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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 20 April 2015**

**Lundi 20 avril 2015**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 April 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 avril 2015

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome some very special guests here today at Queen's Park. I had a great meeting with the chairs of our community advisory boards that provide advice to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I want to welcome Julianne Dunbar, who's a member for the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre; Ian Peer, who is the Chair of the Community Advisory Board at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre; Nancy Martin, who is the Chair of the Central East Correctional Centre's Community Advisory Board; and I believe we had with us earlier Wesley Crichlow, who is the Chair of the newly formed Community Advisory Board at Toronto South Detention Centre. I thank them for their public service and welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce the mother, Dawn Perry, of page captain Cailyn Perry from the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. Welcome.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** On pay equity day, I'd like to introduce the House to Mary Cornish, who's the chair of the Equal Pay Coalition; Samantha Scott from SEIU Local 1, who is their staff legal counsel; Lori Davis from OPSEU, a pay equity negotiator; Nancy Hutchison—everyone will know—from the OFL; she's their secretary-treasurer. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to introduce Mr. Richard Redman of United Rentals in Mississauga. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park Jamie McMillan, the founder of Journeyman: It's a Status, Not a Gender, who is a journeyman ironworker and welder from Local 736 in Hamilton. She's here for Equal Pay Day. Jamie, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** It gives me great privilege this morning to introduce the mother of the page from my riding of Davenport, page Misha Davies Gedalof. I want to introduce his mother in the public gallery this morning: Sarah Davies. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** It's my pleasure to welcome students from West Hill Collegiate, who will be joining us later this morning, Speaker.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good morning, Speaker; good morning, Premier. My question is for the Premier. In the documents received during the gas plant scandal, we saw the confidential advice to cabinet. We learned the path to balance you presented to the financial community was complete fiction. The numbers presented were "never a real expectation" and "a deliberate policy." It went on to say that, "Over the medium term, we have notional targets that add up to the deficit numbers, but not yet full plans to deliver on them." It also divulged, "For the extended outlook, neither sector targets nor plans yet exist."

Well, Premier, the time of reckoning is fast approaching. Do you have a credible plan to balance, or is it still aspirational?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I was tempted to say to the member opposite, in response to his question about whether we have a credible path to balance: Yes; simply yes. However, I will elaborate because I know that the member opposite is very excited to see the budget that will be delivered this week, and that he is leading up to and anticipating that event.

As the member opposite knows, our commitment to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 remains in place. We are overachieving on the targets that we have set in 2014-15; our government beat the deficit target by \$1.6 billion. The member opposite knows that we have a plan that includes program review, renewal and transformation; he knows that managing compensation costs is part of that path to balance; he knows that making sure that everyone pays their fair share of taxes—those are components of our path to balance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** To the Premier: The once-secret documents went on to say that "in order to hit the deficit targets, spending growth has to decrease dramatically"—but they're not alone. Moody's changed their outlook from stable to negative, concerned over your inability to eliminate the deficit. The chamber of commerce, in their How Bad Is It? report, tells us we're in crisis—and becoming increasingly dire. The Auditor General said, "Ontario's debt continues to grow faster than the province's economy"—that this is crowding out other spending and we can expect another downgrade.

Despite all this, you haven't changed a thing. Your numbers are going the wrong way: \$9.2 billion grew to \$10.5 billion grew to \$10.9 billion. You haven't changed

a thing. When are you going to provide a serious, credible and detailed plan to eliminate the deficit?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just repeat what I said in terms of in 2014-15: Our government beat our deficit target by \$1.6 billion.

I will say to the member opposite that I recognize that we made decisions in terms of investments in this province, in terms of investment in people's talent, their skills and our education system, in terms of investment in infrastructure, public transit, roads and bridges across this province. We made those decisions as being very important to the future well-being of this economy. We are committed to that.

At the same time, we've taken a balanced approach, and let me just expand on the plan in terms of the path to balance. When I talk about program review, renewal and transformation, we're talking about reducing overlap, we're talking about improving efficiency. When we talk about managing compensation costs, we're committed to net-zero bargaining. That is a critical part—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Beating your fluffed-up numbers is no achievement, Premier.

Over the last couple of weeks, our colleagues have presented you three budget asks. The first asked you to stop your planned pension tax, as it will put a burden on business and cost us jobs. The second asked that your cap-and-trade tax not be adopted, as it hurts families by putting a tax on everything. The third asked you to fix home care by reducing the number of agencies patients must deal with on a day-to-day basis.

Today, we make our fourth ask. Based on everything you've heard, from all of the experts, including your own Ministry of Finance, Premier, we ask that you present a serious, credible and detailed plan to balance the budget by 2017-18.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier.

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**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just say to the member opposite, on the fourth request: Absolutely. I look forward to him reading the budget before he comments on it, and he will see the serious, credible plan that's in place.

On the issues around home care, we are in the process of transforming the health care system. I agree with him that there's more that we can do in terms of making sure that people understand the system, that they can access the system, and making sure that we've got the right governance in place.

What he's saying in terms of the first ask is, "Make sure you don't work to have retirement security in this province." Well, we're not going to do that. We are absolutely committed to retirement security, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The second ask is, "Don't fight climate change. Don't do your part to fight climate change." We're not going to acquiesce to that, Mr. Speaker. We are going to fight climate change.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy leader, come to order.

New question.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Premier. On May 21, 2002, Dalton McGuinty moved an opposition day motion in this House and said, "What would possess the government, I mean any government, to sell" this asset?

We know what possesses this government: It's years of financial mismanagement and scandals, and the fact that they don't know how to pay for their promises.

By selling a majority stake in Hydro One, Ontarians will lose control of this asset, and prices will skyrocket to pay for the last 12 years of this government's mismanagement—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Economic Development.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, why are you selling a majority stake in Hydro One when you said yourself that you can't guarantee that hydro rates won't go through the roof?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let me just say to the interim Leader of the Opposition that in order for Ontario to move forward, in order for us to realize our potential as a province and a future economy that is solid, we must invest in infrastructure. There's no option there.

When you talk to companies outside of this country, they look at us and they say, "Well, we like the look of Ontario, but we're not sure that you have the plan to invest in infrastructure that's necessary."

Mr. Speaker, we have that plan. This is about investing in new assets that are needed for today. It's about 20,000 jobs a year that are critical to our short-term prosperity. But in the long run, we must make those investments: \$16 billion in the GTHA and \$15 billion on projects outside the GTHA. Those are necessary to the future prosperity of this province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Premier: In 2002, Dalton McGuinty said, "This government should know that when you turn a natural public monopoly over ... it is the consumer who ultimately pays the price. Rates would go up. Rates could in fact go up dramatically and there is nothing consumers could do...."

Premier, you're not only giving up majority control, but you're taking \$4 billion that, by law, is supposed to be used to pay down the hydro debt and lead to lower electricity prices for everyone, because we'd have less debt to pay off.

Even with OEB oversight, customers are already facing a 42% increase over five years in their hydro bills.

Premier, if you can't guarantee that the sale of a majority in Hydro One won't increase rates any higher, why on earth would you expose the hard-working people of Ontario to even more hardship?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, let me just say to the member opposite that as we have made this decision to make investments in the transportation infrastructure within the GTHA and beyond—the transit, the roads, the bridges that we know are necessary—we are being very careful not to make the mistakes that the PCs made when they sold off the 407. In fact, that is exactly the model we have looked at to say we know that that is not what we can do—so, making sure that the regulatory protections remain in place for people in this province.

As I said last week, if there's a transmission line that needs to be built in northwestern Ontario, we will make sure that that transmission line is built.

The way that rates are set by the OEB: That's how they're set now; that's how they will be set in the future. Those protections are in place.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, in 2012, former Energy Minister Chris Bentley said: "We need to keep the whole asset in public hands, public control working for families and businesses...."

Premier, you're now selling a majority share of Hydro One to pay for your scandals and irresponsible management of Ontario's finances. The government I was part of came to understand that losing control of a public asset like Hydro One is a mistake. Up until recently, the Liberal Party seemed to agree with us, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, will you stop this foolhardy decision and keep a majority share of Hydro One in the hands of the people of Ontario, who own the company?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, let's talk about exactly what it is we're doing, rather than the fiction that the member opposite is putting forward.

We are making a decision to invest in enhancements to the GO line, a foundation for regional express rail that will allow us to have 15-minute service across the system. We are looking at projects like the Hamilton RRT and the Hurontario LRT.

Outside of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, we're looking at programs like Connecting Link. I would hope that the party opposite, that seems to talk about their concern for small-town and rural Ontario, would understand that having the Connecting Link Program that sup-

ports the maintenance and the upgrading of roads that are necessary connections between those small towns and provincial roads is critical.

That's the kind of infrastructure that we're investing in, because we know our economic prosperity relies on it.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier remind me and can she remind Ontarians: Did she run on a plan to sell off Hydro One, remove Ombudsman oversight and hand away control of this strategic asset to Bay Street?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would remind the leader of the third party that we both ran on a plan to invest in public transit by relying on a review of assets as part of that plan. The leader of the third party seems to have forgotten that.

She also seems to have forgotten that we need badly to invest in transit and transportation infrastructure. I would suggest that her new deputy leader could tell her how important it is to invest in transportation infrastructure, because he lives in the 905 and he knows how critical it is that we make those investments.

To do that, we were very clear in the last election and in the last budget that we needed to look at the assets that were owned by the people of Ontario, and in a responsible way—not in the way that the Conservative Party did it, which was to give away a provincial asset with absolutely no return. We were going to do this in a responsible way so that we could make those necessary investments.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is planning to sell off a majority of Hydro One. It's a plan she didn't run on. No matter how she protests, she did not run on that plan. Before last week, the Premier hadn't even actually talked at all about a plan to sell off the majority of Hydro One.

