



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Second Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 April 2014

Mercredi 30 avril 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 April 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 avril 2014

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY
GENERATING FACILITIES
AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR
LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX,
DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES
ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 24, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 51, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2013 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated, we were into questions and comments from the Minister of Rural Affairs. He's not here, so we move to the next rotation.

Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to stand this morning as our party's critic for community safety and correctional services to speak on Bill 51, the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014.

When I read the words "security" and "electricity generating facilities" in the title, I did a quick read through the bill to see if the security involved was the protection of emails or other documents related to the gas-fired generating plants. I'm sorry to report that that's not the kind of security that we're talking about in this bill. Before anyone over there—I know the Chair of Cabinet is very quick with standing order changes—I'm going to try to stick to the bill.

The previous incarnation of this bill in 2012 was known as Bill 34 at the time. It actually made it through second reading. In fact, the bill went through committee,

it was amended and ultimately it was brought back to this House for third reading. Just a few hours of debate remained and the bill could have been on the books as passed legislation from the previous Parliament. But you'll recall, Speaker, something actually happened that interrupted Bill 34's rather smooth sailing through the Legislature. In fact, what happened derailed not just this bill, but many other pieces of very good legislation. That, of course, was Dalton McGuinty, the previous Premier, proroguing Parliament, and a lot of those bills that would have been passed and that had all-party support died on the order paper.

Let's face it: He pulled the plug because of the heat he was facing from the politically motivated decision to flush more than \$1 billion down the drain by cancelling the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. Bill 34, again, was a victim of the former Premier's decision to get out of Dodge, to leave this place. Unfortunately, we had just a few hours of debate left and the bill would have passed.

So we're back here, back in office. Bill 51 was introduced on April 10. I have to tell you that I was amazed that my friend, Mr. Yakabuski, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—my predecessor in this critic portfolio—stood in his place and gave an hour leadoff one year ago this week. It was one year ago that our party gave the opening hour leadoff on this bill. A full year has now passed before the government got around to calling this bill again.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: No, Minister, it's a full year before your government made this bill a priority and brought it back to the floor of the Legislature. His speech, back on April 24 of last year—I note that it had been 14 months since he joined the debate on Bill 34. So here we are today, a full year later. I know the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton is here, and he'll be doing his barnburner one-hour leadoff for the NDP.

I want to also say that my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke asked a year ago, when he spoke on the bill, what the government had been doing all this time. We're going to find out tomorrow how badly this Ontario government has managed our economy, when the finance minister reveals the details about his plans to keep spending and put us further and further in debt.

I think the little history lesson I just provided on Bills 34 and 51 speaks to the inability of this government to manage the minority. I think we've seen this, time and time again. Whether it was under Premier McGuinty or, now, Premier Wynne, this government has significant difficulty managing the minority. How on earth can you

presume you can run a province when you can't seem to get a bill that has all-party support through second reading in 12 months? It's unbelievable to me.

Basically, we've got a lot of fanfare and now Bill 51 is back on the order paper today, Speaker—and welcome, Speaker; it's good to see you in the chair.

There's no plan by this government to manage the Legislature, and certainly there's no plan to get our province turned around. The people deserve better. I know that the people of Leeds–Grenville certainly want the government to stand up and put forward some legislation that is going to get us back on track. I know that our party has a bill, the Million Jobs Act, that is guaranteed to get our economy back and going.

It's important to remember, with Bill 51, that it's not only the “what” that is important but the “why.” This particular bill repeals the Public Works Protection Act, an outdated piece of legislation from the 1930s that suddenly found itself in the spotlight in June 2010 for reasons I'm going to get into in a few moments. It also amends the Police Services Act, to address issues around court security, and sets out stand-alone legislation for the protection of electricity generating and nuclear plants.

I know, when we talk about the matter of courthouse security, that we've had a very stark reminder recently about how vital that is. Like every one of our front-line police officers and first responders, we saw in the recent shooting at the Brampton courthouse that our court security officers also put themselves in harm's way every day they show up for work.

0910

That shooting in Brampton left Constable Mike Klarenbeek seriously wounded, while the disturbed individual who shot him was killed by officers on duty in the courthouse. Obviously, it's a very tragic situation for everyone involved. I know that we're all so relieved that Constable Klarenbeek survived and has since been released from hospital. Security officers like him play a critical role in the administration of justice in Ontario by protecting the public and the employees of Ontario's 167 courthouses.

As MPPs, we have a duty to these men and women to do our jobs by setting the legislative framework that helps them do their good work. Again, that's why I'm so frustrated at the delays we've seen with this government in getting this bill passed into law. As I said, it's a bill our caucus supports. I know the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke expressed his support many months ago. I know it also has—at least, I believe it has—the support of the third party as well as various stakeholders.

I'm also pleased to see that the government has included amendments to the previous legislation, Bill 34, that were made at committee. My concern, though, is that we stand here, days or maybe weeks away from a possible election, so we could see this important bill washed away again as it was when Parliament prorogued. That's more evidence on how the government again continues to mismanage its legislative agenda.

But as I stated, the importance of this bill isn't just what it does but why it was introduced. It was interesting,

taking a look at the former Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services' leadoff speech for Bill 51 last year. Speaking to the impetus of the legislation, she said, “Simply put, the time has come to modernize the legal framework under which we protect our courthouses and critical infrastructure such as nuclear and electricity generating facilities.” Well, that's one way to put it, and I agree: The time had definitely come to make some changes, although not for the reasons that I think the minister was alluding to.

Let's make one thing very, very clear: The inspiration of the bill isn't some bright idea from a former minister, who is now the Attorney General, or her staff. It's far from it, and I think you concur. The truth about Bill 51 was that its origins can be found in the fallout from yet another scandal on this government's terrible record—I'm talking about the G20 summit, as we all know, that was held in Toronto in June 2010.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Ombudsman gave it to them on that one.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Ombudsman sure did. He sure did.

What we know is that on June 2, 2010, the Liberal cabinet secretly used the Public Works Protection Act to give special powers to police and security at the summit. They did this by invoking regulation 233/10 under the act, which effectively declared the G20 zone a public work for the period between June 21 and 28.

The June 2 date on which cabinet made that fateful decision to unilaterally invoke regulation 233/10 is important for two reasons. First, it was several weeks before the G20 summit actually took place on June 26 and 27, so there was certainly no urgent or compelling matter of public safety that required the government to behave in this way.

The second, which should offend every member of this Legislature sent here with their duty to represent their constituents and the people of this province, is that we were in session on June 2, 2010. But rather than bring the issue to the House so that MPPs could have their rightful opportunity to debate these extraordinary powers that they were talking about, cabinet acted secretly, behind closed doors. As someone who was a sitting member of the Legislature at that time, I find it insulting. It's an affront to our democratic principles upon which this Legislature and this place was built.

I can't put it any better than the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke did when he spoke for our Ontario PC caucus following the minister's leadoff. What the government did, he said, told MPPs that they didn't count and, by extension, neither did our constituents. And he's right: That's exactly what the government was doing.

I mentioned that I was an MPP at the time. In fact, I had just been elected as the MPP for Leeds–Grenville. I had been a member for not quite three months.

I know I recall being in Toronto just prior to the G20 and—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We've got, probably, seven sidebars going and two or three—really

loud—in the group of the member who is speaking. It would be nice if we cut it down.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't need any backseat drivers on this, thanks very much. So we'll keep it down a bit. If you have a very heated discussion and you need to do it, you know where to go: outside. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker, for your very thoughtful ruling. I appreciate that. Thank you.

I mentioned that I was a new MPP; I had been here not quite three months. The G20 was starting and I remember having an event in my riding on a Sunday and deciding not to drive and taking the train. I got into Union Station quite late—I think the train was about an hour late—and I can remember coming out of the station and seeing this massive wall; it was huge fencing. The entire area around Union Station had been cordoned off with this 9- or 10-foot fencing.

I remember it was almost unreal coming out of the train station at midnight. There was not a person around Union. I remember walking blocks through fenced areas not seeing a person and this was well in advance of the G20. I can remember sitting that final week before the summit and seeing fencing put up behind Queen's Park, in the park just north of this place. I can remember it was very unreal. I can remember taking the train home that week and having 10 or 15 officers at almost every corner of this massive structure of fencing, so it was a bit strange to me. All of that fencing and the other security measures I saw were very intimidating and it definitely changed the place that I had come to visit as an MPP over those three months.

Imagine how upset I was to learn, as we all did, following the uproar in the wake of the G20, that the security measure which would have the most impact on the people—and in some cases, it would change their lives forever—was unknown to me. We weren't part of that decision to invoke that piece of legislation.

I couldn't see it when I left Union because even as a sitting MPP I had no idea the government was up to this. It was offensive. We, on this side of the House, deserved an opportunity to uphold our sacred duty as an opposition to question the government on its plans. Had we been given that opportunity, which the government obviously found too inconvenient, the events that unfolded at the G20 could have been different.

It is through debates like the one we're having this morning that we put the government's plans under the microscope. I'm sure there would have been some tough questions asked about whether it was appropriate to use a piece of legislation drafted at the outbreak of the Second World War, when the government of the day was worried about Nazi spies. Certainly, I think the mood of the province, and indeed our nation, as we prepared for war with Hitler, was much different than it was heading into the G20 summit. If not for the use of a bill that hadn't been reviewed since the end of the war in 1945, then I'm sure we would have talked about the specific nature of powers

being granted to police and security officers for the summit.

There's no question that there was confusion amongst police about exactly what the government had handed to them under the arcane Public Works Protection Act. It's that confusion, I believe, that led to what we now know was the abuse of power by authorities in detaining people at the summit. Let's remember that there were more than 1,000 people who ended up being detained.

I know it's easy to lay the blame at the feet of the police, but let's not get carried away in using the luxury of hindsight. It's this government that made those decisions. I think it's worth noting that prior to the summit, media began reporting that police had been given special powers of arrest. Those reports, I think you'll recall, focussed on a five-metre perimeter on either side of the security fencing that had been set up.

0920

Even as it witnessed the confusion in those conflicting media reports—questions that extended to police and the general public—the government did nothing to provide clarity. They did absolutely nothing. In fact, I think there is merit to the suggestion from many that the government purposely let the confusion grow in the hopes that it would deter protestors from getting too close to the security zone. We know it didn't work out like that. What we got was chaos and the widespread trampling of people's rights.

I think it's important to look at what Ontario's Ombudsman, André Marin, had to say in his report on the G20. He called his report Caught in the Act, and there's no question that he holds the government accountable. It really is some enlightening reading, I have to say, and I quote one passage in particular:

"The Public Works Protection Act under which" regulation 233/10 "was proclaimed authorizes regulations to be created to protect infrastructure, not to provide security to people during events. Regulation 233/10 was therefore probably invalid for having exceeded the authority of the enactment under which it was passed. These problems should have been apparent, and given the tremendous power regulation 233/10 conferred on the police, sober and considered reflection should have been given to whether it was appropriate to arm officers with such authority. This was not done. The decision of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to sponsor the regulation was unreasonable."

That's from the Ontario Ombudsman. That's pretty conclusive.

So what happened was an important message of what can happen when a government is determined to do an end run on the checks and balances that exist in democracy. And sadly, this isn't the only evidence that cutting those corners and a preference for doing things behind closed doors is just another day at the office for that Government. It's a shame.

I think we saw that, certainly, in the Auditor General's scathing special report on the OLG modernization last week. The people of my riding were outraged when the

government agreed—again in secret—to close our OLG facility in the Thousand Islands Casino in my riding and move it to downtown Kingston. Again, that report that was just tabled by the Auditor General confirms that there were a lot of discussions that went on behind closed doors, when they looked my officials in the face and said that everything was open and above board.

Just like in that report this week on the OLG modernization, the fix was in. I think it's surprising that this government waits a year to bring Bill 51 back. Again, I think it's not surprising. This government can't manage the minority; Bill 51 is just yet another example.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Just to echo some of the points that the member from Leeds–Grenville made, this was one of the most egregious moments in Canadian history, the G20—he's absolutely right. I was sitting in the House; we were all sitting in the House—the House was in session when the cabinet, unbeknownst even to their own backbenchers in the Liberal Party, brought in this regulation—dusted it off—meant to be invoked during wartime conditions, and put it into place.

I was also part of the demonstrations. I was a member of a student Christian movement who did a special service. It was a church service that we conducted downtown among Christians, only to see the riot squad come to us, with full riot gear, pushing us back. I've never seen anything like it. A thousand people were arrested. A democracy was put on hold. How and why? By Dalton McGuinty and his cabinet, in which the current Premier sat. It was absolutely outrageous.

I can say that the only other time in Canadian history that this was matched was under Trudeau the first, and that was the War Measures Act, when the civil liberties of all Canadians were lifted for a local situation.

This is not, in any way, partisan or ideological. People from across my riding came to me and talked to me about how absolutely egregious this was. They couldn't believe that a small group within cabinet could dust off a War Measures Act kind of security measure and put it into place just for what were, in the main, peaceful demonstrators. It was outrageous. I still hear from people about this.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association condemned it. The Ombudsman condemned it. This was not about bad policing; this was about very bad government—in fact, the absence of democratic government. This government should be ashamed of this, and it should be ashamed it's taken this long to correct that simple regulation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who was having a lovely discussion there, nice and loud.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on a very, very important piece of legislation.

First, I want to thank my predecessor, the current Attorney General, who, in her role as the Minister of

Community Safety and Correctional Services, has done a tremendous amount of work in bringing forward this particular bill and its predecessor, Bill 34, which has been debated in this House, has gone through the committee and was reported for third reading.

There is no doubt, hearing from the conversation that's taking place in the House and from the member from Leeds–Grenville, that there was definitely a need to modernize a law when it comes to security of public buildings. As mentioned, the previous law was developed around the Second World War when the world was very different; Canada was very different than it is today. I'm very happy that our government, through the advice of Justice McMurtry, has been able to bring forward a modern bill in Bill 51 that will ensure that there is the right balance between providing security and safety for critical infrastructure in our province and that of civil liberties.

Now, Bill 34, the predecessor to Bill 51, as has been noted, had gone through the entire process. It had gone through committee, it had gone through the amendment process. All three parties worked together in making sure that the right set of amendments came forward, and it died, unfortunately, because of prorogation. Bill 51 contains all the changes that were made through the committee.

This bill has the agreement of all three political parties, so I urge that this bill is important. This bill is the right step, and I think we all agree. Let's make sure that we use our time wisely in this House in terms of debating Bill 51, given that it is Bill 34, amended, and pass this bill as soon as possible so that we've got a modern, new bill speaking to the reality of 2014 Ontario in place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to see you in the chair this morning, and in good spirits.

The member from Leeds–Grenville, I think, gave an excellent summary of where this bill has been in its previous form as Bill 34, as he said, about a year ago, actually—no, it's two years ago, really. The process had been followed.

Once again, the reminder to all of us of the importance of this place and our right to have a voice is the prorogation. It will reign in my mind as the biggest slap in the face in the province for the time I've been here, in 18 or 19 years. This bill was a victim of that circumstance as well, as the member from Leeds–Grenville pointed out.

It's also important to look at the three sections of the bill, in my case specifically, because the riding of Durham is home to a very large nuclear facility and other power installations. The security for electricity generating facilities and nuclear facilities is described in some detail. It's important that they get this thing right.

I think the section that is only a very small troubling concern here is section 6—the powers sometimes need to be examined. “Section 6 sets out offences and section 5 provides a power to arrest a person committing any of the offences, without warrant and using reasonable force if

necessary.” It’s explained in more detail in the full section of the legislation as well.

I’ve visited facilities many times over the years and I’ve noticed already, without this bill being passed, a step-up in background checks of anybody who even comes on the site. You have to have your passport and everything really submitted before you even attend the site.

Let’s be reasonable, I think, as the minister himself said this morning, using a balanced approach, and get it right. We are likely supportive of this bill.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I’ll be presenting my lead on this issue very soon, but I’d like to just give a little bit of a preamble.

G20, from which this bill arrives, was one of the worst civil rights violations in the history not only of Ontario but of Canada. Over 1,000 people were detained, the majority of whom were released without any charges whatsoever. This was a severe abrogation of civil rights, and much of that was due to the Public Works Protection Act, and I’ll go into detail about that.

But it was also about a culture of both government and police, which see dissent as a threat, which see the freedom of expression that is one of the hallmarks of our society—the idea that people can stand up and say, “We do not support what our government is doing,” the freedom to get up and say, “We disagree with the policies of this government,” or the policies that are being enacted worldwide, that is one of the hallmarks of a democracy. That is one of the pillars of a free society: to be able to get up and have the right to dissent. That right to dissent was stifled through a systemic approach to silencing protesters.

In my speech, I want to get into this idea that instead of language like “crowd control” or “suppression” of people who are speaking, we need to look towards language of facilitating democracy, encouraging people to dissent, to voice their opinions in a safe manner. The language and the culture need to shift, both from a government side as well as a police side, to encourage and support people who wish to engage in democracy in the most meaningful way, which is to stand up and voice their expression. That’s what I’ll be speaking of in a couple of moments, so stay tuned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Leeds–Grenville has two minutes.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Parkdale–High Park, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and my friend the unstoppable John O’Toole, the member for Durham. I appreciate his good counsel. Also, I appreciate the comments made by the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who will be speaking in a few moments.

I see that the minister spoke, and that the previous minister is here. I appreciate their work in community safety and corrections. I know that there are a lot of issues going on in the ministry right now. They’re spending

hundreds of thousands of dollars building bunkers for their managers, if they’re called into duty in case the front-line correctional workers are walking off the job.

The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and I toured the Toronto South Detention Centre, and I know that there continue to be challenges to open that facility. I know that there are continuing issues at detention centres like the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre that need to be addressed by this ministry.

Here we are with Bill 51. We’re coming up to the four-year anniversary of the G20. I think it speaks volumes that after the public outcry and two scathing reports on the fiasco, this government still hasn’t been able to manage to put those changes into a bill and get the bill passed in this Legislature. I think it’s shameful. I think it’s a sad commentary on this government’s record.

I really hope that the people of Ontario will have their time to cast judgment on this government in the days and weeks ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I believe I have a full hour—at least, I’ve prepared notes for a full hour—so I encourage everybody to sit back, relax and enjoy this discourse on public participation, on democracy, on civil liberties and on the feelings of this government. Hopefully, we can learn from it, moving forward.

I want to begin with saying a very common saying: You need to learn from your history, and if you don’t learn from your history, you’re doomed to repeat it. I submit that this government has not learned from its history, the history being G20, one of the worst civil rights violations in the history of Ontario. They haven’t learned from their history because they are repeating their history in this current piece of legislation. They’re repeating many of the problems that we saw in G20 in this current piece of legislation.

So I’m gravely troubled. I am skeptical of whether or not this government or the minister has read either the report of Justice the Honourable Roy McMurtry or the report written by the Ombudsman of Ontario, André Marin, because this piece of legislation recreates many of the problems that existed in the Public Works Protection Act. So it boggles my mind that you would create some of the very same problems that were identified by Justice McMurtry in this legislation.

Let’s go back to the history, and I’ll tell you how this is so flawed. Hopefully, we can find some amendments to make this more appropriate, more fitting with the recommendations made by Justice McMurtry and more in line with the spirit of democracy and civil liberties and civil rights. Let’s begin with a little bit of the history.

With the G20, we talk about the worst civil rights violation in the history of Ontario. There were 1,105 people arrested during the G20. The vast majority of those individuals were released without any charges whatsoever. This means people were detained, were kept in custody, and their liberty, their freedom, was literally stripped

from them. They were placed into holding pens and holding cells for two days, only to see later on, for many of them, that no charges were laid. Those who had charges laid, the charges were withdrawn. A small percentage, approximately 50 people out of the 1,105 people, actually faced charges. Even half of those charges were withdrawn, and a small percentage actually went to trial. This is absolutely unacceptable. This is such a violation of civil liberties, it is unbelievable.

People, citizens, just watching what was going on in the streets, who stepped outside of their home just to see what was going on—the streets were shut down. They lived there. Residents walked out of their homes to be kettled by police, to be thrown into these cells, these outdoor pens, kept in custody for two days, only to find that they had not committed any offence whatsoever—absolutely unacceptable.

Why did this occur? This occurred for a number of reasons. There are two major reasons why this occurred, and we need to address these two reasons. One, and Justice McMurtry identified this in his report, was that the Public Works Protection Act provides too-broad powers; the powers it allows or confers upon the police officers are too broad. The often-used saying is, “Absolute power corrupts absolutely.” The idea is if you have too much power, it’s hard to use it judiciously. If you have too much authority, it’s hard to use it in a manner that is fair. That’s why we place limits on the powers given to police.

The problem specifically with the Public Works Protection Act—I quote from Justice McMurtry on page 20 of his report. He’s speaking with respect to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. He refers to that and says, “The report of the CCLA called for the repeal or significant amendment of the PWPA ‘to meet basic constitutional standards.’” The suggestion was that even allowing these extra powers in and of itself may have been unconstitutional. This is exactly what Mr. André Marin says as well: that the powers given to the police were probably unconstitutional to begin with. So off the bat, there is a constitutional violation, let alone the civil liberties violation that actually did occur when we see the 1,000-plus people who were arrested and detained without any charges.

Justice McMurtry goes on to say, “I agree with the observation of the CCLA that the provisions of the PWPA”—the Public Works Protection Act—“led to a ‘lack of clarity as to the scope of the search and seizure powers,’ which created many difficulties and conflicts that probably could have been avoided.”

Now, it’s clear—I want to highlight this—that the lack of clarity as to the scope of the search and seizure powers created the difficulties and conflicts. I want you to remember that, that having too-broad powers creates problems. When you give someone too much authority to interfere with someone’s liberties, it creates conflict; it creates issues. This is something that was identified by Justice McMurtry, this is one of the major problems with the Public Works Protection Act, and this is the very same problem that exists in the current legislation. I’ll go into some detail on that.

0940

The second issue, which is a significant problem, is—let’s make sure it’s clear: The Public Works Protection Act was the responsibility of the Liberal government. They used that power, they used that authority under that legislation, to give the police officers additional powers that they should not have had. That was this government’s fault. This government set the tone and the tone was: “Let us silence dissent. We are afraid of citizens who want to speak their mind. Let’s silence every and all form of democratic dissent. Let’s silence the ability of protestors and those who wish to exert their democratic right to say, ‘Hey, listen, I don’t agree with what’s going on.’ Let’s silence them and let’s catch in the net people who are just bystanders, just people living their lives, who walked out of their homes just to see what was going on. Let’s make the net so broad that we are not only going to silence dissent, but we are also going to just capture and arrest everyday citizens.” That’s what this Liberal government did due to their actions. The climate they created and the tone they set was that dissent was unacceptable.

