard-pressed taxpayers.

Hundreds of thousands of Ontarians have lost their jobs. Communities are hurting; families are suffering; yet week after week we hear of this government and its agencies abusing the public trust, spending tax dollars like there's no tomorrow. There's a growing sense of entitlement in this government. It's infecting their agencies, clearly. You can't distance yourself from this. It's happening on your watch. You get up and explain to Ontarians: How could this happen?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** I do thank the member for the question. I must admit I do not agree with his characterization.

I can tell you that electronic health is significant. It's an important investment in the modernization of our health care system. What it will do is connect medical professionals together. What it will do is provide greater information for the kinds of decisions that will go into better patient care. What it will do is eliminate errors and have better patient safety. I think that those are the results that Ontarians want to see from their health care system. I think that those are important investments. I think that Ontarians understand that south of the border, President Obama, as part of his stimulus package—a \$50-billion five-year investment in electronic health.

This government is determined to modernize our health care system to ensure that patients have better health care and have the electronic health infrastructure in place. As the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** That was unadulterated pap. People are sick and tired of those kinds of responses. I asked you a specific question about a \$114,000 bonus, taxpayer dollars, after just three months on the job—no explanation or justification for why you were asleep at the switch.

Over a four-month period, Ms. Kramer spent nearly five million tax dollars on consulting fees. She awarded those contracts without going for public bid. She broke the rules but still gave herself a \$114,000 taxpayer-paid bonus. You can't wash your hands of this. You're responsible for the agencies and the people you appoint to them. Stand up and tell hard-pressed Ontarians why this happened and why you failed to do your job.

**Hon. David Caplan:** Once again, I disagree with the member opposite. No rules were broken.

In fact, eHealth has accomplished much since they began in September. They've unveiled Ontario's first-ever comprehensive, published eHealth strategy. They've launched ePrescribing, which is the first of its kind in this country, connecting pharmacists with family physicians in two communities, Collingwood and Sault Ste. Marie, cutting down medical errors when it comes to filling prescriptions. They're partnering with OntarioMD to roll out electronic medical records in primary care physician offices throughout the province. They've launched the baseline data set for a diabetes initiative to measure the current state of diabetes care in Ontario, providing phys-

icians with information needed to improve care. They've established a diagnostic imaging network across Ontario so that images are available digitally, resulting in faster turnaround times for patients.

These are tangible results, benefits for patients, and we're going to continue driving forward—

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

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Back to the Premier: Obviously we're not getting any answers to these legitimate concerns. Months ago, our caucus raised concerns about what we saw as a sense of entitlement at play within the management ranks of eHealth. The red flags were flapping in the wind, alarm bells were ringing, but you and your minister chose to ignore massive expenses and breaches of government rules. Now it has come back to bite you, and you can't walk away from this, Premier. The buck stops with you. Why did you and your colleagues not act months ago when the arrogant misuse of tax dollars first became known?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** The fact is that this government did act months ago. Previously, an organization called the Smart Systems for Health Agency was put in place with an incorrect mandate. In fact, it was through the timely intervention of my predecessor that an operational review was ordered and acted upon, to the formation of eHealth Ontario. And eHealth Ontario has moved forward quite aggressively and, I would say, with some urgency to be able to deliver the electronic health infrastructure that Ontario patients would want, that Ontario health care practitioners tell us they need.

I have had a chance to speak with the board, with the chair, Dr. Alan Hudson, and with Ms. Kramer. I have impressed upon them the need to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and with sensitivity, given the factors that the member mentioned in an earlier question. I know they are following—

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

1040

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** That's a typical cavalier attitude when it comes to misuse of tax dollars with respect to this government. This minister was clearly asleep at the switch. Now he's defending his lack of action.

CBC's The National last night revealed that one of the consultants hired by Ms. Kramer was paid \$300 an hour for reading newspapers, watching TV, and even for conversations on the subway.

This is your agency, Minister. The Premier met with this lady before she was appointed. This is your appointee. You can't walk away from responsibility.

I would ask you today to stand up and explain to struggling families in Chatham, Windsor and Cornwall just why you allowed this to happen, why you failed to protect scarce tax dollars.

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, we treat tax dollars very seriously on this side of the House, and I know that all members would want that to happen.

eHealth is an expensive undertaking; I acknowledge that. We're drawing on expertise from around the world because I'm determined, and this government is determined, to build the best electronic health system for all Ontarians.

We're not alone. We're using specialized consultants, specialized talents for large-scale IT initiatives. It is standard practice in public and private sector around the world.

These are important investments in improved health care for Ontario residents. They are important to transformatively see better patient safety, as I mentioned earlier. We're going to continue to drive forward for improved health care for Ontario residents.

I do understand that in fact the percentage of consultants, for example, as the member mentioned, when started by the Conservatives, started at 27%—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The folks over there would make David Dingwall proud, for feeling so entitled to your entitlements.

This Minister of Health is no stranger to scandal. He left his previous position under a cloud with the extravagances at OLG. Where Minister Caplan goes, scandal and sloppy oversight, when it comes to the expenditure of tax dollars, are sure to follow.

Not so long ago in this place we were asking about millions of tax dollars being thrown out the door by the former Minister of Citizenship. Well, he's now sitting in the backbenches.

I ask the Premier—this should really go to the Premier: Along with Ms. Kramer, we would hope both of you will soon be given your walking papers. When can we expect that to happen?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'm going to keep delivering on the mandate we talked to Ontarians about, which is improving health care in the province of Ontario, lowering wait times, expanding access to family health care and, yes, making sure that we modernize our health care system with an important eHealth platform.

We do have a legislative officer who is and has been engaged, as I mentioned back on April 9 in this House, at the behest of the federal Auditor General. Provincial counterparts were asked to look at these very expensive undertakings and these investments of public dollars in health care systems. I look forward to the Auditor General giving us his advice about the efficacy of those investments and about ways that we can improve.

I know that Ms. Kramer, and Dr. Hudson too, have just recently met with Mr. McCarter, the auditor, and in fact have engaged him. We are determined to deliver value—

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

## ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. Premier, everyone in Ontario's health care community agrees that we need an electronic health record. But Ontario has continued to lag far behind other jurisdictions, and this after the government has poured close to \$1 billion down the drain. Yet the bungling and the mismanagement continue at the new eHealth Ontario agency, which doled out close to \$5 million in questionable contracts during the first four months of operation.

How much desperately needed health care money is this government prepared to blow before it steps up and cleans the latest eHealth mess?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** I disagree with the member opposite. In fact, her leader had said in this House that we should pull the plug on electronic health initiatives, so I'm glad that she agrees that these are important investments in the modernization of health care.

As well, there are no questionable contracts. I disagree with her on that. These are important guidance and investments during the transition from an agency start-up toward its maturity and the development of a plan.

I shared earlier with the leader of the official opposition some of the accomplishments just in September, and I'll list them for the member opposite: We've unveiled the first-ever comprehensive, published eHealth strategy and we've launched ePrescribing. This is a project which will connect pharmacists to primary care physicians to ensure communication and the reduction of errors. We're partnering with OntarioMD to—

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** What we're talking about here is a lax approach of the eHealth president and CEO, who is living large on the taxpayers' dime. Sarah Kramer spent—blew, really—\$50,000 on office makeovers and brought in \$114,000 in bonus money after five months on the job. This is, of course, on top of her \$380,000 base salary. She also found nothing wrong with handing out million-dollar contracts with no tendering process. Is it okay to let consultants bill us \$300 an hour for reading newspapers and riding the subway?

When will this minister say that enough is enough? This is a gross and appalling misuse of taxpayers' money.

**Hon. David Caplan:** I disagree with the member opposite. In fact, we are tracking the best talent not only in Canada but from around the world in delivering an eHealth infrastructure which is going to improve care for patients.

They're developing an electronic system to store images from hospital CT scanners on surgical and neurological care to improve patient access to care. They're managing and delivering a managed drug profile viewer in order to be used in all hospital emergency departments across Ontario to help health care providers quickly identify and prevent harmful drug reactions and provide

more informed emergency care. They've established a major network service provider for Telemedicine in Ontario, enabling over 42,000 clinical consultations in 2008 alone.

Those are impressive achievements in just a few short months, and I look forward to more as they move forward on a—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I think this minister has proven time and time again that he is incapable of managing the start-up of an electronic health records system and infrastructure for Ontario. This incompetence is mind-boggling, and it is the taxpayers who are picking up the tab all around. I sincerely think that heads need to roll, starting at the very top.

When will the minister look in the mirror, realize that he is not capable of bringing an electronic health record to the people of Ontario, realize that he is incompetent as a Minister of Health, do right thing and resign?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I'm going to keep driving forward on electronic health infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

I can tell you that we have already had expressions of interest in public tendering on a diabetes registry, and the request for qualifications will be going out quite shortly.

I think it's understandable that, in the transition from a start-up agency to full maturity, you would see taking on expenditures, as eHealth Ontario has, but I can tell you that Ontario is quickly making gains and quickly making strides to eliminate that gap which exists between where we are today and where we hope to be.

I have every confidence in Dr. Hudson and in Ms. Kramer and in their abilities to deliver on the most ambitious agenda that this province has undertaken when it comes to eHealth.

I can tell you that we know from the operational review that the Smart Systems for Health Agency was not set up with the proper—

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

## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Premier. According to today's Toronto Star and the reports, you are considering a plan to bury the HST in the price tag of goods and services. Clearly, this government is doing everything it can to hide the 8% tax grab from unsuspecting Ontarians. They know this unfair tax grab will make life harder for them and their families. My question is, why is the Premier trying to fool Ontarians about the real impact of the tax grab by burying it in the final price?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member points out that a number of sources have talked about a single price. We appreciate his insights and advice on this. I will remind

him what both the Premier and I said: that the HST, the single sales tax, will be transparent and plain, both on the shelf and on the receipt a customer has.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** The McGuinty Liberals think that they can act like magicians and make the tax suddenly disappear by hiding it in the final price, and it seems that this government will go to any lengths and say just about anything to downplay the real impact of the 8% tax grab.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, the finance minister mistakenly suggested that the tax grab was revenue-neutral for families, but his own tax calculator shows that it's not. Instead of trying to bamboozle Ontarians, why won't this minister and the Premier say no to burying the tax, right out front, right now?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I thought I was pretty clear about that in the first question. Let me say it again, as I said it yesterday, to my friend and colleague: The tax, the single sales tax, will be plain, transparent and in view, both on the shelf and on the receipt.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I'm not sure what that means. I'm asking for him to be more candid than that. It's going to be plain to whom? Is it the same as the GST and the PST taxes on alcohol and on gasoline, which are hidden and nobody sees? Is that the "plain" that you're talking about?

In the newspaper today, one law firm gave the real reason this government is considering burying the tax. According to Blakes, it "will likely have less of a psychological impact on consumers if tax-inclusive pricing is adopted." That's apparently the basis for this government's policy decisions: psychological responses to tax proposals.

Maybe the McGuinty Liberals think hiding the sales tax will make it easier to hike it again. Maybe that's the real plan. Why won't the Premier do the right thing and axe the tax altogether?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll speak to the people of Ontario this time and say to them that number one, the single sales tax will be plain and transparent at the shelf and it will be plain and transparent on the receipt. There's no question about that. I don't have any other words to express it to help the member understand the answer.

I will not scrap the most important tax reform in the history of the province. It's too important to unemployed auto workers to get this economy going. It's too important to the forestry sector. It's too important to this province's future growth. And so we are embarking on a tax reform package that will keep our businesses competitive. Unlike the members opposite, we have a plan, which they voted against, that shows the compassion and care of this government and this party for the future of our people, for the future of the province. It's the right plan—

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

## ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is going to go to the Premier. We now know, according to the CBC, that over a four-month period, eHealth has spent about five million tax dollars on consultant fees. Premier, as you know, all of these contracts were awarded in secret by the agency's CEO without any public bidding and without any tendering. This goes against established provincial rules. Premier, why did you allow this to happen?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** In fact, no rules were broken. In the case of start-up, as has happened under previous governments, it is allowed. Of course, I have stressed with Ms. Kramer and Dr. Hudson the need to have a procurement process that is competitive in nature, which in fact they have fulfilled starting with the diabetes registry.

I find it interesting that when the member and her colleagues started up the Smart Systems for Health Agency, consultants represented 27% of the cost and of the expenditures. Today it is down to 16%. We are taking more of that work in-house. We are ensuring that taxpayers receive value for the dollars that they are investing. They are substantial, but I know that these individuals—I have full confidence in their ability to drive out on better patient safety, better care, connecting—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm not surprised that the Premier didn't answer the question. He wouldn't respond to our questions on Smart Systems for Health either, which was quietly disbanded after wasting \$800 million of taxpayer money.

The other thing the Premier knows, and I guess the minister knows, is that much of the money is being awarded to Liberal-friendly firms in the name of Courtyard, which has donated hundreds of dollars certainly to Liberal ridings. But we also know that Courtyard is being paid by the Ministry of Health.

Why, Premier, are you allowing the squandering of taxpayer money to pay for consultants' fees to both the Ministry of Health and eHealth?

**Hon. David Caplan:** The member is simply wrong. This is a company, a consulting firm, that is well known and is doing work worldwide, in Canada and elsewhere. They have particular expertise, and we'd be foolish not to take advantage of the expertise of these individuals when it comes to delivering on an e-health agenda. In fact, the member says that money for Smart Systems for Health was squandered. She and her colleagues set up this organization with an incorrect mandate. They took on consultants at the rate of 27% of their expenditures; we have changed that. We have eliminated that kind of situation and brought more of that work inside.

I can also tell you that Smart Systems, while it did not have the proper mandate, did have and has had a network of connected sites, 7,000 of which—50,000 users across



the province of Ontario on the secured network. This is an important—

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

#### ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is for the Premier. On July 20, 2008, there was a horrific explosion at 2 Secord Avenue in East York. Nearly 1,000 people were forced from their homes. On March 19 of this year, there was a second electrical explosion, this time at 3640 and 3650 Kingston Road in Scarborough. Five hundred people were forced from their units and none have been allowed to return to date. Many thousands of multi-unit buildings could be ticking transformer time bombs and there hasn't been a word from the Minister of Community Safety's office.

Can the Premier tell us when these residents can expect the fire marshal's report to be released by your government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** As the minister isn't in the House today and since the matter at hand does have to deal, at the heart of it, with an important piece of the electricity sector infrastructure, I could tell the honourable member that we're also working very, very closely with the officials from Toronto Hydro and other local distribution companies and the Ontario Energy Board to allow for the necessary investments to ensure that the infrastructure, much of which is below the surface of roads and the like in vaults, is receiving the necessary capital investments. I'm not entirely familiar with the angle that the honourable member has spoken to, but I do want to let him know that we have been working to try and address whatever capital deficiencies may sometimes cause these very, very challenging circumstances for our residents. I'll take the rest of his question under advisement and seek to get back to him.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I am happy the minister wants to take some of it under advisement, but really, the question is, we have hundreds and hundreds of families locked out of their homes for months at a time and the government doesn't seem to be doing anything or even releasing the report.

Millions of Ontarians live in high- and low-rise multi-unit buildings. They need to know their homes are safe. They need to have the confidence that if such accidents occur, there will be provisions to assist them. They also need to know why these transformer explosions occurred in the first place. The release of the fire marshal's report will start the process of ensuring safer high-rise communities and shed light on how the explosions happened and how to prevent these ticking time bombs.

The government must act now to speed up a report that will prevent more tragedies and get people back into their homes and into safety. Will the government release the report now?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** In the earlier answer, I already acknowledged to take the matter up with the respective minister and to report back to the honourable member in a timely way, and I will do that.

1100

#### GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. We know now, more than ever, the urgency of action required to protect our environment. Climate change is our generation's greatest environmental challenge, and Ontarians expect their government to take action. Our government has set ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets of 6% below 1990 levels by 2014 and 15% below by 2020, and we have laid out an integrated plan to achieve those reductions.

Yesterday in this House, the minister introduced a bill that would enable the province to establish a cap-and-trade system for Ontario, another key step in ensuring Ontario achieves our greenhouse gas reductions. Could the minister provide this House with further details of how a cap-and-trade system would enable Ontario to meet our ambitious environmental goals?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** This is indeed a great question. As you know, a good piece of legislation was introduced yesterday, because cap-and-trade is one of the most important ways in which we can combat climate change. It will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and that's what we should all be interested in. But not only will it do that; it will also attract investments in new technology and create new jobs.

The proposed legislation that was introduced yesterday is enabling legislation, and it's a good first step. It will deliver on our promise to reduce greenhouse gases from industrial sources, it will give us the ability to link with other trading systems to ensure maximum trading opportunities for our industry and it will promote Ontario's interests, especially in future discussions on a broader cap-and-trade system, not only across Canada but across North America. It will allow us, in effect, to align our system with the American system that President Obama's been talking about. It's a good first step.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** In today's economic climate, I know some will be concerned about the impact of such a proposal on Ontario industries. Our government understands that this is a pivotal time for the province, for our environment, our economy and the future well-being of our people. We know that we face two enormous challenges: climate change and a global economic crisis. Both must be addressed.

As we act on the economic crisis, we must at the same time move forward to lay the foundation for a low-carbon economy. How will the minister ensure that cap-and-trade both protects and promotes Ontario businesses as they transition to the new, green economy?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** We have been meeting as a ministry, together with the Ministry of Economic De-

velopment and Trade and industrial leaders from across the province, to discuss the system for the last four to five months. We've heard one consistent message, loud and clear, and that is that no-carbon pricing is coming and that they want certainty in the system. They also want a system that is in effect North America-wide.

Enabling the development of cap-and-trade through future regulations will provide the certainty that industry wants and needs. It will also allow us to establish a reliable price signal, which is what they're interested in, ensuring a level playing field for Ontario industry and avoiding duplication with federal regulations.

But what it's really all about is reducing greenhouse gas emissions so that all of us in Ontario can lead a better lifestyle, particularly for the younger generation, such as the class that is here from Our Lady of Lourdes School with Mr. Joe Bush, who's here—

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

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'd like to go to the Premier again. We know that contracts worth about \$2 million were secretly awarded to the Courtyard Group. We also know that the wife of the head of Courtyard got a contract for \$268,000, which included such things as \$300 an hour for reading the New York Times, \$300 an hour for listening to voicemail, and \$300 an hour for talking to somebody on the subway. How can you justify this type of waste of taxpayer money?

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

**Hon. David Caplan:** The risk of not bringing in a transition team would have been further delays in the implementation of eHealth. As I said earlier, Smart Systems for Health, the legacy agency, was given an incorrect mandate by members opposite. My predecessor ordered an operational review, we've changed that organization, and, through its ashes, we see eHealth Ontario.

There's a need to move quickly. I do agree that Ontario is not where it should be when it comes to electronic health records in this province. That's why they did move fast. The new organization is improving transparency through increasing public disclosure of contracts. It's also co-operating, as I've mentioned earlier, with Mr. McCarter, our provincial Auditor General, as he does a review at the behest of the federal Auditor General. This is an organization which is committed to—

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

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I find it shocking that this minister doesn't condone that type of spending—I mean, that you do condone it and that you don't condemn it. It's simply unbelievable. It seems that wherever you go there's scandal, there's sloppy oversight and there's incompetence. You haven't been able to come forward with a 10-year strategic plan for health, and now, in this case, we have an agency that again has postponed eHealth until 2015. Why will you not resign and recognize you're over your head?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I don't agree with the member opposite. I don't think she really understands the importance—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member may want to be in his seat. Minister?

**Hon. David Caplan:** I disagree with the member. I think she doesn't understand the importance of electronic health and what it will do for patients in the province of Ontario. I know that, for example, a mother in Sioux Lookout sees the value in being able to get advice from a specialist at the Hospital for Sick Children without having to travel to Toronto during the winter. Just ask the librarian, for example, who lives in Waterloo with failing eyesight if she sees value in a wait-time information system that tells her she can get her cataract removed in less than one third of the time than she had to wait for that surgery when this government was first elected.

We're going to keep driving forward on innovations like that. I know that's difficult for the member opposite, because she didn't get it when she was on this side of the House. Clearly she doesn't get it today. But I can tell you that we will keep driving forward to ensure that Ontarians have better patient safety, that they have better health care systems and they have connected—

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

#### DRIVE CLEAN

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Talking about driving, I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. As he knows, smog leads to the premature death of as many as 10,000 Ontarians a year. Reducing vehicle emissions is key to reducing smog. Can you assure Ontarians that the government's Drive Clean program is working as effectively as possible to identify high-emission vehicles and reduce smog in Ontario?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Let me put it this way: This government has been working for the last five years to improve the air-quality standards in so many different ways. We've introduced over 57 new air quality standards with only one thing in mind, and that is to make the air that we all breathe on a day-to-day basis better for everyone in this province. We're working hard on that. The Drive Clean program is working as well; we will continue to work on that. There's a lot of work that has been done. A lot more needs to be done in the future as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I'll certainly agree that a lot more work has to be done. The 2007 report indicates that Drive Clean reduced vehicle emissions by one third. The program is identifying fewer and fewer vehicles with high emissions each year. Test failure rates fell by almost 50% between 1999 and 2005. Concerns about Drive Clean testing units have been raised for years, and it's been asserted that as many as one third of these units do not meet California Bureau of Auto Repair standards. Minister, can you provide proof to this chamber and to Ontar-

ians that lower failure rates in Drive Clean tests are a reflection of cleaner cars and not the deficiency of the testing equipment itself?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Well, I think the member to a certain extent answered his own question. That is the fact that, in effect, through the Drive Clean program the standards have risen dramatically over the last number of years. Yes, cars are a lot cleaner now in the way they deal with fuels than they have in the past. A lot more work has been done and needs to be done in the future as well. But we've come a long way, and this program in the long run is to the benefit of all of us.