She hasn't shown Ontarians the respect that they deserve, or even asked them what they think about this plan. Does the Premier honestly believe that she has a mandate to sell off Hydro One to Bay Street?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** What I believe I have a mandate to do is to invest in the future of this province, to invest in the transit and transportation infrastructure that will allow us to thrive.

I will freely admit that this is not about ideology for me; it's not about ideology for us. It is about ideology for the leader of the third party. But our position is that we must make these investments.

A former NDP cabinet minister, Frances Lankin, who was a member of the advisory council advising us, and the Power Workers' Union, who are supportive of our plan, understand that. They understand that it's important to make practical decisions. LIUNA, the building trades, mayors and councillors understand that those investments are critical.

If we don't make those investments, which is exactly what the leader of the third party is advocating, then we will not be prepared to be competitive on the global stage.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it's kind of funny. Conservatives and New Democrats both think this is a really bad plan, but somehow the Liberals think it's a good plan. I don't see how that has anything to do with ideology. It's about the fact that the Liberals are doing something wrong for—

*Interjections.*

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

Please.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is ignoring Ontarians. And to add insult to injury, she's actually taking away their advocate at Hydro One. Let me talk about page 26 of the Clark report: "We are also proposing that" Hydro One "will no longer fall under the scrutiny of the Ontario Ombudsman...." So not only will Ontarians no longer have control of Hydro One; when they have a problem they won't even have a champion to stand up for them. Does the Premier really think that along with less control Ontarians want less oversight as well?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The leader of the third party knows that publicly traded companies have a different set of oversight mechanisms, and I'm happy to talk about those, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure she will give me another opportunity.

But the fact is that we need to be clear about what the leader of the third party is saying. The leader of the third party has no plan about how she would invest in infrastructure within the GTHA and outside of the GTHA that we know is needed. She has no plan. In fact, she ran on the plan to review assets, which is what we have done.

The fact is that what the leader of the third party is advocating is not to make these investments in transit, not to create 20,000 jobs a year, not to make us competitive on the global stage; to say to companies in other parts of the world, "Actually, because of ideology, we're not going to invest in roads and bridges and transit that would make us competitive. We're not going to create those jobs that we"—

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

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, let me get this straight: Ontarians are going to get an Ombudsman to complain about flat beer, but when it comes to the hydro system, they're not going to have any Ombudsman whatsoever. It makes a lot of sense to me.

My question's for the Premier. Ed Clark admits that the first part of the Liberal Hydro One sell-off will cost Ontarians at least \$150 million annually. That's stable annual income that could fund hospitals, schools and,

heck, even infrastructure. By the time you sell off a majority of Hydro One, how much is it going to cost Ontarians each and every year?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party understands full well that what we are proposing, and what Ed Clark has proposed, is that we make this into a stronger company, that we retain substantial ownership, that we have controls in place in terms of government influence, but that in fact the company become more efficient and that we realize the funding, we realize the dollars we need to invest in the assets that we know are needed right now and into the future.

As I said, the leader of the third party has no plan to make those investments. She has no plan for investing in transit and transportation infrastructure that is needed in communities across the province: in our urban centres, in our small towns, in our rural communities and across the north. She has no plan to do that. We do, and that's why we are going to make this decision. We are going to make sure that the protections are in place for the people and we're—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier knows that this plan is going to put hydro rates through the roof, but she's putting all of her trust in the Ontario Energy Board to keep rates under control. Now, that's the same Ontario Energy Board that allowed a 40% increase in rates for Enbridge just last year. Can the Premier give Ontarians any guarantee that her privatization plan will not leave them paying even more on their hydro bills once it's implemented?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The leader of the third party knows full well that the OEB does approve rate increases, and the OEB approves rate decreases, and enforces rate decreases. The leader of the third party has chosen to pick part of the report and part of the quotes that Ed Clark made. So I want to just be clear that in terms of what we can predict going forward, when Ed Clark was asked about whether rates would go up, he said this: "We don't think so. In fact, we" believe "the opposite will be the case," that "there will be a favourable impact on hydro rates over time."

I know that this is a concern, and I'm not going to cede this ground to the leader of the third party. I understand that people are concerned. That's why we are making sure that those controls remain in place. The controls that are in place right now will remain in place.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, selling Hydro One is going to drain needed provincial revenue. It is going to cost Ontarians more. It's going to mean higher bills and less money for infrastructure. It will mean less control and less oversight. It is a bad, bad plan, and the Premier knows it.

Will this Premier do the right thing by the people of this province and pull the plug on this short-sighted plan today?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It is the job of any Premier of this province to look into the future and make sure the decisions that we make today are going to be in the best interests of the province going forward.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, with the infrastructure deficit that was left by the previous government and, quite frankly, governments before that, we are digging ourselves out of that hole. We started in 2003, and we have to continue to make those investments.

My commitment to the people of Ontario, when I ran in the election last June, was that we would make those investments, that we would make sure we looked past the next election cycle and that we invested in the infrastructure—whether it's bridges in Kenora, whether it's roads in our small towns or whether it's transit in the GTHA, that we would make those investments. That's why we reviewed our assets and that's why we have made this decision.

#### TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Some 24,000 students at the Durham District School Board were met with a picket line today. Those 24,000 students won't be in the classroom today. The parents of 24,000 students are wondering how their children will spend that day. The parents of 24,000 students are worried their children aren't learning the skills they need.

These 24,000 students and their parents are just the beginning of a mess your 12 years of Liberal fiscal mismanagement have created. Minister, what do you say to those students who want to learn, and what do you say to the parents who want to see them succeed in the classroom?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Obviously, we're very concerned about the students and the parents in Durham, but I think it's important to understand that what is happening in Durham is a local strike between the local board and the local union. We know that in order to resolve this—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's not a local strike. What local strike will be on tomorrow?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Please continue.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I understand that the board in Durham has indicated that it's willing to come back to the table. I would encourage the union to do the same, because we know that, ultimately, the resolution is to come to a local agreement. That's absolutely the way that we will resolve this: to come to negotiated collective agreements.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, you know that there are a number of local boards that are prepared to go out right now.

This weekend, we all heard from students and parents. The message was clear: They don't want another spring break; they want to be in the classroom, on the sports field and going on their field trips. Your years and years of Liberal fiscal mismanagement are putting all of that in jeopardy. There are just no negotiations taking place.

Students are worried that they won't be able to improve their grades before the end of the year. Parents are worried that they won't see their children's graduation ceremony. Minister, can you guarantee that these students will be back in the classroom and their parents will actually see them graduate this year?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I need to correct one of the statements that the member opposite made. He said that there are no negotiations going on. We were very distressed last week when OSSTF walked away from the central table. I want to report to everyone in this House that we worked very hard with a provincial mediator over the weekend, and as a result of that hard work by all parties with the mediator, the central negotiating table has in fact resumed negotiations. Negotiations are going on at the central level.

1100

What that means is that because central negotiations are occurring, we have an opportunity to do what we all know we need to do to resolve the situation so students are in the classroom, which is to make sure that we reach a negotiated settlement, a negotiated collective agreement. That's what we're doing.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. The Premier insists that no company is going to be able to buy more than 10% of a privatized Hydro One. But does the Premier realize that if she sells 60% of Hydro One to private owners, the private companies will outnumber the province in every vote in every board meeting?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Speaker, I would say to the member opposite: Does he realize that if we do not invest in transit, in transportation infrastructure in this province—and particularly coming from a riding like Toronto–Danforth, I would expect that the member opposite would recognize that those investments are critical. I hope that the member opposite also recognizes that there is no plan being put forward by his party in terms of how he would make those investments.

What I have said and what I made crystal clear in my conversations with Ed Clark and with his team is that the protections, the de facto control over the decisions that are made, would rest with the government. That's why we have proposed that there would be substantial ownership. That's why we have proposed controls over the chair and so on, that this would be a broadly held company and it would be a strong company and the price-control protections would—

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, the Premier wants to keep 40% of Hydro One and privatize 60%. I want to remind her that 60 is more than 40.

We know that the private investors will be looking for one thing: profits and dividends. That's what they're supposed to do. But you know where the money is going to come from. It's going to come out of the pockets of the ratepayers.

Can the Premier explain how she can say the province will have de facto control of Hydro One when the public will be outnumbered three to two by private investors?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just talk about those protections that were absolutely fundamental to our decision-making in this. I'm going to talk about the Ontario Energy Board, because as the member opposite knows full well, right now the Ontario Energy Board sets rates. Let's look at what the Ontario Energy Board did in March—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In March 2015, the OEB decreased rates by \$100 for Enbridge and Union customers. In 2010, Ontario Hydro asked for a rate increase for distribution by the OEB and was ordered a 9% reduction for its capital request. In 2012, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for transmission, but the OEB ordered a 3% reduction for its capital request.

When OPG applied for a 6.2% rate increase in 2011, the OEB denied the request and lowered rates by 0.8%. That's the protection that remains—

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

## RETAIL ALCOHOL SALES

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, last Thursday, the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets released its report on how to modernize beer sales in Ontario. Grand River Brewing is located in my riding of Cambridge and their craft beer is very well known locally—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins-James Bay.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I've heard for quite a while now that craft brewers like them have a difficult time in getting access to the market, that there's an inherent unfairness when it comes to the beer retail system in Ontario.

Ed Clark and his panel made several recommendations, which I understand that our government will be acting on. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could you please explain how the proposed changes will help our local beer producers by restoring fairness to the system?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I'd like to thank the member from Cambridge for the question and her continued advocacy as well on behalf of her community.

I'm proud to say that the changes we'll be introducing represent the biggest shakeup of the sale of alcohol in

Ontario since the end of Prohibition. Some 450 grocery stores in Ontario will now be able to sell beer, and the Beer Store will return to its co-operative roots by opening up ownership to all breweries with facilities here in Ontario.