Of course, we want to ensure that there is safety. We’re not proposing to support violence in any way; however, there’s a huge line, there’s a huge gap, between violence and the democratic right to dissent. There isn’t a blurred line here; there is a huge gap. To put in place protections to prevent violence is fully acceptable. To ensure that people are safe, that’s fully acceptable. But it’s absolutely unacceptable to create zero tolerance, an absolute silencing of dissent, and that’s what this government created.

The second issue is, the police, once given the powers, have a cultural issue that needs to be addressed. I want to make it clear that it is not all police officers who are bad, not in any way, but there is certainly a culture in policing which is combative. The culture which is combative we’ve seen in recent incidents in Toronto involving those with mental health issues, involving the overuse of force against citizens where less force could have been used, which resulted in charges being laid against police officers who inappropriately used force against citizens, against vulnerable people.

There needs to be, again, as the Ombudsman of Ontario has identified, a cultural shift where police officers look to de-escalate conflicts. De-escalation is the number one strategy that needs to be utilized in any sort of confrontation or any sort of conflict, period. The police culture is one of combat between the public and the police, and that needs to be shifted.

When we shift that culture, we can have a facilitative discourse between the police and the public. What I mean by that is—I spoke at a conference of the police services board of Ontario. They asked me to give them some feedback, and I asked the organizers, “Are you sure you want some feedback because some of it will be negative?” They said, “Yes, we want to learn.” I applaud the leadership of that organization for accepting criticism. That’s how you grow, and I told them very clearly.

In their response to the G20, they came up with some recommendations internally and in the internal memo they had created where they looked at some of the issues, they talked about improving crowd control. I said to the members gathered there, “Why are you using the language of crowd control? When you assist at festivals and you’re present, as the police, to help different festivals that occur in our communities, you don’t talk about crowd control. You are facilitating a festival. You are facilitating people who want to enjoy themselves. Similarly, you are pre-emptively creating a conflict when you call it crowd control. If you believe in democracy and believe that people should be able to get together, gather and say, ‘Listen, I don’t agree with what’s going on. I don’t think the government is doing the right thing here, or I don’t like the way that policy direction is headed,’ people should be able to do that.”

Let’s talk about facilitating the use of this right, facilitating democracy, facilitating dissent, allowing people to engage in democracy in a safe way. The language itself, actually, would encourage people to move away from this climate of combat and this culture of combat just by saying, “Listen, let’s look at our strategy around the facilitation of democracy.” How do we facilitate demonstrators? How do we facilitate protestors? How do we allow them to engage in their rights in a fair and safe way, so that people can still engage in the civic process and the democratic process, but also so that the rest of the citizens can be safe, and ensure that they’re not disrupted in a dangerous manner? The language itself suggests conflict. That’s why I speak about the culture that needs to be addressed.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I feel that the member from Trinity–Spadina is enjoying, or at least appreciating, this concept here.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Absolutely. I’m all ears.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I appreciate that.

I want to quote from Amy Goodman, the well-known radio host and journalist. Amy Goodman writes in her article, “Dissent Is Essential to Democracy”—first of all, the title says it all. It’s very clear: Dissent is essential to democracy. She writes, “The bulwark against tyranny is dissent. Open opposition, the right to challenge those in power, is a mainstay of any healthy democracy.” I couldn’t have put it in any better words—I think there’s a reason why Amy Goodman is so well respected as a journalist and as someone who is maintaining the strength of independent journalism—it is truly something of grave importance.

If you look through history, any time there has been a significant silencing of dissent; whenever there has been overuse of police force or state powers against the public, that has preceded some of the worst violations that we’ve seen in our history. The climate that’s created by silencing dissent creates an oppressive environment, something that we need to stand against. That’s why it’s so important that we protect the right to dissent everywhere, and that’s why it’s so vitally important that we look at G20 as

an example of how horrible things can be if we’re not cognizant of supporting this right and of encouraging people to engage in their civic responsibilities.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association spoke in great depth with regard to the problems around the G20 around the overuse of police powers and, again, of this climate that was created of silencing dissent. They also spoke on the fact that the government-side problem was that the Public Works Protection Act provided powers that were far too broad.

Now let’s turn to the proposed legislation, Bill 51. Again, before we actually get into the details, let’s talk about some of the history here. We have debated this—and my colleague from the Conservative Party talked about this—at second reading. We had committee hearings where we heard from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association as well as many organizations that had a stake in this matter. We heard their testimony; we submitted amendments; we raised issues. We had third reading debate. But the government prorogued and, as we say in colloquial terms, the bill was killed on the order paper, or the bill essentially ceased to exist. It no longer existed and had to be reintroduced. All the work that was accomplished, all of the effort that was put into place—we now have to do that once again. But there’s a silver lining to that.

While I want to denounce the prorogation and the fact that a bill like this, something that happened years ago now, has still not been rectified, and that this government has been derelict in its duties and in its responsibilities to ensure that what happened at G20 doesn’t happen again—one of the ways was, very clearly, to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, and they have waited years to do that. That’s absolutely neglectful. That’s absolutely unacceptable. On top of that, when they actually had a solution, when they were about to rectify something they should have rectified right away, they prorogued the government. The bill ceased to exist, and we had to start all over again.

The silver lining, though, is that the bill initially had a great deal of problems. I raised those problems—I was very clear on them—and they were not fixed. I attempted to fix them in committee. Again, the government was not receptive.

Let’s go through the problems with this bill.

0950

I started off my remarks by saying that Justice Roy McMurtry, who wrote one of the major reports on the problem of G20, identified one major problem; I hope you remember that problem was that the Public Works Protection Act provided powers that were too broad. When you have powers that are too broad, it is very easy to overuse those powers; it is very easy to abuse those powers. So, powers that are too broad—that’s exactly what Bill 34 did, and that’s exactly what Bill 51 is doing.

First and foremost, when it comes to court security, court security is something that’s been going on. We have a very strong form of court security that goes on, and the major purpose of court security is to ensure that danger-

ous weapons and items don't get into the courthouse. Beyond that, there are police officers who are present in the courthouse, there are a number of security individuals who are there, and the major issue that you need to prevent is weapons and dangerous materials: flammable material, incendiary material, explosive material—you want to prevent those from going into the courthouse.

Another important thing to keep in mind is that one of the other indicia or other hallmarks of a free and democratic society is open and transparent courthouses. In societies that are tyrannous or dictatorships or where there is not full democracy, the courts are not transparent. People don't know what goes on in a court. They don't know what goes on in the legal system; there is often not a legal system. Those are the symbols or the signs where you do not have a democracy.

In contrast to that, where you have a democracy, you have open and transparent courthouses. You can go into a court and watch the wheels of justice. You can go and observe a trial and you can see what happens. Those are important things. Where you do not have that, you don't have democracy.

To encourage democracy, we need to make sure that our courts are accessible. We want to ensure that people can come into court and see what is going on. We want to make sure that people can come into court and there are no barriers to their access to the court beyond the safety requirements of not bringing in explosive material or inflammatory material or weapons, to ensure their safety. Beyond that, there is really no reason to restrict anyone from entering the courthouse. In fact, if there are any barriers, if you require people to identify themselves when they come into the courthouse, there are many problems that can arise from that.

If there is a sensitive case, if there is a case of an individual who has raised some concerns against the government and has protested and maybe faced some improper charges, and you want to go in and support that individual—say there is an environmental group and you want to go in and support this environmental group for its activities in protecting the environment. Someone is facing charges, and you enter the courthouse and they ask you for your identification. They say, “Identify yourself.” Maybe you don't want anyone to know who you are. You're not going to commit any offence, you're not bringing any weapons in and you have nothing dangerous with you, but you just don't want your identity to be known because you fear, perhaps, reprisal; or you fear, perhaps, that you'll be identified and that will be used against you in some way. That could be a barrier to accessing the court.

Initially, in Bill 34, this government required that someone had to produce identification to enter a courthouse. No one does that right now. I was a lawyer before I became a politician. We have lines and lines of people who line up to go through the metal detector—

Hon. John Gerretsen: You're still a lawyer.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm still a lawyer. Thank you very much, minister without portfolio.

As a lawyer, commonly you'll see a lineup of people coming into the courthouse. They're going through the metal detectors; they're searched for weapons. They walk through. No one asks them their name, no one asks them to identify themselves; no one produces any form of identification. However, Bill 34 had the requirement that you had to produce identification. Why would you put that in there? What was the point of that? I'm glad you removed it; that was a good step. However, you still require someone entering a courthouse facility to identify him or herself and provide information relating to “assessing whether the person poses a security risk.” What does that mean? What is information regarding “assessing whether the person poses a security risk”?

What you're doing here is exactly what Justice McMurtry said not to do: too-broad powers. Why would you require someone to have to identify themselves to enter a courthouse? What difference does that make, what their identity is? You're not running a criminal records check for someone to come into the courthouse. In fact, people with criminal records are going to go into the courthouse because they're going to be answering charges, perhaps. So really, what is the purpose of asking them to identify themselves? What it does do—and also allowing this right, allowing this power that you not only have to identify yourself, but you have to provide information so that the security guard can assess whether you're a risk or not.

Now, again, if we're talking about the Public Works Protection Act, we're talking about powers that were too broad, that created a conflict, that created difficulties, that created a violation of civil liberties. That's what Justice McMurtry said.

Now, to rectify it, you're creating a new set of laws. You're repealing the Public Works Protection Act, which is right, but you're creating, again, too-broad powers. Why would you require someone to have to identify themselves to enter the courthouse? And secondly, why would you require that they have to provide information that the security guard has to assess?

Another problem with the Public Works Protection Act was that it created powers that were too broad in terms of search and seizure; it created powers of arbitrary detention that were too broad. These are two pillars of our Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 8 of the charter protects us from unreasonable search and seizure and section 9 protects us from arbitrary detention. These are pinnacles of justice.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms that we have in Canada is one of the go-to pieces of legislation in the world, something that supports freedoms and liberties and is something that is pro social justice. It set up a foundation of rights and freedoms that we should all enjoy.

However, inherently in this legislation there are some serious violations to those charter-protected rights. If someone is entering a courthouse, I agree that weapons should be searched for and dangerous materials should be searched for. But let's be careful about our language.

First of all, the law here states that any person entering a courthouse can be searched. The language of “search,” again, is too broad. If you can search someone, that means you can go into their pockets, you can go into their purse, you can go into their material, you can go into their briefcase, and you can search it. That’s not, again, what we’re looking to do. We want to encourage people to come into the courthouse. We don’t want them to be subject to a pat-down, a thorough search of everything they carry with them. We want to screen them for weapons. We want to screen them for dangerous materials. The language should be that people should be subject to a screening with a specific purpose, not just a broad “you can search them for anything;” a specific purpose: Screen them for certain material that we do not want to come into the courthouse, and those materials can be defined. The Criminal Code defines them very clearly.

What are weapons? Materials that can be used to harm another individual: explosive material, material that is flammable, material that is corrosive or chemicals that can cause damage. We want to screen for those types of materials so they don’t get into the courthouse. But we don’t want to allow a broad power of search so that anyone coming into the courthouse can be subject to an exhaustive and thorough search—absolutely not. That’s not what we want to do. That would discourage people from accessing the courthouse, and it’s not what goes on right now.

When you go to a courthouse, you’re not searched, your pockets aren’t emptied and your laptop and briefcase aren’t examined thoroughly. There is a screening process where you walk through a metal detector. Your briefcases and your purses are put through a conveyor belt, and also scanned for any sort of inappropriate materials. That’s the right way to do this. But the way this law is written, it is again providing too-broad powers.

Let’s go further: It’s not only allowing a broad power of search, it also says that your vehicle that’s on the premises can be searched. If you’re a passenger in a vehicle, that vehicle can also be searched. What grounds does an officer or security guard have? If I’m dropping off my brother who’s working at the courthouse—to go to the courthouse—and the security guard has some issues, asks my brother to identify himself and asks some questions around assessing whether he’s a security risk, and at some point arbitrarily determines, “I want to search him and I also want to search the car that he was dropped off in,” that’s clearly a violation of section 8 of the charter. That’s an unreasonable search.

What evidentiary basis, what reasonable grounds do they have to search the car in which you were a passenger? What if there is material found in that car that has nothing to do with the individual himself or herself? What if you were dropped off—you just needed a ride to the courthouse and you got dropped off by somebody else? All of a sudden, that person’s car gets searched and things are found in that car that have nothing to do with the individual initially. These are exactly the reasons why we have the Charter of Rights.

Section 8 of the charter clearly says that there shouldn’t be unreasonable searches. That’s against the charter. That creates a climate of totalitarianism and creates a climate of oppression, to allow such a broad power of search without any reasonable grounds.

1000

Let’s keep in mind that the police always have a power to search someone if there’s grounds. That always exists. You don’t need legislation for that. There’s already thorough, exhaustive jurisprudence where police officers have the power to arrest someone if they have reason to believe that they have committed an offence. They have the power to search someone if there’s reasonable grounds. That always exists. But to give this additional warrantless search power is absolutely unacceptable. It basically goes further than the existing powers of the police—which are properly mandated, which have jurisprudence—and gives them far too much power.

So very clearly, this government has not learned from its history. The PWPA was criticized for being too broad in its power, for giving police too much power—and that it resulted in the G20, which was one of the worst civil liberties violations in our history. Now, there have been many reports about this that talked about the problems of the PWPA. Again, the number one problem that was identified, one of the major problems that was identified, was if you give someone too much power, if you give them too-broad powers, it’s hard to interpret those powers. There’s a lack of clarity, and what happens is, conflicts arise, and abuse of power arises. That’s exactly what’s happening again in this legislation.

This legislation provides powers that are too broad, that are unconstitutional, that potentially violate the charter and that do not address the specific problem that we need to address. What we need to address in our courthouses is security, absolutely. We need to identify what makes a courthouse secure and safe. We need to provide the powers necessary to do that in the most defined way possible so that the powers that are given are not overly broad, and are directly associated with the problem or the risk.

One thing we certainly need to work on is the power around the search. The search needs to be clarified so that it is defined as a screening for weapons or for any dangerous material. I ask this government—I asked before, and I’ll ask the government again—to look at legislation that works. Manitoba—I guess it’s no coincidence that they have an NDP government—enacted a Court Security Act. In that Court Security Act, they were very clear. The Court Security Act in Manitoba uses the language of screening instead of search, because it wants to make it clear that you should screen individuals for certain materials and not allow them in. So the Manitoba Court Security Act has the language of screening. It defines what the purpose of that screening is, defines what material should be screened for—weapons and matters of that nature—and narrowly defines the powers. That’s the right way to do this. If you want to address a problem where powers are too broad, you need to come in with

powers that are more narrow. Solving a problem of a law that's too broad by bringing in another law that's also too broad is absolutely not solving the problem.

Schedule 2 of Bill 51 sets out these two areas where I think the powers are far too broad. Beyond that, if someone is in custody at a courthouse, the search powers there are appropriate, so there's no issue with that. Schedule 3 of the bill talks about security at electricity generating facilities. This is an important place to make a distinction. When it comes to the security associated with electricity generating facilities, there are two absolutely different scenarios, two absolutely different examples.

With the courthouse, there is something of importance. There is something that we need to address in terms of allowing access. People have a fundamental right to access courthouses. That's good for democracy, and we need people to access courthouses.

For electricity generating facilities, that same requirement isn't there. You don't have a democratic interest in entering an electricity generating facility, a power plant, to the same level that you would have with a courthouse. The laws can be more restrictive when it comes to a power plant, and that's acceptable as a social policy. We would understand that the laws defining how you can access a power plant would be more narrow, would be more difficult; it would be harder to access. That's absolutely acceptable. The fact that there are so many similarities between the laws that the government is proposing for a power plant and for a courthouse suggests that this government has not done its homework and thought this through.

A more thorough search of someone entering a power plant may make sense, and that's something that I leave open to perhaps some deputations at committee to address whether or not there are some issues there. But on first blush, it makes sense that a power plant would have a higher level of security. That's something that makes sense. However, even with a power plant, we need to make sure that people have the opportunity, the legal space and the physical space to voice their dissent. If there are issues around the power plant, if there are issues around the type of power, if there are issues around the way in which it is generated and people want to voice their concerns around it, there needs to be a safe legal space as well as a physical space in which they can conduct that.

The reason that I address both legal and physical space is that one of the issues that needs to be addressed is where the perimeters are, so that people who do wish to voice their dissent or their concerns around a particular electricity generating facility are able to do so. But, again, the restrictions placed on someone at a power plant can be certainly higher than they are with a courthouse.

I spoke before about this government's priorities with respect to various legislation. I've been elected for just over two and a half years. The G20 occurred some years ago now, and there are clearly some problems in terms of this government's priorities. They have not addressed

matters that need addressing, and they've waited years for them to be brought forward.

This bill is not associated with any costs; it doesn't cost us anything. It's not going to stress the public purse in any way, it's not going to affect the deficit, it's not going to affect spending, and it's something of vital importance. I struggle to understand why this government has waited so long to bring this bill forward again. After prorogation, when we were so close to passing this bill, when we were so close to repealing the Public Works Protection Act, why didn't this government bring this bill back in immediately and debate it immediately? I struggle to understand why this government has not made this a priority. I hope the government appreciates the damage that the PWPA has left, the mark that it has left on the people of Ontario, and particularly in Toronto.

To this day, people talk to me about what happened. I personally was present as a legal observer during the G20 protest and witnessed some horrendous violations. People peacefully protesting; my colleague from Parkdale-High Park talked about members of her church gathering peacefully. Peaceful protestors gathered and were met with violence, were arrested, were detained. It was absolutely unacceptable. It was something that, as a legal observer, was horrible for me to watch, to see the manner in which people were being treated.

The strategy of kettling: Observers, peaceful protesters, people just stepping outside their homes on Spadina and on Queen Street were met with the police tactic to kettle them, to surround them, to enclose them, so that they couldn't leave. They were detained before they had the opportunity to even walk away. I had cited before—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Is the Attorney General paying attention?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I had cited before, 1,105 arrests; 1,105 people detained. The majority, again, were released without any charges. This is not something to be taken lightly. This is not something that should be two and a half years into this session and only now being brought for second reading. This is something that should have deserved more priority. The fact that the government prorogued and didn't bring this bill forward quickly and expeditiously speaks to an absolute lack of respect for how serious this is.

This speaks to the absolute lack of seriousness with which this government is taking this issue. This government has shown that civil liberties don't matter, that the abrogation of one's rights—

Hon. John Gerretsen: Oh, come on.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —doesn't matter, it's not important. They haven't prioritized this bill. The fact that we're debating it only now, two days before a potential budget is coming forward, speaks to the absolute lack of priority. This bill doesn't cost you anything. It doesn't cost you any money. I don't understand why this bill was not brought forward before.

We addressed that the priority is lacking. On top of that, I'm hoping that someone on the government side can answer this question for me: If Justice McMurtry said

that the problem with the PWPA was that the powers were too broad, why would you present a bill that also has powers that are far too broad? Why would you do that? I need to understand that. I'm hoping someone from the government side can answer that question and at least set my mind at ease that they thought this through.

The other issue that I want to raise—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're quite active today.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The other issue that I want to raise is that I'm hoping we're on the same page. I want to ensure, from the government side—Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure: Do we have a quorum at this time?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Do we have a quorum?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member asked if a quorum is present; I don't believe it is.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm honoured to have two important people in the chamber today to watch the proceedings. I'd like to welcome my mother, Susan McNaughton, to the House, and also my aunt, Diane Brewer, who has been the reeve of Newbury for 30 years. Welcome to the House.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Tashi delek, everyone. Today is Tibet day at Queen's Park. We have Students for a Free Tibet here. We have the Tibetan Women's Association. Of course, the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet are hosting a lunch on the second floor for everyone. Please join us and have some delicious Tibetan food. Particularly, check out the momos. Welcome.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It's my pleasure to welcome Sarbjit Deol, who is a very active member of my community and has promoted supports and active living among youth and seniors. Along with him are his friends Paramjit Singh from England and Rajinder Mand. They are in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to present to the House Paul Vickers, chair of Gay Lea Foods and a fellow Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program grad. Welcome.

M. Gilles Bisson: J'aimerais être capable d'introduire Michelle Lebel, qui est ici et qui est la maman d'Émilie, page de Kapuskasing. Puis aujourd'hui, Émilie est la capitaine de tous les pages.

I'd like to say again that I'd like to welcome Michelle Lebel, who is the mother of Émilie, who is a page here at Queen's Park from Kapuskasing. Guess what? She's the page captain today. Welcome to mom.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to welcome the staff and students from Hillel of Greater Toronto: Marc Newburgh, the executive director; staff Jaime Reich and Julia Bernshtein; and students Bailey Fox—bear with me, Mr. Speaker—Carina Newton, Samantha Cooper, Amanda Osak, Yaron Mildwid, Deborah Benhamu and Cyrus Cohan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to welcome Pat Jilesen and Heather Frook from the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture. I don't believe they are in the House, but they are coming to spend the day at Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Page Victoria Recagno has two special guests who are joining us at Queen's Park today: her grandmother, Joanne Belvedere, and her aunt, Pat Plant. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park my constituent Monica Graves, who will be showcasing her one-of-a-kind jewellery line at the Legislative Assembly gift shop today from 11 to 1:30. Everybody, come out and buy something.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my pleasure to introduce my page captain William Qin's mother, Ning Zhang, and father, Max Qin, from the great riding of Mississauga—Brampton South. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I ask you all to join me in welcoming Ashley Bowes, Oshawa's page, and her mother, Kathreen Bowes. As well, I see that Mr. P. is here with the staff and students from G.L. Roberts.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to welcome to the Legislature today from Thunder Bay, sitting up in the public gallery behind me, Mr. Mark Brassard. Mark is here to see his son in action, Thomas Brassard, who's one of the newest pages here this week. Welcome.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to welcome today Diana Hamilton, John Robotham, Wayne Underhill, Tanya Tompkins and her children, Tatiana and Colton Tompkins, who are here today to talk about housing issues and to visit the Legislature.

REPORT, OMBUDSMAN OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario respecting his investigation into how the Ministry of Transportation administers the process of obtaining and assessing information about drivers who may have uncontrolled hypoglycemia.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question to the Premier: We're at a turning point in Ontario. I know in my heart that

Ontario can and will do a lot better. After 10 years of higher taxes, deeper debts and skyrocketing hydro, it's time to turn the corner to a time of lower taxes, more jobs, affordable hydro and less debt under our million jobs plan. That's what I plan to do.

Premier, when I see your budget—I mean, pretty well everything now has been leaked by your budget-leaking team—it appears that you've utterly given up on trying to even pretend to balance the budget. You're going to spend money. You're going to increase taxes. You're going to actually increase both the deficit and taxes, which is an incredible feat.

What I see here are deeper debt, higher taxes and higher hydro rates. I have a simple question: Can you tell me one thing that's different about you than Dalton McGuinty?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order.

All right, let's get to it. The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say that, tomorrow, the Minister of Finance will table a budget that is designed to build opportunity today and to secure the future for the people of the province of Ontario. While we're working to create jobs and partners so that those jobs can be created, the Leader of the Opposition seems intent in his proposals to kill jobs, to actually move jobs out of the province.