1110

#### ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** My question is to the Minister of Culture. There are more than 400 community museums in Ontario that reflect the diversity of Ontario's histories and cultures. Community museums in Ontario provide us with the opportunity to learn about the growth and progress of our province. I know that museums and historical sites in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry help instill in our citizens a sense of pride for the communities in which they live.

Providing all Ontarians with greater access to learn more about their cultural heritage is something the government should actively promote. In the government's 2007 election platform, the government committed to creating a fund which would enable museums to use new technology to make history more accessible and tangible to Ontarians. Would you please tell us what the status is of this fund?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I'm delighted to respond to my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I joined him just last summer—it seems longer than that in some ways—to tour a number of facilities in his riding. He's a tremendous supporter of the cultural agenda of this government. Those museums of which he spoke indeed provide us with an opportunity to learn about our past, and they contribute hugely to local economies by attracting millions of visitors every year from across Ontario and from outside.

Last week, I was delighted to announce that our government is investing \$6.5 million over four years to make Ontario's history more accessible. And how is that? Through innovative technology. This new museum and technology fund will enable museums of the 21st century to become centres of innovation promoting their culture and heritage. It's a tremendous initiative and one I'm delighted to enable.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I know community museums in my riding and all across Ontario will be happy to hear that the government is fulfilling its commitment to help museums use technology and innovative methods to increase and expand their reach beyond their local communities. Each year, more than three million people visit Ontario's community museums to learn about our unique

cultural heritage and to gain a better understanding of who we are as Ontarians. As the keepers and interpreters of our heritage, it is important that we provide ongoing support to help community museums maintain their collections and implement programming.

Again, can the Minister of Culture tell this House what investments the government has made to ensure that community museums have the resources to tell the stories of our province?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** The museums are indeed vital cultural institutions in our society and in the development and growth of our society. They engage us by increasing our understanding of the world through museum collections, museum programs and special events. Museums inspire passion for the communities in which we live and for this wonderful province. This new fund is going to build on our government's substantial investments in community museums. In 2007, our government nearly doubled our investment in the community museum operating grant to \$5 million, and since 2003 the Ministry of Culture has provided almost \$21 million in operating funds to museums throughout this province. We are committed to them, we understand how vital they are, and we will continue to support them.

#### ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. You will know that back in May 2009 both Jamie Goodwin and Ricardo Wesley died as a result of being incarcerated in a Kashechewan jail. Those buildings, those jails, those police detachments did not have the type of fire suppressant system or detection system needed in order to make sure that those prisoners were kept safe. The coroner's inquest, under section 43, has set the following recommendation: "It is recognized that as many as nineteen (19) of the NAPS detachments do not meet the National Building Code standards and do not have sprinkler systems installed." It says it recommends that Canada and Ontario, along with NAN, meet by June 30 in order "to determine the most expeditious way to resolve this ... problem." Do you plan on meeting this deadline?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Attorney General.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** I thank the member for the question. Of course, the deaths are very, very tragic circumstances. I know all of our sympathies go out to the families and to the friends. I'd like to thank the jury members for the very hard work that they did on this very, very difficult case. I know that the government, my colleague Minister Bartolucci, is reviewing the recommendations, taking them very, very seriously, and will make sure that whatever needs to be done will be done to ensure the safety of all persons who would be involved in circumstances in the future.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The question was to the Premier, and we would have liked to have had a response from

him because, quite frankly, this cannot continue to happen.

Your minister Mr. Bartolucci met with NAN, NAPS, me and others on numerous occasions in order to deal with this issue, much before the inquiry had finished its recommendations.

We now know that there are a number of detachments that don't meet the minimum requirement to make sure that police officers and those who are incarcerated within those police stations are kept safe. Our question to you is simply this: Do you find that this is acceptable, and if not, what are you going to do about it, and when?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** As I indicated, we're taking the recommendations very, very seriously. Whatever needs to be done will be done.

To put some of the other comments of my friend in a little bit of perspective, we have invested in First Nations policing, which we take as a priority. We have invested \$112 million since 2003, \$30 million in 2007-08 alone, and that represents, just for the member's information, a 37% increase since 2003. So we are serious about making the investments. We're making the investments. We're working with our other partners in justice—the federal government and others—and we're taking the recommendations to heart, and we'll be coming forward with whatever is required in the future to ensure the safety of all.

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, earlier this month, the Premier's Innovation Awards took place here in Toronto at MaRS, one of the world's top research incubation centres.

The importance of innovation can be seen in the fact that our Premier had the vision to create the Ministry of Research and Innovation in 2005 and make innovation part of our five-point economic plan. Yet for many of us, it's difficult to envision the impact that the phenomenal research undertaken by Ontario's world-class scientists will have on our daily lives.

Could the minister please tell us about the importance of recognizing the world-class ideas and innovators such as those who won the Premier's Innovation Awards this month?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my friend from Kitchener–Conestoga for the question.

What we do in this province is, we actually celebrate our world-class excellence. The reason there is a brain gain into this province is because one of the things that we do is actually celebrate and tell those special people that we are so very proud of them.

The Premier's Summit Award is a \$5-million award: \$2.5 million from our ministry and \$2.5 million matched by the institution. I think of this year's two recipients of this penultimate award: Dr. Ben Neel, who was recruited from Harvard University, who is a leading cancer specialist and the head of the Ontario Cancer Institute;

and Dr. John Wallace at McMaster, who is the new head of the Farncombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute in Hamilton. Both of these amazing scientists are doing groundbreaking work. In this province, we understand that we have to take great ideas and turn those into great jobs, and both of these unbelievably qualified and—

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

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** Minister, in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, a company by the name of Unitron is breaking new ground in the field of hearing instruments. At the awards, it was announced that Unitron won a Premier's Catalyst Award as the company with the best innovation, for their Yuu intelligent hearing aid.

Released in 2007, the Yuu is a premium hearing aid that quickly established a new industry benchmark for performance, aesthetics and ease of use. In an industry that's growing by 3% to 6% a year, Unitron has seen sales increase 30% annually since the launch of the Yuu. Pardon? That was 30% annually since the launch of the Yuu.

Could the minister outline the importance of supporting groundbreaking, innovative companies such as Unitron through the Premier's Catalyst Award?

**1120**

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** There are a number of awards, and the thing that struck me, I say to my friend who represents part of Canada's Technology Triangle, is the number of firms and individuals from the Waterloo region.

Unitron is a good example. They make, we're very proud to say, the greatest, the best hearing aid in the world today, because of groundbreaking technology. We're proud of them, but also Dr. Bin Ma, who is part of Bioinformatics Solutions, who added groundbreaking work on the identification of proteins, which allows our researchers to find new and novel cures. As well, I do want to pay tribute to his colleague—and I'm right with you here, Mr. Speaker—from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Ming Li.

But particularly, I want to talk about Dr. Scott Vanstone, who created Certicom. In our BlackBerry, the reason that they're secure is because we have world-leading encryption software provided by Certicom—

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

## MUNICIPAL PLANNING

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, in the gallery is a delegation of citizens from the town of Innisfil, led by Mayor Brian Jackson. They are here today because they are worried about the future of their community.

Preserving the high quality of life enjoyed by residents of Innisfil depends on preserving the town's economic viability and its tax base. Barrie's desire to annex large sections of Innisfil puts the town's viability and quality of life at risk.

Minister, what message do you have for my Innisfil constituents who are seeking to keep their town a great place to live?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I thank the honourable member for her question, and I do welcome the delegation from Innisfil. I know Mayor Jackson was here just a few moments ago, and we thank him in absentia for the good work that he and his council do, day in and day out, on behalf of the people of Innisfil.

I've always maintained that the best solution to these kinds of disputes between one jurisdiction and another is a local solution, and that's why I convened a meeting of Barrie officials on February 11 and Innisfil officials on February 18, which the honourable member attended, and then Simcoe county officials on March 4. I further convened a meeting of all three groups, facilitated by my ministry, on March 23. Regrettably, to date, we have not been able to find a local solution.

Let me quote the mayor of Innisfil when he said that Minister Watson "wants us at the table and he wants us to work this out ... he said he is not going to allow" this to "drag on for another year"—

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** The town of Innisfil is a leader when it comes to sensible development and the environment. Innisfil's council and citizens have worked hard with the rest of Simcoe county to devise a sensible growth plan to meet your Places to Grow requirements.

Innisfil is an environmental leader as well, particularly when it comes to Lake Simcoe. On the key issue of discharge of phosphorus into Lake Simcoe, the city of Barrie puts two and a half times as much phosphorus per litre in the lake as Innisfil does.

To continue providing quality services, including environmental protection, Innisfil needs a secure tax base. Will you guarantee Innisfil that it will not lose its ability to provide services at an affordable cost?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** We know that when one community prospers, the adjoining community also prospers, so when Innisfil is doing well, Barrie does well, and when Barrie does well, Innisfil does well and the entire county does well.

But the business community and those people who want to create jobs need certainty. They need stability and they need predictability when it comes to what's going on with boundaries and what's going on with growth plans, and we want to make sure that we are in a position to help facilitate the growth and job opportunities for the people of Innisfil, for Barrie and for Simcoe county.

In my meeting with the mayor of Innisfil on February 18, I asked the mayor, "What would you do if you were in my shoes?" And he replied, "I would impose a solution because I would have no other options." We still want a local solution, but at the end of the day, we feel that the province does have a role to ensure that the growth—

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

## STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you and the Premier have stated very clearly that the demographic information on the school information finder website will remain. You said that you had some positive feedback from parents on this, and I want to share some of the feedback that I got from parents.

"I appreciate your voice on this ridiculous website. This site contains information out of context and should not be applied as the ministry implies."

Another one: "Thanks for sticking up for those smaller, rural, and other demographically challenged schools, students, teachers, and support staff."

Another: "I completely share your views; however, find very saddening and disturbing that the Minister of Education and Premier are seeing it quite differently and stereotypically."

In the face of this kind of opposition, why do you insist on leaving this unnecessary demographic information on the website?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'll just share some e-mails that we have received. "I was very pleased to see the data presented in such a clear and useful way. The comparison tool really allows people to process and understand the information better ... removing the ability to analyze the data from the website doesn't change that, and both the ministry and education interest groups would do well to focus more on solving the problem and less on protecting people from valuable information."

Another one: "There's no question that programs should be informed by evidence and that evidence should be made public."

We can have this back and forth. What is important is that there is some disagreement. There needs to be a conversation about what data, what information should be available on this website. As I said to the member many times, we are going to be having a round table with all of the stakeholders and we are going to be having that conversation. But we believe that profiles of schools and information should be made available in a consistent and—

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Minister, there isn't much back and forth. The federations are against it—all of the federations, clearly against it. OPSBA and the trustee associations are against it. Student trustees are against it. Most of the parents that you know who support you are against it. You've got very little by way of a back-and-forth, I say to you.

We support the idea of making information available to parents. Parents can benefit from knowing if the school has a physical education or music teacher, a teacher librarian or wraparound daycare. That's fine. However, nothing that you can add to this site is going to make the demographic information more acceptable.

We are happy that you are consulting about this, but will you at least agree to remove the offensive, un-

necessary demographic information from the site while you are engaged in this consultation process?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I will guarantee is that we will have that conversation with those people who are interested in talking about what other information should be on this site so that the school profiles can be as complete as possible. That is the conversation that I have had with all of the stakeholders who sit at the partnership table and who have expressed their concerns to me. I think they're very aware that I am open, that we are open, to having that conversation.

It seems that at the root of this member's concern is that somehow there's a problem if there's a disagreement in the education sector between some folks who hold one opinion and others who hold another. The fact is that even among the folks who support us, there can be disagreements. We can have that conversation. As I've said before, having those conversations means that at the end of the day, we have a stronger relationship and a—

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

#### STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

**Mr. Dave Levac:** My question is for the Minister of Education as well. In the riding of Brant, as in other ridings across the province, grade 3 and grade 6 students are sitting down this week and next week to write the EQAO test for reading, writing and mathematics. I wish them all the best of luck.

I know that the students in my riding have been tremendously improving since 2003. That speaks highly of the classroom teachers, the principals, the support staff and the parents, not to mention the students themselves. For example, in 2007-08, results of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board indicated that the percentages of grade 3 students at or above the provincial standard in math was 71%, up from 57% in 2003. At Grand Erie, last year's results had grade 6 students doing better in reading: 61% when it had been only 52%.

I understand that we haven't reached our target of 75% in the entire province. Would you tell us what that trend is across the province—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, across the province, there is exactly the trend that the member for Brant is speaking of. As a former educator, he knows how critical it is that we have an ability to track what's going on in our schools. We've got a majority of boards where we see a noticeable improvement in the writing, reading and math scores for those grade 3 and grade 6 students.

Right now, 65% of Ontario's grade 3 and grade 6 students are achieving 75% or higher on their EQAO test. That's a B grade, so it's a substantial majority of kids achieving at that high level. When we took office, just 54% were at that level, so there's been a significant increase since we've been in office; that's 11% since we came in office. It's clear from the facts that the resources

we've put into the system to allow teachers to work with their kids, professional development—

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

**Mr. Dave Levac:** In my first classroom I had 62 students, and I can tell you that I've been visiting the schools in the riding and I've seen smaller class sizes, more teachers, more support staff and more individual attention that is so critical to the students' success.

In the Grand Erie board, 100% of the primary classes have 23 students or less and 90% of the primary classes have 20 students or less. There are 132 new teachers and 314 new EAs, thank you very much, and all of this despite 3,000 fewer students.

In the Haldimand Catholic board, 100% of primary classes have 23 students or less and 91% of primary classes have 20 students or less—40% before the cap. There are 52 new teachers and 110 new EAs despite declining enrolment as well.

There's been criticism by some people about teaching to the test. Is this an accurate assumption about our approach?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What the teachers in our schools do is teach to the curriculum. The tests that are being administered this week—and I wish all the students in Ontario who were sitting down to write those tests last week and this week all the best of luck. Those tests, as opposed to being standardized tests, are tests that look at the curriculum and the way the curriculum is being delivered. What we do is use them as a diagnostic tool. So they are not a randomized, standardized test that is used to take a snapshot of a particular part of the province; they are used as diagnostics in every one of our schools and in every one of our boards in order to improve the practice of our teachers and to improve the outcomes for our students. That's what they're for.

Indeed, when the NDP government introduced the EQAO process, that's exactly what they were looking for. They were looking for that—

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

#### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Premier. We've been witnessing quite a spectacle here today, with the Minister of Health condoning scandalous misuse of tax dollars by officials at eHealth. Premier, at least earlier today you said you were concerned about some of these revelations, and in the past you've indicated that you support greater involvement of legislators in the business of government. I'm going to test your sincerity here today. Will you agree to have Minister Caplan and the CEO of eHealth appear next week before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to explain just what's happened at that agency?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the overture made by my colleague, but I think what the public would prefer is that the Auditor General be allowed to continue his work. He's independent, he is non-partisan, he is ob-

jective, he's impartial and he's nothing if not thorough. The good news is that he's already in there. He's on the ground and he's making some inquiries. I think we should allow him to complete his work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 o'clock this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1134 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome the following individuals to the east gallery: Mr. Sarkis Assadourian, a former member of the House of Commons for Don Valley North in 1993 and Brampton Centre in 1997; Dr. Reza Baraheni, former professor at the University of Toronto, former president of PEN Canada, poet, writer, literary critic and human rights activist; Mr. Hassan Zerehi, editor-in-chief of Shahrvand Publications; and Mr. Bahram Bahrami, editor-in-chief of Mehr-E-Iran.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BRAD FORWARD

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to be back in the Legislature today.

Firmly back on Canadian soil, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Brad Forward and his wife, Sandra, back from their recent trip to Norway for the World Driving Championship. Brad has racked up 166 wins this season, with a total of 3,289 career wins. Forward, now residing in Woodstock, Ontario, represented Canada last week in Norway.

Earlier this year, eight of Canada's best drivers converged at Fraser Downs for a chance to represent our country in the World Driving Championship, and with trips down victory lane, Brad Forward earned the 2009 National Driving Championship title with a total of 65 points.

I want to congratulate him once again for representing the people of Ontario and the people of Canada at these very important championships. I just want Brad to know that this Legislature is proud of him.

### CITY OF BRAMPTON

**Mrs. Linda Jeffrey:** I rise in the house today to recognize the city of Brampton, which recently received a prestigious five-star rating and special recognition at the eighth annual WinterLights Celebrations symposium and awards ceremony held in Prince George, British Columbia. Brampton was one of 32 participating communities from across Canada and one of only seven cities

which was identified as having delivered a unique winter environment experience for its residents and visitors alike.

WinterLights Celebrations is the winter edition of the Communities in Bloom program, which seeks to promote community involvement through the enhancement of neighbourhoods and public spaces with colourful displays and staging of festive events and winter-related activities. The program aims to promote Canada as a winter tourism destination, as well as creating awareness of cultural and social events during the winter months.

The city of Brampton received special mention by the judges for their newest recreation facility: the Cassie Campbell recreation centre. This is a 65,000-square-foot facility which houses an eight-lane indoor pool, two ice pads, a daycare facility and a community policing station.

Congratulations to the city of Brampton and Brampton city council on winning this award and showing the innovation I know they possess in making Brampton a destination for locals and tourists alike during the winter months.

## ABORIGINAL LAND DISPUTE

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I have a question: When is the McGuinty government going to commence to enforce the rule of law in the province of Ontario? For example, why does a mining company like Platinex have to launch a \$70-million lawsuit against this government, alleging in part that the province has failed to enforce the rule of law?

As many know, Platinex leases crown land from the province for mining exploration, and according to today's National Post, under the headline "Mining Company Warns of Another Caledonia," an Ontario Superior Court justice ruled that the company took adequate steps to consult with the area KI native community at Big Trout Lake, and that preliminary drilling would do minimal harm to the land. However, KI protesters consistently have shut down operations. Both KI and Platinex are equal victims of the Ontario government's failure to adequately intervene in these disputes.

These kinds of ongoing native land disputes—we see them in Caledonia and Haldimand and now Brantford—have cost Ontario tens of millions of dollars. It's been over three years—three years of fear and intimidation, with no respect for the rule of law. Despite pleas from this side, the situation has been allowed to fester.

Now it looks as if Mr. McGuinty is willing to have it happen elsewhere in this province. I've seen the damage, and I don't wish this on any other community.

## JIM TOVEY

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I rise today to recognize and congratulate the 2009 Mississauga Citizen of the Year, Mr. Jim Tovey. A long-time resident of Lakeview, Jim has been a tireless community advocate on issues of culture, planning, environment and health. He has also

been a strong voice in calling for the protection and revitalization of our waterfront. Jim's efforts were critical in achieving our community's goals of closing the Lakeview coal power plant and ensuring that the waterfront will never again be used for power generation.

Under his leadership, the community has developed a shared vision for the area, which includes park space, a heritage walk and destination attractions. This vision has excited the imagination of the whole city and has brought people together to work towards a common goal.

Jim is known for his active involvement in protecting and promoting our local history. These days, he's working to convert a small-arms building in Lakeview into an arts and cultural hub while preserving its historical significance. As its name suggests, the building was a small-arms factory during the Second World War and played a vital role in our nation's war efforts. So far, his efforts have saved the building from demolition, and he continues to pursue further protections for the site.

Jim Tovey is indeed most deserving of being named Mississauga's Citizen of the Year. His ongoing and selfless service to our local community and to Mississauga as a whole has already made a tremendous impact.

One day, when our grandchildren in south Mississauga walk along the pristine shores of a vibrant and accessible waterfront, the acres of green space, heritage site and thriving cultural attractions, it will be in large part because of the outstanding leadership Jim Tovey has shown today.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly and the residents of Mississauga South, thank you, Jim, and congratulations.

#### NATIONAL ACCESS AWARENESS WEEK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** As we mark National Access Awareness Week, we are reminded of the barriers that those with a disability face every day.

Right in our own backyard, deaf students at the University of Toronto are faced with not only the challenges that come with having a hearing impairment, but the fact that they are also facing accessibility challenges right on campus.

Some of those barriers include being forced to withdraw from courses due to a lack of interpreter services within the accessibility services office, course instructors not prepared to deal with deaf students, and office staff unaware of how to place and receive calls through a relay service, just to name a few.

Each year, National Access Awareness Week encourages Canadians to think about and find ways to break down barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. Access means more than just removing physical barriers. It means changes in attitudes and supports that allow all people with visible or invisible disabilities to be part of community life.