So far, the feedback we've heard has been overwhelmingly positive. Cam Heaps, the chair of Ontario Craft Brewers, said this: "This is a monumental day for craft brewers and for all consumers in Ontario. We believe that this package of fundamental changes ... will unlock craft brewers' true growth potential, allowing us to quickly double or triple our direct brewery jobs."

Irvine Weitzman, president of Mill Street Brewery, said, "Greater access to consumers and stability in our relationship with the Beer Store will make it possible for us to plan for, and invest in, future growth with confidence."

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I'd like to thank the minister for that answer.

Speaker, our government has a strong track record when it comes to creating jobs. I'm glad to hear that modernizing the beer system in Ontario will create jobs not only in my riding of Cambridge, but all across the province. I'm also happy to hear that we've listened to consumers and we're delivering more convenience and expanded choice.

However, any plan that expands the sale of alcohol distribution needs to take into account the impact it will have on social responsibility. Any changes that we make must uphold our province's strong record when it comes to the responsible sale of alcohol.

Speaker, through you to the minister: How have we ensured that the proposed changes to the sale of beer uphold social responsibility?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** That's a great question, Mr. Speaker, and I'd again like to thank the member from Cambridge for her advocacy. Our government has a strong record when it comes to job creation, and she's right when she says that our plan will create more jobs in the craft brewing industry. In fact, John Hay from the Ontario Craft Brewers has this to say: "This is a game-changer. This is a fundamental change. We can create a couple thousand jobs directly and all kinds indirectly in smaller communities right across the province."

The member from Cambridge is also right when she says it's important that we balance social responsibility. To do so, we'll maintain strict controls over how beer is sold in grocery stores. In fact, Andrew Murie, the CEO of MADD Canada, said this: "We are pleased that the council has listened to our concerns throughout this process. Given the good relationship to date, we have confidence in the council's continued commitment to work with MADD to ensure that beer is introduced to grocery stores in a socially responsible way."

## PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is to the Premier. Last week the sorry state of your government's handling



of the province's finances was once again confirmed when you told Ontarians that Hydro One was going on the auction block. Your claim is that the revenues generated from your fire sale are going to Liberal election promises, including public infrastructure, but the people don't believe you. Your record on accountability gives them every reason not to trust you.

Premier, I asked your minister this question before, and now I'll ask you: Will you put any deal for Hydro One in front of the Auditor General and the Financial Accountability Officer, and subject it to a value-for-money audit so the people of Ontario can know whether or not they're getting value for their money?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question.

The principles that the council is guided by are about incremental value for Ontarians and for consumers. They're also about ensuring that we provide greater investment opportunity thereafter.

We've always said that we'll be transparent and open in our discussion. So, absolutely, what we're doing will be open for discussion, will be reviewed. There's going to be a process over the next couple of months prior to broadening the ownership of Hydro One, and it's going to be in the best interests of all concerned, because we've mandated that, and we'll continue to do so.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'll go back to the Premier.

Premier, imagine all of the roads, bridges and subways you could have built if it weren't for all of the scandals and mismanagement over the past 12 years: eHealth, \$2 billion; Ornge, \$1 billion; the gas plant scandal, a billion dollars—and that's just to name a few.

Premier, your record on openness, transparency and accountability is—how can I put this in a kind way?—abysmal.

Ratepayers need to know that the proceeds from the sale of Hydro One are going to go where the law directs that they should go; namely, the \$27 billion of hydro debt. When you sell off 60% of that asset, the revenue piece will be dropped as well. It will drive up hydro rates again.

So I'll ask you one more time: Will you subject this deal to the Auditor General and the accountability officer—

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

Minister.

1110

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Oh, Mr. Speaker, imagine if they had applied the same principles to the sale of the 407. Imagine if the annuity of the \$1 billion annually was there for the benefit of the people of Ontario today.

We recognize the mistakes they made, and we're ensuring that we don't make them again. That is why we're broadening ownership. That's why we're insisting on the integrity of dividends that's going to be assumed by the ownership, still, of Hydro One. That's why we're investing it into the Trillium Trust which is going to be

legal because we recognize we're also applying a portion of that to the debt of OEFC and consolidated debt.

We recognize the importance of investing. The member across has just admitted that he would not invest in those transit projects because he feels that the return on investment is greater by holding an operation that is not—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** —should be. We're doing both. We recognize the incremental value that comes from it.

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

## EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Premier. This morning I joined education workers on the picket line in Durham, and it felt a lot like 1997. While this Premier claims she cut her teeth in education, the actions of her government are throwing our publicly funded schools into chaos.

Liberal cuts to education are undermining the ability of students to learn by forcing community schools to close, reducing in-classroom supports and limiting access to special education. It's frankly not surprising that we are seeing Harris-era labour unrest, with the first group of OSSTF teachers in Durham on strike as of today, and Sudbury potentially joining them next week.

Why is it that when Liberal insiders need a leg up, it's no problem, but when it comes to our educators and our community schools, the Liberals say that the cupboard is bare?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I really do have to challenge the premise of this question because once again the third party keeps trying to promulgate the idea that we have cut education funding. We didn't cut education funding. It's stable this year. It's exactly the same as it was last year, and there are actually fewer students in the system than there were the year before. That means we're actually spending more per student than we did last year.

If you look at our record over time, we've increased education funding by \$8.1 billion. That's 56%. So I absolutely deny the premise of the question. We have not cut education funding.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Back to the Premier: Premier, when you cut \$6 million in special education, when you provide \$36 million less for textbooks, in-classroom support and supplies, when you close 88 schools across the province since 2011, you simply cannot act surprised when Ontarians speak out.

This government's right-wing austerity plan means 21 fewer early childhood educators in Windsor-Essex, 118 fewer education workers in Peterborough and 50 fewer educational assistants in Toronto. It means students in

Durham and Sudbury need to worry whether or not they will actually be able to finish their school year, with grade 12s wondering if they will be able to transition into our post-secondary system. New Democrats and Ontarians know that it is not progressive to cut \$500 million from education.

When will this government stop cutting education, dealing out pink slips and closing community schools, all while calling it progressive?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I repeat, once again, the facts are just simply wrong. We have not cut funding for special education; we've increased funding for special education, just as we have increased every other line in Ontario's education budget. It's going up, not down.

However, we do have this sort of myth that the NDP keeps trying to sell to us: that we should ignore the fact that we have declining enrolment. It is absolutely true that the enrolment in many boards has gone down. The enrolment in many boards has gone down by 5%, 10%, 15% and sometimes almost 20%. Of course that means they're going to have to change. When enrolment goes down that dramatically, adjustments will happen.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Minister, in the recent election, our government ran on a plan to review our province's assets in order to invest in vital long-term infrastructure. Last week, Ed Clark and his council released their recommendations on how to unlock the value of our province's assets in order to make these important investments.

We know that by investing in infrastructure, we can spur economic growth and create jobs. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Could you please inform this House of how Ed Clark's review will allow our government to invest in transportation infrastructure and create jobs?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** In the last election, we ran on a plan to invest \$29 billion in transportation and other critical infrastructure. Thanks to the recommendations from Ed Clark and his council, we'll now be able to invest \$31.5 billion in transportation and critical infrastructure over the next 10 years.

Our government has committed to making the largest infrastructure investments in Ontario history, and the response has been very positive. John Tory, the mayor of Toronto, said, "I think it is a significant day, a significant step forward for transit in Toronto."

Jan De Silva, president and CEO of the Toronto Region Board of Trade, has said, "This funding will create good jobs while improving our region's productivity by modernizing our infrastructure to reduce congestion."

Mr. Speaker, these are critical investments we're going to be making—

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

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I know that constituents in my riding will be glad to hear that our government is increasing investment in transportation infrastructure. They know that our plan will create jobs, spur economic growth and allow them to spend more time with their families.

I was thrilled to join the Premier last Friday when we announced that, thanks to these investments, there will be increased service on the Barrie GO line. Constituents in my riding were delighted to hear that the GO line will increase from 70 to more than 200 weekly trips. The people in Newmarket–Aurora will directly benefit from the government's unprecedented investment in infrastructure.

Minister, can you please inform this House on how communities across the province will benefit from these investments as well?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Our government is making an unprecedented investment in infrastructure. As part of our plan, we'll invest \$16.5 billion in transit in the GTHA alone. Over the next 10 years, it will expand weekly trips across the entire GO rail network from 1,500 to nearly 6,000. That's a lot.

Unlike the opposition, we know the importance of investing in infrastructure. We know it's important to our economy, and it's important to keeping Ontario competitive. In a joint statement, a number of organizations—CivicAction, CodeRedTO, the David Suzuki Foundation, Evergreen CityWorks and the Pembina Institute—said, "We applaud the government's announcement ... of more than a billion dollars in new, dedicated funding for transit service and new capital projects in the GTHA."

"We look forward to seeing the government move forward on the implementation of this important initiative."

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've already admitted that your pay-to-pollute plan is a tax. What you have failed to mention is that this tax on everything will be one of the biggest taxes in Ontario's history.

The cost of groceries, heating your home, raising a family and doing business in Ontario is on the rise. The most recent StatsCanada numbers show that food costs have increased by nearly 4% since last year, while rent, property taxes and electricity have also increased.

People are struggling to keep up with these rising costs, and your pay-to-pollute tax on everything hasn't even begun yet.

Premier, why are you making the people of Ontario choose between heating or eating?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is going to want to speak to this issue.

But let's just be clear on what the member from the opposite side is saying. She's basically saying that we don't have to worry about climate change; that there's nothing that Ontario has to do; that Ontario has no responsibility to either take advantage of the innovation

opportunities that come with climate reduction, or to do our bit to reduce our footprint, to make sure that we take part in a global move to reduce greenhouse gas emissions so that we can cut down on the extreme weather events that I know are taking place in the member's riding, because they're taking place all over the province: the flooding, the wind, the drought in some parts of the continent. What the member opposite is saying is, "Don't do anything to address that; we have no responsibility as Ontarians." We reject that.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Back to the Premier: What I'm saying is, if you would have taken into consideration the consultation ideas that were suggested, a carbon tax on everything probably would not have happened, but you ignored the public across Ontario.