We're working to strengthen pensions and to make sure that people in this province have the prospect of a secure retirement. The Leader of the Opposition has no intention and, in fact, seems quite content to let people face a future of insecurity.

We're working to build infrastructure in this province, in the GTA, in the north, and the Leader of the Opposition has no—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Look, I get it. You don't want to say the M-word: McGuinty. I understand that. You didn't answer my question about a single difference between your approach and Dalton McGuinty's.

The Premier talks about securing a future for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Natural Resources, come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: After all this, Speaker, all the Premier cares about is securing a future for her Liberal MPPs and insiders. I'm going to stand up for the real people. It's time we had a Premier who was focused like a laser on job creation and a team of confident economic managers to put our province back on track.

Look, I understand why you want to continue the McGuinty record. You were there at the cabinet table. You held senior positions. You should actually be proud of that, that you had senior positions and a big part in the McGuinty team. I don't know why you deny it.

But I think it's time to end this charade. This should not be about a Premier who is looking out for Liberals and Liberal insiders. It should not be about a feckless NDP leader who simply wants to get a contract extension to prop up the coalition. It's time for a change, a focus on jobs. Premier, wouldn't you agree?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, any Premier or, quite frankly, any leader worth his or her salt would be focused like a laser on making sure that good jobs, like those that are coming to the province through OpenText, come to the province. Any leader focused like a laser on the future would make sure that children have the education they need and that post-secondary institutions have the support they need.

We are focused absolutely on the investments that this province needs. If the Leader of the Opposition suggests that there is no need for investment in roads, bridges and transit, in education, talent and skills, if he's suggesting that partnering with industry and business to make sure jobs come to this province—if he's suggesting that's not what's needed, then he's just dead wrong.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, he didn't say anything.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Delayed reaction. Just trust me.

Final supplementary.

1040

Mr. Tim Hudak: I talk to job creators. I talk to workers each and every day. What they tell me is, they want a fair and level playing field, the chance to succeed. They like our plan to make hydro affordable, to focus on private sector job creation and not more and expensive bigger government, to actually have a government that spends within its means and focuses on the skilled trades. They're confident. They're behind my plan because they want to see hope in Ontario. They want to see people back to work in our province. I'll tell them this: Hope is on its way. Opportunity is coming to our province. Jobs are around the corner. That's my plan.

I'll just ask you one thing: Stop with the higher hydro. Stop with the increased taxes. Stop with the runaway spending. We've had enough of Dalton McGuinty. We don't need his twin. It's time for a bold, new path: Focus on jobs and get Ontario working again.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just do not believe that picking fights with organized labour, that cancelling full-day kindergarten, that firing education workers and health care workers, that moving away from a practice of partnering with industry that has been in place in this province for decades—Premier after Premier, government after government, Conservative, NDP, Liberal, all governments have partnered with industry to bring business to the province. And yet the Leader of the Opposition says that all of that partnering is not necessary, that we can just stand back as government and we can let those jobs go to other jurisdictions. I just don't believe that that's in the best interest of the province. You do. There's a real distinction between us, between the Leader of the Opposition and me.

I believe that building our future is what we need to do. He believes that tearing down the province will somehow get us there; it—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. For the past two years, we have been looking, as have Ontarians, for the true answers surrounding the cancelled gas plants. So this what they know: The Premier signed the cabinet document authorizing the cancellation of Oakville. They know that she was the campaign co-chair for the cancellation at Mississauga. They know that she told us the cost was only \$40 million; that was far exceeded. She also told us at that period of time we had all of the documents, which we know we did not.

The Premier needs to clear the air because the public deserves to know exactly what her and her transition team knew about the alleged destruction of documents in the Premier's office.

She's threatened to sue my leader and I in the hopes that she could silence us, but we won't be silenced. Today, our lawyers have sent the Premier a letter about the preservation of documents in relation to the cover-up, and we're wondering if the Premier will be open and transparent as she professes and provide us with that documentation immediately, and today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the government House leader will want to speak to the details of what's going on at committee.

But I will just say, as I have said many times in this House, from the moment I came into this job, I was very

clear that we would open up the process, that we would provide information as it was asked for. Hundreds of thousands of documents have gone to the committee. I have appeared before the committee twice.

We've changed the protocols and the rules around retention of documents. I've made it clear across government that everyone understand what documents need to be preserved, and that is because we worked with the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Leeds-Grenville, come to order. Second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On top of that, we've changed the process around the location of large—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Northumberland, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —energy infrastructure.

We will continue to co-operate in the investigation.

We'll continue to co-operate with the committee and make sure that the information that is asked for is made available.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Well, this wasn't a committee question, and if she wants to co-operate with the committee, she could haul Monique Smith and Tom Allison into our committee rooms, as we've requested and as they have denied.

But let's get back to the lawsuit and the billion-dollar question of where the money went and why there were deleted documents in her office during the transition period. If she wants to put this behind her once and for all, we've given her the opportunity. Myself and the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition have asked. We've requested this of her lawyer:

—copies of any and all correspondence between the Premier and the former Premier Dalton McGuinty and/or members of his staff;

—records pertaining to any official meetings held by the Premier and the Premier-designate;

—any and all records pertaining to and identifying the individual staff members who were employed in the Premier's office on January 26, 2013, through to February 10, 2013.

The list goes on.

Will the Premier do the right thing? Release that documentation to our lawyers today, so not only can we defend ourselves, but we can get to the truth of a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader, and the member from Nipissing. Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am not qualified to conduct—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I tend to agree with the member from Oxford, but not the way he thinks. So I'll repeat what he said: Enough said. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am not qualified, nor certainly is the member opposite qualified, to conduct a legal discovery process in this chamber, Mr. Speaker.

What I will say to the member opposite—and I wanted to answer this part of the question, because she mentioned two people, both of whom have agreed to appear before committee. They have agreed to appear before committee, and she implied that they had not agreed. I will say again: I will debate the truth and facts any day. I will not—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'll be returned to. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will not debate unfounded allegations. I will debate facts any day.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The Premier said she wasn't qualified; I couldn't have said it better myself.

We know that while documents were being destroyed in the Premier's office, she was holding private meetings. On the same day, February 7, she directed the Auditor General—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will withdraw.

Hon. David Zimmer: I withdraw that I referred to her—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do not make any comment.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Let me finish so I can bring attention to the fact that I'm not happy.

The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will withdraw.

Hon. David Zimmer: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish your question, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Hey, guys, I guess we've struck a chord again.

Let's put this into context. On the same day as hard drives were being wiped in the Premier's office, this Premier was holding a private meeting directing the Auditor General to expand the scope of the gas plant cancellation and investigation.

1050

We know that her campaign transition chair, Monique Smith, had many conversations with Peter Wallace, the secretary of cabinet, about the gas plants. We know that

the OPP are continuing to dig deeper and deeper into this scandal and probing it because among all of the Liberals, they're refusing not only to speak to our committee, but also to the OPP.

If she is not prepared to provide us with the documentation, will she call—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: This is, quite frankly, appalling, Mr. Speaker. The member stood up here and talked about testimony of Peter Wallace. Let me share the testimony of Peter Wallace on April 15, 2013: "We did not express any advice with respect to the management of political records or the hard drives or the emails associated with the former Premier's office" to the transition team. "The area that we did not cover, because we had no visibility into it whatsoever, was the management and the practice of the former Premier's office with respect to its records management, whether it be hard drives or other mechanisms, of its political records." That is what the secretary of cabinet talked about in terms of his relationship with the transition team.

That is the truth. The truth is that members of the Liberal Party, members of this government, have agreed to appear in front of the committee, unlike the Conservative—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier said, "As soon as we knew that there was a problem with the girders in Windsor, we stopped the building." But three months prior to that, there was a heated email exchange between senior officials about—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Stop the clock. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I'm looking for quiet.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There was a heated email exchange between senior officials about the safety of the girders. The Ministry of Transportation project lead for the parkway, Fausto Natarelli, wrote to Infrastructure Ontario saying: "I have no confidence in you or frankly your organization to act in the provincial interest ... we need a conversation with more senior officials."

Is the Premier telling Ontarians that these senior officials, who regularly meet with deputy ministers and had this heated discussion about the girders, never raised concerns with anyone?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm just going to go through the timeline once again, because I think it's

important that we deal with the facts. As we've explained many times to the NDP, the issues brought up at the meetings that the leader of the third party is referring to had to do with non-compliance as opposed to safety.

Here are the dates: On June 14, 2013, the minister's office staff were first briefed on the safety—on the safety—and durability issues regarding girders on the Herb Gray Parkway. On June 19, 2013, the minister was briefed on the issue of girders; he immediately took action to cease the installation of the girders. On July 22, 2013, the minister called on a group of independent experts to look into the issue and make recommendations to the government. On November 1, 2013, the Windsor Essex Mobility Group and the Parkway Infrastructure Constructors announced that they were rejecting and replacing the girders at no cost to Ontario taxpayers.

That's what happened, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We now know that in the fall of 2012, the Canadian Precast Prestressed Concrete Institute expressed concerns that we know were discussed in the minister's office. They wrote to say: "If non-conforming girders, supplied by non-certified precasters, result in future structural or durability deficiencies that affect public safety, this will impact our industry significantly."

Now, is the Premier going to stand by her minister who says that safety concerns were never raised?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have gone through the chronology of when the minister was informed about and briefed on safety and durability issues. I know, because the minister and I spoke, that he took action right away. That was action that he took because I supported him in doing that, and making sure that—the fact that there was a safety issue meant that we would take action.

Those girders have been removed, those safety issues have been dealt with and at no cost to the Ontario taxpayer, because it was part of the contract. So yes, I stand by the process and I stand by my minister's decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier said yesterday that the minister's office staff were first briefed on the safety and durability issues regarding the girders on the parkway on June 14, 2013, and that the minister was briefed on June 19, 2013. But documents show a decision was made by the minister's office on February 14 not to intervene in the girder issue.

Now, can the Premier explain why she's saying one thing and the documents are saying something completely different?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that those meetings took place, obviously. There was not sufficient information during that time period that the leader of the third party is talking about to make definitive recommendations on safety. There were issues on compliance. I've been through the chronology of the meetings that took place, and I've made it very clear that as soon as the minister knew that there were safety concerns, action was taken. Those girders were removed, and they were re-

moved at the cost of the company. They were not removed at the expense of the taxpayers of the province, and that is exactly what should have happened.

If the leader of the third party is suggesting that we would put people's safety at risk, that is just not the case. We acted as soon as we knew there were safety concerns.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier: We on this side of this House have learned to actually rely on the documents, not the word of Liberals.

Documents show that substandard girders and installation of panels is not the only concern that senior ministry engineers have with the parkway. Is the Premier prepared to tell us what other structural problems exist on this parkway?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am very, very pleased the contract that was put in place was designed such that an issue like this could be dealt with in the way that it was. I'm very, very pleased that the safety of the people of Ontario was protected because action was taken as quickly as it was and, quite frankly, that those girders were removed as soon as we knew there was a potential that there was a safety issue.

I would think the leader of the third party should actually agree that it is a very good thing those girders were removed, should agree that before more of them were put in we stopped that process—we stopped the construction so that the testing could be done. Once that testing was done, the girders were removed at the expense of the company, and that's exactly how it should have happened.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Government documents show that senior ministry engineers are concerned about bearings, protection boards, waterproofing and poor mixture of concrete. These are not isolated in one area. These structural deficiencies cover different stretches of the parkway.

Now, what is the Premier prepared to do to ensure the safety of the parkway and the tens of thousands of people on both sides of the border who will be using this road each and every day?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What we are prepared to do—and I think the leader of the third party is bringing forward accusations that are unfounded. What we will do is we will continue to work with the engineers to make sure that at each stage, if there are concerns, we will take action, just as we did with the girders, exactly as we did with the girders. If non-compliance issues transform into safety issues, then we will take action and make sure that the number one priority is the safety of the people of this province, as we did with the girders.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Senior engineers have flagged a variety of structural issues. These are not unfounded accusations. These are senior engineers who have found

these problems, issues including bearings that did not meet code requirements.

Internal correspondence shows, “This situation is not unlike the girders issue. It is true that these bearings are being installed and are not approved.” Bearings are what the bridges on the parkway depend on for their stability.

1100

How can the people of this province trust this government on transit and infrastructure projects worth billions of dollars when this project, a major international border crossing—one that the Premier used to brag about negotiating—has so many serious, serious safety problems?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said, there is nothing more important than the safety of the people of Ontario. So we will continue to work with the experts, with the engineers to make sure that all of the parts that go into the building of the parkway are safe. Ontario has the safest roads in North America. We will continue to make sure that the Herb Gray Parkway is part of that.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that there is going to be a budget introduced tomorrow. I have been trying to get a meeting with the leader of the third party since February, to have a conversation about how we might work together to pass the budget. My hope is that she will agree to meet with me so that we can look at a path forward. I know that the Leader of the Opposition has no interest in working with us, but I hope that we will have an opportunity to meet, because a lot hangs in the balance, including continuing to be able to build infrastructure in this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Premier. Premier, in Saturday’s London Free Press, your Minister of Health claimed that she didn’t know why the Ministry of Health used an irrevocable trust agreement, which would have allowed two Liberal-friendly groups to pocket up to \$40 million—this, despite the fact that she personally signed off on two separate renewals.

I have since learned that this government set up irrevocable trust arrangements in a number of ministries over the past 10 years. Premier, will you immediately order every ministry to disclose how many trusts were created, what organizations ran them and how much taxpayers’ money was involved and possibly pocketed by groups that may be affiliated with the Working Families Coalition?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite is talking about the Nursing Retention Fund. When

we took office, hospitals were running massive deficits, and they were signalling layoffs of nurses as a result of PC cuts. That was unacceptable to us, so we took action to reverse that drain on our nursing workforce. We put strict controls on the funding that was put in place in terms of the Nursing Retention Fund. The Minister of Health has been working to see what we can do to make sure that the Nursing Retention Fund is utilized.

But you know, I think, really, what the member opposite is doing once again is undermining the work of organized labour in the province. That’s really what this is about. We put in place support for keeping nurses in the province. What he wants to do is to undermine that relationship.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Sarnia–Lambton will come to order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Premier, we know that it is extremely unusual to use an irrevocable trust to fund government programs.

This morning, I met with Ontario’s Auditor General in follow-up to my letter requesting that her office immediately launch audits on all irrevocable trusts that this Liberal government has set up and maintained. One of the documents I turned over to the Auditor General is confirmation from a Ministry of Finance official that, over the past 10 years, these types of funds were set up in at least seven government ministries, including the Ministries of Education, Aboriginal Affairs, and Agriculture and Food—three ministries that you know quite well.

Premier, will you confirm this morning that you have never set up or helped maintain an irrevocable trust during your time in cabinet?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Nice.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The point of the Nursing Retention Fund was to make sure—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, that’s what the question is about. It’s about the purpose of setting up such a fund.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I have to take direct action, I will.

Premier, finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: So the—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You must not be qualified to answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

Mr. Mike Colle: How many warnings?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, maybe one.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

In January, the minister met with nursing organizations to talk about how the fund was being managed and to make sure that it could be used in the best way possible to retain nurses. That's what it was about.

The reason the member opposite is asking this question, as far as I can tell, is that he wants to undermine the reputation for competence of these groups. His quote from April 28: "Acting Premier, the most generous possible interpretation of the Nursing Retention Fund boondoggle is that the RNA, RPNAO and ONA are utterly incompetent project managers and cannot be trusted to serve as stewards of taxpayer money."

So, Mr. Speaker, this—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock.

Given some thought, I'm going to ask the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex to withdraw and the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound to withdraw. One at a time, please.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Speaker, Premier Wynne promised that her government would be open and transparent and that her ministers would correspond on government business using official channels, including ministerial email accounts.

Despite the Premier's claims of a more open government, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure regularly corresponds on sensitive ministerial business with senior Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Infrastructure and Infrastructure Ontario staff, as well as government legal counsel, using his Liberal caucus email account.

Why are there no emails at all from the minister's email account regarding the girders as part of the 1,200-page FOI request submitted on August 12 last year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, again, both the minister and I have answered the questions around the chronology of how we took action on the girders. We've answered that question a number of times. I will continue to answer the question.

The primary concern is that the safety of the people of Ontario be protected. The primary concern is the one that motivated the actions. As soon as the minister was aware that there were safety concerns, the construction was stopped, and the girders were tested. The girders were removed at no cost to the people of Ontario, and that is how the system should work.

I would just say that the member is well aware of this, because he was included in the process. He was brought

up to speed. He was part of the discussion with the minister, so he knew all along how the girders were being dealt with, and the safety concerns and the actions that we were taking.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Premier, I've seen the evidence. I've seen the documents; I know what's in there. Don't try to pull that bluff with me.

According to government documents, there are only four email chains that included messages from the minister about the girders between June and August 2013. Four second-hand emails were the only correspondence the minister sent about the girders that we received in the documents included in the FOI request.

Is the Premier telling the people of Ontario that she believes the minister only exchanged four emails about the Herb Gray Parkway while it was going off the rails, or was he purposely concealing public information?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the member opposite is reading the email because he received it through freedom of information. Government business is subject to freedom of information no matter where it takes place.

What I can tell you is that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure was having regular meetings. He was having face-to-face meetings. He was on top of this issue and he was making sure that he understood what the concerns are and he was taking appropriate action.

That's what he was doing. That's why the girders were removed. That's why the safety issues were dealt with. That's why the safety of the people of Ontario is preserved: because of the actions that the minister took, because of the meetings that he was attending.

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As we all know, the Ring of Fire is a historic economic opportunity for northern Ontario, but it's bigger than that. Just like a rising tide raises all boats, the Ring of Fire is going to raise not just the north, not just Ontario, but all of Canada.

That's why it's a shame that the federal Conservatives have completely abrogated all responsibility on this file. But we here, the Liberal government, continue to show leadership.

Minister, I understand that you and our northern colleagues, this past Monday, made a major announcement—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay will come to order.

Carry on. Finish.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I know that the minister and our northern colleagues, this past Monday, made a major announcement regarding the Ring of Fire. Could he please tell us more about that?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to thank the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for the question. Indeed, this past Monday I was very excited to announce, alongside my colleagues the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Natural Resources, that our government is prepared to make a commitment of up to \$1 billion to develop all-season infrastructure in the Ring of Fire.

We are making tremendous progress on this multi-generational project that will not only see benefits for the north but for the entire province and, indeed, for the country. Just this past week, Premier Wynne and I also signed a historic landmark agreement with the Matawa First Nations communities that will not only ensure that the First Nations and the province can work together to advance Ring of Fire opportunities but will also ensure that their communities significantly benefit from Ring of Fire opportunities.

We're very excited about it—a great commitment for the province, but the federal government needs to come in now.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. A billion dollars—wow. If only the federal government was listening. I know that, once this project gets going, it's going to create jobs right in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville. Minister, could you, through the Speaker, tell us how you are driving this project forward?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, my thanks to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville. We're very proud of our government's commitment to this project.

We've said many times in the past that we were prepared to make a very significant investment in Ring of Fire infrastructure. Now that we have announced our financial commitment to the project, we are indeed providing clarity and making incredible progress on this multi-generational project.

In order to maximize the Ring of Fire's potential—not just for the province but for the entire country—we need the federal government to follow through on what they have said many times: This is a project of national significance and national benefit. The expectation we have is that they will be a partner in this project, they will match the dollars that we're committed to paying, and they will help with the two major infrastructure pieces: the industrial park and community access, which is very important to the First Nations.

My focus is to get the federal government on board. If they're on board, this is a better project; it's a bigger project; we're completely—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

MINISTRY GRANTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Premier, the auditor's report on the Ministry of Citizenship's year-end slush fund made it

clear to your government that the availability of grants must be communicated to all potential recipients.

We discovered that, as Minister of Agriculture, you've been giving away year-end grants to hand-picked companies. There was no publicly available application; in fact, companies were only invited to apply because of their relationship with staff in your ministry.

Minister, do you believe that the rules of financial accountability don't apply just because you're trying to get money out before year-end?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually would have expected that the member opposite, a former Minister of Agriculture, would have understood that it's very important that we work with food processors and with the agriculture community to make sure that they can make the investments that are necessary.

The investments that we're making through the Local Food Act—for example, I was at a bakery just on the weekend. The applications had come in. Those grants—I think it's over 60 grants to promote local food and make sure that they have the capacity to grow their enterprise.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know what? These are businesses all over the province. They are businesses that have a wide range, whether it's bakeries or whether it's farmers' markets and local food strategies. All of that promotes local food and allows food processors and food producers to do better in the province. I would think he'd be supportive of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Premier, you must have missed the original question about which grants I'm talking about. Premier, these grants included \$1 million given to a distillery even though their project didn't create a single new job. Over \$6 million went to two companies that had almost completed their building projects on their own.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of the Environment, second time.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This is the worst type of picking winners and losers. Competitors had no idea the grants even existed and couldn't apply. They were reviewed by a panel whose membership isn't public and then approved by you personally.

Premier, at any time during this process of hand-picking, did it occur to you that it was wrong to do it this way?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.
Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite has made a couple of allegations. If he's talking about McLaren's Distillery, that was a grant that was made through the Local Food Fund. If he's talking about Hiram Walker and Sons, \$1 million, that actually did create 10

new jobs. Hiram Walker currently supports Ontario's agriculture sector by purchasing 4.2 million bushels—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The folks who work at Hiram Walker think that's pretty good. The people who work at St-Albert Cheese Cooperative think that's pretty good, too, that they will be able to create 10 new jobs. The people at Thomas Canning, with the \$3-million investment creating 40 new jobs—the people who have those jobs and those companies think that it's a very good thing that they have a government that works with them and is in ongoing conversation with the sector to find those companies that need the support to help them to grow. They think that's a good idea, and I do, too.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier.

In their rush to put casinos in communities that don't even want them, the Liberal government dealt a blow to the horse racing families in Fort Erie and across the province.

The Auditor General's report found that the Liberal government's OLG privatization plan didn't have a clear business case, and they failed to consult communities. The report also points out that the OLG's net profits are down over \$600 million from previous years and that the government doesn't really know what effects cancelling the Slots at Racetracks Program will have on the industry.

Do you continue to stand by your misguided OLG privatization plan that decreased profits, threatened to put casinos in municipalities that didn't want them, and almost destroyed the horse racing industry?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: When I came into this job I made it clear that I was very concerned about the fate of the horse racing industry. The member opposite knows that the Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium has signed a three-year agreement. This is great news for Fort Erie. Jim Thibert said it was a brilliant move.

We have made it clear that investing \$500 million over the next five years to put the horse racing industry on a solid and stable track to sustainability—that is what we will do.