People with learning, developmental and psychiatric disabilities or other invisible impairments should not be forgotten when we strive for equal access. It is very im-

portant that we raise awareness for accessibility standards not only during this week of recognition but every day. Let's make Ontario a leader in accessibility, starting with the University of Toronto.

#### LEONARD AND LOUISE PRESKETT

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On May 16, the people of East York and the surrounding environs got together to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Louise and Len Preskett. That's a long time to be married—70 years.

The couple met back in the 1930s at a party in England. They got married just before the Second World War, had one child, and Len was sent overseas. He served in places like North Africa, Italy and Sicily. But on the trip from North Africa to Sicily, his ship was bombed and he was presumed lost at sea. The army, of course, had to go and tell Louise Preskett that her husband was missing in action and presumed dead. She had one child and she had another she was about to deliver a few weeks later. You can imagine how she felt.

A few weeks after the second child was born, the Salvation Army came to the house and told Louise that her husband had been found. He had suffered a concussion and had been washed ashore, but he was alive. You can imagine how that affected both of them.

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Len came back, and after the war, they decided to move to Canada. They moved first of all to Parkdale and later to East York, where they have lived for the last 42 years. They're an amazing couple.

If I can just have a couple of seconds: On their 70th anniversary, they got placards from the Queen, the Governor General, the Prime Minister, the Premier, local politicians and the media. All of East York stands to celebrate with them.

#### GEMS OF THE LAKESHORE

**Ms. Laurel C. Broten:** I rise today to congratulate the small businesses and community organizations recognized at the third annual Gems of the Lakeshore. Each year, our community recognizes businesses and community organizations that are unique to south Etobicoke and make our community a more vibrant place to live.

Earlier this month, I joined with members of our community, the joint BIA and the Lakeshore Community Partnership at the historic Assembly Hall in my riding for an evening of celebration and recognition of businesses and organizations in six categories: restaurants, cultural and recreation, community services, retail businesses, service businesses and, for the first time, quick-food businesses.

The 560 recognition forms submitted this year by local residents who shop, frequent or visit the businesses and community groups certainly reflect the great commitment the residents of Etobicoke-Lakeshore have to the services and products uniquely offered in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, making our community a must-visit destination.



I'm pleased to recognize this year's Gems of the Lakeshore recipients here in the Legislature: Siam Princess, Assembly Hall, LAMP Community Health Centre, The Loot Lady, Pina B's Salon and Spa, and Chasers Juice.

I hope that all members will join me in congratulating all of the great small businesses and community groups in my riding. I invite you all to the Etobicoke–Lakeshore community to see what our Gems have to offer. Congratulations to all of them.

#### CHILDREN'S WISH FOUNDATION

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Each year, thousands of Canadian children between the ages of 3 and 17 are diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. Today in the Legislature, we have one of those very precious children here with us: Neilah Brooks. Neilah is here, in her beautiful dress, with Rosemin, her mom, and Sandy Hancox, from the Children's Wish Foundation.

As you know, the Children's Wish Foundation is celebrating its 25th anniversary. It's the most recognized charity when it comes to granting wishes for children diagnosed with high-risk, life-threatening illnesses. The magic of a wish provides children and their families with an opportunity to share the joy of a special experience and escape from the day-to-day challenges of the illnesses.

I commend the Children's Wish Foundation for their commitment to bringing wishes to life for children, who benefit, and for supporting their parents and families during these most difficult circumstances.

The Children's Wish Foundation is a symbol of hope and a chance to provide families with special memories. I invite all members of the Legislature to acknowledge the Children's Wish Foundation and the work they have done with more than 4,000 families in Ontario, and the work they continue to do with families across Canada.

I hope that your wish is a very, very special one, Neilah. Welcome again, and have a great deal of fun, okay?

#### INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The McGuinty Liberals know that in order to compete in the global economy, we need to invest in our strongest asset, our people, and work hard to overcome the neglect done to our roads, schools, hospitals and public institutions by the previous government.

The Conservatives refused to invest in people and refused to invest in our province's infrastructure. In 2002-03, for example, they invested only \$1.8 billion. Ontarians knew they deserved better, and they chose change.

The McGuinty Liberals know that strong public services are the key to stable families and sustainable communities, and we launched an ambitious plan to invest the unheard-of sum of \$30 billion in infrastructure

through the ReNew Ontario program. This plan was completed in 2008-09, a full year ahead of schedule.

We on this side of the House have again responded to challenging times with an additional \$32.5 billion over the next two years, supporting 300,000 jobs and making strategic investments in our people and our future economic prosperity.

These investments underscore the McGuinty Liberals' commitment to strengthening our citizens and improving our public services. While there's more to do, we'll continue to work hard to build strong communities for all Ontarians.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### CONDOMINIUM OWNERS PROTECTION ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Mr. Marchese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui a trait aux condominiums.

**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. Rosario Marchese:** Condominium owners haven't had a voice since 1972, when the first Condominium Act was introduced. They haven't had adequate representation or advocacy since then. Changes were made in 1999, but nothing changed for condominium owners. This bill is an attempt to address that by changes to the Condominium Act, including the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and also the building code.

##### TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND SAFETY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT AUX NORMES TECHNIQUES ET À LA SÉCURITÉ

Mr. Takhar moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 187, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 and the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 187, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité et la Loi de 1996 sur l'application de certaines lois traitant de sécurité et de services aux consommateurs.

**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?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I will make the statement during ministerial statements.

## MOTIONS

### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 22.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### TECHNICAL SAFETY STANDARDS

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I'm honoured to rise in the House today to announce that our government is taking steps to further strengthen public safety in Ontario.

Ontario's technical safety standards are among the best in the world. They generally work well and protect Ontarians every day. Our government has confidence in the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, which we normally call TSSA.

The TSSA is a not-for-profit corporation formed under the Corporations Act. The TSSA is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of regulatory services and technical safety in five key areas in this province. These five key areas are upholstered and stuffed articles; boilers and pressure vessels; amusement and elevating devices; fuels safety; and operating engineers.

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Keeping the public safe is a top priority for this government.

As I mentioned—and it bears repeating—Ontario's technical safety standards are among the best in the world. However, where improvements can be made, it is our duty to make those improvements and ensure that we are constantly working to have the best systems and standards in place for the people of Ontario. Today our government is proposing amendments to the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000, that are designed to further improve accountability and transparency. They are also designed to strengthen Ontario's public safety system.

Before I get into the details, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the team from my ministry who worked tirelessly on this legislation. They have all joined us here today. I would like them to stand up and be recognized. I would also like to thank my parliamentary assistant, the member from Hamilton Mountain, for the work that she has done regarding this legislation as well.

Here is a summary of some of the proposed legislative changes:

First, our proposed amendments would require the TSSA to appoint a chief risk and safety officer. This position would provide independent review of the TSSA and report annually, and publicly, on how the TSSA is meeting its public safety mandate.

Second, our proposed amendments would give the minister the power to guide the strategic focus of the TSSA by issuing policy directives.

Third, our proposed amendments would give the minister the power to appoint the chair and the vice-chair to the TSSA board.

Fourth, we propose to allow the Auditor General to access TSSA records should the auditor choose to conduct an audit.

Fifth, the proposed amendments to the act would require the minister and the TSSA to enter into a memorandum of understanding on the governance of the corporation.

Sixth, our proposed changes would allow the minister to ask for reviews, when deemed necessary, relating to the performance, governance and accountability of financial matters of the TSSA. The proposed amendments would also give the minister the authority to appoint an administrator for the purpose of assuming control of the TSSA if it is in the public interest.

Two other proposed legislative amendments address recommendations made last November by Ontario's propane safety review panel. The panel reported that the building blocks for propane safety in Ontario are in place, and that these building blocks have served the people of this province well over the years. However, improvements can be made, and we are moving ahead with making those improvements.

Among their 40 recommendations, the panel advised that our government provide the TSSA with clear authority to respond to imminent hazards to public safety and charge the cost back to the operators. Our proposed amendments address this recommendation.

In response to other recommendations, we propose to require propane operators in Ontario to carry insurance as a condition of licensing. The remainder of the proposed changes are in addition to these recommendations that were made by the propane expert panel. Our proposed amendments to the Technical Standards and Safety Act clearly demonstrate that we are serious about building on our province's technical safety systems to keep Ontarians safe.

On behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair of the TSSA board of directors, Rudy Riedl, vice-chair George Irwin,

and TSSA's president and chief executive officer, Kathy Milsom, for their outstanding work in acting upon the recommendations made last November by Ontario's propane safety review panel.

The people of Ontario can be confident that we are taking steps to make this province even safer, and they can take pride in choosing to work, live and play in a province that considers technical safety paramount.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to introduce this legislation and make this statement.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus in response to this minister's bill.

This piece of legislation, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is long overdue. I believe it's inherent of this House and the members in it to ensure that all Ontarians have the safety and protection they require and they deserve as residents of this province.

When it comes to public safety, there are no excuses good enough to not respond immediately. What happened on Sunday, August 10, 2008, in Toronto was not only frightening, but it was avoidable. This avoidable propane explosion at the Sunrise Propane industrial gas facility affected what is estimated to be more than 10,000 people. All residents and business owners within 1.6 kilometres were asked to leave the area, forcing them to close their businesses and, in many cases, flee their own home.

The Technical Standards and Safety Authority, TSSA, is the agency responsible for ensuring safety in a range of Ontario industries, including propane facilities, which extend from gas stations selling propane for vehicles and barbecues to large-scale distributors. This agency falls under the direction and authority of the Minister of Consumer Services. At the time of that propane explosion, the minister failed to take any immediate action; today, he is proposing more authority for himself. We cannot be assured on this side of the Legislature that he will act in that capacity.

During and immediately after the Sunrise explosion, the McGuinty government and this minister had an obligation to act immediately to secure public safety and they neglected to do just that. It is the responsibility of the government to demonstrate that public safety comes first by looking at ways to act instead of finding excuses not to.

This bill, as I mentioned, is long overdue. This bill should have been implemented six years ago. We didn't need this bill for the minister to act immediately; he chose not to. Following the propane explosion, the Liberal government dithered the time away and they failed to protect Ontarians and consumers. Immediately in the aftermath, then-Progressive Conservative leader John Tory visited the site several times. Mr. Tory, with the support of this caucus, made recommendations immediately so that we could deal with the crisis so many Torontonians and so many Ontarians were facing. Yet

this minister continued to fail to act. It took him more than four days to actually visit the site when Ontarians were in crisis.

Months following the propane explosion, the TSSA, under the direction of this minister, developed the action plan to reaudit to further assure Ontarians of the safety of propane-filling facilities in the province. Upon reviewing the TSSA Action Plan for Propane Safety Review Recommendations, November 13, 2008, I can see that they have called for 40 recommendations to further enhance Ontario's safety systems, none of which included the PC caucus suggestions. We in the PC caucus are now excited to see that Mr. McGuinty and his government are finally following through and acting to ensure that Ontarians are safe and protected.

I'd like to reiterate that this bill and its new regulations have not come fast enough. The destruction and lives that were lost as a result of the Sunrise Propane explosion can never be compensated, and we believe the McGuinty government and this minister need to accept full responsibility for their failure to act in a timely, appropriate and decisive fashion. Our party called for a comprehensive and immediate action plan on the issue, but our suggestions went unheard.

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We in the PC caucus look forward to working through this legislation with all members of the House to enhance and further advance the protection of all Ontarians. The safety of Ontarians should be a priority—not just a top priority but the priority—the safety of all Ontarians. There are many outstanding problems that the McGuinty Liberal government has not addressed as a result of the August explosion.

I'd like to thank you again, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to address this legislation. I want to commit to the minister that we will work with him to ensure that all Ontarians are safe.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It was indeed interesting to hear the commentary from the minister. One of his lines that I enjoyed best was that the technical safety standards we have here in Ontario "are among the best in the world." That may be true, but if they are kept in a glass case, if they are only rolled out after an explosion, if they are only shown to people and given to them as a demonstration of the depth of commitment, then frankly they're useless. No matter how beautiful a piece of legislation, if there is not enforcement and if there is not a framework, a body set up to enforce, then those laws are not worthwhile.

You should know that in November 2004, there was a propane fire and explosion in Bowmanville. Hundreds were evacuated. Highway 401 had to be shut down. Frankly, that should have been a clear signal to this government that the privatization of regulation was a failure, that they had to act, that in fact the body that had been set up by the former Harris government to privatize regulation was not doing the job that had to be done. Clearly, on the first strike they didn't notice.

Strike two: In the summer of 2008 we had the explosion at Sunrise Propane. Again, we had a situation

in which a large number of people were at risk, where the citizens of North York had to be evacuated, where local politicians like Councillor Maria Augimeri had to deal with fallout from a situation where they didn't have regulatory authority, where in fact this government had regulatory authority.

Privatization of regulation has failed. We have seen two substantial examples. Remember: After the Sunrise Propane explosion the TSSA didn't even have a full list of all the facilities. Within a few weeks, a number of facilities—many dozens—had been shut down. The question I have to ask is, if they had to be shut down then, why had they not been shut down earlier? Why were there not inspections going on? Why was there not a comprehensive list of facilities in place? All I can say is that there was an abject failure of this corporation to fulfill its mandate and protect the public.

The amendments that have been brought forward today are an admission that the privatization of regulation has failed. What the minister has done is taken a lot more power and brought it into his hands. Frankly, it's still a failure to do fully what has to be done.

The Harris era privatization of regulation is a legacy that has to be cast off. This government, in 2003, presented itself as the alternative, the change that Ontario needed, but in fact they have found the legacy of that government one that is too tempting to let go of, one that they want to hold on to, one that they want to perpetuate.

We have had two strikes. Will we have to have a third significant propane explosion or a third significant industrial accident to get this government to actually cast off that legacy of privatization of regulation, take the regulatory framework into its own hands and actually protect the people of Ontario? Do we have to wait that long? Apparently so.

## PETITIONS

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario’s cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario’s inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

“Ontario’s cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province’s cultural heritage;

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

“The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the re-location of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign and send it to the clerks’ table.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Joseph.

## AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Charles Sousa:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment ... conducted 22 months of ambient air monitoring and determined that the Clarkson, Mississauga, airshed study area was taxed for respirable particulate matter (PM2.5); and....

“Whereas the study found that emissions of acrolein and acrylonitrile exceeded provincial limits; and....

“Whereas the MOE stated that it would focus on achieving reductions of the target pollutants from the 57 identified emitters that currently operate in the area; and

“Whereas the Ontario Power Authority is accepting proposals from companies for the operation of a gas-fired power plant in the Clarkson airshed study area that would see a new, very significant source of additional pollution into an airshed already determined as stressed by the MOE;

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

“That no contract be awarded by the Ontario Power Authority for the operation of any gas-fired power plant that would impact the Clarkson airshed study area.”

I'll sign it and provide it to Sarah.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** A petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians who now live in long-term-care homes are increasingly older, frailer and have greater complex care needs; and

“Whereas our elder parents, family and friends deserve to live with dignity and respect; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government failed to revolutionize long-term care and broke its promise to seniors to provide \$6,000 in personal care per resident; and

“Whereas five years of Liberal inaction has restricted Ontario’s ability to meet the demands of our aging population; and

“Whereas more than 24,000 Ontarians are currently waiting for an LTC bed; and

“Whereas Ontario funds significantly less resident care than Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba and New Brunswick; and

“Whereas dedicated LTC homes are short-staffed and have not been given resources to hire enough front-line workers to provide the level of care residents require; and

“Whereas devoted LTC staff are burdened by cumbersome government regulations; and

“Whereas some 35,000 seniors are living in LTC beds which do not meet more home-like design standards introduced in 1998 by the former PC government;

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

“That the McGuinty government must enhance long-term care by:

—initiating a sector-wide staffing increase of 4,500 full-time positions within a year;

—expediting the redevelopment of Ontario’s 35,000 oldest long-term-care beds by providing adequate support and funding;

—achieving an average of three worked hours of personal care per day within a year;

—simplifying the regulations which govern nursing homes;

—producing a comprehensive plan with benchmarks to reduce LTC wait lists of more than 24,000 people; and

—addressing inflationary pressures by adequately funding the increased operating costs of LTC homes.”

I support this petition, am pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Ajoy.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from about 500 people from the area of Grey Bruce, and it goes as follows:

“Whereas millions of dollars provided by the taxpayers of Grey and Bruce counties, and indeed from the whole of the province of Ontario, have recently been squandered on a huge, expensive new building for the Grey Bruce public health unit that now sits half-empty; and

“Whereas the health unit has now laid off several front-line staff and in fact proposes further layoffs, compromising the delivery of vital health services as

mandated under the Health Protection and Promotion Act; and

**1340**

“Whereas the front-line workers have identified several areas where health protection and promotion programs are not meeting the level of service mandated by the act; and

“Whereas even a single dysfunctional public health unit can put our citizens at risk of an epidemic” or a pandemic;

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

“The Minister of Health should immediately order an assessment, under section 82 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, of the Grey Bruce public health unit and the Grey Bruce board of health, including an audit of their finances and management practices.”

I support this petition, I will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks’ table with page Kevin.

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I have a petition on behalf of the unemployed workers in Canada and Ontario.

“Whereas the federal government’s employment insurance surplus now stands at” over “\$54 billion; and

“Whereas over 75% of Ontario’s unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa’s unfair eligibility rules; and

“Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers; and

“Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus” unemployed are “not qualifying for many retraining programs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario’s unemployed workers.”

I’m in solidarity with Ontario’s unemployed workers, and I support this petition.

#### POVERTY

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas members of Peel Poverty Action Group (PPAG) who are on the Ontario disability support program acknowledge the 2% increases in allowances that will partially offset rising costs of living, we point out that current allowances of about \$1,000 a month do not cover the cost of adequate shelter, nutritious food and personal needs, let alone the additional costs of disability. Further, people with disabilities who are able to work have half their earnings clawed back; we are disappointed that the focus of the government’s poverty

reduction strategy is on families, as relatively few people who are on ODSP have children; and most importantly, persons with disabilities in Peel region, as in other areas of the 905, suffer acutely through chronic underfunding of social services in growth areas of Ontario;

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

“We ask that the pending social assistance review mandate ODSP allowances that enable people with disabilities to obtain shelter, food and personal supports; that those ODSP recipients who are able to work keep a fairer portion of their earnings; that the review significantly restructure the rules and practices governing ODSP to develop a system that supports and encourages people with disabilities rather than diminishes, curtails and punishes them; and, as support services in the region of Peel are severely underfunded because successive governments have failed to develop a formula to take population growth into account, we ask that the review hear from people with disabilities in the 905, particularly the region of Peel.”

I'm in agreement so I'm going to sign my name thereto.

#### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents;

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act as above to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**M<sup>me</sup> France G linas:** I have a petition from the people of Sudbury.

“Whereas 2009 is a reassessment year in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the assessments will be phased in over a four-year period from 2009 to 2012; and

“Whereas the assessed values for current value assessments collected as at January 1, 2008, were obtained during years of high real estate activity in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the downturn in the current global economic climate has greatly affected the real estate market, and subsequently, the assessed values in the province of Ontario;

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

“That the Minister of Finance for the province of Ontario roll back assessed values to the base year of January 1, 2005.”

I support this petition and will affix my name to it and send it to the clerks' table with page Mariah.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

##### CAPPING EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT DE LA R MUN RATION DES CADRES SUP RIEURS

Ms. Horwath moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act to cap executive compensation /  
Projet de loi 180, Loi portant sur le plafonnement de la r mun ration des cadres sup rieurs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I appreciate the opportunity to say a few things about a bill that I tabled in this Legislature not too very long ago. I want to talk about my private member's bill, which in effect caps compensation for corporate executives at the amount of \$400,000. When I say “corporate executives and their compensation,” I particularly mean the ones who receive taxpayers' dollars, the companies that are receiving provincial money, provincial help.

I bring this forward now because I believe that now is the time we need to look at what kinds of strings are being attached to the investments, if you will, that are being made on behalf of taxpayers, on behalf of members of our communities across Ontario, to help struggling corporations.

I raise it because we know that many, many families are in fact struggling in today's economy. Families from one end of this province to the other are in incredible circumstances. Many of them are making sacrifices like they have never made before and like nobody would ever have conceived that they would have to make: sacrifices like rolling back wages; sacrifices like loss of jobs; sacrifices like reduction of hours; sacrifices like loss of benefits. All kinds of sacrifices are being made by families and workers in every single community of this province.

We know that we are in a tough time. We know that people are suffering. In fact, we know that Ontario, even before the economic tsunami hit us back in, I guess it was, around October of last year—even before then, we knew that hundreds of thousands of jobs were being lost. In fact, during the year prior, in 2008, 76,000 jobs were lost in manufacturing in Ontario, and over 30,000 construction jobs were also lost.

We know right now that things continue to get worse. Jobs are lost every single month in this province. People are suffering; families are suffering. The unemployment rate is at 8.7% province-wide, but in some communities it's even worse than 8.7%—places like London, 9.5%; Windsor, 13.6%—13.6% unemployment in the city of Windsor.