StatsCanada numbers show that Ontario has the greatest cost increases across Canada since last year. And what is the Liberal plan to help Ontario families all about? It's about putting a carbon tax on everything to fund your sorry government's mismanagement.

Ontarians cannot begin to save for retirement when they're worried about how they're going to afford to heat their homes. The Green Energy Act already takes \$1,100 out of a household's yearly income, and your approximate three-cent increase on the cost of gas will cost drivers another \$100 per year.

Premier, how are people going to afford to live in Ontario if you keep raising the cost of everything?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I don't know where to start; it's very amusing. "All across Canada, prices weren't going up as fast": (a) that's not true, and (b) BC, Alberta and Quebec—which is most of Canada—all have a price on carbon. So the member just proved our point. She's wrong.

Second of all, food prices went up because apple production was down 80% and then 60%. We want to be able to grow apples in Ontario because apples are a good thing. Drought in California, where 30% of our food comes from now, is going up.

Prices went up in grocery stores, the member should know, because—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Huron-Bruce will come to order. As you asked the question, I'm sure you wanted to hear the answer.

A one-sentence wrap-up.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much for making the government's case. Maybe we can give the member another question, Mr. Speaker.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Premier. Across the province, Liberal cuts to health care have been having a devastating

impact on patient care. On Friday, the Ontario Health Coalition held a day of action in front of the Sudbury MPP's constituency office to bring attention to Liberal cuts to health care in northeastern Ontario.

The numbers speak for themselves: 75 positions are being eliminated in the North Bay hospital. In the Sault Area Hospital, we are seeing the closure of 56 beds and 59,000 nursing hours. In Sudbury, it's 42 nurses who are being cut; nearly 40 positions will be lost in Timmins.

Will the Premier finally take responsibility for the cuts to health care in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I think the member opposite knows that we continue to make substantial investments in health care. The budget, the envelope for health care, each year has been going up. It will continue to go up in the years forward. A significant portion of that funding goes to northern Ontario.

We actually leave these important decisions to the hospitals themselves as well as the local health integration networks, at that local and regional level, to make the decisions that they deem most appropriate to ensure that the outcomes that we want to see in our health care system—the highest quality of care, timeliness in terms of provision of that care, and the appropriate staffing to deliver that care—that that's provided. We feel that it's important that that decision be made locally by our independent health care facilities in conjunction with our LHINs. That's what's happening in all parts of the province, including in the north.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the Premier: In March, a northern health care worker was quoted as saying, "We will probably be in front of [Glenn] Thibeault's office eventually." Look: On Friday, they were.

Even though this government tries to place blame on hospitals for the cuts, Ontarians know better. In fact, the president of the medical staff at Health Sciences North recently said, "I don't blame the hospital, because it's the Ontario government that's making them do it."

After decades of downsizing, Ontario hospitals have been cut more deeply than anywhere in Canada and now have the fewest beds left of any province in this country. Will the Premier tell the people of this province how many more cuts are coming with regard to her health care plan?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we've increased our hospital funding across this province by more than—sorry, it's risen from \$11 billion, when we came into office in 2003, to over \$17 billion now. That's a 50% increase in hospital funding, and it doesn't include the increased investments that we're making in home and community care as we continue that shift of patients who can be adequately or even, often, better cared for at home or in the community. We're increasing our funding to that sector by 5% this year, 5% next year and 5% the year after that. This year alone, it's about \$270 million as an increase.

But even in Sudbury and the Greater Sudbury area, the reality is that our investments have been increasing. The funding for hospitals in Greater Sudbury has gone up by 62% since 2003, more than \$100 million.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is for the Deputy Premier and President of the Treasury Board.

In the past election, we ran on a plan to maximize the value of our government assets in order to make critical investments in infrastructure. Based on their review, Ed Clark and his advisory council have recommended to the government that we broaden the ownership of Hydro One.

We've seen the mistakes that have been made, including that of the previous Conservative government when they imprudently gave away the 407. Because of their imprudent actions, constituents in my riding who access the 407 regularly now have to pay high tolls to foreign owners any time they want to use the highway.

Deputy Premier, how are we ensuring that we don't repeat the mistakes of the previous Conservative government with our plan to sell shares in Hydro One?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Burlington. There are several fundamental differences between the selling of Highway 407 and our plan for Hydro One. Let me highlight just three of those fundamental differences:

(1) Hydro One does not now, and will not in the future, have the power to set its own rates. Rates will continue to be set by the independent Ontario Energy Board. In stark contrast, when Highway 407 was leased, the government of the day made a deal that let the owners charge whatever they want.

(2) The province does not receive any ongoing revenue from the Highway 407 lease. As it would retain an ownership stake in Hydro One, the province will continue to receive income from Hydro One.

(3) The use of the proceeds of the lease of Highway 407—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —was not tied to any—any—government investment at all. It was used to pay the bills. The gain from Hydro One will be used—

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

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I'd like to thank the Deputy Premier for her response. It's comforting to know that our government has a comprehensive and well-thought-out plan when it comes to broadening the ownership of Hydro One and, in doing so, that we'll be able to make much-needed investments in transportation infrastructure, including GO train service enhancements for my community and my residents.

However, it's important that any action we take doesn't have an adverse effect on electricity rates. Some are saying that our plan to unlock the value of Hydro One would drive rates up. Deputy Premier, is that the case, or

will electricity rates actually come down thanks to Hydro One's improved performance?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's important to reiterate that Hydro One does not and will not set its own rates. Rates will continue to be set, as they are today, by the independent Ontario Energy Board. That's not changing. The OEB's mandate is to protect the interests of ratepayers and to set just and reasonable rates.

Additionally, our government intends to introduce legislation that would strengthen the regulatory oversight of the OEB to protect ratepayers, including increasing the penalties for non-compliant companies, enhancing the oversight of utilities and more protection for consumers who sign energy retail contracts.

Ontarians can rest assured that ratepayers will continue to be protected as we move to unlock the value of our assets and invest in much-needed infrastructure across this province.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My question is to the Premier. Hydro rates are out of control. Rate increases are forcing cuts in the classroom, hospitals and long-term-care homes, and the hikes are leaving businesses and households in the dark. Sixty families in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound alone had their utilities disconnected last fall because they could not afford your rates. But bills are about to get a lot higher after you sell off Hydro One and expose Hydro One's blockbuster debt of \$27 billion.

**1130**

So I ask you, Premier: How much more out of control will the rates get? How many more families will have their utilities disconnected?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just reiterate some of the points I have already made. The first one is, the way rates are set today is the way rates will be set going forward. I gave some examples, and I will do that again, Mr. Speaker.

The second point I want to make is that—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Finish please.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I actually believe—and this was one of the points that was put forward by Ed Clark—that we can see a better company. I actually believe that we can see a better company in broadening the ownership of Hydro One.

But let me go back to the way rates are set. In March 2015, the Ontario Energy Board decreased rates by \$100 for Enbridge and Union customers. The Ontario Energy Board sets rates, sometimes it approves increases, and sometimes it requires decreases. That regime will continue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Speaker, this Premier and her energy minister are clearly out of touch. Let me reiterate that rates 42% higher over five years is not the direction we should be going in.

The 60 families in Grey-Bruce whose lights, heat and hydro you allowed to be shut off really show what is happening in this province under your watch. You have failed to look after the cost of living for low-income Ontarians.

But the question underpinning all this is: What is this Premier's advice to low-income families, frail seniors and public institutions who can't afford their rates anymore—where exactly should they cut to make up the impact of your hydro increases?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt, when we came into office in 2003, there was a degraded energy system across this province. There had not been investments. There had been neglect. We have built up the energy system, Mr. Speaker; 10,000 kilometres of line have been replaced. I will acknowledge that there is a cost associated with that. Because that was not done in an ongoing way by previous parties, it had to be done, and we have done that. Because we recognize that there is a cost associated with that upgrading, we have put in place programs to keep hydro rates down.

I hope that the member opposite will make sure that his constituents are aware of those programs, whether it's the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program or whether it's the saveONenergy Home Assistance Program—those are programs designed specifically to do what the member opposite is talking about. I hope he will make sure his constituents—

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

#### PAY EQUITY

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, today is Equal Pay Day, a day that marks how much further into the next year a woman has to work in order to earn the same salary a man earned the year before.

Each year in this province, women's average earnings are about one third less than a man's—an injustice that is both a human rights issue and a major barrier to Ontario's economic and social well-being. Eliminating the gender pay gap is a multi-faceted challenge, but we know from other countries that it can be done, given the right government legislation and a real commitment to act.

I would like to ask the Premier, after more than a decade in office, how can you justify allowing the gender wage gap to widen under your watch instead of close?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you to the member for this very, very important question—very appropriate for Equal Pay Day.

Our government is committed to developing a wage gap strategy in Ontario that is going to close the gap in earnings between men and women. That's part of the Premier's mandate letter to me as Minister of Labour.

I'm pleased to say that today we're announcing the creation of a wage gap steering committee. This steering committee is going to develop recommendations, is

going to help create a strategy that's aimed at closing the gap through the actions of business, of government, of labour and of all Ontarians. Two external advisers—two very good external advisers—are being appointed, Linda Davis and Dr. Singh. They are going to be joined by Ontario's Pay Equity Commissioner, Emanuela Heyninck; and Nancy Austin, the wage gap strategy executive lead will be representing the Ministry of Labour. The object here is to make progress on this issue.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Speaker, it's embarrassing that we have yet to remedy this situation in 2015. After more than a decade of Liberal government, the problem is getting worse. The gap has widened to 31.5% from 28%. Simply talking about the issue and appointing another panel is not enough. Women's livelihoods are at stake.