I know that the member opposite really understands that the decisions that were made about Fort Erie were the right ones, that the community was very eager to make sure that these agreements were put in place. They have been, and I'm very pleased that the horse racing industry has a season this year and in the mid- and the long-term will have those seasons.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The horse is out of the barn when it comes to the failed Liberal plan for OLG, and horse racing families are stuck with empty stalls on farms across the province. Even the Auditor General says the government's modernization plan nearly put down the horse racing industry.

Is the government finally ready to apologize to the horse people in Fort Erie and guarantee a long-term future for our historic track?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Exactly what the member opposite is talking about is what I have been working on since we came into office. Since I came into this office, I said that we needed to take a second look at what was happening with the horse racing industry. My predecessor had set up a panel of Elmer Buchanan, John Snobelen and John Wilkinson. We took those recommendations. That's what the \$500 million is about.

I want the horse racing industry to have a bright future. I want the integration of horse racing with gaming in this province. I know that that is a challenging process, but I want the member opposite to know that I am on it. I am working to make sure that integration happens, because that's what will ensure the long-term success of the horse racing industry, if gaming and horse racing can be integrated. You know that's the case and you know that's the way forward.

EDUCATION

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education. We know that Ontario's publicly funded education system stands as one of the best in the world. The progress that we've made is the result of the dedicated work and vision of our government working hand in hand with the education community to create a world-class system.

Recently, the minister engaged with my constituents and many others across the province to reach a consensus on a vision that will carry our province forward. The result of these consultations was recently released in the Renewed Vision document. Can the minister please update this House on the renewed vision?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Ottawa South. Speaker, we do have a lot to be proud of when we look at our accomplishments in education. Over the past 10 years, we've been able to raise the graduation rate from 68% to 83%, and 71% of our children in grades 3 and 6 are meeting the provincial standard. That's up from 54% 10 years ago.

But we know that building on that success—there's more to do. We need to move our system from great to excellent. That is why, on April 9, we released a renewed vision for education in Ontario entitled *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*.

The document outlines our four renewed goals for education: achieving excellence, ensuring equity, student well-being and enhancing public confidence. As the member mentioned, we travelled all over the province and found—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you to the minister for bringing us up to speed on the renewed vision.

It is important for us to continue to look forward on how we can take our system from great to excellent. Excellence is preparing our students to be personally suc-

cessful, economically productive and actively engaged as global citizens.

This renewed vision is about the next 10 years and beyond. We have an opportunity to seize on the progress we have made and build on it to create a brighter future for our children.

Technology has changed the classroom tremendously, impacting the way the students learn and teachers deliver their lessons—directly impacting their job prospects as they graduate.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Can the minister update us on what our government is doing to support the renewed vision in creating a modern, innovative and responsive system?

Hon. Liz Sandals: One of the things we heard in our consultations when we talked to business, post-secondary, not-for-profit agencies and communities was a common theme: the impact technology is playing in our classrooms, especially with younger, digitally native students. So when we looked at our vision, we knew that we had to look at technology—the use of technology.

I was pleased to announce our support for the renewed vision by investing over \$150 million over three years to give learners and educators access to new technology in the classroom. This funding will support improved student achievement through innovative teaching and learning practices. It will help us to take best practice on how to use technology effectively and spread it throughout the province. These—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, the Ontario Energy Board reported tomorrow's hydro rate hike is because of renewables coming on the grid over the next 12 months. Renewable energy producers—including wind, solar and biomass—provide 10% of the total supply of electricity, yet receive 31% of the subsidies that ratepayers must provide in the form of the global adjustment. The total bill for the average customer will be nearly double the Bank of Canada's core inflation forecast.

Minister, the people of Ontario, as well as hospitals, curling clubs, and Royal Canadian Legions, to name a few, cannot afford higher energy rates simply because you refuse to acknowledge your mismanagement of our electricity system. Why are you doing nothing to ensure that Ontarians are able to pay their energy bills and prevent future rate hikes?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I do have some numbers on electricity rates in the province of Ontario. As I've indicated previously, Quebec Hydro annually does a survey in North American cities of electricity prices. At the end of 2013, the last year that they have compiled it—I'll give you the rates: the rate per kilowatt hour in Ottawa, 12.39 cents; Toronto, 12.48 cents; Edmonton, 13.9 cents; Calgary, 14.8 cents; Halifax 15.45 cents.

They often refer to US jurisdictions as having much better competitive rates than we do. In Detroit, it's 15.54 cents, in Boston it's 16.5 cents, and in New York it's 21.75 cents. Our rates are competitive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Clearly, the big Liberal wheel keeps on turning or, more appropriately, spinning. But we need to be serious for a minute.

Back to the minister. On April—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Listen. On April 27—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Listen. On April 27, a small airplane crashed on the site of NextEra Energy's South Dakota Wind Energy Centre, killing all four passengers. This is very, very serious. Four people were killed because they crashed into NextEra's wind project in South Dakota. An Associated Press report notes that one of the wind turbines was in fact damaged. Turbines have been ordered to be taken down around Chatham airport, but nothing has happened. Samsung is throwing money around and wanting to change approaches to the Kincardine airport, yet my letters of concern are not satisfactorily addressed. Collingwood airport is threatened by industrial wind turbines as well, and Peterborough airport has stated that wind turbines are threatening the safety of pilots.

When, Minister, are you going to admit that the siting of industrial wind turbines has not been properly done?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Our renewable process—the Ontario Power Authority has a process. Contracts are awarded, and they go through a process including the REA, or environmental assessment, process. There's an opportunity for all objectors to come before the Ministry of the Environment to review that. Even after that, there's an appeal, and even after that there's a judicial review that's possible.

You know what? There are huge developments that take place across this province for buildings, for real estate developments. They have an appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. They can go to judicial review. The same legal rights that exist for all these other types of developments exist for wind. It's fair, and it's reasonable.

They plan on cancelling 250 contracts. They're going to put the province at risk to \$20 billion in legal claims.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex will come to order.

New question.

1130

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Every time this Liberal government fails to deliver for Ontarians, they just make more announcements and

empty promises. Today in London, they are doing it again on transit. The Premier has promised Londoners high-speed rail, but it's hard to take her seriously because her own ministers can't get their stories straight. The transportation minister has boasted publicly about bullet trains travelling at 320 kilometres per hour, but the education minister says it certainly won't be bullet trains and she honestly doesn't know what her colleague was referring to.

Speaker, will the Premier level with the people of London and let us know which Liberal cabinet minister we should believe?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here is the thing. What we know is that there needs to be better transportation in this province. We know there needs to be transit in all parts of the province, including the corridor from Toronto to London. So the announcement that the minister is making today is a very important one. I know that the connection between Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo, the high-tech hub where OpenText is bringing all those jobs, and then between Kitchener-Waterloo and London—we know that that is a very important corridor for business in this province. So we are making the investment. We are going to work with the private sector. We are going to work with the communities to make sure that those connections are put in place.

What I would like is, I would very much like to be able to have a conversation with the leader of the third party about what parts of the budget, what parts of transit investment, what parts of infrastructure investment she might be willing to support. I haven't been able to have that conversation, but I'm very much looking forward to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: As much as the people of the London community want to believe they will get high-speed rail, they can't seem to trust this Liberal government. Like all Ontarians, they know that empty Liberal promises don't create jobs or provide transit relief. They know that if the Premier was serious about her latest scheme, she would have told us the cost and timeline.

It's time for the government to stop playing games with people's lives in London and start providing real transit relief to families and businesses. When will the Premier admit that she has no idea how much high-speed rail will cost and has no plan to make it happen in London?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have to say, coming from a party that has no plan on building transit, it's pretty rich. If the leader of the—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I would suggest to the member opposite is that she look at the projects that are under way if she wants to look at our reliability in terms of delivering. I would suggest that she go to the Eglinton Crosstown and look at what the boring machine is doing there, look at the progress; look at the progress

on the Union-Pearson rail line; that she look at the York-University line, that she go to Ottawa and look at the work that's being done there, because there is building happening in this province because of our commitments to transit. We will follow through. They don't have a plan. We will make those trains run.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. New question.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Residents in my community of Scarborough Southwest, including myself, are glad to know that our government is committed to protecting our pets and animals from abuse and neglect. Our government created the strongest animal welfare legislation in all of Canada that increased OSPCA agents' ability to inspect and enforce the law. The government also strengthened penalties, including jail up to two years, fines up to \$60,000 and a potential lifetime ownership ban for animal cruelty.

But some of my constituents are concerned that cases of animal cruelty may be going unreported. Can the minister tell us more of what the government is doing to make sure our pets and animals are being protected?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As the proud owner of a dog named Bella, a husky and German shepherd mix—she'll be happy that she's mentioned in Hansard now—I thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for asking a very important question. I want thank my predecessor, the Minister of the Attorney General, for all her hard work on this very important file.

Just last year, our government announced \$5.5 million in annual funding to the OSPCA to enhance their abilities to enforce the OSPCA Act. This funding will help the OSPCA to establish a toll-free 24/7 hotline and centralized dispatch service to report animal cruelty. It will create a team of specially trained investigators whose responsibilities will include cracking down on puppy and kitten mills. Also, it will deliver specialized livestock training for investigators in the agriculture sector, conduct regular inspections of zoos and aquariums and establish and maintain a zoo registry to support twice-yearly inspections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you for that answer, Minister. My family owns three abandoned cats, Buffy—or Buffalino, as I call him—Mishi and Jack. There are a lot of animal lovers in Ontario, and we know that most people take good care of their animals; however, there are troubling instances of abuse and neglect that cannot be tolerated. When someone feels that an animal is in distress, it is important for those people to call the OSPCA.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I think the 24-hour call centre will be an important tool for the OSPCA

agents, as it will enable them to respond to situations of animal abuse and/or neglect in a reasonable time frame. When can we expect the 24-hour call centre to be up and running?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is a very important issue. Protecting our animals and preventing cruelty to animals is very important to all Ontarians, and I'm really proud that the OSPCA made this very important announcement last Monday by launching the 24/7 call centre.

We should be very proud of the fact that we are the first government to provide the support necessary to help launch such an important initiative. Now there is a toll-free, 24-hour phone number available to report suspected animal cruelty.

If you believe that an animal is in distress, call 310-SPCA—that's 310-SPCA—any time of the day; any day of the year. This is just another example of how we are enhancing the responsiveness of investigators to animal welfare complaints for urban, rural and northern communities.

YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question today is to the Premier. There's a gap in the child welfare system that leaves 16- and 17-year-old children who find themselves in need for the first time without access to services. This systemic flaw creates street kids who have increased rates of hospitalization, incarceration and failing in school. These forgotten children under 18 are having their human rights violated under your watch. I'm surprised that, actually, you haven't been sued yet.

Bill 88, the Youth Right to Care bill, closes this service gap and protects our youth. As the self-proclaimed social justice Premier, explain to us why you're stalling third reading of this bill?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you for the question with respect to our youth, with respect to what we are doing to protect our youth and with respect to Bill 88.

Yes, Bill 88 has gone through standing committee and, yes, we've had that discussion. But let me just say very clearly that we've had this discussion many times in terms of what this government is doing in terms of our commitment to our children, in terms of our commitment to vulnerable youth in our community, in terms of listening to our youth and the Youth Leaving Care recommendations that came forward, and everything that we are doing to ensure that they can transition into adulthood and have all the same opportunities that every child has across the province.

In fact, yes, we are committed to our youth, and we will continue to do what we need to do to ensure that all our youth are protected across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Premier, with due respect, this question is for you, because you have the power to make this change. This bill came directly from the children in

care. These came from the Youth Leaving Care hearings two years ago.

You're now responsible for the only jurisdiction in the developed world that neglects these children. I can only draw the conclusion, Premier, that you don't care.

These kids end up getting picked up by high-cost reactionary services eventually: jail, hospital, rehab services or even worse. If they're lucky, they end up on adult welfare.

We need to ensure that every child under 18—full stop—has access to a child welfare system and the best opportunity to succeed in the future. Stop banking on a possible election to save you from acting as the social justice Premier. Do the right thing, right now. Tell us when these youth will become a priority for you—not for your minister, not for your House leader—for you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's have this discussion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late to have somebody leave.

Finish, please.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Mr. Speaker, in terms of the bill coming forward, we know how that works in terms of government House leaders having the discussion about bills coming forward into this House, but let me just talk about some of the stuff that we have done on behalf of those recommendations that came out of that report.

I think everyone knows what we have done. We've raised monthly financial support for our children. We're developing mentorship opportunities. We have new—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, come to order.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: —we have new youth-in-transition workers helping our youth. We have absolutely been listening to our youth, to the recommendations that they have brought forward. We will continue to do so, and we will continue to do what we need to do to protect all our youth.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for York-Simcoe on a point of order.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

My point of order is that I have an overdue order paper question. It's to the Ministry of the Environment: Would the Minister of the Environment please give the status of the cleanup order and other orders to comply that your ministry has issued to the Thane smelter in Georgina in the riding of York-Simcoe?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is my understanding that indeed that is overdue, and I would defer to the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, at the request of one of my favourite members particularly, I would be happy to comply at the very earliest opportunity.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While this process is going on, I would love the members to take a break on the heckling.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Including those who want to do my job.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on a point of order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have a point of order to the Premier: Do you approve of one of your ministers calling one of the members of this Legislature a windbag?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: Speaker, I have to be perfectly honest with you: This guest isn't here, but she is watching. She's approximately four days old. She's my great-niece, and I'd like to welcome Ellie Grace Baldwin to the political world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you to the member from Sudbury for the mystery guest.

Further introduction of guests?

Mr. John O'Toole: I have two introductions today. One of them is here now, so I'd like to introduce Edrick Dunand. Edrick is a very good friend of mine, a constituent, a very successful businessperson. Welcome to Queen's Park; I believe it's your first time. Good luck on your business ventures as well.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JONATHAN JENKINS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want to speak directly to two young children today: Maizey, who is six, and Dexter, who is nine. I want them to know that their dad, Jonathan Jenkins, was a genuinely decent man. He was warm-hearted, he was funny and he was fair.

Maizey and Dexter, I know what it's like to lose a dad, but I don't know what it's like to lose a dad at your age. That's why MPPs and press gallery journalists want to share stories and our memories with you.

One of my favourite stories is how your dad ended up taking over John Tory's chair after Mr. Tory left this Legislature. Antonella Artuso says that big, awkward red leather chair is the most uncomfortable in the Sun bureau, but your dad won it fair and square after a hard-

fought negotiation with the CTV bureau here. Antonella said your dad looked like the crown prince of Queen's Park when he sat in that chair.

He was also the barefooted Winnipeg Jets-loving drummer who organized Newzapalooza. He organized it to support children's aid societies and raise some money for them.

But his love, Maizey and Dexter, was reserved for the two of you and your mom, Nancy. He talked about you all the time. Your pictures were all over his desk and all over his office. He would do anything for you, and he would drop everything for you.

As you grow older, Maizey and Dexter, I want you to know that there's a Pink Palace where there once worked a crown prince journalist. It's filled with people: journalists, MPPs, civil servants and political staff. They have a lot of great stories for you, and you're welcome to visit us in this chamber anytime to hear them.

MOOSE TAGS

Mr. John Vanthof: The Ministry of Natural Resources has just announced that moose tags will be cut by 18% across the province. In some areas, like wildlife management unit 28, commonly known as the Kirkland Lake unit, tags have been cut from 457 to 30, a staggering 93%.

According to the ministry's website, unit 28 faces more hunting pressure than any other area in the province. Considering that fact, one would suppose that this unit would merit at least standard attention from the MNR, but that has not been the case. The aerial moose count on which current tag numbers are based was carried out this January. Moose counts should be conducted every three years, but counts have not been conducted in this unit for five. A timely count could have identified problems before numbers dropped to crisis levels.

Quoting the MNR website: "We conduct scientific research and apply the findings to develop effective resource management policies." That is hard to believe when the ministry can't even conduct regular moose counts. Has the budget at the ground level been gutted so badly that basic wildlife management can no longer be carried out?

We have waited years for the promised MNR moose management plan, dubbed the moose project. In unit 28, it could soon be called the moose reintroduction project.

When will the minister release the report, and, more importantly, will the current government ever give northern wildlife management the resources that it needs?

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of l'Académie Alexandre-Dumas in Scarborough–Guildwood.

C'était une ouverture très réussie.

Some 1.4% of the people of my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood claim French to be their first language, and I'm so proud of this government's investment in French education for Franco-Ontarians.

Une éducation française est importante pour la préservation de l'histoire ontarienne et canadienne.

It was a privilege to join Principal Robert Beaudin and the wonderfully talented young people at this school during constituency week. I even had the honour of watching a performance of *The Three Musketeers* by the students, in honour of the school's namesake.

Investments like this one in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, as well as investments that are being made across the province, are part of our strength as a province, et rendent la province de l'Ontario plus dynamique et diversifiée.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Ms. Laurie Scott: I rise in the Legislature today to speak again about the review of the OPP billing process, which was supposed to bring clarity to a complicated formula, but it seems we are no closer to a fix. I've heard from property owners from across my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who expressed their deep concern with increasing policing costs and the proposed new OPP billing model.

In Haliburton county, which will be devastated by this new model, they will see their collective annual policing costs rise from \$3.3 million to approximately \$8.5 million, equating to tax increases between 20% and 36%. Families in Haliburton are already falling behind, with one of the lowest average household incomes in the province.

Out of 300 municipalities serviced by the OPP, 190 would see cost increases under the new formula. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario has failed to look out for the 190 who will see increases in their police costs, with no increase in service. Many municipalities, like those in my riding, simply cannot absorb such significant cost increases from the provincial government without causing serious hardship to property owners. For over a month, my requests for meetings between the county of Haliburton and the new Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services have gone unanswered.

Haliburton county is ready to act and has orchestrated a day of action for tomorrow, May 1. OPP May Day urges residents to bring the message directly to the government here at Queen's Park with phone calls and emails and to taking to Twitter with the hashtag #OPPMayday.

JAKOB BEACOCK

Ms. Catherine Fife: Earlier this month, my community lost a young boy. Jakob Beacock was 13. He was a cherished son, respected friend and a proud member of the minor bantam Waterloo Ice Wolves.

Jakob was a spirited "I've got your back" kind of hockey player. He was well liked by all his friends. He was deeply loved by his family. Jakob was a good kid.

He was struck down by an appendicitis-related illness. During his illness, and later when he was on life support, this community rallied around him and his family. Jakob's grandmother was quoted as saying, "I can't believe all the support. It does our hearts good, all this positive love."

When his family lost Jakob, his parents, Pam and Dan, with the support of Trillium Gift of Life, made the courageous decision to donate some of Jakob's organs. All that positive love that his family and friends shared with him over the course of his young life lived on through organ donation. His lungs and eyes were donated, and his heart went to a little boy. We know of four people who now have hope in their lives.

1510

I can tell you that as our community mourned with the Beacock family, many people commented that the thought of organ donation was of great comfort to them, and it was also an opportunity to talk openly and honestly about the need for more organ donation.

April is donor month. One organ donor can save up to eight lives. Currently, there are 1,500 people waiting for organ donations.

The entire community in Kitchener-Waterloo sends the Beacock family their love and prayers.

Jakob's memorial was truly a celebration of life filled with love and happiness, and at the memorial, his dad told me that Jakob would have wanted his organs donated. So not only did his family honour his wishes; they also honoured his life. That is the power of organ donation.

LOCAL FOOD

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Today I bring good news from my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. This past Saturday, I was joined by the Minister of Agriculture and Food, Premier Wynne, in Scarborough to highlight the Local Food Fund. This program promotes and offers support to local businesses. More importantly, it supports companies that use locally grown ingredients.

The Local Food Fund is a key component of this government's broader local food strategy to promote the good things that are grown, harvested and made across the province. With this funding support, food processing companies are able to grow and expand their operations while offering Ontarians more choices for tasty and locally made foods.

Stonemill Bakehouse, which is located in the centre of Scarborough–Rouge River, uses their support funding to create healthy, great-tasting artisan breads, including their new Prince Edward county rye. Specifically, the funding from the Local Food Fund will help Stonemill Bakehouse market and increase distribution of its new Prince Edward county rye bread across the province, expand the use of rye grown in Prince Edward county in

its other breads, strengthen their supply chain with Prince Edward county farmers and challenge other retailers, bakeries and farmers to establish local food supply chains.

Speaker, the products from Stonemill Bakehouse are not only healthy for you, but they're healthy for our local economy.

Supporting the agri-food industry goes to providing business opportunities for farmers across the province, while providing local jobs in places like Scarborough–Rough River.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Last Friday, I visited EFS-plastics in Listowel, along with our energy critic, the member from Nepean–Carleton. She has shown tremendous energy in this role, and I want to thank her for listening to us in Perth–Wellington when this government would not. I especially want to thank Martin Vogt, president of EFS-plastics, for hosting us and sharing his experience with this government's failed energy policies.

EFS-plastics has one of the most modern plastic recycling and reprocessing systems in North America. The company is an environmental leader and supports many jobs in our area. Mr. Vogt told us that this government's high-cost energy policies are putting a brake on expansion and a brake on investment with respect to his own company and many others.

EFS-plastics currently pays around \$80,000 a month on hydro. Five years ago, its bills were half that amount. If this facility was located in Quebec or New York, the company could save up to \$350,000 a year on energy costs. That is a staggering number, and it effectively tells investors and manufacturers to stay away from Ontario.

Even worse, there is no relief in sight—at least as long as this government remains in power; recent announcements by the Minister of Energy would confirm that.

Skyrocketing energy prices are making our manufacturers less competitive—they have told us so. High prices are costing our businesses large and small.

Shame on this government for playing political games with hydro in this province.

COMMUNITY LEADERS IN DURHAM REGION

Mr. Joe Dickson: Unfortunately, there have been a number of community leaders in Durham region who have passed away recently.

Henry Tillaart Sr., the founder of Dutchmaster Nurseries in north Pickering, passed away in March. He was a devout, hard-working man, and the family continues as a large employer and vibrant business today.

Gerry Armstrong, founder of Armstrong Homes and inductee of the Home Builders Hall of Fame, as well as the past president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, passed in April. I knew him well. He was most generous and, above all, he was a great family man.

And, unfortunately, one of our great leaders, the vibrant Irishman, the Honourable Jim Flaherty from Whitby—my wife and I were among the thousands who attended the final respects for Jim in Whitby, and all of us here, of course, attended the very beautiful ceremony as part of his funeral.

Most recently, though, I'm heartbroken at the loss of a very great friend, Mr. Ron Halliday. As a matter of fact, my colleague Bas Balkissoon just reminded me that he had a 25-year friendship with him.

Ron worked with Cougs Investments and Coughlan Homes in Ajax, but his legacy is defined by his always-generous charitable work throughout the entire Durham region.

I first met Ron when I was a councillor in Ajax in 1983. He was a butcher, a farmer, but someone who had—

Interruption.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I apologize. That's mine, and I—

Interruption.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I think Ron Halliday just turned my BlackBerry on.