Last year, the number of EI beneficiaries doubled in many communities. In London, Kitchener, Hamilton and Windsor, the number of people being forced onto employment insurance actually doubled—unbelievable.

#### 1350

Auto worker families particularly know what's been happening. Their communities have been hard hit. Their losses and sacrifices have been very, very obvious, as we hear about them almost every day in the news.

In March, the workers at General Motors agreed to a \$7-an-hour cut in wages and benefits, a move that the head of GM said was difficult. Federal and Ontario governments ordered the company and the union back to the table, though. It wasn't enough; a \$7-an-hour rollback was not enough. They had to go back to the table. The governments wanted deeper cuts. They wanted more sacrifice from their workers. So what happened? They went back to the table, and of course we know that on Monday GM ratified an agreement for a further \$15 in cuts. Meanwhile, workers at Chrysler have agreed to \$19 an hour in cuts.

More workers are taking job sharing to try to cope with the recession, to keep their jobs—and not only in the auto sector; in other sectors as well. Full-time staff at one Rogers Communications unit took a 20% pay cut—20%—just to avoid layoffs at that company. Mitel Networks employees in Ottawa are taking one day of involuntary leave every three weeks to save their jobs.

Needless to say, these are certainly challenging times for Ontarians from one end of the province to the other. Workers and families were not the ones who caused the economic crisis that we're in, but they are absolutely the ones who have been doing their part to make the

sacrifices necessary to get the cuts in place to try to save the companies that they work for.

Sacrifices absolutely need to be made by workers, but the purpose of this bill is to speak to the fact that sacrifices also have to be made by those corporate executives at the top who have been making decisions around how these companies have been faring for quite some time. Some of those executives actually had a hand in the crisis that we see currently unravelling in this province in North America and indeed around the world. So we know that—New Democrats, certainly; we have said very clearly that we're in favour of governments helping some of those companies to make ends meet, helping them to stay solvent during these difficult times. We've watched as taxpayers have come up to the plate and as governments, including ours, have offered to help. But what we want to see, what New Democrats want to see, is not only workers and not only governments, on taxpayers' behalf, making sacrifices and contributing to the solution, but we also want to see top corporate executives play their part as well. That is the purpose of Bill 180.

The issue has been debated hotly. This is not something new, the idea, the issue of capping corporate executive compensation—and again, not just salary, but all those perks, all those benefits, all those stock options, all of those pieces capped to a maximum of \$400,000. That is not something new. In fact, we know that in the United States, President Obama made the same requirements. His cap was at \$500,000, particularly when they were doing the bailouts for the financial sector. So we know that it's not a new idea, a new concept. In fact, in the States there are a couple of different senators who have raised the exact same issue more than once—several of them, in fact—using the same figure as I'm using in this bill today, a \$400,000 cap.

We know what's happening when you look at CEO salaries in comparison to the salaries of regular workers in the workforce. In 1995, the 50 highest paid executives were paid 85 times the pay of an average Canadian. That was in 1995. By 2007, that figure leaped to 398 times. What is that? It's a 12-year period, and it went from 85 times to 398 times? It is sickening to see the growing disparity that's been occurring in our country, in our province. In 2007, the top 100 highest-paid CEOs made an average of \$10.4 million, an increase of 22% from just the previous year. I want to know how many workers in this province got a 22% increase from 2006 to 2007. That's what I want to know. We know that that's not happening; in fact, the opposite is happening, and many of us bemoan the widening gap between the rich and the poor in this province. Well, I would submit to you that it's not a matter of the growing gap between the rich and the poor anymore; it's the growing gap between the rich, these corporate CEOs, and everybody else, and that's what's happening in the province of Ontario.

I want to give you one example of something that came out of my own community, and it was the restructuring of Stelco. What ended up happening in the

restructuring of Stelco after that company went into CCAA protection, which is basically bankruptcy protection here in Canada, was that the corporate CEO was hired during the restructuring after the CCAA. His name was Rodney Mott, and he joined the company about a year before he decided to move on, but his time at the company was interesting. He was able to take \$67 million when he left, mostly from stock options that were provided to him in the company—\$67 million.

The province of Ontario paid \$150 million to help secure the pensions of United Steelworkers members of Stelco back when that bankruptcy protection was under way. Not very long after that, the company switched names, switched ownership, and the CEO of that company walked away with \$67 million. There were no job guarantees there. A couple of jobs were saved temporarily, but we all very well know what has happened to Stelco, US Steel. It's not operating in Hamilton anymore; it's on a shutdown. So: \$150 million of taxpayers' money, a CEO who walked away with \$67 million and a whole bunch of workers out of work in the city of Hamilton. Unfortunately, this is not a new story. Unfortunately, this is not a unique story. This is the same kind of thing that we see over and over again.

A number of my colleagues in the NDP caucus are going to speak to the legislation, and I think it's important that the members in this Legislature think seriously about the opportunity to support this bill. Again, it is not simply something that is a clarion call from New Democrats. Certainly people from all sides of the political spectrum have been calling for similar measures, both here and in other jurisdictions around the world, particularly when we look to the United States.

I would ask members here to seriously consider putting hard caps, real caps, on the executive compensation of CEOs in this province. When the people who work hard for these companies every single day, day in and day out, for decades, are given the pink slip, are given an option of a job with a 20%, 30%, 40% cut in wages and benefits or no job at all, while we're giving their hard-earned tax dollars, as a government, to help out their companies, let's make sure that the corporate executives in those companies are capped so that they're not walking away with the blood and sweat of those workers who have worked for them for decades and decades.

It's a matter of fairness, it's a matter of basic justice and it's a matter of making sure that, when we put these agreements in place where we're helping these companies out, we're not putting in place weak, flimsy strings that might or might not get us some jobs, that might or might not keep these corporate executives on a leash, but we're putting ironclad strings and steel cables in place, steel cables that hold these companies and their corporate executives to account. It's the only fair thing to do for the people of this province whose hard-earned dollars are going into these compensation packages. It's the only fair thing to do for workers who are being devastated in this economic time.

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

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I'm pleased to be able to rise today and join in the debate in respect to the bill being brought forward, Bill 180, by the member from Hamilton Centre.

I'm going to start with what it is that we're trying to achieve. Is putting a hard cap on all compensation—I'll speak to that briefly in a moment—to, as the member has identified in her words, the top corporate executives in the interest of ensuring that we have a growing, vibrant economy to take us through this storm we're all weathering? Is this going to enhance our capacity to get through the economic storm, or is it going to diminish that capacity?

I'm going to argue, in part, that it would diminish that capacity, not enhance it.

**1400**

We're probably really speaking about relatively few people in the context of the province of Ontario. It's certainly more than a handful, but few in the context of all those who are in the workplace. It's not directly relevant to those who are receiving or might receive provincial grants or loans.

I want to speak briefly about Canada's top-tier banks, which have among them Canada's top corporate executives. It's our banks that are being lauded internationally for positioning Canada as well as anyone or any country in the world during this economic storm. I would probably argue that in the case of those top corporate bankers—the ones who lead the CIBCs, the Toronto-Dominions, the Banks of Montreal, the Banks of Nova Scotia and the Royal Banks of Canada—the total compensation packages for those few folks well exceed the hard cap that the member is proposing.

Those folks work at substantial salaries. They probably have some pretty good benefit packages. I suspect they also have deferred stock options. They probably have some performance bonuses built in. But these are elite members of the business community who have positioned this country well. I would argue that there are those in a great variety of industries in this country who have done very much the same, who have helped to grow this economy in Ontario and in Canada, and at the same time have helped to ensure—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I need to be able to hear the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, and I would ask all members of the House to allow me to do so.

I return to the member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Thank you, Speaker, for your interjection, and for those from the member opposite, who may not be as enamoured with my comments as I hope others will in understanding that our role here, in part, as I said in my opening comments, is to ensure that what we do enhances the economic climate in this province and doesn't diminish the prospects of an economic recovery and economic growth in the country.



The folks we may be talking about—some of these top corporate executives—are folks who have many years of academic study: master's in business administration, maybe Ph.D.s in a variety of areas. They're chartered accountants by trade; they have worked in a number of corporate entities; maybe they have moved both nationally and internationally; they have acquired skills south of the border or in Europe; they have returned to Canada so that they can bring those skills back here—those economic and financial skills, those skills in running business—that will continue to make us successful.

There is the argument being made that where the government has felt the need to engage itself in business through support mechanisms, we should target those top corporate executives for hard-capping all of their packages at a particular number that has been drawn from somewhere, I'm not quite sure where, unless they're using a south-of-the-border number and discounting it at 25% because of the American dollar. I don't know exactly where those numbers are coming from.

The reality for me, in part, is that we need to ensure that we encourage those with the skill sets to move through those corporations, to create the type of work environment to build those companies in a very positive way. We're not going to get that if we don't provide the opportunity for those corporations to bring those skill sets to their executive offices. We're not going to do that if we, in effect, preclude them from getting people with international experience to come to Canada to assist those companies who need them most. We're not going to get it to support those very dollars that we are guaranteeing, either through grants or principally through loans to companies. We're not going to ensure the viability of those loans to be paid back to this province if we don't support those companies with the best possible top executives, particularly at the time of greatest need. It is the time of greatest need, where we need the best executives possible—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm sorry to interrupt you again. We're all very enthusiastic and excited about this debate, but I would ask all members of this House to please refrain from heckling the member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

I again return to the member for Pickering–Scarborough East.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I admit I will be sharing my time, obviously, with the other speakers, including those within our caucus who will be speaking to it in whatever fashion. But as I started off by saying, I don't support the legislation proposed. The mover talked about top corporate executives. We need to ensure that those top corporate executives are the best in the world, particularly if we are going to invest in those companies. We want to ensure we're getting the best-quality people. Sometimes that does cost, and hard caps don't help us achieve that.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I want to warn the excitable party to my left that if the Liberals aren't going to support this bill, can you imagine what I'm going to say?

It's an interesting concept and it's one that perhaps comes to light more during economic downturns, when corporations try to take action to garner some support for their business and their businesses. However, I think, in a way, we're comparing apples and oranges. We're not making the same comparison when we talk about those people on the floor, the labour in a factory, and those people who are managing that company. The compensation rates that they have between those two groups of people have different criteria as to how their compensation programs take place. Of course, if you're comparing apples to apples, which is usually a pleasant thing to do, or apples to oranges, you obviously want to select the apples as opposed to the oranges.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** There are a lot of Republican voters who would support our motion.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Yes. The southern Republicans, of course, would go with the oranges, I'm sure.

However, the compensation package of an employee of a company, of course, is quite often based on their productivity. If you look at someone who is on the floor of a plant, their productivity may increase in small increments based on the management of the company and how that management supports that worker. The compensation for a chief executive officer, for instance, is based on far different circumstances. It's based on their ability to move the entire company. It's based on their ability to add value to the entire company, and sometimes that requires very high wages.

Now, I will admit that I have looked at some of the compensation packages that have been given over the last 15 years and I wondered why a reasonable board of directors would ever authorize a compensation package for chief executives that will amount to that amount of money, because no one could ever increase the value of that company that much. One company that seemed to fall into that category time and time again was Nortel, which was famous for that. Actually, I think those compensation packages went significantly a long way to bringing that company to its knees, where it is today.

However, we're getting a ways away from the issue of this bill, and the issue of this bill is about capping the wages of all the executives of companies. Although, as I've said, there are times when I've wondered why a corporation would get into that situation, I do think that if you cap them all at a figure of \$400,000—I think that's the one that the member has chosen—that might be far too much in some circumstances. It may be far too little in other circumstances.

**1410**

Ontario is a huge and diverse province, and I have great concern in any facet of the management of this province when you can wave a wand and say that Ontario is all the same. From Cornwall to Kenora, from Leamington to Moosonee, Ontario is not all the same. It's extremely diverse, and if we wave a wand and say that it

is all the same, we are taking the first step towards making a very large mistake.

I would have liked to have seen something in this bill that would allow that if a government were to make a deal with a company—and that's basically what they're doing, in compensating a company or handing out a grant—there was a clause in there that a clawback of excess wages could be inserted. I would like to have seen that in this bill, particularly if the company is sold or shut down at the end of the arrangements. That would have given me some confidence that taxpayers' money would be protected because, in the long run, I think what has to happen—what we're all talking about is protecting some taxpayers' money, in the case where we've seen this government hand out money to General Motors in the Beacon project. What happened? General Motors' executives did get bonuses and General Motors' employees did get laid off, and taxpayers' money did go to assist that process.

I think that the terms and conditions of that arrangement that was made with General Motors perhaps didn't have nearly enough detail involved in it, and I think the government is learning as it goes. Unfortunately, it's learning with Ontario taxpayers' dollars.

Another company the government got into bed with was the Ford Motor Co., which is doing very nicely in Ontario, thank you very much. They're not lined up for government grants. But in the 2006-07 era, Ford did receive a large grant from the province of Ontario, and on the eve of hiring 500 employees who were to start work on Monday—on Friday, the Ford Motor Co. announced that that shift would not start. That was a disaster for those 500 people. They had left jobs or they had left a community. They had moved. They had out-of-pocket expenses and then they weren't hired at the end, and I don't believe that Ford ever paid back any of the money they got from the Ontario government. I would stand corrected if someone can tell me they did, but I don't believe they did, and I think that's wrong. That's terribly wrong. The contract that was signed between the government of Ontario and Ford Motor Co. wasn't nearly tight enough—not by a long shot was it nearly tight enough.

Chrysler also had some money in those days, and again, they laid off workers. They took the money of the taxpayers of Ontario and laid off workers, and although they have survived, they have done so at huge, huge human expense to their workforce and to the people of Ontario in the way of grants.

I think that all governments should take extra, particular care when they are negotiating these huge contracts in handing out huge amounts of Ontario tax dollars to these companies and not having a handle on how the company operates or what it does with the money they get from the government.

In not knowing how to do that from a government point of view, that is one of the few times—I'm sure the government will be interested in this—that I would recognize that a consultant might be money extremely well spent by the government—if they were to hire a

consultant and find out how they can accomplish what they want to accomplish without wasting taxpayers' dollars, on the other hand, by watching the company shrink. Perhaps "sellout" is what happened in the Stelco situation, with US Steel. No sooner had they got the government money than they sold out to US Steel. US Steel came along and shut down the company, and Ontario taxpayers' dollars went somewhere up in the ether and we're left without jobs in Ontario. And I think the chief executive of Stelco and US Steel, whatever company he was working for—I think the chief executive did get a huge bonus.

I think those kinds of things could be avoided if the government recognized that they don't have any expertise in tying up a corporation or a company, when they're dealing with handing out taxpayers' precious dollars. I think they could go a long way toward being a lot more careful with someone else's money.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Before I get into my notes here, I'd just like to bring to the attention of the official opposition and the government that I happened to be working at that place when it got taken over. The first thing out of Mr. Mott's mouth was, "We'd like the union to take a \$3- to \$4-an-hour cut in concessions, and we'd also like to go into their benefits."

I'll tell you what happened. If Bill 180 had been on the books when US Steel took over Stelco, we might have had a much fairer outcome. I'll quote from the Hamilton Spectator about Rodney Mott, the wealthy takeover artist brought in by US Steel to seal the demise of our company, Stelco:

"Mott set about restructuring Stelco's operations and reducing the workforce from more than 5,000 workers to 3,600 through buyout and retirement incentives.

"He also immediately bought one million Stelco shares at \$5.50 each, for a total investment of \$5.5 million. He will cash those shares in November for ... \$33 million.

"Mott also holds 1,044,000 options to buy shares at the same price of \$5.50 each. Those options, when exercised, will provide another \$34.45 million in profits to the turnaround man. That's on top of Mott's regular salary and bonuses totalling more than \$500,000." Well, that's very interesting.

It was and still is a disgrace that the provincial government forked over \$150 million to the Stelco pension to sweeten the deal for this big takeover by the Americans. Stelco retirees are worrying from year to year about their meagre pensions, yet this fancy man from the States walks away with excessive salaries and gross personal profits on the shares of a company that provided livelihoods for many of my neighbours and friends in Hamilton.

Now that same company is taking its materials off the ground from Hamilton, shipping them back to the States and restarting blast furnaces down there—and I won't be surprised if Mr. Mott is involved in that—while our

furnaces sit cold, our workers are on the street and their EI is running out. Nice deal.

The government should not allow these things to happen in our province. We need legislation to protect the public purse from successive executives who bleed away our hard-earned tax dollars with these high-income sweetheart deals.

Let's not forget how many times we've uncovered inappropriate spending, administrative investment and structural nightmares caused by the actions of these overpaid fat cats. And you know that white-collar crime is running rampant in North America while governments sit around and do nothing about it.

It's time to take back control of Ontario's public dollars and cap the executive salaries of any organization receiving even one cent from the government, directly or through any of its agencies, grants, loans or any other form of compensation or investment. I'd even like to include these overpaid consultants hired by any government office, agency or recipient of government funding of any sort. And I'd make darned sure that any consultant hired by this government is a resident of Ontario, and that we "buy Ontario" at all levels.

In closing, I can only tell you, from a layman's perspective, I spent over 30 years in that plant. I worked, I brought up my family, I contributed to the tax base and I helped my community. These guys walk in here from Virginia and walk away with \$64 million. It's shameful, disgraceful, and government should wake up.

1420

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm pleased and honoured to stand up in my place and participate in the debate on the private member's bill, An Act to cap executive compensation.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Mr. Marchese.

It's important for all of us to talk about a very important issue: protecting the workers and the taxpayers in this province. I know it's a very emotional issue for many people across this province, especially for the workers who've lost their jobs and for towns that have lost their main employers. I know it's an important issue and I know we can talk about it in this place. I know the member from Hamilton Centre wants to bring it forward and play with the emotions of Ontarians, play with the emotions of the workers—because we know that whether we pass this bill or don't pass this bill, it's not going to make any difference.

I'll tell you why it can't make any difference: Most of the companies that open in the province of Ontario are international companies that come from different parts of the globe. They come to the province of Ontario and give us the opportunity to have a lot of workers working in their companies and their factories. If we pass this bill or don't pass it, it's not going to make a difference, because it only plays on the emotions of the people of this province.

We witness so many different companies coming from abroad to Ontario. I'll give you an example. A company came to London, Ontario, called Hanwha, and it opened its doors and also got supported by a loan from our government—a \$10-million loan for 10 years. As a result of that loan, they were able to open their doors. It's very important. They are going to hire more than 100 skilled workers from the city of London. Without that support, I think that company wouldn't have been able to open its doors this month.

Another company called the Original Cakerie came from British Columbia and also got supported by our government, through a loan to give them the support to open in the city of London. Without our government support, they wouldn't have been able to open in London.

We have to distinguish between a loan and a grant. We give a successful company a loan. We give that to companies that are able to expand their operations, that are able to employ more people and that are able to produce more products for the province of Ontario. We're assisting them to offer more expansion and offer more people work in the province of Ontario.

If you want to cap the salaries, we cannot because some of them are, as I mentioned, international companies which we have no jurisdiction over. It would be nice if we could have some kind of mechanism to cap some companies that are supported 100% by taxpayers' money or by a grant. Maybe it's good. Maybe it's correct. But when we give them a loan, it's a totally different story. That's why it's important for all of us to keep that prosperity in the province of Ontario. To be able to protect and also attract many companies to come to this province, we have to create a good atmosphere, good rules and regulations, to be able to open our doors for many different companies and big corporations to come to this province and open up and employ the great people of Ontario.

That's why I listened to the honourable member from Hamilton Centre talking about many different stories, comparing Ontario companies to United States companies. We have to remember that Obama's bill only talks about companies that depend 100%—or a big percentage of its operations—on United States taxpayers' dollars. But we deal here in the province of Ontario with successful companies that offer innovative, prosperous ideas to employ the people of Ontario.

I would love to support this bill, but it's not going to make any difference, as I mentioned. How can we control a company that comes from Germany, Italy, the United States, Mexico, or from any part of the globe? We don't have the head office here in Ontario.

As the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek mentioned, we shouldn't allow an executive to collect a big amount of money if he does not live in the province of Ontario, if he does not have a house in the province of Ontario. I think it will be an appropriate approach to support our economy, an appropriate approach to support our government, and an appropriate approach to support our workers in this province who want to work, who

want to find a job for themselves and for their families in this great province of Ontario—to create more taxes for the people of Ontario in order to support our agenda for public education, public health care and infrastructure, and also to support the vulnerable people among us.

That's why I'm not supporting that bill, because it does not offer a logical approach to our economic crisis. But the most important thing is that we have to work with those corporations and with those companies to create jobs for the people of Ontario, to protect our economy and to protect our tax base.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I think I have two minutes, and I have a couple of comments to make on this bill. I come from a background in the private sector and I can remember the halcyon days 22 years ago when I made significantly more money in a year than I make as an MPP today in 2009. The reason I would like to think I was paid that way was that a board of directors somewhere thought that I brought something unique to the company that they wanted me to manage and I made them a significant multiple of what I was being paid.