It is not progressive to allow the gender pay gap to widen. It is not progressive for the government to refuse to comply with its own pay equity laws for female-dominated professions like midwifery and community service.

When can Ontarians expect real action from this Liberal government to close the gender pay gap?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Our Ontario Pay Equity Act continues to be recognized across Canada and internationally as one of the most progressive pay equity statutes in the world.

In terms of action, I do want to highlight what this government has done to make sure we have a fair society for women and make sure they're paid the same as men in similar jobs.

There is more work to do. You heard from the Minister of Labour about the panel, but there has been a number of programs the Women's Directorate has supported to help low-income women and women who experience violence, and help people get new skills and careers.

More than 2,200 women have participated in training through the Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology Training Program. We have a micro-lending program.

Be assured that our government is very, very determined to close the wage gap in Ontario.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order from the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to introduce some guests who are in the east members' gallery. The parents of Kristen Neagle, my OLIP intern, are here—Craig Moore

and Cindy Rampley—as well as a friend of mine from Ottawa, Aman Hundal. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

The President of the Treasury Board and Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I know everyone would love to welcome Ian Peer to the Legislature today. He's a very fine retired member of the London Police Service and a great friend of all of us. Welcome, Ian.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** We're joined by a number of people today. As you will know, it's Equal Pay Day.

Let me start by introducing Dr. Parbudyal Singh and his family: Nirmala, Amelia and Aren. They've joined us in the gallery today.

We also have people here from the Equal Pay Coalition. Mary Cornish is here. She's the chair of the Equal Pay Coalition.

Nancy Hutchison, the OFL secretary-treasurer, is here; and Carrol Anne Sceviour, from the OFL, the director of women's issues.

Lisa Kelly is here from Unifor. She's the director of the women's department.

Barbara Wilker-Frey is from CUPE—the social services coordinator.

Juana Berinstein is from the Ontario Association of Midwives—the director of policy and communications.

From the Pay Equity Commission, we'll be joined by Emanuela Heyninck, Grace Lin, Joanna McDonald and Margaret Dwyer.

From the Workers' Action Centre are Deena Ladd and Acsana Fernando.

Mary Joe Easton is here from UFCW Local 100A.

Finally, Nancy Austin is from the Ministry of Labour, and is the executive lead on the gender wage gap committee. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### NURSES

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to share the experiences of two constituents of mine, Heather and Maynard Payne, both experienced nurses who have endured nothing but frustration and delays with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Our local hospital has an immediate requirement for a nurse with Mr. Payne's expertise. However, he has not been able to clear the obstacles at the CNO. Mr. Payne is an American-born permanent resident of Canada with 20 years' operating room experience in the United States.

Mrs. Payne was born in Canada and educated as a nurse here. They have experienced significant and unjustified delays with credential approvals and registration through the CNO. Shockingly, one of the many significant delays was a requirement for both Heather and Maynard to prove they speak English.

To further frustrate the matter, when I spoke to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration about this issue and the proposed amendments to the health professionals act, he told me it was not his department but a matter for the Minister of Health. Surprise, surprise: When I asked the Minister of Health, he told me to speak to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

How do we expect to deliver the health care our constituents deserve if the people with the skills, the training and drive to do so have to jump through unnecessary regulatory hoops and barriers, barriers like proving their proficiency in English when their first and only language is, indeed, English?

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Before long we'll be singing Solidarity Forever over on those benches.

Anyway, I want to rise today on something that's directed to the Minister of Housing. Imagine the surprise of tenants who are seniors living in Timmins at what is called the Empire Complex at 11 Spruce Street when they organized themselves as tenants into a tenant association to do two things: yes, to advocate on behalf of tenants when it comes to issues in their building, but just to get together. Sixty per cent of the people who live in that building are seniors, and they want to be able to organize themselves so that they can have a tea every now and then, enjoy each other's company and have a little bit of an opportunity to socialize with other people who live in the building.

Well, imagine the surprise when the organizers of the tenants' association get notice of eviction from the owner, a Mr. David Wall, who comes from British Columbia, who serves a notice of eviction to seniors for trying to organize essentially a tenants' association that both is able to deal with them being able to socialize but advocate for their rights.

I'm putting the government on notice because when Natrice, one of the people who was evicted, called the Ministry of Housing, they said, "Oh, he's within his rights."

When is it in your rights to kick a senior out of a building because they're trying to organize a tenants' association? I serve notice to the House and to the minister today that this is something we're going to have to resolve, and we're going to have to resolve it very quickly.

### ISLINGTON HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Recently I joined constituents in my community of Etobicoke Centre in attending the

fourth annual Islington Health and Wellness Fair, sponsored by the Village of Islington BIA, the Islington Golf Club and the Etobicoke chapter of CARP. I want to thank the organizers and sponsors for continuing this annual tradition of reaching out and supporting my constituents in Etobicoke Centre.

At the fair, residents of Etobicoke had the opportunity to meet local health professionals in the community and received their expert advice on how to stay healthy and active through all ages of their life. It included organizations like the PKD Foundation, the Canadian Diabetes Association, Alzheimer Society Toronto, the Mississauga Halton CCAC, the Red Cross, Meals on Wheels, Islington Seniors' Centre, Dorothy Ley Hospice, the Etobicoke Lawn Bowling Club and others. I haven't mentioned them all—there are too many to mention—but there were so many exhibitors offering important advice to my constituents.

In a community like mine, where we have one of the highest percentages of seniors of any riding in the country, this kind of advice and this kind of support on how people can stay active and healthy is so important. The support of CARP Etobicoke in particular, both in sponsoring events like this one and in the regular work that the local chapter carries out, makes a huge difference to our seniors and their families and families who care for seniors.

The Etobicoke chapter is led by Chair Gary Hepworth. It's incredibly active and takes part in local events and in hosting regular meetings for members to discuss important issues that Canadians face as we age. This advocacy continues to make a tangible difference in the lives of my constituents and truly reflects CARP's commitment to solidarity between generations in order to build a more inclusive, healthy and civil society.

I'd like to thank all the sponsors and participants of the event and applaud CARP Etobicoke's contributions to this cause and its advocacy on behalf of seniors in my community of Etobicoke Centre.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My remarks this afternoon are addressed to the Minister of Health. I was approached a few months ago by a constituent, Barbara Selkirk, whose mother, Marlene Shields, has been diagnosed with a stage 4 glioblastoma brain tumor.

After two operations, which removed as much of the tumor as medically possible, Marlene had both radiation and chemotherapy. These treatments did little to slow the growth of the tumor. However, for a year, she received biweekly infusion treatments with Avastin. This treatment seemed to work, and MRI results showed that her tumor had stabilized.

The cost of Avastin is up to \$12,000 a month. The cost of the treatment has been covered by Marlene's husband's company's health plan, but that comes to an end at the end of this month.

We know that the cost of Avastin is covered in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. If Marlene lived

in any of these provinces, she would be assured that her treatment could continue. But because she lives in Ontario and the Ministry of Health says the manufacturer has not proven that Avastin works, the government will not fund it.

I know that the member for Dufferin—Caledon has written the minister on behalf of Marlene as well.

Time is running out. We implore the minister to personally review this matter and intervene on a compassionate basis until the manufacturer can submit additional clinical evidence that Avastin works as a treatment for this kind of cancer.

#### UNBOUND FASHION SHOW

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It is my pleasure to share with members of the Legislature details of the ninth annual Unbound Fashion Show, put on by the fashion design program at Fanshawe College.

Unbound, well known for its cocktail hour, catered reception, celebrity MC, fashion designers and its New-York-inspired runway, features the final collections of graduating seniors in the fashion design program. Held at Museum London, this high-profile event is juried by renowned Canadian fashion icons David Dixon and Franco Mirabelli, amongst other fashion industry leaders.

Through the fashion design program, students acquire a three-year co-operative Ontario College Advanced Diploma, which prepares them for the ever-versatile and rapidly changing fashion industry.

With this in mind, Unbound gives students the opportunity to let their talent shine and a professional venue to display their hard work. In fact, the top prize winner receives a professional portfolio, a photo shoot and a \$5,000-value subscription to Worth Global Style Network.

I would like to congratulate the graduating class of 2015. I am very proud of the creativity and passion shown in London—Fanshawe. I'm also pleased to share this achievement with all of you here today.

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#### SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD APPRECIATION DAY

**Mr. Han Dong:** I rise today to recognize and thank school crossing guards in my riding of Trinity—Spadina, the city of Toronto and all of Ontario.

Recently the city of Toronto proclaimed April 15, 2015, as School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day. I believe it is very important to thank the school crossing guards in my riding for their dedication and commitment to community safety. Thank you to the school crossing guards in Trinity—Spadina. I know you don't make a lot, but you take your job very seriously. As a parent, I want to thank you for the important work you do each and every day.

School Crossing Guard Appreciation Day provides us with an opportunity to recognize the significant contribu-

tions and important role that school crossing guards play in the safety of our children. Their work ensures the safe arrival of our children both at school in the morning and at home again at night. They play a vital role in our education system in Ontario.

I'm extremely proud of all school crossing guards in Trinity–Spadina, as the work they do, day in and day out, ensures the safety of our children. I stand today inviting all Ontarians to take a second and thank one of your local school crossing guards.

#### NATIONAL ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION AWARENESS WEEK

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in the House today to celebrate National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week. Anybody who has received an organ donation or knows somebody who has can't express enough how important this initiative is.

In the past I've been very fortunate to meet with Sandra Holdsworth of Gravenhurst. Sandra was the recipient of a liver transplant in 1997, and in the years since has been a volunteer and tremendous advocate for the Be A Donor initiative.