He worked with the principal at Cougs Investments, Jerry Coughlan, to create one of the most beautiful facilities in my area and all of Durham region, the Deer Creek golf and country club, with 54 holes of golf—as well as the Deer Creek community, and homes throughout all of Durham region.

As well as being an environmentalist, Ron was a supporter of some of the great causes in Durham: the Ajax Bomb Girls campaign from the war effort; the Durham West arts association, our Sunny Days for Conservation group; our most beloved Ajax and Pickering hospital; and the Abilities Centre in Whitby, where he was a director on the board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wrap, please.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Christine Elliott and Jim Flaherty had done such great work to bring that centre to Whitby.

To give this House an example of Ron's generosity—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wrap, please.

Mr. Joe Dickson: In 2005, my wife and I attended the wedding, and they simply wanted a donation, to make a large contribution to the hospital.

Our sympathy to his wife, Carol; Ron's children, Kathy, Robert, Dennis, Sherry-Lee, Danette and Ashley; and Ron's two grandchildren, Jennifer and Joseph.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of these gentlemen, I want to tell you—please, may they rest in peace. They all had big hearts and souls.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to first introduce constituents of mine, Jim and Lorraine McEwen. Welcome to Queen's Park. Jim is a stroke survivor, and my statement is about post-stroke physiotherapy treatment.

I rise to make this government aware of how they are treating stroke patients in Ontario today. The constituent who I've just introduced suffered a major stroke in 2010

and spent some time in hospital receiving physiotherapy before being discharged. He needed additional therapy then, as close as possible to the stroke event, to have a complete and more fulsome recovery.

Since then, Mr. McEwen has been forced to pay thousands of dollars out of his pocket for the additional physiotherapy sessions, in hopes that he can return to work. Mr. McEwen wants to continue to work as a very skilled and successful engineer. He wants to contribute to Ontario.

On occasions, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has denied extending OHIP coverage to Mr. McEwen—and thousands of patients like him—because of his age. The minister has stated that OHIP-funded physiotherapy treatment is only available to those under 19 and over 65. Mr. McEwen was 55 at the time of his stroke in 2010, at the height of his career, and is now 59 years young, meaning Jim and his family must struggle for another six years before OHIP funding will be available to him.

Jim's wife, Lorraine, has been his strength and his courage for many years. Mr. McEwen and his family simply cannot afford to wait another six years in the hope that they will once again be eligible for OHIP funding.

We need to take action today to close this gap and provide OHIP funding for post-stroke patients for additional physiotherapy treatments. It's the right thing to do, and I ask the government today to do it.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1474486 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2014

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr32, An Act to revive 1474486 Ontario Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

1520

MADE IN ONTARIO MATTERS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'IMPORTANCE DE LA FABRICATION EN ONTARIO

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 193, An Act to require the disclosure of the country of origin of motor vehicles and their components sold in Ontario / Projet de loi 193, Loi exigeant la divulgation du pays d'origine des véhicules automobiles vendus en Ontario et de leurs pièces.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The bill requires advertisers and persons or bodies that sell or offer to sell new motor vehicles in Ontario to clearly indicate in the advertising and sales contracts the country in which the vehicle and its constituent components were produced and the proportion in which each of the components makes up the vehicle.

Sellers are also required to clearly indicate the information on motor vehicles that are delivered to purchasers. It is an offence to contravene the requirements.

Essentially, in today's changing society, it's important to inform individuals where vehicles are coming from, and that's exemplified in the bill's short title, which is, Made in Ontario Matters.

PETITIONS

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

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

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I agree with this petition, I'll affix my signature and I'll send it to the table with one of my favourites, Zahra.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to present this petition on behalf of Mennonite Savings and Credit Union.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers’ resources;

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

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario’s economy and create jobs in three ways:

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I am pleased to affix my signature and give this to page Victoria.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have an important petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the construction industry is a major economic driver, providing jobs for more than 400,000 Ontario workers, accounting for almost 6.5% of overall employment; and

“Whereas all contractors, including subcontractors, are frequently hindered in their ability to create jobs, contribute to apprenticeship growth, meet payroll, tax, WSIB, pension, employer health tax, and health and welfare benefit obligations, and stimulate the Ontario economy by slow or delinquent payments, in many cases by several months and more than double than any other sector; and

“Whereas hundreds of thousands of Ontario construction workers rely on being paid promptly in order to meet their own financial obligations; and

“Whereas no other industry anywhere in Canada tolerates this type of delinquent payment practice; and

“Whereas the United Kingdom, Ireland, European Union, Australia, New Zealand, 31 US states for private sector projects and 49 US states for public sector projects all have prompt payment legislation in place for the construction industry;

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

“To pass into law the Prompt Payment Act, 2013, otherwise known as Bill 69, immediately.”

I’ll send this with page Ethan.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from M^{me} Ginette Lefebvre de Lively et Ron Bradley de Chelmsford, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to “mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the Ontario government has raised minimum wage by 50% since 2003 and will increase it to \$11, the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada, on June 1;

“Whereas both families and businesses in Ontario deserve a fair and predictable approach to setting the minimum wage;

“Whereas indexing minimum wage to CPI is supported by business, labour and anti-poverty groups from across Ontario as the best way to achieve that;

“Whereas indexing ensures minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living, providing fairness for workers and their families and predictability for businesses to plan and stay competitive;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 165, Fair Minimum Wage Act, 2014.”

I fully support the petition and give my petition to Emma.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O’Toole: I read this petition today on behalf of my constituent Mr. Jim McEwen, who composed this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of 20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

“Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible” and to maybe return to work and become productive citizens and taxpayers in Ontario;

“Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving

additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

“Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians,” perhaps baby boomers, “to wait until age 65 to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

“Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs” and potentially sell their home to raise funds to pay for their therapy;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment” policies.

1530

I call on the minister to endorse this, and I sign it, endorse it and send it to the table with Ashley.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Ethan, who will bring it down to the Clerks.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to ‘provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.’ RSO 1990, c. E.19, s. 3.; and

“Whereas ‘all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.’—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

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

“That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present the petition. I will affix my signature to it.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas escalating rental costs are making Ontario less affordable and leaving many tenants financially insecure or falling into poverty;

“Whereas tenants living in residential apartments and condominiums built after 1991 are not protected within the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) by rent control guidelines, nor are they protected from other arbitrary changes to their rent which currently cannot be appealed to the Landlord and Tenant Board;

“Whereas this has created an unfair two-tier system of tenant protection in Ontario, where some tenants have no protection from large and arbitrary increases;

“Whereas removing these simple exemption loopholes in the RTA law will help protect tenants and help make housing more affordable and secure for thousands of Ontarians;

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

“That the province of Ontario acts to protect all tenants in Ontario and immediately move to ensure that all Ontario tenants living in buildings, mobile home parks and land-lease communities are covered by the rent control guidelines in the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and give this petition to Gabriel.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition.

“Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of 20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

“Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible to maybe return to work ... ;

“Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

“Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians to wait until age 65 to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

“Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs and/or sell their houses to raise funds;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment practices.”

I affix my signature and pass it to page Ashley.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over northeastern Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas, since October 2009, insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of” the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Victoria to bring it to the Clerk.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the infant and child development program funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is severely underfunded in Northumberland county and is placing the services to infants and children whose development is at risk in jeopardy;

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

“To restore appropriate funding levels to the infant and child development program for Northumberland county to ensure that infants and children whose development is at risk are receiving services comparable to other jurisdictions in the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, and I'll affix my name to it.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again, these petitions just keep coming into my office.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Brendan to bring it down to the Clerks.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

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

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

LONG-TERM CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further petitions? The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. You're most generous with me today—very appreciated.

I have this petition that comes from all over, but mainly around Shelburne. It reads as follows:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes and hospitals; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently they don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes and one of two without oversight of hospitals...”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes and hospitals in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The time for petitions has passed.

MEMBERS’ PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, the member from Timmins–James Bay, Mr. Bisson, submitted a notice of his intention to raise a point of privilege. The notice alleges that the answers made in Monday’s question period by the Minister of Transportation to a question about a construction project were deliberately misleading and therefore a contempt of the House. After serious consideration, I am now prepared to rule on the matter without hearing further from the member, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

In his notice, the member contends that part of the minister’s answer was at variance with the ministry’s documents in the member’s possession, which were released pursuant to a freedom-of-information request. The so-called McGee test for determining whether a statement by a member has deliberately misled the House was set out in a ruling I made yesterday.

1540

In yesterday’s ruling, I also made reference to the ruling by Speaker Carr on June 17, 2002, which I think bears on this matter.

“The threshold for finding a prima facie case of contempt against a member of the Legislature on the basis of deliberately misleading the House is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon. It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct, independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable members would engage in such behaviour or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake.”

Because he is not relying on the McGee test for this case, the member for Timmins–James Bay is instead effectively asserting that the documents he provided me represent, as Speaker Carr put it, “tangible confirmation of the conduct independently proved.” As a corollary for the McGee test, this information would have to be of a

quality at least as high as that required to meet the McGee test itself; that is, it would have to be completely unambiguous, irrefutable proof of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature.

I accept that the member holds the strong view that the freedom-of-information documents do achieve this. But even he states in his submission that the documentation “suggests” certain discussions occurred. A suggestion is not proof.

For my part, in order to concur, I would have to make many large assumptions and inferences about what was discussed under certain agenda items at the meetings referred to in some of the documents provided to me, and even who was at those meetings. None of the material in any of the documents points to an intentional and direct contradiction of what the Minister of Transportation has said in this House.

With respect to the member from Timmins–James Bay, I must conclude that the case at hand amounts to a disagreement as to fact, something the Speaker cannot resolve. I appreciate that members often hold divergent views and interpretations on issues that are the subject of questions or debate. If so, the matter can be pursued, as has occurred in this case, in question period and other parliamentary proceedings. It is not a matter of contempt.

For the reasons indicated, a prima facie case of contempt has not been established.

I do thank the member from Timmins–James Bay for his notice.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

YOUTH SMOKING PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DU TABAGISME CHEZ LES JEUNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 131, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It’s a pleasure to rise in the House and talk about Bill 131, the Youth Smoking Prevention Act.

Speaker, there are a number of things that should be brought to light in this debate, and my colleagues in my party certainly have addressed quite a few of these.

In the bill summary, it says that the bill would prohibit smoking on playgrounds, sports fields, restaurants and bar patios.

I think most of us were around when smoking was allowed in bars. Whether you were a smoker or a non-smoker in a bar, it could be a very dangerous place to be. It would make your eyes water. It certainly added to a certain aroma that would be found in a bar or restaurant, and usually it stank that bad that you didn’t want to be

there after a while. However, it was an accepted part of society that smoking be allowed in these places.

I know that the changes to the legislation that prohibited these types of actions were welcomed by both smokers and non-smokers because it created an environment that was healthier and certainly more pleasurable to be in.

The Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association has raised concerns about outdoor patios and that it might have an effect on their businesses, and I can understand where they're coming from. I'm certainly not well versed enough or haven't studied this well enough to say whether it would have an adverse effect on their business or any effect on their business, but they do raise concerns over this part of the legislation.

I know from some places that some people attend, I've been told, there is outdoor smoking on some of the patios. I myself haven't heard a complaint from anyone as long as the people who are smoking are far enough away from the doorways and don't bother you. In fact, I've even seen people who have gone out there who don't smoke and ask some people who are smoking if they wouldn't mind putting their cigarettes out. It's been my experience that people are genuinely interested in doing that and do actually agree to put their cigarettes out because they are bothering other patrons.

I think it's part of society now that we do know the adverse effects of smoking. We do know that people who don't smoke but who have to be around or are forced to be around smoking certainly can get a disease from it, and I specifically talk about cancer and other diseases. It's perfectly legal to smoke in this country, but smokers by and large don't want to, as I say, force their habit on someone else. People are getting to be more educated that way and certainly want to not infringe what they're doing on somebody else. I think that's something that people certainly do.

I do have some reservations about this not smoking on patios, because I think, properly guided, the owners of the bars can certainly set up places where it's not going to be a bother to people who don't smoke. I also say, people who do smoke seem to understand that it does bother other people and will put out their smokes if somebody complains about it.

I think that the next thing I would like to talk about is the doubling of fines for those who sell tobacco to youths. These fines would be the highest in Canada. Fines are an interesting thing. Sometimes they work, and sometimes they don't. In fact, I know from years ago that some people would take the chance on paying the fine because they were making too much money doing the illegal part, so I don't know whether this is something that will help. Certainly, it's scary to have to pay that much money if you happen to get caught selling tobacco to people you're not supposed to be selling tobacco to. I think it's up in the air whether that is going to do a lot of good.

I would suggest that there are a number of illegal smoke shops in this province that probably need to be

tended to a lot sooner than later on the sale of illegal tobacco. There seems to be a resistance of this government to ask the proper officials to do this. I think we all know we're talking about rollie cigarettes. I think that's what they call them. You can buy bagfuls of them. It is illegal to sell these tobacco products to just anybody; however, it's not a hard thing to do. Any one of us can drive by some of these places, see the hole in the fence, walk in and purchase these things, and nothing probably will be done about it. I think there are some issues of selling illegal tobacco in this province that should be targeted a little bit more.

I know some of my friends in my riding of Perth–Wellington, where we have coffee, who happen to sell cigarettes too. They're pretty cautious on who they will sell a pack of cigarettes to, because they do know they can lose the privilege of selling these things, for one thing, and lose part of their income, plus the fines are involved. So I've seen them asking for proof of age from young people that I know are old enough to legally buy these items. They're pretty cautious in what they do.

1550

I think we really have to look seriously at the sale of contraband cigarettes in the province of Ontario. And it should be done sooner than later, because if you enforce one part of the law, such as convenience store owners or gas stations and keep going after them all the time, in effect, it increases the business of contraband cigarettes. That's the way it works. If people want to smoke or have any habit, whether it be drugs or tobacco, if you cut off the supply over here and you don't cut it off over there, they're going to get it anyway. We need to focus on both sides of this equation. I don't know exactly why there is a reluctance on the part of this government—we've seen this going on for years—to crack down on this type of thing.

I remember one of the first interviews I gave to a local radio station in Wingham, CKNX, and a caller called in. My friend from Huron–Bruce was there that day, and we both didn't have a very good answer for this question. A guy called in and he said, "What about banning cigarettes altogether, completely cut them off from Ontario?" We didn't see that work very well during Prohibition. I never thought of it that day, but I think if people want to do something bad enough, there will be a way of doing these things.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It drives it underground.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Everything drives it underground. We've seen that Prohibition didn't work back in the 1920s and early 1930s. In fact, they repealed the Volstead Act because of that. There were too many people making a lot of money, and some of them were on our side of the border. I'm sure the Speaker would probably know who they were. But it just didn't work. You just can't do those things and expect people to conform to them.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: They're doing that now; they're going to raise taxes on cigarettes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I know this government is talking about raising taxes on cigarettes, which I don't

really have an issue with. It's something that people want that they don't need.

Anyway, this act would also ban the sale of flavoured tobacco products targeted at kids, to make smoking less appealing to young people. That's a good thing; I think it's something that needs to be done. I, personally, have never seen a flavoured cigarette. I don't know whether they taste like bubble gum or strawberries, or what they do. However, smoking is a habit, and once you get into the habit of having something in your hands all the time and putting it in your mouth—I'm sure that the flavoured cigarettes are something that can promote smoking to kids. That's something that I'm glad that this legislation looks at.

This bill would also prohibit tobacco sales on post-secondary education campuses and specified provincial government properties. I don't know why it doesn't have all provincial government properties but just specified ones. Again, you're opening up, maybe, a can of worms here where you are allowed to do something over on this side of the street and not on that side of the street. I think that's something that, if this bill gets to committee—and I'm sure it will—should be looked at rather strongly.

There's a section in the act, too, that—I think any government has to be very, very careful when they increase the powers of their employees to do things. What I'm talking about is that it says, "Subject to subsection (4), for the purpose of determining whether this act is being complied with, an inspector may, without a warrant, and at any reasonable time, enter and inspect..." Powers are being increased to inspectors, which can be dangerous. It can be dangerous.

We've seen this with different agencies with this government. I've specifically talked about OSPCA, where in my riding there were some hardships on a number of farmers who were doing what they had always done. They were raising their animals. They had always taken animals that probably wouldn't make it to market but there was some value to them and gotten them slaughtered at the local butcher. In fact, one fellow was giving the meat away to charity and was subject to over-ambitious inspectors.

Like I said, this man is my age or maybe a little younger. He had done this all his life on his hog farming operation and was put through a court—he didn't go to court. He decided to pay the fine because he was so upset. He didn't want his neighbours, he didn't want the people in the city communities, reading about a court case because he was quite embarrassed about the whole thing. But he shouldn't have been embarrassed. It was a matter, in my opinion and I think the opinion of a lot of people, of too much power given to someone in the civil service who maybe didn't have the proper education to make the judgment call as to whether this farmer was doing things in an improper way.

I can remember from my own farming experience that not every animal is going to make it. I mean, animals die or they have something wrong with them where they can't make it to market, so we would try to get something

out of them, whether they were used for barbecue pigs or whatever.

So I see this section here about how they can enter places without a warrant at any reasonable time and inspect. I think these people should have—I know the police use a term called "reasonable and probable grounds" to enter a place. In fact, most police have to get a warrant on reasonable and probable grounds if something is going on. I wonder if that should be a part of the act that is strengthened a little bit. It's one thing to suspect there's an illegal activity, but just to go kick a door down or demand to enter a premise because you think something is happening, and have the authority to do that, to me, is dangerous.

I would suggest that if and when this gets to committee—I'm sure it will at some point—this should be strongly looked at. It should be very strongly looked at.

My son is a police officer, as his wife is, too. I know that the amount of paperwork and proof that they have to have to execute or even to get a judge to sign a search warrant is quite extensive.

Like I say, I don't want someone who has the powers that are suggested here to get into trouble, and I certainly don't want the proprietor of a premise to get into trouble either, because he thinks that maybe this person is acting illegally. So I would suggest that that section, 4(2), be looked at rather seriously before we give anybody any more power than we are giving them now.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Sorry?

I'm sorry, Speaker. I don't know what they're talking about. Anyway, I'll continue on.

Mr. Michael Prue: You're like the rest of us. We never know what you're talking about.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: We're in good company, aren't we?

There's another thing here that's interesting. I used to do a bit of trucking for a living, and I know they have changed the rules on smoking in vehicles now. If you own your own truck, you can smoke in your own vehicle. If you drive for a company, you're prohibited from smoking in that vehicle. I can remember, I was just a part-time driver and I used to travel the Midwest. I'd go out there once in a while. I used to go to Quebec and out west in Canada, hauling livestock. So I drove other people's trucks all the time. It was interesting. The guys who had no smoking in their trucks would have a sign right on their window: "Don't smoke in the truck." For the other guys who smoked in the trucks, it was an issue. Even the guys who smoked had problems driving in the trucks of guys who smoked because of the smell in there and the other health issues involved.

1600

Society has changed over the years. I think we can all remember back to when the tobacco wars were going on in the United States a few years ago and the big tobacco companies were fighting the medical establishment over whether cigarettes caused cancer. There was all kinds of money spent during those wars, or I call them wars. I

don't think there's any doubt in anybody's mind that this is not a great thing to do.

I perceive this as an act to improve what we've been doing already—I think it is—and I do believe that we will certainly like to see this get to committee, but strengthen it up a little bit, especially with some of the things I'm talking about.

The sale of promotional items is always an issue with any product. We want to be honest with what the product does or what it could do, and I know that in this country especially, cigarettes are advertised in a not very flattering manner, which is fine. If you go to the United States, it's a different program they have over there.

I have seen an increase in smoking on television. I have seen an increase in smoking in movies. That was pretty much banned a few years ago. They never did it. Actors didn't want to be accused of helping to promote something that wasn't good for the populations of their countries. I don't understand why they have started to allow this again or why movie productions or TV are allowing this to happen again, because they are receiving some criticism over it. I can understand that.

Like I say, some of the points in this bill, with the flavoured tobacco products—we've got to stop that business. Doubling fines for selling tobacco to youth and also making a real effort to look after the contraband tobacco that is being sold in this province are some of the things that I would like to see done when we're dealing with this product.

It has been an honour to stand here on behalf of our party and our leader, Tim Hudak, to talk about this bill. I know that all the members of our party, when it comes to these types of things, will support legislation of this kind. I would like to see some of the points I've made brought up in committee, and maybe we can strengthen the bill a little bit more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I was listening to the member from Perth–Wellington. I think what's really key in this entire debate about smoking as it relates to Bill 131, the Youth Smoking Prevention Act, is the prevention piece, because the evidence in the research is very clear around nicotine addiction. The smartest money, the smartest investment, the smartest strategy, is to prevent people from getting addicted.

I think there is some very conclusive research, also, that shows that flavoured cigarettes has great appeal for youth. I have two teenagers in my home. Their interest is piqued by a flavoured cigarette. There's a genuine curiosity about that. I think we've known, from past practices, as the member from Perth–Wellington has identified, that the addictive qualities of cigarettes are, some people say, even more addictive than heroin—which makes sense that we would actually have a smoking cessation strategy in the province of Ontario, which would be effective. It's a smart investment to get people less addicted and hopefully to stop smoking.

When I was a teenager in Cape Breton—I've always wanted to say that, but it actually is true—you could go

down to the corner store and you could buy a single cigarette for 15 cents. So many youth in Sydney, Nova Scotia, became addicted to smoking because they could buy single cigarettes for 15 cents. They couldn't afford a whole pack, but they could go down and buy a single.

We know that this age group is incredibly susceptible and easily influenced, so I think that this piece of legislation is incredibly important.

I want to commend the member from Nickel Belt for championing this cause for so long. It's good to see the piece of legislation that's before us, and we will make it better, as well, because that's what we do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Oak Ridges–Markham?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It's certainly a pleasure to rise to make a few comments on the remarks from the member for Perth–Wellington. Bill 131 is a very important amendment to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which, of course, our government introduced a number of years ago. It builds on that and continues this war against tobacco.

It has a number of very important provisions, as it is, of course, going to ensure that there is no sale of promotional items together with tobacco products. The sale of flavoured tobacco products is prohibited. Then, of course, it goes into the powers of the inspector.

I want to assure the member for Perth–Wellington that these inspectors are public health inspectors. They have been specially trained as provincial offences officers. They know exactly how to ensure that reasonable and probable grounds are used before there is any power of entry that is in fact utilized.

Having been a former medical officer of health and having had jurisdiction in this particular area of ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards for business, as well as the duty to protect the public—this is an important balancing of those two important criteria when an inspector goes into a premise, and I have every confidence that our health units are going to be able to ensure that the public interest is preserved in this way.

It's important that we move this to committee. I think all parties are no doubt going to support this piece of legislation, and I urge us to move it forward as expeditiously as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's always a pleasure to sit and listen to my fine seatmate from Perth–Wellington, Mr. Pettapiece. He's doing a great job here at Queen's Park, and I know the people in his riding are very happy with the work he's doing here.