I think the same is true if you look at entertainment people, when you look at television, and people are making \$10 million and \$20 million and \$30 million a year because of the advertising revenue that they attract. Or sports figures: I remember the last year that the Jays won the World Series, and Joe Carter was making something like—I remember calculating it—\$100,000 per home run. So you pay for uniqueness. Even when you look at companies that were once private enterprise but now have been adulterated because there's a government loan or government equity investment involved, you have executives who were treated on that basis and who now, in the face of a bill like the member's or the scrutiny of the government or the scrutiny of the population, have to review and decide whether or not they can maintain huge bonus structures and huge salaries, given that the performance of the company is negative.

I must admit, notwithstanding the fact that I am on one side of the political spectrum and the member who has brought forward this bill is on the other, that I have some feeling for what you're trying to put forward. In terms of giving government the opportunity to invest in companies or offer loan guarantees, there's one sure way to create a small business, and that's to start a large one and give it to a government to run—and, I might say, a government of any stripe.

So you have to differentiate between loans and equity, whether the government is going to take a position going forward on the long term or the short term. I've heard members argue that it would be hard to differentiate when it comes to companies that are external to Ontario. That's not true, because Ontario controls its own companies.

I can't tell you whether I'll vote for or against this, but I have some sympathy for it.

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Just because I can't help resist, I would invite my honourable friend from Thornhill to look at the Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan, which is wholly government-owned and which probably makes the largest profit of any company in this country. Just to let you know, that's government-run.

I think what some of the members are missing here, what you're losing here, is that this bill is seeking to limit and cap compensation for those who are accepting government money. It's not for all the corporations in Canada. It's not for the profitable ones. It's not even for the ones that are losing money but don't want to take government grants and loans. It's for those that are coming on bended knee to us and saying, "Give us public money. We need public money. We can't exist without public money. We're going to go out without public money." All we're saying, and all this bill is saying, is that if they come and they want the taxpayers' dime, then this government and every government should limit the compensation of its chief executives. They don't have to take the money and we won't limit them. But when they are coming and saying, "I want \$1 million or \$5 million or \$5 billion," then there have to be some rules. And one of the rules is that the public ought not to be spending their money on excessive compensation.

Those of you who get Maclean's magazine—and I just got the May 11 issue; I had an opportunity to read it—and you look inside the compensation of six executives here in Ontario: You have to ask yourself, is this fair? Should the public, if they come for money, be giving money to people like this? They highlighted six individuals.

The first one was Michael Sabia of BCE. He took over BCE in 2002. Its stock was struggling in the mid-\$20 range. He was hired to fix things. But when his planned privatization fell apart, the stock plunged right back down to where it was when he took over. His pension plan: \$21 million.

Robert Prichard—you all remember him from Torstar, the Toronto Star, the big paper here in Toronto? He's now riding the GO train. How did he earn his money during his tenure? Torstar's stock fell by two thirds, and the company recently announced that its dividend will be slashed in half. Just after a large quarterly loss and writedown were announced, it was revealed that Prichard would be leaving with \$9.6 million.

**1430**

You've got Tom Parkinson—we all remember him from Hydro One. Parkinson left after scathing criticism of billing practices by Ontario's Auditor General, but he still managed to pocket \$4.8 million on his way out, including severance of \$3.3 million and \$1.5 million in salary and other payments.

Not be outdone, of course, we have those people in the United States who have ripped off the system royally. A couple of American examples: Robert Nardelli of Home Depot had a really good contract. His contract promised that he would get 90% of his pay no matter how poorly the company did. He resigned in 2007 after years of

slowing profits and still got one of the biggest packages ever awarded: US\$210 million.

You've got Rick Wagoner—we know that General Motors is looking for money here. How did he do? “On March 7, when Wagoner was forced out as GM’s CEO after eight years on the job by the Obama administration, he left it teetering in life support where it remains today, filed for bankruptcy. That didn’t stop him from driving off into the sunset with a pension package worth \$23 million.”

The worst one of all, of course—I have saved the best till last, and so did Maclean’s—was Stanley O’Neal, from Merrill Lynch. How did he earn his money? “Under O’Neal’s leadership, Merrill delved deep into sub-prime mortgages. When the market crashed and Merrill reported a quarterly loss of \$2.2 billion, he left with \$161.5 million in stock options and retirement options.”

What we’re saying is that if the shareholders and the people in the executive want to pay these guys, and they can, pay them. If they want them to ride off with this, then that’s their problem and the problem of the shareholders who put up with it. But if you want government funds, if you come to the Ontario government and say, “Give us money; we’re struggling; we need to stay solvent,” then I think we have an obligation to say, “You can’t be earning that kind of money.” Surely to God, if the Premier of this province makes \$200,000 a year on a \$100-billion enterprise, which is the government of this province, then I think \$400,000, or double that—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** He does a bad job.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Well, he may or may not—whatever job you want to say he does. Surely to God we can cap it at \$400,000 too. We have an obligation, when public money is there, to make sure that is done.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** As my colleague just said, Bill 180 is really focused on limiting executive pay for corporations that are not profitable, for corporations that are coming to the government for bailout money, that are coming to the taxpayers for their money. This is what this bill is all about.

CEO pay statistics provide a glimpse into the rising income inequality in Ontario and in Canada. Did you know that average real wages have stalled since 1979? That means that for the average Ontarian toiling every day with a full-time job, pay has not gone up. Meanwhile, the income share of Canada’s top 5% rose by 20% and the income share of the top 1% rose by 44% in real dollar value. So, while the vast majority of Ontarians’ salaries didn’t move, the people at the top kept getting richer.

In the last 20 years, the top 10% families went from making 31 times the earnings of the poorest 10% to making 82 times the earnings of the 10% poorest families. In the last 10 years alone, the average household with children put in 200 hours a week more work time on the job just to stay alive. Bill 180 won’t fix the income and inequality crisis, but along with other initiatives on

executive pay, such as the say on pay, it would help the conversation get started.

A society where the rich get richer while the poor get poorer, all on the taxpayers’ money, is called income inequality. It is a huge determinant of health. A society which sees a growing gap in income inequality will also see social unrest. You will see more violence on the streets. You will see more hardship for your citizens because the gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider in Ontario.

We have an opportunity to do something about this. All of the unprofitable corporations that are coming to the Ontario government wanting taxpayers’ money to stay afloat—if they want that money and they need it to stay afloat, then the government of Ontario is in a position to say, “We will help you if it’s to the good of the people of Ontario, but you will have to cap your executive salaries at \$400,000.” Before, all of the other profitable corporations could do whatever they want, but if you come for money, the money comes with strings attached, including a cap.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I believe that concludes the time that each party has to speak to this particular ballot item, but the member for Hamilton Centre.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I want to say, first of all, that I appreciate the level of debate that has occurred on this issue, but I have to say I’m a bit disappointed. We know what’s happening out there. We see the suffering that workers are facing every single day, day in and day out. We see pensioners who are worried about whether they are going to be able to have a pension or not, whether the pension they have now is going to still be there for them next week or the week after that. We see families having to eat into savings that they put away for the post-secondary education of their children because they can’t make ends meet anymore, because their job isn’t there for them or they’ve taken significant rollbacks. This is not the way for a society to move forward, when the very top executives are making scads and scads of dollars, and the rest of us are barely holding on by our fingernails. That’s bad enough, but to have that situation occur when government dollars, when taxpayers’ dollars are being given to these companies to help them survive, the very, very least that we need to do with those grants and loans is to make sure that those corporate executives are feeling the same kind of pain that regular people in the province of Ontario are feeling. That is what Bill 180 is all about.

Some of the members talked about how perhaps \$400,000 is too much; perhaps it’s too little. I don’t really want to put the details in place today. We could get this bill to committee; we could have the conversation about what the caps should be. Perhaps it shouldn’t even be a figure. Perhaps it should be a percentage of the profits that the company makes, for example, or an average wage of the workers in the company. There are ways of finding the cap, but the bottom line is that it is unacceptable that taxpayers’ dollars go to these companies while the workers get the shaft.

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL  
AND COMMERCIAL  
SURGE PROTECTOR ACT, 2009  
LOI DE 2009  
SUR L'INSTALLATION  
DE PARASURTENSEURS  
RÉSIDENTIELS ET COMMERCIAUX  
DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Mr. Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 176, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings / Projet de loi 176, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités à l'égard de l'installation de parasurtenseurs dans les nouveaux immeubles d'habitation et les nouveaux immeubles commerciaux.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**M. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** C'est avec plaisir que je présente en deuxième lecture le projet de loi 176. Tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes bénéficieront de ce projet de loi, qui prévient la nécessité de recours légaux ainsi que les pertes économiques encourues lors du rétablissement de pannes de courant.

**1440**

These amendments would authorize municipalities to pass bylaws requiring the installation of surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings. I want to make it clear: It is a permissive bill. It is not forcing anything on municipalities. As a long-time politician, un politicien doit toujours être à l'écoute de ses commettants et commettantes.

I have learned that after 40 years in politics, in public life, a good politician must always pay attention to the needs and concerns of his constituents. Well, this is exactly what I'm doing today. I have listened.

On March 17 of this year I attended a public meeting on power outages organized by my colleague the member for Ottawa–Orléans, Phil McNeely. Many Hydro One customers from Orléans, Cumberland and Navan attended the meeting. Also in attendance were two representatives from Hydro One: Laura Cooke and Len McMillan, director of the power lines operation. Since 2008, almost 40,000 Cumberland township residents have experienced many severe power outages. In many cases, these outages have caused considerable damages and expenses. For example, after an outage on December 23, 2008, two days before Christmas, 86 claims were submitted to Hydro One for furnace repairs, electrical appliance damage, faulty electric garage doors, burned-out TVs and many others. Today, none of the 86 claims have been awarded; that is to say that no money was awarded either through Hydro One or the insurance companies.

When I spoke with State Farm Insurance, they explained to me their policy: If they deem the claim justifiable they will only cover some specific appliances, but the deductible will apply, and at times the deductible goes as high as \$1,000, often higher than the price of repairing the damages. Richard Lalonde, who is not my brother but a resident of Queenswood Heights, a constituent of Ottawa–Orléans riding, spent over \$800 on furnace repairs after the December 23 outage. At the March 17 meeting, Richard Lalonde said, “You guys”—MPPs Lalonde and McNeely—“need to go back to the Ontario Legislature and act on our behalf.” This is exactly what I'm doing today.

The manager of risk management and insurance for Hydro One reports that they receive between 1,500 and 2,300 damage claims per year. Rarely, if ever, do they get reimbursement.

A power surge occurs when an electrical charge is increased to up to 1,000 volts at some point in the distribution lines and hits a component designed for 120 to 240 volts, the regular voltage in residential homes. A less common but more damaging cause of power surges is lightning. When lightning strikes near a power line, the electrical energy can boost electrical pressure by millions of volts, causing an extremely large power surge. This can damage delicate parts found in all electronic devices, including home appliances, computers, televisions, furnaces and garage door openers, just to name a few. A power surge can enter your home through power lines, telephone lines and cable lines. Power surges can also be caused by faulty wiring, broken power lines, faulty utility company equipment and extreme cold weather.

What is a surge protector? Surge protectors block the peaks by diverting excess voltage to a home's electrical ground connection. Surge protectors absorb the excess electrical energy, slowly letting it dissipate until it is grounded. These devices protect electrical equipment from voltage spikes. They could be installed on the electrical panel. The size of the device is roughly 24 by 10 by 8 centimetres, and the cost could vary between \$100 and \$500, depending on the device you choose.

I've received support from all over Canada. This is the first time this was ever brought to a Legislature. In BC, in Manitoba, everybody is complaining, but nobody has ever paid attention to this problem that we have. I have received support for this bill from a number of constituents, local municipal hydro commissions and local distribution companies.

Selon l'administrateur en chef de Hawkesbury Hydro, Michel Poulin, ce projet de loi semble simple et précis. « Le parasurtenseur »—that is the French word for “surge protector”—« va effectivement protéger le panneau électrique du client et par le fait même éviter des réclamations ».

Hydro One has said, “It is safe to assume that surge protection in every newly constructed dwelling or commercial building ... could help to prevent damage to household appliances and other electrical equipment, usually beyond the control of Hydro One or the local distribution company.”

Selon René Beaulne, conseiller municipal dans la municipalité d'Alfred et directeur général d'Hydro 2000, « Ceci sera bon pour les usagers, surtout les gens qui habitent dans les appartements. Ça serait moins dangereux et protégerait leurs équipements. »

What are other jurisdictions doing? This is cutting edge. As I said, no other jurisdiction in North America has a bylaw requiring the installation of surge protectors in new residential or commercial buildings.

Given the extent of the problem, many local distribution companies advise consumers that they should invest in surge protectors. As I said, a surge protector only costs between \$100 and \$500; that is all. The damage that this causes—as you will see in the Mr. Lalonde case, it cost \$800 just to have his furnace repaired. Really, if he goes to his private insurance company—he had a deductible of \$500. Immediately it didn't pay, and also his insurance company had to investigate, so the person, two days before Christmas, was out of pocket \$800.

This problem is not exclusive to Ontario. A blackout occurred on January 5, 2009, in Silverdale-Stave Falls, British Columbia. Many people were left without power for a full day. The permanent and expensive consequence came from the power coming back on, creating a surge and destroying electrical appliances, televisions, computers and even electrical consumption meters. BC Hydro would not compensate their customers.

1450

Manitoba Hydro is recommending that consumers have their own surge protection devices installed for the protection of their personal electrical equipment. Where can we buy the surge protectors? There is no manufacturer in Ontario, but there are distributors. Here in Mississauga there's one. But as far as I know, while there are a number of distributors in Ontario, surge protectors for residential and commercial buildings are entirely manufactured in the US.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I note this bill with interest, because I think that, on the basis of the value of surge protectors, I could support the bill.

Where I get off track is when the member says something like, "No other jurisdiction in North America has a bylaw like this." I suppose he says it on the basis that he thinks that this bill is therefore somewhat groundbreaking. It is, but not in a way that I can agree with. There's a reason why no other jurisdiction in North America has a bylaw like this. It's because this is one of those things that we should consider optional, in my opinion.

I have a bit of personal experience—very recent, as a matter of fact, in the last month, and it makes a fool of me but I'll tell it anyway, because I think it is somewhat revealing.

I lost a computer about three, four weeks ago at home because I don't have a surge protector in the circuit. I own a surge protector, but I didn't bother plugging it in because it has a great big battery in it, because it also acts

as an uninterrupted power supply and the battery was dead. I plugged the computer in the wall. Poof—no more computer.

That, as the member correctly points out, is the value of having surge protectors in, and to me, right now, \$1 to \$500 would be a very small price to pay to have saved that particular computer. It's going to cost me that much to repair the power supply, if indeed it is the only the power supply that has been blown.

I look at it on the basis of it being a good thing, but I also look at it on the basis of what in Latin is called "caveat emptor." I knew, before I plugged that computer in the wall, that I was taking a chance by having what is commonly referred to as "dirty power" coming out of the outlets in my home. As I look around the room, as I look at any group, I can tell you that you all have dirty power coming out of the outlets in your home, because that's what the power company supplies.

In fact, it begs the question, if we were talking about legislation, especially in the context of these days of green energy, whether that be in an act or otherwise, we should probably be looking at giant surge protectors that protect neighbourhoods, apartment buildings or whatever the case may be, rather than looking—if we were going to impose something, let's talk about the power company supplying something that is clean power as opposed to dirty power. But we don't do that.

The point is that these are great devices. They actually do what the member says they do: They smooth out the power and they keep us protected from losing computers and other similar devices, as I did a couple of weeks back.

More importantly, people don't realize that their homes, in these times, are loaded with electronic devices that, while they don't look like computers, are to all intents and purposes the same. We're talking about big-screen televisions, microwave ovens and all kinds of things that have microprocessors installed in them, that would benefit from surge protectors. In my own case, having purchased a house recently in Niagara-on-the-Lake and looking at taking occupancy of it in the next couple of years and putting a lot of electronic equipment in it, I'll probably retrofit it.

I think that that is the place where we best should leave the concept of surge protection, because what we're doing, when we mandate yet another thing, is opening the door to a domino effect.

I'll provide an example. This bill does not force anyone to install a surge protector in their home. What it does is license or authorize municipalities, if they should so choose, to pass bylaws that then put surge protectors in the mix when it comes to issuing a building permit. All I can think of is the mayor of the city of Toronto going, "Aha, another thing that I can tax: \$100 to \$500 for a surge protector, and when we issue the building permit we'll get another \$500 called a surge protector tax." I have my tongue in my cheek when I say that, but I can almost move it away because I can see it happening.

What I would prefer, in order of my preferences, is the power companies cleaning up their power and not

providing so-called dirty, spiky power, on the basis that we know, in these times, that most people have houses loaded with equipment that has microprocessors in at the root, which is therefore subject to disappearance in a moment during a lightning storm, or just during a time where there's a big draw or a big release of power, say, in the middle of summer when air conditioners are being used; and if not that, then at least leaving this optional.

Surge protectors—great idea. Taking care of our equipment—great idea. Saving money—great idea. Authorizing cities to impose this is yet another Big Brother approach that I can't agree with.

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

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I too have a story to tell, and that story happened in my house. There is a large electrical transformer on the post on my next-door neighbour's property, and it blew out. It wasn't the blowing out of the post that caused me any immediate problems; it was when the repair company came, repaired it and turned the power on. Not only did I lose my VCRs and the computer, but all of my neighbours along the street, on both sides, lost almost every single piece of their electrical equipment.

It wasn't because we didn't have surge protection; we all had it. But we didn't have the big one that's in the house, because the houses were built in the 1950s. We all had the little ones hooked up to the computers and the individual pieces, but that wasn't strong enough, so that it quite literally destroyed most of the electronic equipment, the televisions, the VCRs, the computers that all of us owned.

It seemed to me at that point that something ought to be done about that. We did find out about getting an all-house surge protector, and I believe we did get one. We also had to deal extensively, for a couple of weeks, with Toronto Hydro, because they are the ones, in resetting the transformer, who caused the problem. The insurance companies were all involved, and everybody was all involved.

It seems to me that if you can protect a street or a community, as my friend from Thornhill has suggested, that's a good idea. But if you can't go that far, and if perhaps that's a little bit difficult at the outset, then it should at least be possible, when you are building new homes, to put in that kind of protection or to give some kind of emphasis or monies or opportunity to people to upgrade the electrical systems in older homes. After all, if you live in the city of Toronto, as I do, most of the homes are of much older vintage. There are not too many new ones around, and quite frankly, except for infill housing, when an older home is demolished and a new one put in, there are very few new homes in the communities and neighbourhoods that I represent.

I did a little bit of research, in terms of Mr. Lalonde's bill, and it was quite clear: Every home should have a whole-house surge protector. That costs the magnificent sum not only of about a hundred to a couple of hundred dollars to put it in, but it uses three cents of electricity per

month. I think it's money well spent. Once you put it in, it costs three cents of electricity per month to protect you and your family and all your valuables, especially electronic valuables, against not only surges coming off the wires but also lightning strikes.

There is also, of course, the point-of-use surge protector, which most of us buy, in terms of our televisions and computers. You will recognize those; they're usually on a bar and you hook up your computer equipment to it. It works individually but not for massive surges, only for smaller ones.

You will see the problems in this technological society that that can cause to people, especially around their computer systems: the erasure of data, the damage to the hardware, the damage to printers. Quite frankly, most of the equipment, although expensive, is of such a nature that it is not designed to be repaired; it's designed to be replaced. So, quite often, what happens when it blows out is that it ends up in the trash heap. It ends up in a landfill somewhere, which is a shame, because that too is not environmentally very sound. It need not have happened. It probably had many, many years of useful life, the computers, VCR equipment and CD equipment that I lost.

**1500**

The surge equipment also allows ordinary equipment to last longer in terms of wearing out. Because it doesn't have peaks and valleys, the equipment tends to last longer. There is less energy loss and less heat buildup, which is far more energy-efficient in terms of how we're all trying to save on electricity in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I've also got a little piece of information here called Today's Technology and You, and it provided some information to me—Madam Speaker, I'm sorry; I didn't see that we had switched—of which I was not aware. It says, "The switching on and off of nearby or distant neighbours' clothes washers, furnace blowers or air conditioners can send surges through the electric lines into your home." I was unaware that my neighbour's furnace blower, air conditioner or clothes washer could send a surge into my home.

When I found out that that is entirely and eminently possible, then I thought it made much more sense. It's not the surge that are you putting on, it's not the motor going on in my house, the motor going on in the furnace, but it might be my next door neighbour's motor or him cutting the grass with his electric lawn mower or the thousand things that we have electrically in our homes.

It went on to say, "A large compressor motor at a nearby grocery store and electric farm equipment are other common sources of strong voltage surges." This, too, surprised me. Although I don't have any farms in Beaches—East York or in close proximity to Beaches—East York, there are many grocery stores and factory applications where there is a lot of electrical equipment, and it's quite conceivable that in the block next to mine, where there are some factories, that could be a result as well.

So, having taken these things into account and having listened to the member from Glengarry—Prescott—



Russell's able submission, really over the last couple of days—at first, I thought, “Why do we need this bill?” But on reflection and upon some study, it seems to me an eminently good idea.