Sandra has also been a competitor at the Canadian, American and World Transplant Games and continues to be a great ambassador for the importance of organ donation. In fact, in 2011, Sandra organized a friendly competition amongst MPPs to see who might sign up the most donors.

I'm proud to say that the community of Parry Sound in my riding is currently the fifth-highest-ranked community in Ontario, with 51% of local residents being registered to be a donor. It's also worth noting that the top five communities in the ranking are all located in northern Ontario.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the dedicated volunteers in Ontario, particularly the Trillium Gift of Life Network. This week, I would ask people to take time to go online to [www.beadonor.ca](http://www.beadonor.ca) to verify their organ donor card and sign up to give the gift of life.

#### MENTAL HEALTH

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to tell you about a town hall I recently hosted in Kingston and the Islands to raise awareness on mental health. Mental illness is so common, so varied and the impact is so huge on society that we focused on stigma and strategies for its reduction.

The occasion was anchored by six panelists with a wealth of practical and research experience. Ruth Wilson spoke about health as a holistic package, and sickness resulting from a deficit in any one area. Family doctors already have a grasp on a person's dynamic.

Roumen Milev discussed self-stigma and when one believes the information and resists seeking help. Talking to those affected is the key to re-education.

Michael Condra presented mental health as a continuum of minor to major disruptions, and he pointed out the vulnerability of youth to risk factors such as bullying.

Heidi Penning and Ben Gooch's message was a call to action to employ persons with disabilities in inclusive environments where employees can feel safe, engaged and productive.

Craig MacFarlane spoke of Kingston Police's understanding of the importance of following up after a crisis to connect individuals with appropriate community resources.

Lastly, Madison Dorling bravely shared her lived experience with bipolar disorder.

It is my hope that the discussion brought us a little closer to accepting people with mental health conditions by recognizing negative stereotypes, stigma and discrimination. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

#### TAYLOR YOUNG

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I rise today as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and on behalf of my constituents of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell to congratulate and to recognize Taylor Young, a constituent in my riding who was awarded an Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers this past Monday.

Established in 1998, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers honours youth between the ages of 15 and 24 who have given a large amount of their time to charitable or not-for-profit organizations or initiatives and who have inspired other young people to volunteer. The medals were presented by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Taylor Young of Dalkeith is a gifted piper and fiddler. For almost five years he has been a member of the Glengarry Pipe Band, a community-based not-for-profit ensemble, volunteering his musical talents at many local community events. He has made significant contributions to the Celtic community in Glengarry county, actively encouraging other young people to embrace and promote local Celtic traditions and culture.

I'm extremely proud of Taylor for being awarded this important distinction in recognition of his significant contribution and dedication to volunteer service. He is truly an exceptional young Ontarian. Again, congratulations, Taylor.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd like to thank all members for their statements.

#### MOTIONS

##### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.



**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item number 49 be waived.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Naqvi moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 49 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### EQUAL PAY DAY

#### JOURNÉE DE L'ÉQUITÉ SALARIALE

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I rise in the House today to recognize April 20 as Equal Pay Day in Ontario. This is the day that's calculated each year in countries around the world to mark the extra time it takes a woman to earn as much money as a man.

I want to acknowledge the advocates, community leaders and those who work each and every day to end wage disparity. I'd like to particularly recognize the leadership of Emanuela Heyninck, Ontario's Pay Equity Commissioner, and extend a thank you to her from the people of Ontario to both herself and her staff at the Pay Equity Office.

Today, we recognize the critical role that women play in our economy. While we reflect on the sombre reality that women continue to earn less on average than men in our society do, Equal Pay Day is a reminder that we must dedicate ourselves to ending this discrimination and ensuring that the great contributions that women make to our society, economy and the province of Ontario are fully valued and fully recognized.

That's why, in the Premier's mandate letter to me, she asked that I work with the minister responsible for women's issues, the Honourable Tracy MacCharles, to lead the development of a wage gap strategy that will close the gap between men and women in the context of a 21st-century economy. It's an important task and it's one that Minister MacCharles and I look forward to tackling and making progress on.

Over the past several years, our government has taken many steps to improve the lives of women across Ontario. Some examples: the Ontario Women's Directorate created a Microlending for Women in Ontario program. It has helped more than 900 low-income women both build and grow their businesses.

But we're also paying particular attention to supporting low-income women. As a result of initiatives undertaken through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the child poverty rate in single-mother-led families has dropped from 44% to 36% in just two years. In addition, as of July 2014, the Ontario Child Benefit was increased to a maximum of \$1,310 per child per year. That's more than double the maximum benefit that was available in 2009.

We've invested significantly in child care, and we continue to implement full-day kindergarten. This helps women participate in the workforce while, at the same time, they know that their children are well cared for.

We've increased the minimum wage eight times since 2003. The ninth increase is coming into effect on October 1 of this year.

Since 2003, more than 2,200 women have participated in training through the Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology Training Program. This program gives low-income women the training they need to get those well-paying jobs.

Last month, Premier Wynne and Minister MacCharles released the sexual violence and harassment action plan for the province of Ontario. The plan will be implemented through numerous ministries, including the Ministry of Labour. The goal is to combat and to raise awareness of sexual violence, harassment and discrimination, and improve support for survivors in Ontario.

### 1320

Like closing the wage gap, these initiatives are steps towards increased fairness. We know that fairness for women in Ontario is about more than just money; it's about freedom from harassment, freedom from abuse, and it's about equality of opportunity. We're not there yet, Speaker, but we are making progress.

Today we're taking another big step in the right direction. Today my ministry is announcing that we have appointed two outstanding Ontarians as external advisers to the government's new Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee. One of those people is Linda Davis. Linda is the past president of the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario, of which she is currently an executive board member. She's also the board's Equal Pay Coalition representative.

Dr. Parbudyal Singh is a professor of human resource management at York University right here in Toronto and has joined us today in the members' gallery. Dr. Singh's research covers emerging issues in human resources management and labour relations.

Ms. Davis and Dr. Singh will be joining with Ontario's Pay Equity Commissioner, Emanuela Heyninck, and my ministry's wage gap strategy executive lead, Nancy Austin, both of whom have joined us in the members' gallery.

Speaker, the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee will conduct provincial consultation sessions in 2015. They're going to develop recommendations that will create a strategy aimed at closing the gender wage gap through the actions of business, government, labour and all Ontarians.

Our government is committed to women's equality in the province of Ontario. We're increasing women's economic opportunities. We're removing barriers that in the past have prevented full participation by women in the labour force.

The gender wage gap strategy that the steering committee will draft will build on the progress to date and will significantly improve economic outcomes for On-

tario women and of the province of Ontario as a whole. I look forward to receiving the committee's recommendations in spring of next year, after their consultations have been completed.

Speaker, by acknowledging this day, Ontario joins others around the world in recognizing that while we've made progress, this inequality still exists and we have a lot more work to do.

Ontario's women include innovators, scientists, teachers, CEOs and, I'm incredibly proud to say, the leaders of political parties and the Premier of Ontario. Yet as long as there's a wage gap, we all have work to do. The truth is, Equal Pay Day is a day that simply should not exist in the province of Ontario. Recognizing the value of the work that women do contributes to a more equal, a more just and a more prosperous society.

Our goal is an Ontario where men and women have equal opportunity to achieve their full potential within a modern workplace and become contributors to Ontario's continued economic growth. There's no other way to put it: Closing the gender wage gap in the province of Ontario is a necessary part of this goal.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for responses.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Equal Pay Day. I speak not only as a woman, but as a daughter, sister, mother, optometrist and member of Parliament.

I want to share the comments by actress Patricia Arquette while receiving her Oscar this past year: "To every woman who gave birth, to every taxpayer and citizen of this nation, we have fought for everybody else's equal rights. It's time to have wage equality once and for all. And equal rights for women."

I won't debate whether the Oscars should be used to express political commentary, but I commend Ms. Arquette for her comments while supporting her sentiment. It is time to work together to bring an end to the gender gap.

In an industry that tends to give female actors limited roles based on sexist ideals and a masculine hierarchy such as breadwinner or caregiver, her remarks unleashed a wave of agreement across the globe.

It is now our responsibility to reduce the wage gap and create laws that support a healthy balance between work and family life. The world economy has shown us time and time again that women's equality leads to job creation and economic expansion that benefit the entire population. We must act together to improve women's work spaces and lives and finally open the door of opportunity to all women.

J'aimerais faire part à mes collègues des commentaires de l'actrice Patricia Arquette après avoir gagné l'oscar du meilleur second rôle féminin. En acceptant les louanges avec humilité et grâce, M<sup>me</sup> Arquette a proclamé : « À chaque femme qui a donné la vie, à chaque citoyen qui a payé ses impôts, je dis ceci : Nous nous sommes battus pour avoir des droits égaux. Le temps est venu pour nous d'avoir une égalité salariale entre les hommes et les femmes. »

Chez une industrie qui a tendance à donner aux actrices des rôles limités basés sur le sexisme et une hiérarchie masculine tels que la principale dispensatrice de soins ou celui d'un observateur passif, ses remarques ont déclenché une vague d'accord en tous points de la Terre.

C'est à notre tour de minimiser les écarts de salaire et créer des lois qui vont améliorer le climat de travail et favoriser l'équilibre entre le travail et la vie familiale. L'économie mondiale nous démontre clairement que l'égalité des femmes mène à la création d'emplois et d'investissements et profite à bon nombre de gens. Il faut agir ensemble pour améliorer la condition féminine et pour ouvrir grand enfin la porte à l'opportunité à toutes les femmes.

Pay equity, also known as equal pay for work of equal value, is a fundamental human right. The goal is to stop discrimination related to the undervaluation of work traditionally performed by women.