Obviously, we do have—I think my seatmate made these observations—some real issues, but again, this bill, on the whole, in theory, is a good bill.

What we should be focusing on is the point that inspectors can go onto your property without warrant. I personally have some concerns about that, and that's one section of the act that I think many people would be very concerned about. There's a due process that we expect

here in a democracy like Canada, especially when it comes to personal rights, freedoms and property rights. To allow this section of the act to pass—I think we would be remiss to say that that would be acceptable.

The other point that my seatmate raised was the contraband, the illegal cigarettes that are in these smoke shops throughout the province. This government has not done its due diligence to enforce the illegal contraband and trade of cigarettes in the province of Ontario. What kind of fair and just society are the Liberals actually trying to establish when they don't even enforce the laws and regulations of the land?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, it's wonderful to stand. I listened very closely to the comments that my colleague from Perth–Wellington provided to this bill.

I have a personal problem with this entire issue. I quit smoking, I would say about 19 years ago. As a father, I'm no-holds-barred with my boys. I sit down with them and I talk to them on a consistent basis. You know, you try to tell them the facts of life, and you try to explain things as they are. You relate it to your personal issues. I've suffered a lot of family losses due to cancer, and we can directly relate it back to smoking cigarettes.

1610

When I see these candy-flavoured products that are out there—and there is so much pressure on our kids and youth that are out there today that this just pulls them in just a little bit more. A couple of weeks ago, I think all of us in this House received a variety of what these candy cigarillos look like, or these candy cigarettes or tobacco that are available to these kids, and it's so easy for them to fall into that trap.

I have to say that I'm dealing with that particular situation right now, and I'm hoping it's through good discussions that I'm having with one of my boys that we'll be able to turn him and bring him back on the right path. It is so easy for these kids, especially with today's society, that they fall to that peer pressure and they just stray.

I think it's up to us as parents to try and provide that information to our kids, but also as politicians to make sure that the right regulations are there, the right policies are there, and that we have the right education so that we can provide that information to our kids.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from Perth–Wellington has two minutes.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I want to thank my colleagues in this House from Kitchener–Waterloo, Oak Ridges–Markham, Northumberland–Quinte West—who is always a pleasure to sit by—and Algoma–Manitoulin.

I would like address something that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham stated about reasonable grounds. If you read the bill, it says that “an inspector ... without a warrant, and at any reasonable time....” It says nothing about reasonable and probable grounds. I think that's something that should be looked at very seriously, and that's why I brought it up.

I don't have an issue with inspectors doing their job, but, gosh, we could get into all kinds of trouble if we give too much power to people. They need to have that kind of—I wouldn't call it restraint, but I think they have to have guidelines, that they must have good, reasonable and probable grounds to go into any premises. I would certainly ask for that if somebody was wanting to come into my house or my business. They better have a good reason for being there. Certainly, I think that should be looked at in the act.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West raised—

Interjection: The fine member.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The fine member—raised the issue of smoke shops. We've got to get this stuff under control. We are not going to be doing our job if we don't do that.

To the member from Algoma–Manitoulin: That's why they make these flavoured things; they make them sellable. That's what companies do. They make it easy for purchase of these things, and unfortunately, they make things easy for our most vulnerable in this whole issue.

So, again, Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to join the debate on this particular issue, Bill 131, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and in its short name, it's known as the Youth Smoking Prevention Act.

I have 20 minutes ahead of me, and there's so much to speak about. I appreciate the comments from my colleague and neighbour from Perth–Wellington. He's hit so many topics square on the head of the nail, but I also need to acknowledge and share some appreciation of our entire team within the PC caucus and support staff. We have a great group, and today I especially want to give a shout-out to Vanessa, Carly and Laurie. It's phenomenal, the manner in which people just chip in and get the job done.

That brings me back to Bill 131. I really want to stress the importance of consultation. One thing about this bill: When I meet with associations representing small businesses, I hear time and again, “There's been no consultation.” I just share that as a flag and a recommendation to the Liberal government: that in terms of consulting with stakeholders, this is an area, indeed, that is in very much need of improvement, and I think in this case they too could do better. But set that aside, this is an important bill, an important topic.

My colleague from Perth–Wellington touched on contraband. I too want to touch on that a little bit, but I also want to recognize the good work of the Ontario Lung Association. I'm pleased to be on the non-partisan committee that is addressing healthy lungs. It's headed up by our member from Whitby–Oshawa. I look forward, in the coming days, to meeting with the Ontario Lung Association and specifically talking about the Ontario lung action plan. We can't turn a blind eye to the proper

steps in helping people manage a variety of issues that affect lung health.

I just want to give a shout-out to Barbara, whom I met. She was advocating on behalf of people suffering with IPF. She joined me in my office with the IPF foundation president, Robert Davidson. I have to say that in my own local riding of Huron—Bruce I have an amazing IPF advocate in Hugh Detzler, from Mildmay, Ontario. We need to be mindful of everything they are going through. As you in this House know as well, my father suffered from COPD.

There are so many diseases that could be better managed, and possibly even averted, if people didn't smoke; we know that first-hand. I would not be responsible in my critic role if I didn't say that if we can get smoking under control, we won't have to see people suffer. When people suffer, where do they want to be? They want to be at home. To enable them to be at home, they do need some equipment, some support machinery. With the cost of electricity going through the roof, I really don't know how that would happen.

Thank you, Speaker, for your leniency in allowing me to get those messages out.

I want to go back now and focus on the Canadian Cancer Society; specifically, some information they have available with regard to tobacco and cancer. It's important that people watching today know that about one third of all cancers can be prevented by eating well, being active and maintaining a healthy body weight. Tobacco use is responsible for 30% of all cancer deaths and 85% of lung cancer deaths, and remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in Ontario.

The proposed ban on the sale of flavoured new and smokeless tobacco products needs to be very seriously considered in terms of all the ramifications. But this particular bill is looking at reducing incentives, especially for youth, to try or start using these products. Recent studies have shown that youth are using tobacco products, and some flavoured ones at that—57,000 Ontario youth in grades 6 to 12 reported using tobacco in 2010 and 2011. I'm sure that all of you in the House today find this number staggering, and we really must work together to stop this easy access to kids by the tobacco industry.

When I think about the studies that are being done, I think about a young man who is going to be a newly minted nurse—I think on June 13, to be exact. His name is Zach Ashley. As part of his placements over the last year, he did work with public health, much to our member opposite's point that public health does take a look at health studies specifically associated with tobacco use.

Zach worked with a public health officer and was incognito, going into convenience stores trying to buy tobacco. I have to say that he shared with me that many, many convenience stores and small shops are working hard to do their part. I'm sure there are a number of people watching, in terms of small business owners and the convenience stores association, who would appreciate hearing that I've heard first-hand how store owners are

trying to do their part in terms of proper management of tobacco products.

Also, it's interesting that another job he had, which was not glamorous, was counting cigarette butts in schoolyards. The majority of those butts, I'm afraid to say—Zach went to nursing school at University of Windsor—were not recognizable in terms of brand names, and that's a big concern. If we're going to seriously address a smoke-free Ontario—and again, a nod back to the short title being the Youth Smoking Prevention Act—this government has to step up to the plate and mean business. It's one thing to talk the talk, but it's another thing to walk the walk. If we're properly going to be going down this path, we need to seriously address contraband tobacco.

1620

I go on about the Cancer Society and the information that they provide. I think there are some simple things. We can say no to contraband tobacco. We can say yes to living a smoke-free life, because lung cancer is the leading cause, as I said, of cancer death in Canada. It is estimated that smoking is related to more than 85% of lung cancer cases in Ontario.

“Smokers are about 20 times more likely to develop lung cancer than non-smokers. The longer a person smokes and the more cigarettes smoked each day, the more the risk increases. Smokers are also at a higher risk if they're exposed to radon or certain chemicals in their home or workplace and” yet, over and above that, “continue to smoke.

“Most forms of lung cancer develop gradually and do not produce any symptoms until,” unfortunately, “the disease is advanced. This makes it hard to find lung cancer early enough for a cure.

“Each year, more than 250 Canadians die from lung cancer as a result of long-term exposure to the tobacco smoked by other people”—I'm talking about second-hand smoke here—“at home, at work and when they're out and about.”

“Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals and poisons, including more than 70 that are known to cause cancer. Some of the poisons and chemicals in cigarette smoke are:

“—carbon monoxide (found in your car's exhaust);

“—ammonia (found in window cleaners);

“—cadmium (found in batteries);

“—arsenic (found in rat poison),” just to name a few.

“When you smoke, many of these chemicals mix together and form a sticky tar. That tar sticks to tiny hairs that line the inside of your lungs—hairs that are supposed to keep your lungs clean by sweeping out the dirt and germs. But when they're covered in tar, they can't do their job properly. This is what leads to smoker's cough to spit up the dirt that's still in your lungs. It also leads to many other health problems.”

Then we all know about nicotine. “Nicotine is what makes smoking cigarettes so addictive. This drug makes your body crave more cigarettes and that means inhaling all those chemicals” as a result.

That's why I think Bill 131 is important to consider. If we get it into second reading, I will be interested in the process that we all know happens in second reading and to the deputants who come in to be heard. As I mentioned before, it's a bit alarming when you hear of a government touting to be transparent and willing to work with people, and then you listen to stakeholders and meet with stakeholders and hear the absolute opposite: that this government hasn't consulted with them. A flag goes up.

It's important that we address this issue because the overall rate of smoking in Ontario has remained flatlined at 19% for the past five years. To some of you, 19% may be a good number, but the key to that statement is that it has remained flatlined. The province took action in 2006 with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, and we know that more can be done to reduce the prevalence of smoking in the province. We can look at other jurisdictions that have demonstrated success in reducing smoking. For example, British Columbia has decreased their smoking rate from over 18% in 2008 to 14% in 2012. I think that's a benchmark that we should strive for here in Ontario.

I just want to revisit what this bill is really all about. This bill contains six main changes, with the goal of decreasing the incidence of youth smoking in Ontario. I will go over each of these six changes and discuss the merits and potential challenges or unintended consequences, if indeed any do exist. The six aspects of this bill are prohibiting sales of tobacco products containing flavouring, prohibiting sales on post-secondary campuses and specified government properties, banning smoking on restaurant and bar patios, increased fines for those who sell tobacco products, prohibiting the sale of promotional items with tobacco products, and increasing the scope of inspection.

Essentially, the inspectors have their range of authority enlarged whereby they can seize improperly packaged products and can go into water pipe cafes and levy higher fines. The one thing that I find interesting is "can seize improperly packaged products." Well, if that's a hint that this government might just get serious about contraband, I encourage them to do so much more.

The smoke shops that we have throughout this province and, again, the number of butts that we find outside hospitals and in schoolyards that are not brand-oriented, but indeed contraband, are increasing at an alarming rate. I think about this, and it's frustrating, because here we are trying to encourage people to live healthy in a smoke-free Ontario, but all the while Ontario is becoming more and more expensive to live in under this Liberal government. As a result, people have fewer dollars to stretch, and because they have fewer dollars to stretch—herein lies the irony, Speaker—you're going to turn them to the underground. We all know from our colleague from Simcoe North that the College of Trades and all the regulations that are being introduced there are going to be driving our handymen underground. Unfortunately, if we don't do this right, in terms of Bill 131, we will not only drive smokers underground as well—to the smoke shops and the rollies that public health officials are finding, as I

said, outside hospitals and in the schoolyards, which is absolutely horrible.

There needs to be bold action taken. There needs to be some very decisive attention. We encourage the Liberals to just not stop at seizing improperly packaged products. We encourage the Liberal government of Ontario to stand up and do the right thing to address contraband in the manner in which it should be.

Let's talk about that first point: prohibiting sales of tobacco products containing flavouring. Tobacco Use in Canada, from the Propel Centre for Population Health Impact, has—the edition is from 2013—a quote that says, "This edition of the report provides, for the first time, data on the use of flavoured tobacco among youth. This shift from cigarettes to other forms of tobacco is a real concern..." So for goodness' sake, let's get the industry stakeholders to the table, discuss this reality and together figure out how to move forward.

If we focus specifically on flavoured tobacco, there's another study that was done in October 2013, a report that was released called the Youth Smoking Survey, which showed that 57,000 grade 6 to grade 12 Ontario youth used flavoured products in 2010-11. This report was just released. There's a concern here in terms of inspectors doing their jobs and the access points for flavoured tobacco products. We need to get, as I said, all these stakeholders together to devise a plan that everybody owns and is therefore accountable to.

Moving on to the second aspect, prohibiting sales on post-secondary campuses and specified government properties, I'm sure we all have had that experience where you go to walk into a particular institution or a particular government building and there is a trash can with a cigarette ashtray on top of it. Butts are strewn everywhere and sometimes you have to walk through the smoke. I know myself, I'm uncomfortable when that experience happens, so I welcome this particular change in Bill 131.

The regulations that would prohibit smoking on playgrounds, sports fields, sports surfaces and sports spectator areas within a 20-metre radius, except if there's a private dwelling, is an interesting aspect. This is the kind of regulation that is already in place in a number of municipalities. I would say the province is playing catch-up right now with a number of municipalities. We need to be careful here because, again, we don't want to over-regulate. We need to be mindful of regulations and bylaws that are already in place, so the province isn't tripping over municipalities and vice versa. To be clear on that, we right now have 100 municipalities in Ontario that have passed such a bylaw, and this number is increasing quickly. To pass this bill with the provision that it would ban smoking in municipal places is really to play catch-up, because a huge percentage of municipalities, as I said, are already there, so we need to be mindful we don't trip over top of each other.

1630

I think we need to take a look, that this is a trend that will increase, because just two years ago there were only

50 municipalities with that particular bylaw. You can see that just in the last few years a number of municipalities have joined the ranks where you cannot smoke in a variety of outdoor places, such as playgrounds, parks, beaches etc. I'm sure that list will continue to grow.

The third element of this particular bill specifically addresses banning smoking on restaurant and bar patios. Again, there's a huge flag here. In my role as critic for small business and red tape, I learned from the restaurant and hotel association that they were not consulted on this bill. There's a trend here, Speaker, and it goes from sector to sector, issue to issue. This government just has the mindset that they know best and they can run roughshod, if you will, over top of people. We need to do better. But essentially, banning smoking on patios will have an impact on hotel and motel organizations and businesses, as it will force smokers out of only public property, which will affect bystanders. So we need to take a look at that.

I mentioned before that people get subjected to second-hand smoke. I want to talk about that for a moment now. Second-hand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, and it is a mix of mainstream smoke exhaled by smokers and side-stream smoke emitted from the tips of burning cigarettes.

Second-hand smoke is also known as passive smoke, or environmental tobacco smoke, ETS. Most public health authorities will use the term "second-hand smoke" as opposed to "ETS," because the latter infers a relationship between tobacco smoke and the environment in general, resulting in confusion about its exact meaning. But exposure to second-hand smoke is involuntary. Involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke results from non-smokers breathing in air containing, as I said, second-hand smoke. It involves inhaling carcinogens as well as other toxic components that are present in both mainstream and side-stream smoke. Carci—carcinogens that occur in second-hand smoke include benzene, butadiene and a number—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Carcinogens.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Carcinogens. Thank you. It's getting to be a long day. Thank you. I appreciate that.

So there are a number of things that second-hand smoke contains, and we have to be mindful that it's involuntary. I don't want to walk through it, as I'm sure none of you do either.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer concluded in its 2002 monograph on tobacco smoke and second-hand smoke that there is sufficient evidence that involuntary smoking, exposure to second-hand or environmental tobacco smoke, causes lung cancer in humans. It makes the overall evaluation that involuntary smoking, meaning exposure to second-hand or environmental tobacco smoke, is carcinogenic to humans. Did I get that right?

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you.

So, ladies and gentlemen, this Bill 131 needs to get into second reading, and we'll continue to do some more work on it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you to the member from Huron–Bruce for her comments.

A couple of things triggered in my head. The first one was her mention of the town of Mildmay. That may not mean a lot to many people here in Ontario, but one of my favourite remembrances as a boy, a young man and even today is a picture of my father and my aunt during the 1920s. They were sent to Mildmay during the summers in Toronto because of the polio epidemics. I still have the picture. Thank you for that remembrance.

The member talked about people suffering and wanting to be at home. I don't think the issue is whether they would like to be at home or not, or the cost of electricity. The fact is that people will suffer—no matter where they end up, they will suffer—if they continue to smoke. We need to do everything we can.

She touched on the whole role of small business policing the sale of cigarettes, and she's absolutely right. I know that there are mistakes made by some small businesses, and some aren't careful enough in selling cigarettes to minors. However, the issue of contraband is the far larger issue. I know if you go into the schools and some of the places in my riding and literally every riding in this province, it is the contraband cigarettes that are being picked up by the young. They only cost a third or a quarter or even less the price. When young people who don't have as much money as maybe perhaps some others take up the habit, invariably they take up the habit with these cigarettes that you can buy in baggies. She's right to talk about that.

She's not so right, though, to talk about the patio issue and the restaurant association. I remember my time as a mayor and on the board of health in both the borough of East York and the city of Toronto. That association came to us and talked about all the money they were going to lose if we put on any kind of smoking ban inside, even to lessen the area where smoking is allowed. The reality is, none of that happened. Perhaps that's why the government is a little bit wary about going there for that advice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Before I dive into my comments, I do want to acknowledge some very important guests here this afternoon at the Legislature with us, from the Canadian Cancer Society—welcome—as well as the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada. Many thanks for the work you do. Thank you.

In terms of this bill, as I think we've heard before, our government is very committed to helping Ontarians live healthy lives. We know that the best way to fight illness and disease is to prevent it in the first place. We know that healthy kids grow up to be healthy adults. A healthy start is better for our kids and our health care system. That's why the first pillar of our action plan for health care is all about that.

We've set very ambitious goals for having the lowest smoking rate in Canada. While we've taken aggressive

action to protect Ontarians, especially young Ontarians, from the harmful effects of tobacco and smoke, we know there is more to do. So that's why we introduced this bill. Together, this bill and the regulatory amendments will help prevent young Ontarians from taking up smoking and protect them from the hazardous exposure to second-hand smoke. A lot of us grew up with it, but when we think back to that time in our lives, we wouldn't wish that for our children or grandchildren.

We also announced last fall our consultation on legislation that would require large chain restaurants to include calories and other information on menus. These kinds of initiatives together are intended to help protect our children. I think we can agree that it's a good thing to do, and we look forward to receiving support from all parties in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I wanted to commend the member from Huron—Bruce for filling 20 minutes with informative information and supportive comments with respect to the importance of this bill and the role that we have here of talking to the issue and, at the same time, educating people about the dangers of smoking. I thought she added a lot of value with some of the history to it. I perhaps will have a chance later this afternoon to speak myself. I hope I do, because the members that spoke today, I believe, on our side—I can say with some confidence that we're certainly supportive of somehow dealing with the problems associated with respiratory illness which is absolutely related, no question, to smoking.

I think of some of the information on the chemicals and the other compounds, but I think the part that touched me most was the contraband issue and the studies that had been done. Also at the same time, I think she's quick to recognize the work that has been done by the critic for health for the NDP, France Gélinas. I think she has done a marvellous job on this file, perhaps in excess of the work done by the government itself. She has almost coaxed them into doing this bill. It should always be recognized that there's good work done on all sides of the House here. This issue affects health care in Ontario.

I think our member from Huron—Bruce added great value to the debate and to the understanding of the hazards of smoking, especially with our young people. So I commend her for her remarks and look forward to her summation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

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Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm pleased to stand and speak on Bill 131 on behalf of my constituents, and to follow the comments made by the member from Huron—Bruce, in particular. It sounds like people around the House are going to support this piece of legislation. I think it's a good piece of legislation. I think it's sensible. It speaks to the power of government and what we can establish together.

The culture, when it comes to smoking, has changed dramatically in my lifetime. Growing up, you could smoke just about everywhere, and I think that has changed people's perspective. I was recently at a family gathering, and some of the adults left and walked far, far away from the children at that gathering—they left the porch; they left plain view—to smoke a cigarette, whereas back in the day you could smoke in a movie theatre, you could smoke in a hospital room or in an airplane. These things matter.

I want to thank the member from Durham for recognizing the good work that our health critic has done on this particular file. France Gélinas has been a champion of this issue, and I think it's a good perspective that she holds when it comes to taking the preventive measures that are going to improve people's health and reduce health care costs. This is absolutely a no-brainer in this sense.

I'm optimistic that this will go forward, that we can move this forward, that we can protect people from becoming addicted to nicotine, that we can take some power back from big tobacco companies and save all of us those terrible impacts of tobacco addiction and the health costs that go with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Huron—Bruce has two minutes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I certainly appreciate the comments we've heard around the House this afternoon.

To the member from Beaches—East York: Mildmay is the gateway to the Bruce, so I'm glad it conjured up some good memories for you. If you ever have a chance to go there, knowing you're such a connoisseur, there's a fine cheese haus—spelled H-A-U-S—on the main street. I encourage you to visit that.

I also appreciate how you recognize that contraband is an issue that really needs to be addressed. Hopefully, to your colleague from Davenport's point, we can work together to continue on this quest.

To the Minister of Consumer Services: Yes, we need to be very committed in doing the right thing here. Prevention is a very ambitious goal, but I really believe it is the direction we have to go. I really want to encourage that we all take time to engage our stakeholders so that we understand the impacts our discussions may impose upon them. As a result, our go-forward plans will be that much stronger.

To my colleague from Durham, I'm going to take a moment, while I have a couple of seconds, to wish him the very best whenever his retirement may be upon him, because he's one of my favourites. We've learned a lot from John—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: He's one of our favourites, too.

Applause.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: There you go. We've learned from the member from Durham. You speak from your heart, and when you speak from your heart and you know your topic, you should be able to stand up without any notes and speak with conviction. He is always prepared, as well, and I recognize that. As the member

from Davenport pointed out, I really appreciate how he is fair and recognized the good work, not only of the member from Nickel Belt, but of everyone.

I hope our lung action plan can serve the purpose of working together, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before we move on, now that we're all in a good mood and we're throwing around compliments, a friendly reminder to some of the members, and I won't point them out: They have been coming in and out and not acknowledging the Chair, some of them are walking across in front of the Chair and not acknowledging—just a friendly reminder that we don't appreciate that.

Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to be called to duty here, if you will. It's call to duty, isn't it? Isn't that one of those video games today? Anyway, as has been mentioned, it's been my privilege to be here for almost 20 years.

The context of Bill 131—I think it's important to put a little bit of context around it—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: I expect you will be bowing when you're leaving this place.

Interjection: Genuflect.

Mr. John O'Toole: Genuflect.