The only sadness I have is that it is not being made mandatory. Perhaps I come from a different place than my Conservative friends. It seems that it is such a good idea, such a doable idea, that it is something that should be built into new homes. I know that if I was going out to buy a new home and they said, “This home costs \$450,000”—or the equivalent—“but it's going to cost you an extra \$100 because we put surge protection into it and you'll never have to worry about lightning strikes and you'll never have to worry about losing your equipment, your electricity bills will go down, and it's going to help to save the environment,” I would think that was probably about the best \$100 I could possibly spend.

So not just the option to leave it up to municipalities, but it's such a good idea that I hope when this goes to committee—and I will be voting for it—the member considers making it mandatory that new homes throughout the province of Ontario and any retrofitted homes, when people are redoing the electrical systems, should have the equivalent of \$100 surge protection, all-house protection, put in. If it's a little more than \$100 in some cases, I understand that too. But it is money well spent. It's money well spent for all of us, not just the people who live in those homes, not just the people who work in the factories, the commercial application, but all of us who live in proximity to them. Because we are social beings and because we all have neighbours and because what happens in the neighbours' homes can directly affect our own, we ought to be looking at this.

So I commend the member, and I will be voting for this, but when and if it goes to committee—and I trust that it will, that it is his desire to send it to committee—I hope that we take a very strong look at making it an even better bill than was presented here today.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I wanted to speak to this legislation; I think it's a very good idea.

But first, I want to just make a couple of comments about the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and private members' business. I think as someone mentioned and as the member himself mentioned, he had been in municipal politics for a number of years, serving as a mayor of the town of Rockland for 15 years. He has been an outspoken advocate for francophone rights in Ontario, and in fact, I had the pleasure—

*Applause.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Absolutely. I had the pleasure of meeting some high school students from French-language schools across Ontario who were participating in the third annual *Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario*, which is led by the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He brings these students to the Legislature, and they have the opportunity to partake

in what goes on here and, in fact, to experience being legislators themselves.

He's also a passionate hockey advocate, and I believe he's the only member of the Legislature who has a hockey arena named after him. I could stand to be corrected, but I believe he's the only member in that situation.

But most importantly, and vis-à-vis private members' business, he is a responsive member. He has got practical experience that allows him to respond to and understand what's going on in communities around the province. As you heard him speak, he talked about the notion for this legislation coming from a meeting in his own community. It's that kind of issue that gets raised in private members' business, and it's very, very important. I suspect that down the road, as the member for Beaches–East York referenced, this is probably something that is going to happen. There's probably, ultimately, going to be this kind of protection on all new buildings, but the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is ahead of the curve in terms of recognizing that this is necessary.

I want to support this legislation. I think it's important that we understand he has introduced it as a piece of permissive legislation, which should allow everyone in the House, I believe, to support it, because what it says is municipalities can choose to adopt this bylaw.

As the members for Thornhill and Beaches–East York and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell identified, so much of the business that we do in our houses and in our businesses is dependent on electronic equipment. It really means that we need to have this kind of protection. I think that the issue of whether the power is spiking or not or whether we can even that out completely is a little bit beside the point, because I think that we are always going to have situations where there will be surges to a greater extent or a lesser extent, so we need this surge protection. It's a tragedy that there has been damage done, that people have had to pay out of their pockets for something that is so preventable.

I want to talk just a little moment about the relevance of this legislation to my riding, Don Valley West. Some of my constituents have said to me that the greatest potential for application of this bill really is in high-rise buildings, because so much of the equipment is dependent on electronics, so the safety of many of our constituents is actually dependent on having this kind of protection in place.

In fact, one of my constituents, Ali Baig, who has been in the electrical business for the last 20 years, points out this: He says “Our homes and workplaces have a lot of electronic and electrical equipment, and now more than ever we require surge protection to protect this equipment. Electrical surges can damage connected equipment and slowly destroy the insulation on the wiring, which could lead to potential problems over time. When compared to the replacement cost of connected equipment and other hazards associated with it, the cost to protect is minimal.”

Because this is permissive legislation, because it could be so beneficial and because the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is in touch with what constituents are

looking for, I hope that all of us will support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** An interesting subject. This tends to divide along political lines, I think, really.

The member points out that he's not forcing anyone to accept this regulation, that it would be up to municipalities to either pass a bylaw that implemented this, but I would just suggest to the member that if a municipality does pass a bylaw, then the people within that community are being forced. Whether they would use the surge protector or not, they are being forced to pay for it and to defray the costs of those people who do need it.

It was interesting some years ago that I was involved with the chemical industry, and they, of course, have a huge investment in protecting themselves from surges. Mini blackouts of as much as half a second can freeze up electrical processes that are creating chemicals in the Silicon Valley down in Sarnia. So they're very, very sensitive to any fluctuation in power whatsoever. One of the reasons they located in Sarnia to such a degree was because Ontario does have a very consistent and relatively clean source of energy.

**1510**

Another indication of that was when we had the ice storm—in 2002, was it?—where it was found that in the ice storm that went through eastern Ontario and Quebec, two very large dairy producing areas, about 80% of the farms in Quebec, had portable generators, whereas only about 20% of the farms in eastern Ontario had portable generators. The reason for that, of course, was that the power in rural Quebec was so unreliable that you had to have a portable generator on your farm to protect yourself from power blackouts and the need for electricity during milking times. In Ontario, the power was so reliable that only about 20% of the farmers in the more remote areas of eastern Ontario actually had generators on their properties.

The power in Ontario has been, over time, fairly clean and fairly reliable when compared with other places in Canada and I'm sure other places around the world. The member from Thornhill mentioned that we should perhaps clean up the power at the source in Ontario, and I would ask them at what cost that would be, as I would suggest to the member for Beaches–East York, who suggested that the government might want to supply a fund for more individuals to add surge protectors to their homes. His home, he mentioned, was built in the 1950s. I wonder why I should use my tax dollars to retrofit his home when I may or may not need it. As I say, this debate divides along political lines: The NDP would like everybody else to pay for their upgrades, whereas I feel significantly different than that.

I think we've covered the facts of what surges are, how they spike and how the aligned voltages move up and down very rapidly. They're very short-lived. They do their damage very quickly. A lightning strike would be a long surge—a very long surge, in fact. It could be caused

by many different things, including the electrical companies switching on and off. Again, there was an example of some damage being done. When you do have a power outage, it's important to immediately go around your house and turn off all the sensitive pieces of equipment that you may have left on. Many of them have an off switch that automatically turns them off, but it's a good thing to make sure that almost everything in your home is turned off until the power comes back on. I don't know if you've ever experienced a light bulb blowing when the power comes back on, but that would be the result of a surge.

Surges can happen, most dramatically, over a very brief period of time, but they can also happen over long periods of time. Little surges can accumulate in equipment and eventually cause the problems to occur. I've heard a surge protector described as like a sponge. It absorbs those electrical surges as they come through. However, unlike a sponge, this electricity absorber does wear out over time, and so it has to be maintained. If you have a surge protector on your computer and your computer may have had a number of surges over its life, you may want to think about replacing that surge protector because it may be wearing out. It may be losing its ability to absorb those surges.

Some of the background of this: We all of course want safe power. I think I've outlined the fact that Ontario does have very safe power and reliable power compared to those jurisdictions that surround us and around the world. Any of these things can add expenses to individuals, especially those individuals who are not particularly careful in protecting their equipment against surges and those kinds of things. And it's not just computers that we're talking about; almost every major appliance in the house has a computer component built into it, computer chips that control some facet of it. Those things are very sensitive.

I guess what I would want to know is how much this is going to cost in bureaucracy and red tape and how much the public would be willing to pay for this kind of thing. And how can that risk be reduced? That hasn't been talked about. What are the costs of the inspections and the red tape that this is going to add? Is this the right time in Ontario's history to add more regulation? Is there more technical input that we should have in this industry? There are a number of unanswered questions. Until those questions are answered, I'm not sure I can support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, did you know that the average home is hit with more than 20 internal surges in the course of a typical day? These surges are distributed throughout your home, and they can significantly shorten, as some of the other speakers have pointed out, the life of your electronics and your equipment.

The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has brought forth a bill that I think is one that deserves some discussion. Whether it's adopted in this incarnation or

whether it's significantly altered through committee hearings, what he's done is to say to Ontarians, "Let's start a dialogue here, because this is something that can affect you."

I just off the top of my head made a list of some of the things in typical homes that have printed circuit boards in them that can be fried by a good, hard surge. They would include today: your fringe, your washer, your dryer, your stove, your microwave, your dishwasher, your computer, your television, your television converter and your hydro meter itself.

In the old days, what did you have? You had your radio, you had your television—and in the days before computers and fax machines, that was about it. But today, your homes are increasingly run on machinery and electronics that, to one degree or another, operate on a printed circuit board and, more importantly, are always plugged in. In the old days you could say, "Gee, I'm not too concerned about what happens during an electrical storm because I've just pulled out the plug on the television"—well, today, you don't do that.

Now, what exactly are we talking about? Electricity is 120 volts AC and it's 60 cycles per second, so you have what's called a sine wave, for those of you who remember some of your high school math. In a surge, instead of there being a continuous stream of these sine waves, a surge goes right up like that, and a surge protector clips those peaks and valleys. That's what a surge protector does.

One of the things about the power grid that's important to remember is that to a greater degree, it's being distributed. It's no longer power from a few large, central baseload generating stations. Today, even in my own neighbourhood, for example, in something like the Lisgar GO train station with its brand new windmill, a good, strong gust of wind may generate a surge that may affect some of the people who are drawing power off of it, and as the main power runs off the station, that could cause a power surge right in the station—a very good argument for having exactly that, a surge protector there. Hospitals such as Credit Valley, of course, would normally have a surge protector as a matter of course.

What the member has brought forth is a powerful idea, an idea whose idea may come—he's ahead of his curve, as some of the other members have said. But I think what he's done is to start a discussion. What he's done is to bring up something that's important. The key thing about the bill is that it's permissive. It says to municipalities, "You may"; it doesn't say, "You must."

I'm certainly going to support this. For those of you who work from your home and in your home office, where you too may have a whole variety of electronics, this is something you want to think about very carefully. If the value of the work that you do depends upon the electronics you use, you may make the decision that, "I can't afford not to have a surge protector."

It's a good bill. It's a good start. It deserves support.

1520

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** First, thank you very much to Mr. Lalonde for introducing this bill with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell points out quite openly that on December 23 he had 86 claims that were submitted to Hydro One and that he had something to do with it very directly. These were complaints about damaged furnace motors, electronics, appliances, dishwashers, computers, refrigerators etc.

Now, in my own riding of Davenport, on January 13 of this year we had a power outage. The reason we had a power outage was because either a dog or a raccoon got into the transformer station near Dufferin and Bloor Street, and it caused the electrical system to short. The power outage affected not 86 people, in terms of their claims, but it affected hundreds of thousands of people. That doesn't just happen once; it happens fairly frequently.

All previous speakers have indicated that when the power comes back on, that's when the spiking occurs and that's what happens when some of the motors are burning.

Now, Madam Speaker, I would like to have unanimous consent to show the power bar, because it's an important item in terms of coming to grips with a surge.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** The member from Davenport, the Speaker would remind the House that props are not permitted in the House. I'd ask you to just maybe put it down on your desk.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Is there unanimous consent? Thank you.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** To make a long story short, most people who have called my office have said, "Well, Mr. Ruprecht, thank you very much, but I understand that power surges are being protected by power bars." Now, this is a power bar that many homes and certainly many of our offices have. A power bar is not a surge protector. A power bar is simply a protector; if there's enough electricity going in here, it stops the breaker from going off. So if any one of our constituents believes that they are being protected by a power bar, this is not the case.

I'm delighted, in fact, to support this bill. I'm happy that Mr. Lalonde is bringing this bill forward simply because it is very important.

In terms of the question the member from Thornhill is raising about the mayor—the mayor of Toronto or any mayor of a municipality—being able to add some taxes, well, that's certainly something to consider. But essentially, I simply say this: The member has identified a real, significant issue. It actually happened to me in terms of having my fridge blown. I unplugged everything when the transformer station blew, but I left the fridge on, and when the power came back on, the fridge didn't work afterwards.

So it's an important bill. We all have our own stories about power surges and spikes and sags, but I certainly will support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate? The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, you have two minutes.

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I want to thank the members from Thornhill, Beaches–East York, Don Valley West, Halton, Mississauga–Streetsville and Davenport. I have taken a few notes of the comments brought to my attention—or to the attention of the House—by some of the members.

I just wanted to say that it is true: This equipment could wear out. But I want to make sure that everybody understands that this equipment has a little warning light on it, so if the equipment is wearing out because of too many power outages, then definitely the equipment or the device could be affected. So you have the precaution, or the facility in there to notice if your equipment has to be taken care of, or looked over again.

There's also one point that I would like to bring up: Many, many contractors do recommend this already when they build a new home. They recommend to the buyer that they should have a surge protector.

Also, when we refer to the costs, ESA is doing all of the electrical inspections. They are the ones that have the power, and I just can't see any additional expenses for inspecting the power surge protectors. The installation is a matter of a few minutes, so, again, I just can't see what the cost would be in there.

Once again, I would like to thank everyone, and I would like to really thank my legislative assistant, Christine Pelletier, for all the work she has done on this, because she has done a lot of research; and also Richard Lalonde from Queenswood Heights for having brought this to my attention.

#### CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank you for the opportunity to move this resolution today, which reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, to celebrate the cultural diversity of this province, and to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should proclaim February 21 as International Mother Language Day in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Mr. Moridi moves private member's notice of motion number 66. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member for Richmond Hill has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Bonjour, and hello.

*Remarks in other languages.*

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** These were simple greetings in a few of the 150 or so languages that are spoken across our great province of Ontario. If you wanted to say hello in every language on the planet, you would have to learn 6,000 languages and greet at least 6.5 billion people.

I rise in this Legislature to present you and my honourable colleagues with an initiative that is very close to my heart: the recognition and celebration of our mother languages.

The recognition of our mother languages was originally put forward by a Canadian organization called Mother Language Lovers of the World. Initiated by this Canadian organization, and supported by the government

of Bangladesh in November 1999, UNESCO proclaimed February 21 as International Mother Language Day. The objective of this day is to raise awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions, based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue, and also to promote linguistic and multi-lingual diversity and education.

Several jurisdictions, including the city of Toronto, have also recognized this special day. Ontario has always been on the frontier and the leader in integration and recognition of every citizen's heritage and culture. The passage of this motion will be another monument to our acceptance, tolerance, understanding and recognition of the value of our diverse society.

It might be of interest to my honourable colleagues to know that on the federal level two private members' bills were introduced to mark International Mother Language Day, which have yet to pass first reading.

#### 1530

International Mother Language Day is also formally recognized by the United Nations General Assembly, which proclaimed the year 2008 as the International Year of Languages. Both UNESCO and the United Nations General Assembly have recognized the importance of promoting and ensuring the survival of over 6,000 languages that are spoken around the world. Dr. Koïchiro Matsuura, director general of UNESCO, highlights UNESCO's interest in promoting multilingualism, in particular in the education system, by encouraging proficiency in at least three languages; that is, a mother tongue, a national language and a language of communication.

The promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity is supported by a commitment to dialogue among peoples, cultures and civilizations. UNESCO promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism, and International Mother Language Day is observed yearly by many UNESCO member states around the world.

Language is the cornerstone of culture and provides a means of communication among people. Language has long been a tool of learning, a tool for communication and an important niche for the development of an individual's personality and character.

Ontario is home to people from 200 different ethnic origins, who speak more than 150 languages, many of whom are present in this Legislature today to witness the passing of this significant motion. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize representatives from the Afghan, Arab, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Chinese, Ethiopian, Greek, Italian, Iranian, Kurdish, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Turkish communities who have joined us today in the public and members' galleries.

Of the top 20 languages spoken in the world—such as Mandarin, English, Hindi, Arabic, Italian, Korean, Russian and Portuguese—a large majority are spoken right here in Ontario, making the passage of this motion of great significance.

Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. They are also a very important tool in the development of a child's education.

Globalization has resulted in a significant increase in population mobility. On this note, James P. Cummins, a professor and the Canada Research Chair in the curriculum, teaching and learning department at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, states that the consequence of population mobility is linguistic, cultural, racial and religious diversity within schools. To illustrate this fact, in the city of Toronto 58% of kindergarten students come from homes where standard English is not the usual language of communication. The results of research on children's mother language have emphasized the importance of mother language on their overall personal and educational development.

When children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and learn how to use it effectively. When they develop literacy in both languages, they are able to process, compare and contrast the ways in which the two languages organize their reality.

More than 150 research studies conducted during the past 35 years strongly support what Goethe, the famous German philosopher, once said: "The person who knows only one language does not truly know that language." The research suggests that bilingual children may also develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through different languages.

Unfortunately, there are many languages in existence that are facing the threat of extinction. According to the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, of 121 Native American languages in Canada, only six are fully functional and about 10 are extinct. Of all other Indian languages spoken in Canada, a total of 104 are threatened to varying degrees, with 19 of those moribund and 28 seriously endangered. It is our duty and obligation to protect these vital implements of culture and life.

The atlas also points out some very disturbing statistics. Out of approximately 6,000 languages spoken in the world, more than 200 have become extinct during the last three generations, 538 are critically endangered, 502 are severely endangered, 632 are definitely endangered and 607 are unsafe.

The death of a language can have a catastrophic domino effect. Many forms of cultural heritage, tradition and oral expression of a community, such as poetry, legends and even jokes, can disappear. To quote the director-general of UNESCO, "The loss of languages is also detrimental to humanity's grasp of biodiversity, as they transmit much knowledge about ... nature and the universe."

Here in Ontario, we are proud of the diversity of the cultures that exist across our province. We have gained many valuable assets and knowledge in various aspects of our daily lives from this diversity.

Language has always been a form of patriotism and has brought a sense of belonging among cultures and communities. It is our small communities that are the backbone of our infrastructure and our strength in Ontario. The preservation of these communities and ethnic

groups is more important than ever when we are facing such unprecedented times.

The recognition of International Mother Language Day in Canada and in Ontario will be a step forward in achieving that goal. Let's adopt this practice, which will promote and protect languages. With the passage of this motion, Ontario will play an essential role in advocating, supporting and monitoring policies and actions in favour of cultural diversity and multilingualism at the international level.

Furthermore, let's continue on the path of the favourable linguistic policies for which Canada is so famous on the international scene. Let us help to increase the number of speakers in several indigenous languages.

*Remarks in other languages.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It's a pleasure to rise, and I'll say at the outset that I'm going to support my colleague from Richmond Hill, and recall for him that last year his private member's business was not that far removed from what we're talking about this year. Last year he asked us to declare a day that would recognize the Persian New Year, Nowruz. I remember rising in support of that motion, and it passed.

The other thing I'd like to say about the member who is proposing this legislation is that he and I have some business in common. The member represents an adjoining riding to mine, or maybe he would say I represent an adjoining riding to his. He's in Richmond Hill and I'm in Thornhill, in the north part of the GTA, just north of the Toronto border. We often see each other, and when we do, it's usually at community events which are multicultural in nature. If memory serves me correctly—and I see the member nodding—the last thing we attended together was the Menaka Thakkar Dance Company, which is an Indian dance company that takes people into its fold from all over the GTA, particularly the northern area of his riding. It resides, has its home, in my riding of Thornhill. We always enjoy those things.

**1540**

What I want to say is this: I'm a little concerned with creating yet another memorial day or commemorative day for anything in the province of Ontario at this point, because we are so diversified that we memorialize almost everything with a day of its own, and one tends to lose track.

Now, here's what I have to say about multiculturalism, or if you wish, mother tongue. I represent a riding, Thornhill, that is arguably the most multicultural riding and the most diverse riding in the province, and if it is, then equally arguably, the most diverse riding in the entire country.

We know that in Thornhill, at last count, there are a few more than 150 different languages spoken on a daily basis. In my own way, I try to celebrate that both inside this House—I've mentioned it in debate many, many times—and outside of the House, because we celebrate national days of various countries here on the grounds of

the Legislature; we all go to flag raisings in our own ridings and we go to events that relate to community groups. So there's no issue there. I guess the point I'm trying to make is that my riding has International Mother Language Day basically every day of the year.

The reason I support this—because it's really a motherhood type of motion—is that the member has proposed it, not because we need it. I'll tell you why we don't need it, and we're unique amongst the family of nations in being able to say this. We don't need UNESCO to tell us that we have to memorialize mother tongues if we live in Canada, and very particularly, if we live in the GTA. Why? Because the GTA is home to so many different languages that are spoken on a regular basis and that we cherish and preserve.

I remember when I was a child, we would celebrate, as we do these days, Mother's Day and Father's Day. As a child I would say, "Why don't we have Children's Day?" and my parents would say, "Well, because Children's Day is every day." I think everyone has heard that little catchphrase. I guess what I'm saying here is that International Mother Language Day is every day in the province of Ontario, and very notably in ridings where we are the proud home to so many different, diverse ethnicities from all over the world.