It was back in 1987 that this province introduced the Ontario Pay Equity Act as the first important step in recognizing the equal value of women's work and eliminating discrimination in the workforce. While it is important to reflect on the progress that has been made in this province and all across the country, we are still not seeing adequately positive results. Legislation now requires employers to take steps to ensure that both women and men are paid on the same basis—fantastic for women who work in professions with good monetary value, while failing to address the serious problems in women-dominated professions.

Through the combined efforts of the general public, businesses and government, and all the activists as well, more awareness has been created about the causes of the wage gap. Concrete steps are required to better address and ultimately close the gap. Our PC caucus has strongly advocated for a government that helps create a fair, productive and sustainable society for all. We are proud to support the capable and intelligent women who contribute to our society.

Although pay equity is the law in Ontario, women, on average, still earn 31% less than men. As a result, women in Ontario have to work longer to earn what men earn in terms of average annual earnings. This pay gap affects women of all ages and education levels and has an even greater effect on racialized women, women with disabilities and aboriginal women. There are many statistics out there of women receiving less pay. I know that the women in my riding are valued members of the workforce, and this should be reflected in equal pay to them.

Mr. Speaker, many of us in the room are expecting to see three strong female parliamentarians leading our three parties in just a few weeks. Just as a female Premier was historic, three female leaders will be unprecedented in our province.

Strong women, strong society, strong families and a strong province of Ontario.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Speaker, Monday, April 20 marks Equal Pay Day in 2015. I use the word "mark" advisedly

because, unlike many of the days we recognize in this House, Equal Pay Day is no cause for celebration. The day represents how far into the next year a woman in Ontario must work in order to earn the same salary that a man did the year before. In order to earn what a man was paid in 2014, a woman must work those 12 months plus all of January, all of February, all of March and most of April.

Since 2013, thanks to the advocacy of the Equal Pay Coalition, many of whom are here today, as well as the efforts of Ontario New Democrats, in particular my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park, Equal Pay Day has been observed in this province.

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When it was first introduced, Equal Pay Day fell on April 9. Last year, it fell one week later, on April 16. This year, it falls later still. What does this tell us? It tells us that the gap is widening, not closing; that the problem is getting worse, not better; and that women are falling further behind, especially women who are racialized, women who are living with disabilities, indigenous women and newcomer women.

Speaker, in 2010, women in Ontario made 72 cents for every dollar earned by men. Today, the gender pay gap has increased to 31.5%. This is a fundamental injustice. It is both a human rights issue and a major barrier to Ontario's economic and social well-being. Over the course of their lifetime, when women earn about one third less than men, they must work until they are 79 years old to make what men earn by the time they turn 65. That is 14 years longer. Since most women do not keep working until they turn 79, they end their years in poverty and are twice as likely to be poor as senior men.

As women's issues critic for the NDP caucus, I can tell you that Ontario women want to see more than the striking of a panel. They want to see action and change. New Democrats will be watching carefully to make sure that the government delivers on its commitment to close the gap, but based on past experience, it's hard not to be skeptical about the Liberals' promise to carry this through. We've seen a Pay Equity Act that the Liberals have consistently refused to honour, especially in the case of midwives; an Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act that they have refused to enforce; and a Poverty Reduction Strategy that provides no funding and no targets.

We know that eliminating the wage gap will require a significant change to the way government operates—an end to their reliance on undervalued women's work for the delivery of government services, as well as a major commitment of funding—so we're going to hold off on the applause until we see some real resources allocated and some tangible progress made.

We'll also be watching for a gender lens in the minister's other initiative on labour laws and precarious work, because we know that a major contributor to the gender wage gap is the number of Ontario women who work part-time, even when they would rather be working full-time; the number of women who can only find

temporary jobs, contract jobs or minimum wage jobs; and the number of women who can't find any paid employment at all.

Speaker, we already know what needs to be done. We need strategies to improve women's access to collective bargaining and their rights to unionize. We need more quality, affordable and accessible child care spaces, not less, and greater access to paid parental leave, family leave and sick leave. While these kinds of policies will benefit all workers, they will benefit women in particular, given that women tend to carry the burden of family care responsibilities.

In the lead-up to this day, 18 MPPs signed pledges to be pay equity champions—all of them New Democrats, which comes as no surprise, since the majority of our caucus are women. I want to applaud the efforts of the Equal Pay Coalition to raise awareness among MPPs and to enlist our support. New Democrat MPPs did not sign that pledge lightly. We recognize the human rights of women to have their labour valued equally to men's. We also recognize the tremendous economic stimulus, the boost to Ontario's economy and the benefits to our communities that would result from ending pay discrimination.

In closing, a consultation more than a decade after the Liberals formed government is long overdue. While a panel is nice, New Democrats will continue to push for legislation, policies and funding that will enable men and women in Ontario to reach their full economic potential and participate as true equals in our province and our society.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the opportunity to go to Tillsonburg to recognize volunteers at Community Living Ontario and People First. They presented me with this petition, and I'd like to present it on their behalf.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

“Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the

pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

“Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015 shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost of transportation; and

“Whereas people receiving ODSP already struggle to get by, and incomes on ODSP provide them with little or no ability to cover these costs from regular benefits; and

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry’s goal of increasing employment and the provincial government’s poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government’s plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

Thank you very much for allowing me the time. I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

#### FIRST RESPONDERS

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas emergency response workers (firefighters, police officers and paramedics) confront traumatic events on a near daily basis to provide safety to the public;

“Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work;

“Whereas emergency response workers go through painstaking steps in order to receive WSIB benefits based on post-traumatic stress acquired while serving the public;

“Whereas Bill 2, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder, sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder it is presumed that they acquired the illness on the job, unless the contrary is shown;

“Whereas this change would ease the process for receiving benefits for emergency response workers with post-traumatic stress disorder arising out of work;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.”

I couldn’t agree more, sign my name with the thousands and give it to Ryan to deliver.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

“Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

“Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

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

“To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers.”

I agree with this, affix my signature and give it to page Mira.

#### ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I have a petition that’s signed by over 2,700 people since last week. It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas electronic cigarettes, more accurately known as vaporizers, are between 95% and 99% cleaner than smoking tobacco; and

“Whereas electronic cigarettes are not a tobacco product, but rather a tobacco replacement therapy for those wishing to quit smoking, and a significant contributor to tobacco harm reduction in Ontario; and

“Whereas there is no scientific or medical evidence indicating that vaping causes inhalable exposure to contaminants that warrants health concerns;

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

“That the government of Ontario abandon schedule 3 of Bill 45, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014.”

I agree with that petition and will hand it to page Thomas.

#### ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

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

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer’s disease is progressive, worsens over time and will eventually lead to death;

“Whereas there are an estimated 208,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease creates emotional, social and economic burdens on the family and supports of those suffering with the disease—over 25% of those providing personal supports to survivors of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia are seniors;

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“Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020; and

“Whereas Ontario’s strategy for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia has not been revised since the implementation of a five-year strategy in 1999;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately review, revise and implement an updated, research-informed, comprehensive strategy to respond to and prepare for the rapidly growing needs of those living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Misha to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

#### FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly funded French-language education; and

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto (Beaches–East York and Toronto–Danforth) and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school (grades 7-12) yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school, while several English schools in east Toronto sit half-empty since there are no requirements or incentives for school boards to release underutilized schools to other boards in need; and

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools, and yet, not a single French secondary school has opened in east Toronto; and

“Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that ‘... time is running out to address the serious shortage of at least one new French-language school at the secondary level in the eastern part of the city of Toronto’; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has confirmed that we all benefit when school board properties are used effectively in support of publicly funded education and that the various components of our education system should be aligned to serve the needs of students; and

“Whereas parents and students from both French Catholic and French public elementary schools in east Toronto are prepared to find common ground across all language school systems to secure space for a French-language secondary school in east Toronto;

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

“That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school (grades 7-12) in the community by September 2015, so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

I agree with this petition and I affix my name—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Further petitions?

#### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition received from Parry Sound Bikes and from the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas both provincial Highway 559 (from Nobel Road to Killbear Park) and Highway 124 (from Parry Sound to McKellar) are busy roads with fast-moving vehicles and no paved shoulders; and

“Whereas drivers, cyclists and pedestrians are put at safety risks on these stretches of highway between Carling, McDougall and McKellar which are the only routes available; and

“Whereas maintaining unpaved highway shoulders is costly; and

“Whereas area residents and visitors are increasingly using secondary provincial highways to support healthy lifestyles, reduce health care costs and contribute to positive economic development;

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

“To install paved shoulders on Highways 559 and 124 at the earliest possible opportunity, consistent with the 2013 Ontario cycling strategy that promotes safe, sustainable transportation.”

I support this petition and have signed it.

#### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that was gathered by Jim Reid, from my riding. He collected 480 names on the petition, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the NDP MPP for Timiskaming–Cochrane, John Vanthof, has introduced Bill 46 in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario so that UTVs (utility task vehicles) would be treated like all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) by the Highway Traffic Act;

“Whereas this bill to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect to UTVs was introduced on November 24, 2014;

“Whereas this bill will have positive economic impact on clubs, manufacturers, dealers and rental shops and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;”

They ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“To vote in favour of MPP Vanthof’s Bill 46 to allow UTVs the same access as ATVs in the Highway Traffic Act.”

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

#### CREDIT UNIONS

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I rise in the House to read this petition that’s addressed 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’m going to affix my name and send it down to the table with page Misha from my riding of Davenport.

#### OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas it has been over a decade since regulation 316/03 of the Highway Traffic Act has been updated to recognize new classes of off-road vehicles and a motion to do so passed on November 7, 2013, with unanimous support of the provincial Legislature;

“Whereas owners of two-up ATVs and side-by-side UTVs deserve clarity in knowing which roadways and trails are legal for use of these off-road vehicles; and

“Whereas owners should be able to legally use their vehicles to access woodlots, trails and hunting and fishing destinations;

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

“That private member’s Bill 58, which seeks to update the Highway Traffic Act to include new classes of all-terrain and utility task vehicles, receive swift passage through the Legislature.”