Anyway, because of the length of service here and the fact that I did work for 31 years at General Motors, I qualify as being a senior, for sure, maybe a bit beyond that. I think an important perspective is that when I was a child—I can tell you; this is a fact—my mother didn't smoke, as I recall, but I'm sure I was a breastfed child. My oldest sister told me that when she was in maternity, they used to teach you how to breastfeed and smoke. That's a fact. This goes back many years. She's a retired teacher. She was telling me, some months ago, this story about how they used to teach them how to avoid ashes falling on the child's face.

I remember flying to Ireland when I was probably 10 years old, I guess, and people were smoking on the plane. It was quite natural. Even today, in planes, they say if you're caught smoking in the washroom—they have smoke detectors, and they can really give you a hard time.

We've come a long way, I guess, through education. The theme of this discussion today is really—the primary role here is to educate people. I know there's Butt Out and smoke signs and lots of efforts. I want to commend and recognize Heart and Stroke who are here today, and the work that they do, and of course, Cancer Care Ontario and the cancer society, which really carries this forward.

Having lobbying days here at Queen's Park, or education days, I'd call them—Heart and Stroke and others have held these days, particularly pressuring the government to bring forward legislation to address some of the newer forms of smoking, and those are the new brands that are enticing young people into it by marketing and other gimmickry that goes on.

Again, I say it quite clearly: The member from Nickel Belt really has done more—there's no question about that—of pushing relentlessly. She had a private member's bill or two on it, especially with the cigarillos and whatever they call some of these new products. Some of them are different colours. It's all marketing to young people. I think it's important to get ahead of this thing, and this bill does some of that.

The bill itself, for the general viewer today, is quite a small bill in terms of its length, but the content is quite technical, too. It's actually two pages in English and two pages in French. It's got five particular sections, and the assorted amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act are as follows:

“(1) The sale of promotional items together with tobacco products is prohibited.

“(2) The sale of flavoured tobacco products is prohibited, subject to a power to prescribe exemptions.

“(3) The list of places that an inspector is specifically empowered to enter is broadened”—in fact, it's warrantless entry, which was questioned by one of the previous speakers. The list of places that an inspector can enter, as I said, is maybe the question that—some hearing and clarification.

I always dislike the amount of regulation within legislation, because you're really not sure: Are there adequate resources for enforcement or dispute resolutions—often get ignored because we think we're going to handle all the stuff in regulations and don't.

“(4) Adjustments are made to the penalty provisions.” That would be the new government tax, whatever that is. “Penalty” is a substitute word for “tax” or “fine.”

“(5) The power to prescribe places for the purposes of the act is amended to provide for exemptions.”

That's been the most controversial. In my constituency office in Bowmanville, about three stores down in sort of a—not a strip mall; it's downtown. But there's a little plaza, and in the little plaza there's a tavern type of thing, and across the street there's another little tavern thing. In the last few years, they've invested quite heavily in having an outside patio with a roof so that people can smoke.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if you were a smoker at one time or not, but I was. I quit probably about 10 years ago, I guess, because here it's just not acceptable to smoke. Maybe it's more than 10 years, I suppose. I have been known to break that rule the odd time.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Don't inhale.

Mr. John O'Toole: I don't inhale, for sure—and it's 10 years. I only say lightheartedly that nobody is perfect here.

1650

These small business people have built the patios, and I suspect they've got to be clearer on these rules and the enforcement, which is left to the police—often not essential to who is enforcing it and how. So that's got to be clearer.

Then you get straight into the whole reasonable and probable grounds argument for search and seizure of

product. There are sections covered in this bill that deal with, under section 6, “An inspector acting under section 14 may seize” certain things, and it describes that in some detail. There’s another table here sort of repealed, and the substitutes are inserted in the provisions. I think for the viewer it might be easier to just show it. There are two or three tables in here—in two languages, so there are really two tables in here. One is dealing with the fines and the other is dealing with individual and corporate fines. They’re pretty extraordinary fines here, really. They go up to \$600,000, and so I hope that’s not at the individual—that’s the corporation side of the business. But we know in the courts, they’ve taken these companies to task, and they still find ways of circumventing the law. That’s quite important to realize.

Now, what is the outcome on the health care system of Ontario? The health care system represents about 43% or 45% of the total budget, and it’s budget day tomorrow. We’ll find out—I’m not sure, but I can tell you this: They say that they have this expenditure reduction plan and they say that they are going to have a balanced budget by 2017-18. I’m guessing a bit, but this does tie back to Bill 131. I have absolutely no trust in the government, and I hate to say that, after being here almost 20 years. They would say anything to save their soul. Unfortunately, in the context here, this bill may not see the light of day. The reason I say that is, I can remember a couple of years ago where they prorogued the House and lots of the bills just fell away.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Talk about this one.

Mr. John O’Toole: Yes. This bill here is important, and we need to get on with it, but it’s this government that has the keys to the vault and they have the keys to the changes that need to occur in Ontario. It’s up to them to schedule the discussions, schedule the committees. But I’m suspicious that we should find out next week sometime, they may pull the plug and let the water out of the bathtub here and leave all the fish exposed. Do you understand? If they do that, it’s called an election, Mr. Speaker—you know that. I’m not forecasting anything, but what does it do to these bills? They have mismanaged the legislative calendar, and it started two years ago under Premier McGuinty. In that forum, when he prorogued the House, these bills ended up being—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I believe the standing orders have requirements to have the speaker speak to the bill at hand. I’m just gently reminding—I wouldn’t remind you, Speaker, because you know the rules—but I just wanted to identify—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, I’ll assure the minister that I’m keeping close watch on where the member is floating, and if he floats too far, we’ll deal with it.

Continue.

Mr. John O’Toole: Reasonable and probable grounds should come into play here—I was trying to tie it back to

the budget and how important health care is. It’s 43% of the budget.

Now, here is what I’m hearing in my riding: This bill, on respirology—let’s stick with the one thing. Okay? It’s tied to this bill. What are some of the ailments? We have a doctor here, and a couple—no, one doctor. He should be a cabinet minister, actually. I’m surprised he got missed in the last round. But anyway, we’ll stick to the topic here. Respirology: The popular diseases that you hear about are emphysema and COPD, which is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; the more recent one is IPF, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Now, I have constituents, and this is related—to some extent, these chronic respiratory issues are directly or indirectly related to smoking or the environment.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Not IPF.

Mr. John O’Toole: No, not IPF? Well, that’s good, doctor; thank you for that early diagnosis there. That’s important.

I say it and I genuinely mean what I say. I remember, I think it was Brett Hull, the hockey player who had COPD. He was one of the people who spoke here today. That’s important: the educating of our young. Looking at the sports leaders today, very few of them smoke, that I recall. Ten or 15 years ago, they all smoked, basically. It was terrible. Those were models for young people. So some actions on that side are important.

When I brought up these diseases—IPF is one. It’s respiratory, not related to smoking. There’s a drug. If you don’t get a lung transplant within a certain time, you simply cannot breathe, and you suffocate and die. It’s a terrible, terrible affliction. But there is a drug that’s offering hope and optimism: Esbriet. Now, they don’t fund it. I’ve had one constituent decess, and another one whose wonderful daughter, on behalf of her mother, is advocating for the funding of Esbriet, and it comes up here regularly in the Legislature. It does tie to our budget.

I do say that lots of these addictive substances, with the changing market—now, here’s the contrary part of this whole thing. To me, the debate going on at the federal and other levels is talking about decriminalization of marijuana. If you look back far enough, George Washington didn’t know whether to grow hemp or tobacco. If you look back in American history, they didn’t know which product, because they both offered some kind of stimulus, and there was quite a debate. Hemp became the product—they made ropes for sailing and all that kind of stuff out of hemp, because it’s such a strong material. But that’s a fact: They ended up with tobacco.

Now, how does this relate? Well, it relates to the contraband issue, because under constitutional documents that I’ve read, indigenous or First Nations people, I believe, were able to trade in fish, fur and tobacco, I think it is. When you look at the First Nations today and the issue of contraband cigarettes, they have the ability to trade. So we end up with the government having the tax as high as you could possibly get. There are a few members here who smoke. I won’t name them, because it

would be embarrassing—to me, because they'd probably be mad at me forever. I think it's about \$10 a pack—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Twelve.

Mr. John O'Toole: Twelve dollars a pack. It's unbelievable. So I would say we're getting close, on the tobacco side, when the First Nations on the reserves—I guess they're selling them for \$10 or \$15 for a bag of 200, which is like a carton, I guess. No wonder the surveys that have been done by the groups find that about 90% of the butts around these allocated smoking areas in schools, if there's such a thing—I think you can't even smoke on the sidewalk anymore; it's public space. You can't smoke in parks—nor should you, by the way. I should be clear and not ambiguous about it.

Then people ask me, “Why don't they enforce this contraband?” Well, you've got the constitutional issues. Now, the federal government could be dealing with this, the RCMP; it's First Nations. Really, a lot of their legislative, under the Indian Act—it's sort of in there. Provincially, if it's off-reserve, I think they could stop you and say, “Those are contraband cigarettes. There are no labels on them,” and they could fine you.

This bill, I think, sets up a regime of fines or what they call penalties. I call it taxes, because everything now—the licence for your car, fees, permits, licences, all of it—they double. It's just tax. The Drive Clean program is a perfect example. I'm a little off-topic, but the Drive Clean is one example. It's a tax grab.

It comes down to fairness, at the end of the day. Somebody said earlier, and I think it's a very profound way of summarizing this, that doing the right thing is the right policy. In fact, doing the right thing is the right politics. Doing the wrong thing is the wrong politics, and we saw that in the gas plants. We saw it in Ornge helicopter. We see it—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, no, it's all related. It all ties back to Bill 131. It ties back in the respect that this bill could be the subject of an oversight when they call the election.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Any more YouTubes?

Mr. John O'Toole: No. People are starting to chirp in here, and maybe it's not even appropriate.

1700

People ask me this question: “If it's that bad, why are you selling it?” Why are they selling it? It's about the money. Do you understand? It's about the money. If we know categorically that it kills people, why isn't it completely illegal?

What are some of the anti-smoking medicines that you can take?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Champix.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Nicorette.

Mr. John O'Toole: Champix and all this kind of stuff—and they don't even fund some of that. Smoking cessation programs have been cut back.

There's a many-pronged approach that's necessary for this, working with Heart and Stroke and the cancer society, who have done this, working with members on

all sides. Our critic Christine Elliott has done a great job. France Gélinas has done a great job. We want to get this done. I want you to put your money where your goals are. I say that because the budget is coming up. Secretly, I have a hope that this bill will pass before the election.

In the two minutes that the other side has—there are a couple of ministers here; four ministers, actually, which is pretty good for a Wednesday afternoon, because all the other members are somewhere else. Here's the deal. What I want is them to stand and tell me when the election is going to be. The only fair thing to do is to be honest here, to get up, stand on your feet and say, “Look, we're going to call this budget.” Then I want the NDP to say—are you going to sit on your hands again, or are you going to vote?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We seem to have drifted, so I'm suggesting you might want to go back to the bill. Thank you.

Mr. John O'Toole: God, I was on a roll there. But it troubles me to think that this bill is so short and I have so much time to fill. I had to stray off every once in a while.

I do mean this quite sincerely. Let's be honest with one another here. There's a budget tomorrow. I want to know if the NDP are going to stand and vote for it. Is the government going to just drop the gloves, walk down the hall and see the LG? Because I'm concerned that my constituents need this bill passed. Bill 131 talks to public health, the volunteers in our community. What we're trying to do today is to make a focused effort here, right directly to Premier Wynne, and say, “Are you going to do the right thing? Are you going to put this into law, or are you going to call an election to save your own seat?” That really boils this whole thing down into that one decision. The Premier has the power to call an election. The Premier has the power—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Everybody wants the election.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, I'm not running again. I'm being honest. The Minister of the Environment is the longest-serving member here, and I'm wondering if he's going to run again. I'm asking him in the two-minute response to make that announcement, because I'm worried. He has been here so long that he's starting to repeat himself, because he has been the Minister of the Environment twice.

Interjections.

Interjection: Withdraw, withdraw.

Mr. John O'Toole: I withdraw. I meant that as a compliment, to be honest. He was the Minister of the Environment back in the David Peterson government. Now he's back in the—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Oh, that's easy. Okay.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, that's what I meant. I introduced him to one of my friends yesterday. He was pleased to meet him, because I think he was an engineer and worked for the ministry at one time. Then he got rid of all the engineers in the Ministry of the Environment when he was the minister.

Anyway, on this bill here, I suspect that in the two-minute hits, people will be complimentary of the remarks

I've made and the effort—I've tried to educate the public on a bill that should become law. It's the right thing to do. That's the right policy.

Thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: It is a pleasure to rise today to comment on the speech made by the member from Durham. I have had the privilege of being in this House for nearly 13 years and have watched him, sometimes in great awe, as he stands up and orates on so many topics. Sometimes it's a never-ending stream of thought, and sometimes it's very well informed. Sometimes it's humorous; sometimes it's deadly serious, but he always speaks his mind. I want to be able to say this knowing full well, and following on the theme of what he had to say, that this House may or may not be winding down. I wanted to make sure that I got this in.

I remember back to my very young days, too. Women who were taught how to breastfeed in a hospital were also shown how to smoke a cigarette at the same time without dropping the ash on babies.

I do remember quite clearly in my youth many women with young babies—during their pregnancy, postpartum and while the child was growing up—smoking in their presence. It was absolutely common, and today we look aghast when we see anything like that at all.

I wanted to thank him for his generosity and praise, not only for his own colleagues, but sometimes for the government and for the third party. He mentioned particularly Madame Gélinas.

He did talk—and I need to close on this—about contraband cigarettes, and he is absolutely correct. People forget, from time to time, that the First Nations were only allowed to trade in several things; one of them was tobacco. He is absolutely right that this is something that is part of a culture of people who were held down, people who were not allowed to do a great many economic activities in this country; one of them was trading in cigarettes. We need to get ourselves around that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 131 today. You know, it was a government I was with—it was the municipal government—that got smoking out of restaurants and public places in Ottawa, and it was this government that moved smoking out of cars with children. We moved cigarette advertising—the power walls—out of retail, that advertising that was out there to try to convince children to smoke. That was Fonseca, Wilkinson and myself. We were able to pass that motion and get that McNeely amendment in there.

We stopped the cosmetic use of pesticides, which is health-related, much like this bill. We got Ontario out of coal—probably the biggest thing, and so important to the future of this planet. We set the standard for all countries etc.

This bill further supports the health of children. That's important. That's part of those packages. Remember the

days of Dr. Cushman? I think he and Bob Chiarelli were both armed—not armed, but they had protection—when we were passing those no-smoking bills in the city of Ottawa. We didn't arm any of our politicians or the medical officer of health. Sorry about that.

So let's support the bill. There seems to be great support from the member across. I think he's speaking for his party when they say they'd like this bill passed. This would be great to get it moving forward very quickly—the member for Durham.

It's doing the right thing. As the member said, doing the right thing is good public policy. This is good public policy. It's a long list of accomplishments since 2003 to make for a healthier province. Let's continue and get this passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I always listen with great anticipation when the member from Durham gets up to speak. He has been here a long time. We're going to miss him. I would certainly hope that I could call his house when he's not here anymore for advice and whatever.

Mr. Michael Harris: Call the golf course.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Call the golf course. We'll find him there.

Anyway, I listened not only to the member from Durham, but also across the floor. I heard several times, "Let's get this bill going," "Let's get it done," "Let's get it to committee," and everything else. We know what happens when it gets there. Too many bills have been held up in committees, and they're never called back to the House, even though—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: The government controls that.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The government blames everybody else for not getting these things done. I think that if they are genuinely concerned about something that is as important as a bill such as this—and I believe that it is an important bill—don't look across here and accuse us of holding things up, because we know how things work around here. It's the government's duty to get these things in and through committee.

As I said previously—and the member from Durham also brought this up—I am still a little concerned about the powers of search and seizure here and warrants, if there is a warrant that needs to be taken out. I think that we need to have properly trained people who are charged with enforcing this type of bylaw and have the proper things in place, not only for the protection of the business owners that this may affect, with the patios outside their restaurants, but also for the safety of the people involved who are trying to enforce this thing. They must have clear parameters that they have to enforce and deal with. Again, I'd like to state: I think that needs to be strengthened for this bill. Hopefully that will happen in committee.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham has two minutes.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): One more? The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I wouldn't want to miss an opportunity to comment on some of the statements that the member from Durham has made, because this could potentially—who knows what's going to happen? This could be one of his last days here in the Legislature, and I know it's a sad day. He and I have agreed on almost nothing over the last few years, but I do honestly respect the fact that he has dedicated so many years to this place and public service. He's never shy about patting himself on the back, and that's a good sign.

I just want to focus, though, on one element of this legislation, Bill 131. There is room for improvement on prevention in health care. We spend only 1% of the entire health care budget on prevention. As I said in my previous comments, the best and smartest investment around smoking is to prevent people from becoming addicted—because they are highly addictive.

We definitely need to get this piece of legislation to committee. There have been some good suggestions about making it stronger. There is a backlog, though, at committee, as has already been stated, which is very unfortunate. In a minority government, we should be able to move these things through fairly quickly. This should be, I think, a priority. I know that the member from Nickel Belt has brought forward similar legislation, year after year after year, through private member's bills. It has received support from members on all sides. On an issue like this, this should be a genuinely non-partisan issue.

There is a need to accelerate it and we will be supporting it. I hope that there aren't any future speakers on this piece today. Let's collapse the debate, and let's get it to committee, and let's get something done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham has two minutes.

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to thank all those who complimented my length of time here. I genuinely mean that and I'm actually sorry to leave, in a lot of ways. There's a lot of young talent, certainly in our caucus, and I think it's time for them. If I was here, I'd want to be talking on every bill. I need to move aside and let them have more time to comment on behalf of their constituents.

Just on the compliments from the member from Beaches–East York—I've served on committees with him for some time. He said that the House might be winding down. I think you're very insightful. You have a great history of calling the shots when you were mayor and certainly as finance critic as well. Your colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo is now the finance critic, I get, because she speaks on it all the time. Actually, I have great respect for some of the things she says—not all; I want to make that very clear, too.

The member from Ottawa–Orléans forgets that they really didn't close down the coal plants until a couple of weeks ago, actually. They were closed down because the economy was shut down and coal plants were used as

peaking plants. The only one that was closed down, and they made this promise—they promised in the 2003 election to close it in 2007. In the next election, they promised it in 2011. They finally did it out of embarrassment, under pressure from other parties. The only one who closed it down was Elizabeth Witmer. The only one that was down was the Lakeview plant. I think it's important. But good for him. He's retiring as well. He's a fine gentleman as well.

The member from Perth–Wellington, I think, made the most striking point, and he said that it was about managing House business. Do you understand? They can't get anything done. Why? Because they won't give any recognition to the House leaders who want access to information. Not Ornge—we have to FOI everything. Then they dump a whole truckload of paper on your desk; half of it is redacted. I'll tell you this—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 4, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 143, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2013, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 and the Education Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 143, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance et la Loi sur l'éducation et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? I believe the government had the floor.

The member from Kitchener–Conestoga, then.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair today, so good afternoon.

I'm happy to speak to Bill 143 today, the Child Care Modernization Act. I was hoping to have some more remarks on the previous bill, but I will move to Bill 143.

There are many factors that parents take into consideration when choosing a daycare to enrol their child in. These are all responsibilities of the parent when making this important decision, and what separates the

competition between daycare businesses in Ontario. I'll go over some of the factors that are included.

We want the ability for the child to integrate with their peers. Are they receiving proper care? Are the health and safety requirements up to standard? What is the affordability? That's an important aspect. How accessible is it? And what is the child's ability to grow and learn at this daycare?

I'll talk briefly about integration with their peers first. In choosing a daycare, in fact, for my young son Murphy, who, by the way, is at the J.W. Gerth YMCA—he may be picked up already by now, but I know he enjoyed his day there today in Kitchener. Of course, Valerie, Saida, Sarah and Linda all look after Murphy day in, day out. He's at the school where his older brother is, and I know he enjoys it. He loves the people there. He especially loves the water table. He just loves the water table every day, so we'll probably get one of those in the summer-time. Anyway, that's the YMCA at J.W. Gerth.

It was a tough decision for us on where to put Murphy. Of course, he had to attend a home daycare from the age of 12 months, when Sarah went back to work. Up until around 16 months, Pauline took care of him in a home daycare. He loved being there, of course, as well, but I know he does really enjoy the YMCA. His brother Lincoln will be following him in the coming months, as I know Sarah will want to get back to work. She's missing her peers, and, of course, her paycheque. It was a tough decision when we were debating on what we were up to, but we finally settled on the YMCA, of course, and he loves it there.

The other option, obviously, was to bring him to a smaller, in-home daycare in a neighbourhood with a family or friend. Some parents obviously feel way more comfortable bringing their child to a daycare in a private home—it may be a neighbour; it may be a relative or a friend—while others prefer bringing their children to—whether it be a local church group or a Montessori, and I know I'm going to get chatting about that later, or the YMCA. The ability for parents to have this choice is very, very important in the way that they decide to raise their child. This proposed legislation is pushing for licensing, which could affect whether some of these well-operated daycare services can continue to operate.

Secondly, parents want to make sure that their child is safe. I know, for me, I rest assured knowing that, each and every day that Murphy goes to the YMCA, he's at the school; there's controlled access into the building; there's a fence around it—that was, by far, one of the most important factors for me when I was choosing a daycare for Murphy, knowing that he won't be able to get out on the street, with cars coming by, maybe a fence unlocked in the back of a home etc. That is one thing that I know when I'm here—that Murphy is safe, and I know that's a major consideration for other parents as well when they're deciding their child caregiver.

The other factor is experience, and the education level of the caregiver—that's an important role for parents in making their decision. The space where the child eats,

sleeps and plays needs to be clean and safe. That the caregiver should be certified in first aid, of course, and CPR, and have the ability to drive to the doctor or hospital if needed, to me as a parent is important. I know there are a lot of kids at the local YMCA, at J.W. Gerth. They have a lot of medical needs, allergies, all kinds of things. They really do a great job to accommodate that.

1720

The member for Kitchener–Waterloo and I had a bit of a disagreement before she was elected as a member. She was really pushing for before- and after-school programs to be taken over by the school board but really forgot about the value that third-party providers actually provide in our schools. This is one of the examples that I did hear from those parents, talking about the accommodations that they made for their children who have special needs—unlike, perhaps, some of our schools that don't often do that.

I know the government continues to hold up my colleague Jeff Yurek's bill; I believe it's Josh's Act. A young lad there, unfortunately, succumbed because he couldn't get an EpiPen in fast enough. So we need to make those accommodations.

I'm getting us slightly off track there, but I just thought I would bring that up when we were talking about YMCAs and third-party daycare and the ability for them to really be flexible with children with all kinds of needs.