Once again, I don't want to go very long on this. I'd like to add my voice to those welcoming all of you who are here to support this member's initiative. I will vote for this member's initiative, but I've got to tell you, in the province of Ontario, International Mother Language Day is every single day, and although you're going to get your day, you don't need it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I will be supporting the motion by the member from Richmond Hill, and I want to say, in response to the member from Thornhill, that we do need such a motion. I'm going to explain why, and I'm going to be supportive and critical at the same time a bit later on—not of him, but his government—in a mild way. But the reason—

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** You always do that.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** But what else would you want me to do?

The reason we need it is that there are a lot of people in this society and in Canada who actually oppose the retention of mother tongues. While they speak it, there are people who don't like it. Those of you who are here in the audience will know from others who you may know, if they are monolingual, that they may not take such a great interest in your speaking another language. This is a fact.

I remember my days as a school trustee at the Toronto Board of Education, when we were fighting for—this is 1982, and before I was there—the teaching of what we used to call then heritage languages; another term would be "mother tongue." We had tremendous political battles, until you had many of us, mostly New Democrats, I would say—I know you hate to hear it; even those of you

who don't know this hate to hear it—who argued for the defence of the learning of third languages within the regular school day. Those who opposed it said it shouldn't be done in the regular school day: "It should be taught, if they want, after school on their own time." Most of the Tories on the board who declared themselves non-political were of that view, and most of the Liberals were of a similar view—less virulent, but of the same view. I don't understand why, because there are so many good Liberals here today who are going to support this motion. In fact, dare I say it, most of you will. But at the Toronto Board of Education, we had one heck of a fight.

You know what's happening today, to bring you back to the criticism? Those languages are dying off at the Toronto board. And why? There's no support. If there's no adequate financial support by the provincial government, those languages that are taught in 17 schools will die. What's happening is, principals are not supporting it, except in a few instances, and once parents stop defending it, the programs disappear.

What I will speak to in a few moments, to the member of Richmond Hill, is how his government can support his motion, because otherwise it's an empty motion. It's just empty symbolism. If we just simply say, "Let's celebrate our differences and support mother tongues," it means absolutely nothing.

I am one who says often, "Monolingualism can be cured." I think even those who only have one language who believe they can learn another language, can. It's curable. But there are many who only speak one language who don't want to learn any other language. I'm one of those who says that multilingualism is good; that defending the mother tongue is okay; that it's not un-Canadian to do so; that in fact, it speaks to who we are and that we should be proud to be able to speak other languages and to be able to connect to who we were, because that's who we are.

Some of us can't hide the fact. Those of us who are white could be taken for any kind of nationality, but if you're black, you're black. If you're South Asian, you're not entirely like those who are purely white. You can't escape that. I say, we don't have to escape anything. We can be proud of who we are, both in colour and in languages, and that it's good for us psychologically, linguistically and economically. We made those arguments to the Toronto board in 1976 and 1982 when I was there, and the only reason why we won it—it was by one vote, and mostly, as I say, New Democrats. That's just the way it is. That's just the way it was.

Our identity is about cultural diversity, and there are those who say that it's the cultural diversity that divides us. I don't believe that for a moment. I believe that diversity is what identifies us as Canadians. We should be proud of that, and we should make our identity that very thing. But you've got a whole lot of people in this society who are simply saying, "The reason why we're not strong as Canadians in terms of having an identity is because we don't have an identity," rather than saying, "Our identity is multiple. There is no one, single identity

for Canadians. It's a multiple identity, and we should be proud of it." Yet we fight it each and every day.

**1550**

I remember Professor Cummings from those days in 1976, 1978, 1980 and 1982. He was there arguing why the learning of another language is a good thing. He made the case, an intellectual case, as to why it was good. Nobody listened, because it wasn't about intellectual arguments, it was what people felt. Why do you think so many people are so, dare I say it, anti-French? There are so many people who are anti-Quebec in this country. I've never quite understood it. I've been lucky enough to learn French through core in the Catholic school system and at the secondary level public school system continuing on with core French, and becoming an English and French teacher. I was proud of it and proud to be able to speak Italian. I would like to be able to speak French better and Italian better. I'm proud to say that I can get by in Spanish because my wife is Chilean, so I've learned Spanish along the way. I'm not perfect, but I've learned it. I understand a fair amount of Portuguese, and I'm proud of it.

**Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis:** What about Greek?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I would love to learn Greek. I had so many neighbours in my neighbourhood on Shaw Street where I grew up, where Greeks and Portuguese and Italians grew up together. I wish I could learn the language. Yet you have people who don't want to know anything else because English for them is sufficient, and everyone else who comes into the country should only learn the language and nothing else. That's the debate we have.

So do we need this motion? Of course we do. But as it is, it's utterly empty. If you do not, as a government, do something to strengthen this motion so that it becomes a reality, it's meaningless.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** It's not government; it's his motion.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** No, no. It's not his motion. It's his motion supported by all the Liberals who are here, supported I'm sure by the ministers, and you could do something. When all of you Liberals who are present today and those who are going to come to vote for it at 4 o'clock, vote for this, it means you have a stake in making this better. It means you have a stake in saying how we make this happen, because simply celebrating our diversity is not enough.

All of you know, those of you who are here, that racism exists in this country. There are many who don't want to say it. They don't even want to utter the word "racism." It exists. There was a fascinating article that I read just about two weeks ago where the black community feels so discriminated against that they retreat into their own community even more, by the mere fact of being discriminated on, than the other groups who become more Canadian.

It's discrimination and racism that exists in this society. So celebrating our differences means nothing if we don't have an anti-racist approach to ourselves. That's

what I mean about putting meat to these motions. Do we need it? Yes. But do we need to do something more? Absolutely. Do we need to promote the learning of French? Absolutely. It is a bicultural, bilingual country, indeed, and it's multilingual, multicultural, and it's enshrined in section 27 of the Constitution. Yes, it is.

We are not supporting our French community as we should. We should be encouraging all of our children, no matter where we come from, to learn French, because Quebec is right beside us. We should take it as an opportunity, but we don't. When you look at the aboriginal communities, the First Nations communities, they're losing their language. Are we helping as a government to promote the learning of First Nations languages? We're not. We're not doing that, and we're not doing that with French, we're not doing that with the Inuit people, and we're not doing that with the Metis either.

The fact of the matter is that, as a government, we have a strong role to play. If you don't play that leadership role, this will not mean anything. We have a role to promote; we have a role to fund programs. You have an obligation as a government, as ministers, as members, once you pass this motion, as you will, to actually decide what you can do about it.

If our languages are dying in the Toronto school board because they're not being promoted and they're not being supported and there are no funds to promote those programs, then this motion is absolutely worthless, because as all of you know, and all of you up there know, as I know—my children speak Italian not so badly, but the two children of my first daughter do not speak Italian—it will disappear. So you can promote your mother tongue motion, but if you don't support it with real substance, with money and support and governmental obligations to do so, your children will lose their language. That's what will happen. If you don't want that to happen, then you and other members as they speak, when you have the opportunity to say what you can do to make this motion real, if you don't tell us what you can do about that, then at the end of the day we will have all supported it, we will have felt good and nothing will happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of the resolution put forward by my colleague the member from Richmond Hill to recognize February 21 as International Mother Language Day in the province of Ontario.

Certainly, here in Ontario, in the year 2009, we can be proud of the progress we have made in recognizing linguistic diversity in our society, not only in tolerance but in the promotion of learning the languages related to one's own heritage.

My riding of York South–Weston is home to people of all different backgrounds who speak a variety of languages. Many of them are newcomers. We have come a long way since the postwar period, when many Italian-Canadians—for example, my mother—or Jewish immigrants would be able to describe small groups of people

standing together at the corner of a street in Toronto, speaking their own mother language, that would be ordered to disperse by the police.

Harold Troper well describes this face of Toronto's immigrant past in *History of Immigration to Toronto Since the Second World War: From Toronto "the Good" to Toronto "the World in a City,"* written for the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at U of T. I would like to share a few paragraphs with the House.

"It was not uncommon for immigrants speaking their mother tongue in the street or on public transit to be made to feel out of place and told to "Speak white!"

"Teachers and school administrators, thinking they were liberating immigrant children from narrow, old-world parochialism or protecting them from schoolyard bullies, took liberties with many an immigrant child's most personal possession—his or her name. Gabriella became Gail, Luigi became Louis, Olga became Alice, and Hershel became Harold.

"All the while some in the press and several local politicians warned against the evils of immigrant overcrowding, ghettoization, and crime.

"But not all. Slowly at first, Torontonians became more comfortable with the new foods, polyphony of languages, and neighbourhoods that immigrant presence brought in its wake. And for some, comfort gradually turned to pride in Toronto's new-found cosmopolitan image."

Works such as this continue to shed light on past attitudes of Ontario society towards the speaking of mother tongues in Canadian history. As well, institutions like the Multicultural History Society of Ontario documented changing attitudes toward multilingualism and ethnic diversity in our society.

Supported by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Multicultural History Society carries out projects such as *Family Stories*, *Treasured Memories*, a school program that focuses on the settlement experiences of 20th-century immigrants in Toronto.

I also want to mention the multilingual media; that's another important example of how speaking a different language in contemporary Ontario society does not make the speaker any less a part of the day-to-day Ontario reality. In fact, family re-unification and consequent integration in Canadian society is made easier through multilingual media.

But the importance of recognizing a day such as International Mother Language Day in the province of Ontario is also important for our aboriginal peoples. The terrible legacy of the residential school system in Canada is well-known. Through the policy of "aggressive assimilation," 150,000 aboriginal Inuit and Metis children students were discouraged from speaking their first language. If they were caught, they would experience severe punishment.

Can you imagine reaching out to your own parent by writing a letter in a language which many parents can't even read? Fortunately, Canada is currently addressing

the issue of residential schools through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Through initiatives such as the resolution that has been brought forward today by my colleague from Richmond Hill, the province of Ontario will be honouring the call from the United Nations and sending a clear message that there is definitely room in Ontario for the safe speaking of one's language in our society today.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I'm very pleased to say that I will be supporting this bill enthusiastically. I don't have a lot to say about it, but I'll say a couple of things.

I'm very proud of Ontario's record in multiculturalism and how we have handled the huge influx of new Canadians and new Ontarians who now call Ontario home. In fact, I read a few months ago that Ontario—Toronto in particular is the most diverse city the world has ever known. The only other city that would come close to Toronto's experience in measuring their ethnic diversity would be New York City in 1910. Toronto is more diverse than that city was, and yet in the last 40, 50 years, as this diversity has come to our country, we have not seen riots, we have not seen disruptions, we have not seen anything that would be considered to be out of the ordinary as far as people moving into a community and being absorbed by that community. Certainly there are and were incidents that one would have hoped would not have happened. However, the number of those and the severity of those, I would suggest, have been less in Ontario than they would have been in almost any other city in the world.

The second thing I'd like to say is, I was talking to a friend of mine who is Indian, and he tells me that in India, there are over 60 different alphabets. We in Ontario may think we understand a little bit about multiculturalism. When you consider that in one country there are 60 different alphabets, it boggles the mind to think of the diversity that must occur in that community itself. Within those 60 different alphabets there are literally hundreds of different languages, to the degree where two villages that may be located five miles apart can actually speak to each other and understand what they're saying, but they may write in different alphabets. So that kind of diversity isn't something that Ontarians are familiar with—or weren't familiar with up until 20 or 30 years ago. I think the transition that Ontario has made in those 20 or 30 years has been an excellent one.

I think that brings to a conclusion just about everything that I wanted to say, other than to congratulate the member for bringing this bill in. I look forward to supporting it. I look forward to celebrating the language day in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate? The member from London—Fanshawe.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. By the way, you look good in that chair.



I'm pleased and honoured to stand up and speak in support of the resolution brought by my colleague the member from Richmond Hill. It's important to talk about the diversity of multiculturalism in this province. I think the member from Richmond Hill is a strong advocate on behalf of the multiculturalism and diversity in this province. In this province, we welcome people from every part of the globe. They come to this beautiful province. They come with a rich culture, they come with rich skills and, importantly, they have the ability and the talent to connect us with every corner of this planet. That's why I think it's important to celebrate that diversity, build on it, enhance it and embrace it on a level—give us the chance as Ontarians to be able to speak every language on the whole planet.

As the member mentioned earlier, Ontarians speak every language on the whole planet, practise every religion, even though all of us in this beautiful province live in peace and tranquility, enjoy freedom without any fear of any oppression from any dictatorship or from anyone telling us not to do something.

It's important not just to celebrate this event but to embrace and believe in it. It's important for all of us as a province, as a society, as a community and as a country because it gives us the tools and the ability to reach out and also enhance our ability economically, culturally and whatever you want in terms of strengthening this province. I know the member from Trinity–Spadina, from the third party, mentioned many different times that the government should support this initiative. Yes, the government should support this initiative. I know it's a lot for the schools and the province of Ontario to open their doors to educate people from different languages. I can tell you that in my riding of London–Fanshawe we have a school where, every Saturday, students from different backgrounds have a chance to go and study the language they want, to study their native tongue. I feel it's important that it should be built on and expanded to include everyone in the province of Ontario.

He also mentioned something very important: To speak another language is important for all of us because it gives us the ability to understand other people. Language is the door to enter any culture, to understand other people's culture. Since we need immigrants in the province of Ontario, I think it is our obligation and duty as elected officials, as the people of this province, to educate ourselves and understand others to maintain tranquility and peace in this province.

I congratulate my colleague the member from Richmond Hill for his devotion to and passion about multiculturalism and diversity. He sees language as a door; he sees language as an important tool to understand others. Again, I'm going to support this motion. I hope everyone, as I heard, is going to support it. I think the government, with the Minister of Education with us here, is going to endorse it and give us the tools and support on a regular basis to maintain mother languages in the province of Ontario and the nation of Canada.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I guess the member from Trinity–Spadina should be commended for his passion because he reflects the passion of the member from Richmond Hill. And the member from Richmond Hill, I think, represents not only talking the talk, but walking the walk. In other words, he's been here before ensuring that we do not just pay lip service—no pun intended—to language rights. When we talk about language, International Mother Language Day, we're talking about language rights. We're talking about rights, and everybody in this province has a right to speak many languages. You have the right to speak the language that you were born with.

It's interesting. The member from Richmond Hill—English is not his first language. The member from London–Fanshawe—English is not his first language. My next-door neighbour in York South–Weston—English is not her first language. The member from Trinity–Spadina—English is not his first language. And my first language is not English either. In what other Legislature on this continent would you have five speakers stand up who were not born in this country and who do not have English as their first language? But we're here because Ontario does give opportunity not only to celebrate, not only to tolerate, but to actually have the right to speak and practise in the culture and language of your origin. We have that right here and we must tell our young people. We've got young people here who should be aware of that. Do not let anybody tell you that it is enough to speak just one language. As many languages as you can practise, the better it is for you, the better it is for society, the better it is for Canada and Ontario. We should be encouraging multiple-language practice, as many languages as possible.

It's interesting. It wasn't, as the member from Halton Hills mentioned, always this way in Ontario. I can remember as a child in Ontario when the police would come along the street with a billy stick, hitting us on our arms and shoulders because we stood on College Street. You could not walk on College Street if you spoke Italian. The police or the government of the day never said that was wrong. Every Sunday, the police would walk up and down College Street, hitting us with billy clubs. Why? Because we spoke Italian on College Street. You couldn't stand on the street—and nobody defended us. Nobody said that was wrong. Every day, they'd walk up and down College Street with billy clubs, telling us, "Move along. You can't stand here."

**1610**

Thankfully, times have changed, and with resolutions like this, we are reminded of the fact that we have the right to practise our culture and our religion. Some people say that it's just language. Well, we know that language is the tip of the iceberg of our rights and freedoms in this great country, in this great province, in this great city. Sometimes these motions are given short shrift, but really it's a time for us to reflect that these are about the rights of all of us, and to remind us that we must do more to ensure that our children, the ones who are sitting up here, learn to speak many languages and are

proud of speaking Spanish or Mandarin or Farsi. Speak your language proudly.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate? Further debate?

The member from Richmond Hill, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank the members from Halton, Thornhill, York South–Weston, London–Fanshawe, Trinity–Spadina and Eglinton–Lawrence, who spoke so eloquently on the subject of this motion.

Through the concept of International Mother Language Day was initiated by a group of Bangladeshi Canadians, yet we could not give appropriate acknowledgement to this special day in Canada. International Mother Language Day is celebrated by United Nations' organizations, educational institutions, civil society organizations, professional associations, governments and all other stakeholders to foster respect for and promote the protection of all languages of the world.

Many of the world's languages are in danger of disappearing, and the disappearance of any of our languages is an irreparable loss for the heritage of mankind.

Imagine if Martin Luther King would have delivered his famous speech simply by waving his hands before the public—and left. If he didn't have the capacity of a language in his tongue, would we have understood that he also had a dream? Isn't it true that once spoken language came into our tongue, we started dreaming a human society?

As human beings, we are engaged in protecting our surroundings. Let us now extend our hands to our own mother tongues.

I request this House to vote for this motion so that in Ontario we can observe International Mother Language Day on the 21st day of every February with the highest dignity.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

CAPPING EXECUTIVE  
COMPENSATION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT  
DE LA RÉMUNÉRATION  
DES CADRES SUPÉRIEURS

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** We will deal first with ballot item number 19, standing in the name of Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 180, An Act to cap executive compensation. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

The vote will be deferred to the end of private members' public business.

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL  
AND COMMERCIAL  
SURGE PROTECTOR ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009  
SUR L'INSTALLATION  
DE PARASURTENSEURS  
RÉSIDENTIELS ET COMMERCIAUX  
DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Ballot item number 20.

Monsieur Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 176. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde:** I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Mr. Moridi has moved private members' notice of motion number 66. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

CAPPING EXECUTIVE  
COMPENSATION ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE PLAFONNEMENT  
DE LA RÉMUNÉRATION  
DES CADRES SUPÉRIEURS

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1615 to 1620.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 180, An Act to cap executive compensation. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until acknowledged by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Bisson, Gilles  
Gélinas, France  
Kormos, Peter

Marchese, Rosario  
Miller, Paul  
Prue, Michael

Ruprecht, Tony  
Tabuns, Peter

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** All those opposed will rise and remain standing until recorded by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne  
Balkissoon, Bas  
Best, Margaret  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brownell, Jim  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Chudleigh, Ted  
Colle, Mike

Delaney, Bob  
Dhillon, Vic  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel  
Fonseca, Peter  
Jaczek, Helena  
Jeffrey, Linda  
Lalonde, Jean-Marc  
Moridi, Reza  
Qaadri, Shafiq

Ramal, Khalil  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Shurman, Peter  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):**  
The ayes are 8; the nays are 26.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negatived.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):**  
Orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE AT SCHOOL), 2009

### LOI DE 2009 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (SÉCURITÉ DE NOS ENFANTS À L'ÉCOLE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 27, 2009, on the motion for third reading of Bill 157, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):**  
Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I rise to add my comments to the debate on the Education Amendment Act (Keeping Our Kids Safe at School), 2009—would that it were so.

Our caucus was unrelenting on the need for a bill to ensure safety in schools. Some months ago, I recall my colleague the member from Newmarket–Aurora rising in this House to report an incident in his riding of a high school kid who had suffered, at the hands of another student, what we call student-to-student violence. It had gone unreported, and he wanted to raise the issue in the Legislature. That, and another number of like incidents, pushed the government, I suppose, to hasten its introduction of a bill like this, and so it should have; we're all here to see to the safety of people in our province, and no citizens more so than those who are least capable of defending themselves, our children, for whom we as individual parents and as members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario bear responsibility.

When our caucus members stood in the Legislature demanding mandatory reporting—I underscore the phrase “mandatory reporting”—the Minister of Education refused to acknowledge at that time that it was necessary.

What is mandatory reporting, precisely? That, I think, is at the nub of my concerns about this bill, and I speak directly to the Minister of Education when I say this. Mandatory reporting, to me, is the mandate to report to the appropriate authorities, right up to parents, who are ultimately responsible for their children, what has transpired within a school where student-to-student violence, violence and sexual assault are concerned.

The government introduced, in turn, Bill 157, claiming that it was designed to promote the safety of our children while they are in school. That, again, is why we're all here: to promote safety; all of us feel the same way. I contend that this bill, in the form it is being presented to this Legislature, and ultimately will pass into law, is an empty gesture. I will not be voting for it. Our caucus will not be voting for it. You will say that we don't care when in fact it is precisely that we do care that is the reason for which we will not vote for it in its present form.

Like most legislative proposals originating from this government, this bill is a diversion. It is a diversion. It's a diversion like bait-and-switch or false hope or a shell game or just words, and in this particular case, the words that we're talking about are those two words I've mentioned: “mandatory reporting.”

The bill's objective is to shut us up and change the subject. Well I, for one, side with parents. I want safe schools. The government on the other side, based on the legislation that we're looking at, just simply does not. They want us to keep quiet and I will not keep quiet, not so long as the children of Ontario are the victims. This bill fails to ensure student safety. It turns a blind eye to violence in Ontario schools, student-on-student violence or sexual assault, and it is yet another Liberal PR stunt.