It's important that they are also able to properly manage all the children together. This is very important. As you know, Speaker, this bill was tabled around the time when some children died under the watch of a daycare provider. It's very, very sad, especially as a parent, to hear about a young child who lost their life in the care of others. This obviously was a very sensitive issue when the bill came to the House for the first time. Saying that, these were a few examples out of the thousands of facilities that operate safely, with or without a licence, in the province. As tragic as these instances are, they really shouldn't be the reason to overhaul the entire system without having the proper consultations. I think we hear far too often about the lack of consultation that comes with government bills.

It's like a knee-jerk reaction to a lot of things: the Green Energy Act. I'm looking at the minister who formerly was an energy minister. I know he will probably agree with me that more consultation up front could have happened so that we wouldn't have the problems that they are experiencing today. Anyways, these are a few examples.

I also want to get back to the statistics. They say that 80% of kids in daycare are actually being taken care of in an informal setting. Simply to say that licensed daycares are safer than non-licensed daycares really isn't a factual claim. It is the responsibility of the parent to do the appropriate research into the service they go with for the child or children, and it's their right to choose that service. It's extremely important, and I would encourage all parents who are transitioning their children out of the

home at a young age and picking their daycare provider to do the research: to go in, speak to the daycare provider, look at the facilities, look at the property and ensure that it's safe, because they have to drop their child off each and every day and know that their precious one, the most important part of their family, is with somebody else. That's so important.

I will talk about affordability; it's obviously a major factor when choosing daycare services. This could decide for many families whether mom or dad can go back to work or stay at home to take care of their young ones. The cost of daycare ranges based on the type of facility you go to, whether it is an in-home daycare, a licensed daycare at a church or a YMCA facility, a third-party daycare attached to an elementary school, or a daycare program in a private school. The ability to have this choice is fundamental to families, and this allows them, from all levels of income, to have daycare service for their children—extremely important.

In my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, there are many families that would require their child to stay in the neighbourhood, whether it's some of our rural communities in townships like Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich. There have been concerns that the costs of a provider continue to go up as the rules change, threatening closure of some of these rural daycare centres. Parents have a great concern that this would force them to drive 15 minutes or half an hour here and there, back and forth from work every morning, tacking that extra time on to their morning routine.

Accessibility is very important for families, and Bill 143 must not threaten the ability of properly run daycare centres to stay open for children in rural communities like those in my riding and across the province.

Another factor when choosing a daycare service is the ability for that child to grow and learn to that of their peers. I had the immense pleasure and opportunity—and I know my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo was just mere hours before me—to attend the Sunshine Montessori School. I should have got a picture of a New Democrat in a private Montessori school. That would have been a good one. But anyway, I know she had a good time. I know she had a good time there, as did I. That was last week. I think it was great that she went in and saw it.

This private school opened its doors over 25 years ago and now serves over 200 families within the Kitchener–Waterloo community, over 50 families in the city of Stratford that my colleague Randy Pettapiece serves, and over 25 families in the North York region, where my sister lives. I believe my niece Annie also attended. They employ over 45 teachers and staff members who provide exceptional education to more than 300 children between the ages of 18 months and 14 years.

Montessori schools have an educational approach developed by an Italian physician and educator, Maria Montessori. The concept that has been developed emphasizes child independence, freedom within limits, and respect for a child's natural physical and social develop-

ment. At Sunshine Montessori School, there are mixed-age classrooms, with classrooms for children between two and half and four years old, and ages three to five and six to nine. This style of education allows each student to invest in their interests and grow in them.

An interesting fact: Students in Sunshine Montessori Schools across the world actually grew up to be creators of Google, Amazon and Wikipedia.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Amazon.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Now you're just making words up.

Mr. Michael Harris: No, this is true.

Should Bill 143 pass as it is, parents who choose to enrol their children in this kind of school will see many changes that do not reflect the mandate of a Montessori-style school. It is because the bill lumps private schools with early learning programs into the same category as home daycare or unlicensed daycare facilities. Private schools are concerned that this will negatively impact their education system.

I can tell you from being there—I saw the children in the classroom setting learning. What a great experience to see them early on in life, learning how to spell, with an immense educational component to what they're doing, and not just play-based education, which is also important, but really a focus on the educational aspect. For this part, I had talked to parents, and they're really afraid that their choice to choose a school like Montessori would be taken away from them, because they feel also that this system would, in essence, water down the experience that their child is gaining currently at the Montessori schools.

In fact, all private schools must annually register with the province's Ministry of Education and submit to local health, fire and safety standards regularly. They currently undergo the same inspections that all schools complete. Without acknowledging the important distinctions between home daycare, unlicensed daycare facilities and early learning programs in private schools, this bill will drastically affect how all of these child care organizations can operate. We should not put them all into the same category of child care providers.

Sunshine Montessori School feels like not enough consultation was done prior to tabling the bill and is concerned that there are too many changes that will negatively impact their students and children, as well as parents. I will tell you, I have spoken to many, many parents in my community who send their children to the Montessori school, who are really upset that this bill could potentially take, in essence, the choice that they made to send their child to the Montessori school because of the factors, the quality of education they believe their child is getting. And you know what? It provides good competition for our public system when we have these other offerings available.

Some other problems that I hear from my constituents who are parents of children in daycare is that the new ratio of no more than two children under the age of two allowed in a facility, or that only five children under the age of four is the maximum, will make it tough for

parents to find affordable daycare close to home. That's the important part.

1730

I have heard from many in-house daycare providers that this bill will require them to raise costs and restrict children from enrolling in their daycare. The government argues that this will create 6,000 more spaces for children, but in reality, the proposed legislation only allows for one more child to be under the care of a caretaker in a licensed home, if they are between the ages of five and six.

Currently, almost 80% of child care is unlicensed, as I mentioned earlier, so this bill will affect the majority of parents in Ontario. This means that a large number of families may lose daycare services as a result of the proposed legislation. I have received many emails about Bill 143, and I felt that it's important to share those concerns of my constituents.

In fact, I talked to Katie from Baden, who wrote me and said that she is the mother of an 18-month-old and just had another child in February. Her son currently attends a home daycare with a maximum of four children a day, with her son being the youngest and the oldest being 22 months.

She says that the woman who runs the daycare is the most thoughtful, caring and loving woman. She is flexible to the parents' shift schedule, which has made it affordable for Katie to go back to work after being on maternity leave. She feeds her son homemade and mostly organic foods and plans daily crafts and song time. She ensures that the children go outside daily, and is doing everything she could ask for someone to take care of her son.

Unfortunately, though, this bill would prevent her from continuing to watch her son, which puts her in a position to find a new daycare provider, in a short amount of time, who would be as flexible, caring and considerate on the same budget—true story. Anybody who wants to see that email, I'd be happy to share it with them.

In New Hamburg, Christina is an in-home childcare and daycare provider who graduated from Conestoga College in early childhood education. She has her CPR, provides healthy meals and provides age-appropriate activities to help educate the kids. Christina and her husband renovated their entire basement to convert it to a toddler-friendly and safe environment with a separate entrance, kitchen and bathroom facilities.

The proposed two-under-two ratio, in her opinion, is too strict; many childcare providers are well-trained and experienced enough to properly take care of more than two toddlers. She says that it is the responsibility of the childcare provider to decide whether they feel comfortable with the number of children they look after.

She went to school for this, and that is why she has so many families contacting her to take care of their children. According to Christina—and she makes a valid point—parents should also be responsible for choosing their daycare providers. If they feel satisfied with the

facility that Christina is running, it is her right to operate this business.

She makes another good point: that children around the same age do very well together when participating in activities. Having the kids all around the same age allows them to get into a routine and play safely, rather than having large gaps in age where interests will vary.

Since many licensed daycare facilities don't even offer services for children less than 18 months—I did talk about that; we're obviously going through that with Lincoln. He'll be one year in December, and we're already planning where he'll go after that, but there's that gap before the YMCA or another provider will take them, at 16 months at the earliest. That four-month span is a difficult time. Clearly Murphy is at the YMCA, but they don't take them before 16 months, so we'll have multiple providers. There are a lot of families who, obviously, would like one. As I had said, since many licensed daycare facilities don't offer these services, the proposed change would limit the amount of daycare providers available for those under one and a half years.

I've heard from several parents that this would prevent them from going back to work sooner, since they would have troubles finding a daycare that is conveniently located, has spots open and is something that their family can afford. On top of that, restricting the number of children under two would greatly affect daycare providers' hourly pay, making it impossible to run a business. The fewer children they have, the smaller the budget they will have to provide healthy food, materials for activities etc.

Christina says that these changes will put her business at risk, and she may even have to close her doors and find work elsewhere. This concerns Christina because there is already a surplus of teachers in the job market today.

Like Christina, daycare providers—whether they are licensed or not—have to be competitive and operate like a business. They must provide the best care, at the most affordable price to parents, while ensuring that they are receiving good pay and operating their business safely. All of these factors are important when a parent chooses where to bring their child, like I mentioned before.

Stories like Katie's and Christina's ripple across my riding and all over the province. They are not alone with the concerns on this bill. Like I said, 80% of daycare services are informal and not licensed. This is far too many families who risk not being able to afford the alternative that is being pushed by these legislative changes.

I know I've got 20 seconds left. I'll conclude in my two-minute hit. I know my colleagues will want to have a say to this.

Interjection: I know one for sure.

Mr. Michael Harris: I encourage her to share her experience at the Montessori school that I participated in. I wanted to thank them for providing the important service they are in my community. I look forward to questions and comments from my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Questions and comments? The minister—the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is so very clear that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga is so far out to lunch on the child care file. It is very typical, though, of the PC caucus. They are following well in the footsteps of the Stephen Harper federal government, which brought choice in child care, \$100 a month. He has clearly fallen into step with that, this \$100-a-month choice in child care, if you have a choice, which 80% of the parents in this province do not have. I think that this business model, this language that the PC caucus uses around children—it's almost like they want a Walmart version of child care where the lowest price is the law.

I'm going to tell you why we need licensing of child care centres. There are five very good reasons. On July 28, 2010, two-year-old Jeremy Audet drowned at an unlicensed daycare. In January 2011, 14-month-old Duy-An Nguyen died in an unlicensed Mississauga child care. In 2013, on July 4, Allison Tucker, age two, was found dead in an unlicensed child care centre. In July 2013, Eva Ravikovich died at an unlicensed home daycare. In November 2013, a nine-month-old baby, Aspen Juliet Moore, died at an unlicensed child care facility.

This is a very important issue. For us to sort of do the partisan thing about who's visiting a Montessori—I had a great tour at Montessori. I loved the people there. I understand and have taken the time to learn about what impact this piece of legislation will have on their school. I will do something about it when it gets to committee. But what needs to happen in this province is that we need to keep children safe when they need child care. We need to give parents options for child care. That's where our focus should be in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Questions and comments?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Well, you know, I say to my kids every day, "Today is a new day." Today is a new day, because yesterday I was in strong opposition with something the minister—sorry, I'm calling you the minister—the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was debating, but today I couldn't agree more with her. I couldn't agree more with what she just said about the Child Care Modernization Act.

Like her, I have many Montessori schools in my riding as well. I'm meeting with them. I'm listening to them. I'm touring their facilities. When this gets to committee, I'm sure we'll hear from them again, and that will be a constructive thing.

But the important thing is to really get back, I think, to what this bill is all about. It's about strengthening the oversight of the unlicensed child care sector while increasing access to licensed child care options for families. It would put an immediate shutdown of a child care provider when a child's safety is at risk. It would also clarify what programs and activities are exempt from licensing requirements, including care provided by relatives, babysitters, nannies, camps and so on for school-

aged children. It would require all private schools that care for more than five children under the age of four to be licensed. That's a good thing.

As the member from Kitchener–Waterloo said, we're in second reading debate here. Let's continue the debate, and then let's get it to committee. Then we can hear from the stakeholders. We can tweak it. But let's not lose sight of what this bill is all about. It's about child safety. It's about increasing access to child care options and providing stronger oversight—all good things.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I always listen carefully and respectfully to my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga. I should say that he brings a very genuine context to this debate on Bill 143. He and his wife Sarah have three children: little Murphy and Lincoln and Brayden. He speaks with knowledge and information in terms of the options that are prohibitive.

We all recognize the issue—I've heard it in my riding—of the Montessori schools. But this government thinks that one size fits all, and that's what is the most troubling of all the things they do. Whether it's for northern Ontario or Toronto, they operate as if everybody lives in Toronto. It's unfortunate. They honestly don't realize that options for parent choice are very important. To presume that everyone—we had five children. My wife was a teacher and we had mixed uses of family members and others—I won't say any more than that, except to say that 80% of children's care provided in Ontario is unlicensed daycare. To suggest for one moment that they're all somehow abusive situations is simply wrong.

It's the attitude of this government that they're going to fix it—most of the stuff that they've set up to organize is where the problems are. I don't care what institutions we're talking about in Ontario today—long-term care, all the way through the list—there are risks to people. I think this bill presumes that unless it's run by the government, it isn't safe for your children.

You look at the children's aid societies recently as an example of governments trying to say that they can do all things. I think this bill definitely should go to committee. It's a huge issue. I think it's a political football, too. In this respect, I really feel that going to committee and hearing the real people tell their stories—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: How did they do that early learning program? All degree teachers with a master's degree, babysitting kids.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just want to grab, for a second, and actually look at this bill. It's quite extensive. There are quite a few pages to go through in this bill. When you talk about our children, that's something that is really key, and it's something that is very important.

The bill, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2013, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to

amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 and the Education Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts—it sounds important, and we've got to deal with it. And it is important. But this is where my problem is: It was presented on December 3, 2013. I was here—I believe it was a couple of weeks ago—when we first started having discussions on this particular piece of legislation. We should have been having this discussion a long time ago. This is something that is a priority for this province. This is something that we should be moving forward.

I want to make sure that people from Algoma–Manitoulin and people across this province know why this is going forward and why it didn't come up—because the government of the day sets the order paper for the day. This is an opportunity that they had a very long time ago to bring these issues up, not the day before we have a budget reading. We should have had this discussion a very long time ago. This should have been in committee a long time ago, and it is because of the lack of focus that this government has had on priorities for Ontarians that we're now discussing this—how convenient—a couple of days before a budget is brought before us.

This government has lacked in regard to setting true priorities for this province, and we are going to continue, as far as what we need to do. I look forward to having this in committee, but unfortunately I hope that we can get this moving forward. It's unfortunate that it has to come up a day before the budget is proposed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Conestoga has two minutes.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to thank my colleagues who chimed in on my remarks. Obviously, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo—I will never doubt her commitment to children and youth. We're going to have different opinions on things in more cases than not, but I definitely want to get that out there. I give her a hard time, but it's all in good fun.

The member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the member from Ajax–Pickering and, of course, the lovely comments from my colleague John O'Toole, the one-man filibuster—supposedly. Look, he serves his community properly by standing up and speaking to all issues for his constituents.

I think what we've heard today is a lot of things. To me, I would say, from the folks I've talked to, whether it be parents, informal daycare providers, private schools or third party daycare providers, there wasn't a consultation involved here. We all have concerns with Bill 143 and feel that there simply wasn't enough consultation done before it was tabled.

I'm a father. I am very supportive of ensuring that our children are in the safe hands of others. This bill, in its current form, is too stringent and does not effectively tackle the issues of safety by lumping all daycare providers into one definition. As my colleague said, they believe one size fits all, and that's simply not the case.

This will prevent children of the same age from playing and learning together. It will restrict informal

daycares from continuing the way they operate even though some have been running their business for decades. It will increase the cost of care and could prevent parents from going back to work. It will threaten rural daycares to close their doors, restricting accessibility to families. It will prevent schools like Sunshine Montessori from providing the programs they do for children under five. They are special. They are different. The government talks about helping them, as well as the third party. Well, look, stand up and be heard. Let's actually put their mouth where it really matters and let's see them recognize the importance of what they really do.

Many good comments here; I hope the government takes them in consideration, and we'll go from there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand up and to discuss, at length and in depth, some of the connotations and the impact of Bill 143. I think that this is actually an incredibly important piece of legislation. It does provide the framework, and all of us here in this House would agree that the framework for child care needs to be updated. I think we can all agree on that. If that's the starting place for the debate, then we should be able to work this out.

The legislation has some basic principles that we can all support. Establishing a system of responsive, safe, high-quality and accessible child care and early years programs and services will support parents and families and will contribute to the healthy development of children.

The research on the child care file, on the child care sector, the evidence-based research, is profound. From Fraser Mustard to the Atkinson Foundation, the research is solid. It has indicated that learning and development that occurs during a child's early years is critical and can have a major bearing on a person's later achievements in school and in the workplace and on overall health and well-being throughout a person's lifetime.

A strong system of child care and early years programs and services increases labour market attachment by supporting the diverse working circumstances of parents. We know in the province of Ontario in 2014 that there is more precarious work, there is more part-time work. We have seen the workforce and the demographics of the workforce change drastically.

It is unfortunate, and this is something that I've never quite fully understood: why the PCs and the Conservatives in this province and in this country do not support a solid, sustainable child care system. With every dollar you invest, depending on the research, you get a \$3 investment back or a \$7 investment back. It's across all demographics and all sectors. So what a smart investment it would be for the Conservatives, for the Liberals, for all of us to come together and recognize the positive impact on the economy that a sustainable child care system would have.

It was interesting that the member from Kitchener–Conestoga raised the issue that we dealt with at the

Waterloo Region District School Board. For those of you who don't know—when I was chair of the board I sent you all letters, so you should know. I'm sure you read everything that comes into the office. But when the Liberal government brought in the full-day kindergarten model, they left some key planning structures out. But they also called on school boards at the time to extend the school day before and after. That was in the original plan by Charles Pascal. It was endorsed, actually, by researchers, by child care advocates and by labour across the province. In fact, the rest of the country was watching the province of Ontario.

The premise of that plan was that we would make use of the current infrastructure in the province of Ontario, which are schools. Because the children were going into full-day kindergarten—ages four, five and six—we would make use of that infrastructure, those schools in those communities, and employ ECEs from 7 o'clock in the morning until 1 o'clock, and then 1 until 6. This was a huge boost to the early childhood educators as well, because for too long, as a group and as a sector, they had been neglected. They were on the bottom of the food chain. They were paid very little money. They were doing split shifts, the early and then the night shift. It was basically just a disrespectful position for them to be in in the province because they were never acknowledged as the professionals that they are.

1750

It's very similar, actually, to the personal support workers in the province of Ontario and, for a long time, early childhood educators, which is again a mainly female-dominated field—with training, with tons of training. One of the most important jobs that anyone can have is working with young minds, with young children, ensuring that they are safe, ensuring that they are nurtured and ensuring that they are cared for and loved. You can't put a price tag on the compassion; I can tell you that much.

When the child care sector, though, realized that the Liberal government had not fully realized the negative impact that full-day kindergarten would have on the entire sector, a sector which was already vulnerable, they pushed back on this plan because child care in the province of Ontario relies so heavily on those school-age fees. In fact, those school-age fees basically subsidize entire centres. When child care centres were going to lose that important factor, they saw that there wasn't necessarily a sustainable plan for them. So they pushed back, and the Liberal government caved on it, which is really a missed opportunity. Instead of coming to the table and saying, "We understand what the real situation is. We understand that child care in the province has no true sustainable plan. We're going to support child care"—so that would be age zero to 3.8—"but we're going to carry on with this plan because we understand that creating child care spaces for those school-age kids can be done around community hubs."

This vision of community hubs was a good vision. We should have followed through on it. That's what we did in Waterloo, though, and I'm very proud to have been the

chair during that time. I tell you, if you can survive that piece of history, you can do almost anything. The MPPs came in and they said, "We don't like the pushback that we're getting." The Waterloo Region District School Board, to some degree the Waterloo Catholic and the Ottawa-Carleton followed through on some hybrid version of what was originally the plan. In Waterloo region, in that school board, to date we've created almost 1,600 child care spaces, at no cost to the taxpayer because the parent fees pay for the before-and-after—that's at \$24 a day. There are parents in the province of Ontario who cannot believe that a child can come in to a quality setting with a play-based curriculum and have qualified early childhood educators work with them throughout the day. That's making use of the current infrastructure. It should be happening in Hamilton. It should be happening across the province. It really does speak to the vision of child care and of education. I'm proud that we got that accomplished, and I think that the research will show that we made the right decision. It took some leadership, it took some discipline and it also took a new relationship between child care and education.

That comes back to this bill, Mr. Speaker. A strong system of child care and early years programs and services increases labour market attachment, as I've already said. It enables parents to continue participation in the workforce, or education or retraining.

To support the particular cultural and linguistic needs of aboriginal, First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, as well as francophone communities, Ontario needs child care options that are responsive and that are adaptable.

We have seen some tragedies, as I've mentioned. I think it's important to say the names of these young children whom we failed. The system failed these children. When you talk to these parents, they had no choice but to leave those children in those care options, because choice in child care is not the reality for the majority of parents in the province of Ontario.

There are some elements, though, of this legislation that, again, I think all members could support.

Unlicensed child care providers must count their own children: It only makes sense. After all, your own children need care as much as other children. This is common sense. If this gets to committee, we're going to try to make this a factor.

Unlicensed providers can only operate in one location: This is an issue that we're going to deal with at committee as well.

Unlicensed child care providers can't call themselves a child care centre. If you have, like exists here on the east side of Toronto, three houses that have almost 20 children in each house, you should not be able to call yourself a child care centre just because you have children and because they are congregated in one location. That does not make you a child care centre. We need oversight with regard to this.

There have been some leaders on the child care file who have greatly impacted the advocacy that I've been able to accomplish through the Ontario Coalition for

Better Child Care. They're a very informed voice. We were part of the Child Care Action Network in Waterloo region. It's important to listen to the voices of parents. It's important, of course, to work closely with municipalities.

Now school boards are a major part. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that every school board in the province is receiving funding to help them navigate through the before-and-after extended day model? It would be interesting for me to find out how many of those school boards are actually following through with that funding and making sure that they are engaging the community in an inclusive model of child care.

I recently had a great opportunity, as the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo, to honour one of the champions in child care. Her name is Penny Curtis. She received the Leading Women Building Communities Award. She was very political in her acceptance speech. She said that we must do better; we can do better.

Getting this piece of legislation to committee is one of the first steps to securing a stronger child care model. In

the broader sense, while the rules may be necessary, we also have to ask: Why are so many children in unlicensed child care? That Ontario only has spaces for 20% of children is a huge red flag. No amount of rules for unlicensed providers will change that. This piece of legislation does not address the bigger issue: that there is a lack of affordable, accessible child care in the province of Ontario.

We from the NDP caucus are determined to change this. We are looking at creative options, and we're looking forward to this piece of legislation getting to committee so that we can strengthen it and so that we can make sure that the needs of children come first, that it is child-focused and not just focused on the politics at hand.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	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
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Brampton–Springdale	

**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: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Laura Albanese, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
Teresa J. Armstrong, Steven Del Duca
Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Monte Kwinter, Jane McKenna
Rick Nicholls, Peter Tabuns
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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