We are coming to the end of this session. There's a lot of legislation being put through here. I want to go on record and say that just because a bill is called the Green Energy Act doesn't make it green, and in the same vein, just because a bill mentions safe schools doesn't make those schools safe. That is my concern; that is the concern of our caucus; that is the concern of Ontario's families.

Ontario's families and Ontario's students deserve better. When we place our kids in the hands of responsible authorities, we expect responsibility. We do not expect the buck to end at a certain place. We do not expect cover-ups. The families that have come forward have shown tremendous courage, and we were their voice to push for meaningful amendments to the legislation. I myself serve on the social policy committee and I was in camera with three different families for three different in-camera deputations. And I will tell you, they were heart-rending, and they were in camera for a very good reason. I watched tearful mothers. I watched damaged children. I watched tearful members of the Liberal government sit opposite to me while the mother of an eight-year-old talked about how her son was held down and restrained by other young children while another child performed oral sex on her eight-year-old son. If that doesn't raise your hackles, what does? The mother was there because she never got news until she pried it out of her son. The principal knew about it, and the first thing the principal did in that particular case was to call the victimizer, not the parents of the victim.

The PC caucus introduced a number of amendments at committee designed to make this bill do what it is supposed to do, which is keep our kids safe at school. Every amendment introduced by our caucus was rejected.

Do we all want safe schools or do we not? Are we on the same page or are we not? Is this about the minister, is this about the member from Guelph, her parliamentary assistant, or is it about the kids?

When I watched the amendment process in this particular case, with reasonable amendments being presented by the Progressive Conservative caucus and by the NDP caucus, and I watched the Liberal delegation to the social policy committee look for direction from the member from Guelph and watched a dismissive wave of the hand take away a perfectly good amendment, I was appalled. We demanded that the lack of accountability on the part of the principal and the government in this bill be addressed. That was our demand. I'm sure that when we did, we spoke for the vast majority of parents in the province of Ontario.

I introduced an amendment which called for true mandatory reporting by the principal in cases of any type of bullying, physical or sexual assault. I moved that section 300.3 of the act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsections:

"The principal shall not form the opinion referred to ... without consulting with one or more of the following:

- "1. The director of education;
- "2. The local police department;
- "3. The appropriate children's aid society."

#### 1630

Why stop the process at the principal? What makes principals so important? This is about the principal having absolute authority, or some authority, to report back to parents. Parents have the right to know what is happening to their children. My caucus is very, very strong on that. Principals are a daytime authority figure. Parents are 7/24/365 authority figures. Parents are the ones responsible for the rearing of children, and principals have the responsibility to keep them informed. At this time, there is nothing forcing principals to report an incident to parents, so I looked, with my amendment, to another significant level or levels beyond that of simply the principal of a school.

The bill asks that the principal refrain from informing parents of an incident if the principal is aware of a history of abuse in the student's home. That refers to a mitigating circumstance. If this is the case, then there needs to be a level of accountability to contact the police or the children's services to help with the situation. I'll say it again: I watched the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education dismiss that amendment with a wave of her hand, while her peons nodded in agreement. No school principal should have the absolute authority when it comes to the safety of Ontario's students. Whose dumb idea was that? Are you all going to vote yes and bleat as you do?

We have laws that deal with abuse. Principals should not have the responsibility of enforcing those laws. Appropriate authorities responsible for law enforcement exist already. We want Bill 157 to require principals to consult with one or more of the named authorities, and if you're a normal, thinking parent, so do you.

Instead of introducing the necessary changes to ensure student safety, this government kept the status quo, despite the fact that it obviously hasn't been working. Why did you introduce the bill in the first place if that's all you were going to do?

Let's look at some of the consequences of this approach. Over the past few years we have seen serious incidents go unreported to police. We've seen little to no support for victims. In some cases, the victim was transferred to another school.

For example, a five-year-old was terrorized on the playground daily, throwing up before going to school, until the father resorted to filming the bullying to show the principal. The principal refused to view the video, and the next time the dad tried filming, the principal called in police to falsely report a suspected pedophile at the school. That's what principals can do, not in every case, but in some cases, and that's why principals can't be the final arbiter, the final authority.

In another school, a seven-year-old girl was lured into a corner of the playground known by kids as the gross corner, and sexually assaulted. When the parents complained, the principal pointed out that their daughter had started a kissing club and said she'd be safe, now that it was winter and kids were wearing snow pants.

The safety of children is left in the hands of the principals and teachers, yet the minister saw fit not to outline any accountability or responsibilities for them in Bill 157.

Another example: A school in Oxford county had an incident between a junior kindergartener and a grade 2 boy. The junior kindergarten student continually kicked, hit, tackled and tormented the older boy, to the point that the school finally made them have separate recesses. When the young boy somehow got out into the playground, he swung on a bar and kicked the boy in the back, sending him down the slide. The parents were never even contacted. In September, the parents are moving their children to not only another school but another board altogether, because of the lack of accountability and the lack of security for their son. Is that the kind of Ontario school system that we want? I think not.

These stories are the reason why I stand in debate on this bill today, and why I object so much to this bill.

When my children were in school, I wanted to know if they were in trouble or being harmed in any way. Again, I ask: What parent doesn't? I wanted to know because when it came to my children, my wife and I were the only decision-makers. That's how good parents see the world. They want to know what problems their children have and they want to help them solve them. We took our responsibility as parents very seriously, as do the many parents who came forward to speak about the safety of their children in their schools. We listened to them and we listened to groups on schools. We listened to police groups. And we—again I say—wound up with absolutely no give on the part of the government and no amendments, albeit they were quite reasonable under the circumstances.

Our children's education is a partnership, with the goal to raise healthy, responsible, educated members of society. It is a partnership between parents who have the ultimate responsibility for raising their kids, educators who are responsible for teaching children the skills they will need to succeed, and governments who are charged with the responsibility to design a framework in which children can learn in a safe environment. We can never be permitted to forget that the parents are the key party in that partnership, yet this government is seeking to diminish their rights.

We hear parents complain about the fact that schools seem to take over parental responsibility. We hear people in schools—teachers, principals and administrators alike—complain that they are not parents and don't want to be parents and would prefer that parents take their responsibilities. There's obviously a disconnect here, but ultimately we know where the final authority lies.

Our objective should always be to ensure student safety, and that means that that partnership is an essential element. Instead, with this legislation, the Liberal government is showing us that their objective is to make things easier.

Today I am asking the members of this House to put students first and do what is right for them, and that is to require the principals to report incidents of abuse.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I listened to the comments made, and it's quite atrocious that some of those experiences have to be suffered by children. I hear what the member is saying. When it comes to bullying, we all have a responsibility as parents, as educators, and as people in society to do all we can in order to try to make sure that our schoolyards are safe for kids.

I was just talking to one of my colleagues and remembering that when I was in grade 5 or 6, living in northern Ontario in Timmins, part of what you saw was that the bigger kids would come into the school and try to show that they could be masters of the schoolyard, as you might say, and so that one had to learn how to deal with that pretty quickly if you didn't want to be the victim of that bully.

But not all kids are able to deal with it, and I think that's really the point. There are some children out there who, for a multitude of reasons, are unable or unwilling, or according to religious beliefs, and are not going to get involved in physical tussles when it comes to bullying. We need to make sure that our schools are areas that are safe for children, because in the end, what kids need is an area where they can feel safe, where they can go to school in the morning and know that when they leave at the end of the day, the biggest problem they had was trying to figure out their math test or trying to figure out their spelling bee. All of the other things that happen in the schoolyard or, unfortunately—as the member described—happen so often as far as sexual abuse, are not things that you see in the school. I think that we need to

find ways to make our classrooms, our schoolyards, and our homes, quite frankly, safer for kids out there.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** The Safe Schools Action Team, as you know, and the social policy committee did hear some terrible, distressing, heart-wrenching stories where incidents were clearly not handled properly. I want to assure the listeners that Bill 157 does address those stories.

The Safe Schools Action Team also heard some other distressing stories. We heard from a young woman who had been the subject of homophobic bullying and who, when her father found out she was a lesbian, was kicked out of the house. So she went to her mother—her parents were separated. When her mother found out she was a lesbian, she was kicked out of the house. She ended up on the streets of Toronto.

When I was a trustee, I dealt with a case where a mom had the disabilities of a child splashed all over the front page of a local newspaper. It was part of a custody battle. We had to go to the children's aid to get that one closed down.

**1640**

The committee heard from Martha Mackinnon, who is the counsel for Justice for Children and Youth. She reminded me of a case that I was involved in. It was known as Eaton versus the Brant County Board of Education—I actually helped fund it when I was on the executive office. It went all the way to the Supreme Court, and what the Supreme Court found was that, in fact, the interest of a child sometimes does differ from the interest of the parent, and when the best interests of the parent differs from the interest of the child, then the school has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the child.

Bill 157 reflects that principle. That's why we did not accept the opposition amendments.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Questions and comments?

The member from Thornhill, you have two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I appreciate the comments of both the member from Timmins—James Bay and the member from Guelph.

In terms of the responsibility to do all we can, as mentioned by the member from Timmins—James Bay, he's absolutely correct, and I think that was the nub of what I had to say over the course of the 15 minutes, and that responsibility necessarily does involve parents.

I, too, have memories of the way it was when I went to school. Things have come a long way, but that doesn't negate the fact that kids will be kids and there is such a thing as bullying, and we do have to step in when we have student-on-student violence. Moreover, the sexual aspect of what goes on in schools, even at a very young age, as we heard in committee, is there. Maybe it wasn't there when we were young or maybe we didn't know, but we call this the safe schools act because what's that we want: safe schools.

In terms of the response of the member from Guelph as to why there are sometimes incidents where we don't want parents to be looped in—and she gave a couple of good examples—we in the opposition never argued with that point at all. It wasn't about whether or not there were times when parents shouldn't know, because indeed there are, but it was about the fact that, absent the parents' ability to handle the information that is there in a reasonable way—not kick their kid out of the house because they find out that their sexual orientation is not in keeping with the family's idea of what sexual orientation should be—then our amendments gave the opportunity for the government to find a way for the principal to escalate to a children's aid service or to the police or to authorities—the director of education, for example—who could make informed decisions about the welfare of that child without looping the parents in and being of negative effect to those kids. That amendment and amendments like it were absolutely in order and should have been given more than a wave of the hand, and I say again, that's all they got.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

Ms. Wynne has moved third reading of Bill 157, An Act to amend the Education Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** I have received a request from the chief government whip that this vote be deferred. So ordered.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Orders of the day?

## HOUSE SITTINGS

### HEURES DE SÉANCE

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 17, 2009, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, September 23, 2009.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 137.

Further debate? Ms. Smith.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Today we are moving for an adjournment for just a couple of days in September. The House is returning on Monday, September 14. We will be adjourning on Thursday, September 17—normal business. We are asking that the House be adjourned for Monday, September 21 and Tuesday, September 22, in order to accommodate members' attendance at the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo, this year being

held in Temiskaming, or the community of Northern Shores.

This is a very important event. It's an annual event. It is a very important event to our agricultural communities across the province. In the fall of 2009 we all look forward to participating in the plowing match, which is the first one to be held in the north, in Temiskaming. It will be a big boost for the entire northern community. It's expected to draw approximately 80,000 visitors and generate more than \$20 million for the local economy. As always, our government will have a significant presence, and I know that many members from all parties attend the plowing match and are delighted to be participants.

This is the 93rd—many members will not be aware—annual plowing match. It's the largest outdoor farm and rural living show in Canada. It hosts more than 600 exhibitors and has 100 acres of what they call the tented city. Last year we were up in Bruce county. In 2006 we were in Peterborough. It's a wonderful event.

Normally the House would not be sitting until later in September or we wouldn't have this type of motion or this requirement to adjourn for two days, but because we have changed the calendar of this Legislature, we are sitting earlier in September this year and we will require those two days off in order to allow all members from all sides of the House to attend.

I am hopeful that this will not be a lengthy debate today. I am hopeful that all parties will see fit to support this and allow to us to adjourn for those two days in September.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Premièrement, je veux dire de la part du caucus néo-démocratique qu'on va supporter cette motion. On sait que cet événement, pour les communautés dans la région de Temiskaming, est assez important. Ce n'est pas chaque jour qu'on voit cet événement venir dans le nord de l'Ontario. Comme on le sait, c'est un événement annuel qui est très important pour la communauté agricole, et c'est quelque chose où nous, les députés, avons toujours eu l'occasion d'aller y participer. La leader parlementaire du gouvernement libéral nous dit : « Bien, il faut fermer l'assemblée, parce que c'est ce qu'on fait d'habitude ». Mais je veux dire, pour le record, qu'à beaucoup d'occasions—je le sais comme député ici depuis 20 ans—on a eu des occasions où la chambre a siégé en même temps que ces événements, d'habitude, dans le sud de la province de l'Ontario. On s'organise, comme eux s'organisent, pour nous assurer qu'une partie de nos membres est là pour être capable de participer, parce que l'événement n'est pas seulement d'une journée ; c'est sur une période d'une couple de journées, et d'habitude les caucus NPD, libéral et conservateur s'organisent pour être présents, pour être là pour participer à ces importants événements.

C'est un peu différent cette fois-ci parce qu'on reconnaît que—écoute, moi je le sais ; je demeure à Timmins—Temiskaming est un peu plus loin de Toronto,

comme le sont beaucoup de communautés où on a eu ces événements-là dans le passé. Pour certains députés, s'éloigner au nord de la 401, c'est loin. D'habitude, on embarque dans l'avion ou on prend la route chaque semaine pour monter dans nos comtés, comme M<sup>me</sup> Monique Smith, qui chaque fin de semaine va à North Bay, moi qui vais à Timmins et puis d'autres qui vont à d'autres places à travers le nord de l'Ontario.

Pour nous autres, c'est normal, mais pour beaucoup de députés c'est un voyage qui est long ; ce n'est pas court, imagine-toi. Il faut embarquer dans l'automobile et il faut monter et, imagine-toi, avec la Honda on aura besoin de mettre tout le bidon de gaz plein. Ils ne sont pas capables de partir avec un demi-« tank » ; ils ont besoin de partir avec le « tank » très plein de gaz parce que c'est plus loin que d'habitude. Imagine-toi : c'est plus d'une couple d'heures. Ils ont même besoin de prendre le dîner en montant parce que c'est plus que cinq, six heures. Donc pour beaucoup de députés je sais que ça va être un stress énorme, aller à Temiskaming pour participer à cet événement, et pour cette raison nous autres on veut accommoder ces députés pour nous assurer que ceux qui se déplacent pour venir au « plowing match » dans le nord de l'Ontario, à Temiskaming, vont avoir l'occasion d'y aller, avoir un dîner en montant, rester dans les hôtels et les restos dans le coin et participer à ces événements qui sont importants.

Nous, les néo-démocrates, étions préparés à accommoder le « plowing match » en disant qu'une partie de nos députés s'arrêteraient ici une journée ; l'autre partie des députés allaient partir la deuxième journée. En d'autres mots, on a accommodé parce que, comme on le sait, c'est important que cette Assemblée siège et traite des questions de la province d'une manière sérieuse. Ce n'est pas seulement la question de la période des questions, mais c'est aussi la question de tous les autres travaux qui sont ici que nous autres avons proposés. On aurait pu accommoder un horaire un peu moins chargé pour être capable d'accommoder les députés qui vont y aller. On décide qu'on veut le faire différemment, et c'est correct. On ne va pas s'obstiner parce qu'à la fin de la journée nous voulons supporter cet événement à Temiskaming ; on sait que c'est important non seulement pour Temiskaming mais aussi pour la communauté agricole.

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Moi, je suggère au leader parlementaire, M<sup>me</sup> Smith— puis je pense qu'elle va trouver ça vraiment intéressant— pour quelle raison ne prend-on pas la période des questions pour la transplanter au « plowing match » ? Imaginez-vous le premier ministre avec tout le cabinet quelque part dans le comté de Temiskaming, préparés à répondre à des questions ; et on pourrait avoir deux jours agricoles où on est capable de répondre aux questions. Premièrement, nous dans l'opposition poserons des questions faisant affaire avec l'économie rurale et avec la question sur ce qui se passe dans l'industrie agricole, et le premier ministre et son cabinet seront directement devant des huit mille qui sont là et qui auront la chance de voir

la période des questions « live » à Temiskaming. Cela aurait été quelque chose d'extraordinaire. Imaginez-vous M<sup>me</sup> Wynne, capable de répondre aux questions faisant affaire avec l'importance des écoles dans les petites communautés, comme vous le savez, ou supporter les petites écoles dans mon comté, comme d'autres. Vous auriez pu prendre une question des députés comme moi puis montrer pourquoi il est important de supporter les petites écoles.

On aurait pu voir M<sup>me</sup> Smith et d'autres ministres répondre aux questions qui sont importantes pour les communautés rurales et agricoles de la province de l'Ontario. Moi, je vous propose qu'on ait des discussions durant—

*Interjection.*

**M. Gilles Bisson:** On va voir. Comme vous le savez, madame la Présidente, on va finir de siéger la semaine prochaine puis on aura assez de temps de négocier avant le mois de septembre une période des questions au « plowing match ». Je pense que c'est donc innovateur et donc une bonne idée d'avoir une période des questions pour le « plowing match » pour que nous, les députés de l'Assemblée ontarienne, ayons la chance de montrer comment on supporte les communautés rurales et les communautés agricoles de la province de l'Ontario.

Le premier ministre et son cabinet seraient là. On pourrait avoir des tracteurs rouges sur un bord, des tracteurs verts sur mon bord et des tracteurs bleus. Chacun pourrait avoir—

*Interjection.*

**M. Gilles Bisson:** On dit « tracteur ». En français canadien on dit « tracteur », okay ?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** —or brown would be good.

**M. Gilles Bisson:** Ça marche, Monique. C'est correct. On fait du vert des fois quand on est environnementaliste, on fait orange quand c'est nécessaire ; on fait les deux.

Nous autres, on est le parti vert de cette Assemblée. Orange et vert, c'est un peu la même affaire. Imaginez-vous tous les tracteurs sur l'autre bord du champ, avec le premier ministre sur le gros tracteur rouge. On va dire que c'est un Massey Ferguson s'ils bâtiraient encore ici en Ontario. Le restant du cabinet serait sur leurs petits tracteurs et ils seraient préparés à répondre aux questions. Imaginez-vous : on peut avoir quelqu'un qui fait un encan ou quelque chose comme ça qui pourrait être le président de l'Assemblée cette journée-là. M<sup>me</sup> Horwath, sur son beau petit tracteur vert ou orange, peut poser des questions, avec M. Runciman sur un petit tracteur bleu. Nous autres, les restants, sur nos petits mopeds ou peut-être sur un « ATV » de chaque couleur, on pourrait se mettre dans un champ de Temiskaming pour se poser des questions, et peut-être qu'à Temiskaming, M<sup>me</sup> Smith, on aura finalement des réponses.

Imaginez-vous donc une période des questions où on aura vraiment des réponses, puis ce ne sont pas que des chansons à répondre, comme on dit en bon français canadien. Donc, avec ce qui va se passer cet automne il faut dire, chacun ici, que c'est un événement qui est

important. On veut s'assurer qu'on fait tout pour démontrer à l'industrie agricole que la Législature de l'Ontario supporte tout ce qu'on peut faire pour être capable de supporter ces initiatives. Ça va donner une chance aux députés de voir eux autres premièrement ce qui se passe dans les terres agricoles du nord de l'Ontario et de causer avec le monde pour voir quelles sont les questions importantes pour cette industrie. Je regarde avec anticipation l'habileté de M. McGuinty sur son Massey Ferguson, et M. Runciman ou le prochain chef et M<sup>me</sup> Horwath poser des questions dans le champ à Temiskaming sur leur tracteur. Je regarde vers cette opportunité.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Certainly, as an urban member, I look forward every year to the plowing match. I look forward to going to Timiskaming. I think it would be quite surprising to transport question period to the plowing match. I'm not sure it would be consistent with the other events at the plowing match. But the plowing match, as it stands, even without question period, is quite a wonderful opportunity for us to experience agriculture and the rural community and issues, so I look forward to it.

I didn't think we had unanimous consent on this motion, but obviously we do, and that's terrific. I look forward to the vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Further debate?

Ms. Smith, government House leader, has moved government motion 137. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Orders of the day.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Everyone is having a good time this Thursday afternoon.

I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Leeanna Pendergast):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The House stands adjourned until Monday, June 1, at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1656.*



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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney  
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi  
John O'Toole  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott  
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett  
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue  
Charles Sousa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell  
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell  
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro  
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Michael A. Brown, Howard Hampton  
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod  
Gerry Martiniuk, Julia Munro  
David Ramsay, Lou Rinaldi  
Liz Sandals  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott  
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal  
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette  
Laura Albanese, France Gélinas  
Ernie Hardeman, Phil McNeely  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Rick Johnson, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections**

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara  
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial



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