I’m pleased to support Mr. Miller’s private member’s bill. I’ll affix my signature to the petition and send it to the table with page Thomas.

#### ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** This petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I totally support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Ethan to take to the table.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

Speaker, I agree with this petition, affix my name and give it to page Samantha.

1350

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to inform the House that I earlier made a statement, and I'm glad to report that the landlord is not evicting anybody from the building. They're allowed to have a tenant's association and to post notice to people in order to be able to attend. I want to thank the co-operation of the landlord and everybody involved.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have available today for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT, 2015

### LOI DE 2015 SUR LES RÉGIMES DE PENSION AGRÉÉS COLLECTIFS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 15, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 57, Loi créant un cadre pour les régimes de pension agréés collectifs et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 16, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

On March 25, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 57. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

I wish to inform the House that I have received from the chief government whip a notice of deferral of this

vote. It will now take place at the time of deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, April 21, 2015.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

## VISITORS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I wish to inform the House that with us today in the Speaker's gallery we have a group of Franco-Ontarians who have been selected by an all-party panel of members to receive l'Ordre de la Pléiade, the internationally recognized medal of la Francophonie. These individuals are being recognized for their outstanding contributions to French-speaking communities in the province.

The recipients are Monsieur Ernest Côté, whose daughter Denyse will be accepting on his behalf, Madame Lyse Lamothe, Madame Nicole Larocque, Monsieur Sébastien Lorquet, Monsieur Didier Marotte, and Madame Bettina Setton. Bienvenue.

Please join me in welcoming our honoured guests to Queen's Park.

The member for Nickel Belt on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I beg the indulgence of the House. One of the recipients, Lyse Lamothe, is from my riding, and she came with friends from Sudbury. I'd like to recognize Lynn Michel, Robert Blais and Joanne Gervais and welcome them to Queen's Park. They made the trip in the pouring rain, so I wanted to thank them for their effort.

### TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (MAKING ONTARIO'S ROADS SAFER), 2015

### LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE TRANSPORT (ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN ONTARIO)

Ms. Sandals, on behalf of Mr. Del Duca, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act / *Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2012 sur l'autoroute 407 Est et le Code de la route en ce qui concerne diverses questions et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi sur les infractions provinciales.*

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

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, the member from Cambridge, and also the members from Northumberland–Quinte West, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Etobicoke Centre and Scarborough–Rouge River.

Just to lead off here briefly on Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act, Bill 31 is a key piece of a broader legislative package which includes subse-

quent regulatory amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, the Provincial Offences Act and the Highway 407 East Act. It does a number of things. The objectives are: to improve road safety; to enhance the collection of defaulted Provincial Offences Act fines, or POA fines, as they are often called; to improve the Highway 407 East Act; and to address a number of outstanding housekeeping proposals.

Some of the proposals address things like: improvement related to impaired driving, both with respect to drugs and with respect to alcohol; dealing more effectively with distracted driving; addressing the issue more completely of medically unfit drivers; dealing with truck, vehicle and bus safety; pedestrian safety; cyclist safety; as I mentioned, the collection of the POA fines; and also some of the infrastructure around Highway 407 east.

I wanted to comment briefly on drivers with medical conditions, because for those of us who are MPPs this also often becomes an issue in our constituency offices. There is a lot of confusion around what happens when often an older person is becoming medically unfit to drive. The amendments that are before us here today would enable the expansion of medical reporting requirements to additional qualified health practitioners. That is, right now it's only doctors, but if it happens to be a nurse practitioner or someone like that who is encountering the medical condition, we want to make sure that an expanded list of medical practitioners can report.

We need to clarify the mandatory and discretionary reporting requirements. That will be done more completely in a future regulation.

We need to set up what specific driver information must be provided by mandating the use of specific forms. I know we often find in my constituency office that somebody will come in and say, "Why haven't I got my licence back? The doctor sent the information." Then when we track it down, we find out the doctor hasn't really sent the required information at all. They did send a letter, but it didn't include the required form or at least the required information. Having a standard form will just help expedite the whole process.

The other thing that we often hear from constituents who have some sort of temporary medical problem that will be addressed by surgery or some form of medical treatment is that the current requirement to send your licence back just actually makes things way more complicated because by the time they have been notified that they are to send the licence back, in fact the medical problem should be fixed and they should have it reinstated. We're going to clarify how that works and get rid of the business of demanding that drivers always send the licence back. That is one of the things that is being addressed.

Another thing, under the category of truck, bus and vehicle safety, that I must comment on is clarifying that school buses are the only buses permitted to be painted the classic chrome yellow. It prohibits the use of chrome yellow paint in whole or in part on any bus except a school bus. We want to make sure that when people see

that chrome yellow bus, they know that they are seeing a school bus.

#### 1400

What sometimes happens is that school buses which have been legitimately school buses at some point of their life reach the end of the safety window for the age for a school bus and get sold to a private owner, and they don't really get repainted. It becomes quite confusing that you have things that look like school buses but really aren't school buses anymore. So we actually do encourage fluorescent pink or whatever for former school buses. Because we actually want people to understand that this vehicle is no longer a school bus, you would be prohibited from keeping that original chrome yellow paint job.

I'm now going to turn it over to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation to explain things much more completely.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Cambridge.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Speaker, for the past 13 years, Ontario's roads have consistently ranked either first or second in road safety in North America. We are a recognized world-class leader in road safety because of our tough laws, our strong enforcement and the dedicated work of our many road safety partners, who are very engaged with this process around Bill 31.

Keeping our roads safe for everyone—drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, passengers—remains a top, key priority for this government. However, despite Ontario's record of success, there's still more that the province can do to improve its road safety programs.

Last year, Minister Del Duca introduced new legislation for making Ontario's roads safer that, if passed, would help ensure that Ontario remains a leader in road safety. If passed, this legislation and subsequent amendments will help reduce collisions, injuries and fatalities across Ontario, and assist municipalities to collect unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines, all the while improving the safety of road users. It would be one more step in giving the people of Ontario healthier, more convenient and safer options on how to get around.

This legislation, if passed, would improve measures to address drivers who repeatedly drink and drive, by requiring them to complete intensive alcohol education, treatment and monitoring programs. It also proposes to apply alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug-impaired. That's very important, because recent statistics show that over 45% of drivers who have been killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system. Certainly in my past as an emergency room nurse, I can speak to the number of folks I saw coming through the emergency department who certainly had drugs and alcohol in their systems, and that was subsequently a cause for their collision.

It's also a part of our strong legacy on combatting impaired driving. This legacy will include tough penalties such as licence suspensions, immediate vehicle impoundment, requirements for ignition interlock and



escalating sanctions for drivers with a blood alcohol concentration in the warn range.

Although recent statistics show that Ontario's fatality rate for licensed drivers is the lowest ever recorded, on average, one person is killed on our roads every 18 hours. That's one more important reason we're going to target those drivers who still are not getting the message and continue to use their cellphones while driving. We are proposing to increase the fines, which are \$60 to \$500, to \$300 to \$1,000 going forward, and we also plan to introduce three demerit points upon conviction and add a distracted driving prohibition to the graduated licensing system.

We were one of the first to take action on distracted driving, in 2009, by banning the use of handheld devices, and we're going to continue to take action today and in the future. The evidence speaks for itself. A driver who uses a cellphone, Speaker, is four times more likely to be in a crash, and if current trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016. Make no mistake: Safe driving requires undivided attention.

In my conversations around Bill 31 recently with our stakeholders in Waterloo, I had a conversation with Chief Larkin of the Waterloo Regional Police Services, who endorses increased fines and demerit points for distracted driving. This is a key program in Waterloo region that our police are on the lookout for, something that Staff Sergeant Ray Ward endorses as well. He states that his police officers have learned to look for drivers with their heads down at intersections at red lights because very often they are looking at their cellphones. He says that even though the vehicle is stopped, they are in a live lane of traffic and must keep attention.

Public education will be a big part of our work going forward. We're going to work with all of our road safety partners to make sure that distracted drivers get the message: Keep your hands on the wheel and your eyes on the road.

The legislation also looks to see what we can do to improve pedestrian safety. Although the good news is that the number of pedestrians who have been killed has declined significantly over the last 25 years, pedestrians still represent about one in five of all motor-vehicle-related fatalities in Ontario, and 46% of these fatalities actually occur at intersections. That's too many.

In response to the coroner's office recommendations and to municipal requests, the legislation, if passed, would require drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers. It would also support the use of new pedestrian crossing devices.

We know that there are other choices to help people get around. Healthy choices, such as cycling, walking and all other kinds of active transportation, are all part and parcel of a full range of solutions to address congestion and improve air quality. Those who are suffering with lung disease are less likely to need emergency visits if we have fewer cars on the road and our air quality continues to improve in Ontario.

If passed, the legislation would build CycleON, Ontario's 20-year cycling strategy, to become the best Canadian province for cycling. That's great for increasing tourism benefits as well as health benefits, and also by decreasing some of our traffic congestion.

This legislation, if passed, would increase fines and demerits for drivers who "door" cyclists—those who open the door while cyclists are nearby. Where practical, it also requires drivers to keep a minimum distance of one metre between their vehicles and cyclists when passing.

This legislation would also support cycling on paved shoulders of unrestricted provincial highways and in contraflow bicycle lanes in urban centres to give cyclists more choices on how and where to travel.

We know that the younger population, known as millennials, are certainly looking to these modes of active transportation to cut down on urban traffic congestion, decrease their costs and increase their health benefits. These are the folks who are really pushing for this legislation.

In addition, if passed, this legislation would allow us to update our mandatory medical reporting program. Ontario's mandatory reporting program for physicians is a key method of identifying drivers of any age with a medical condition that may make it unsafe for them to drive, something I used to see in my work as a nurse, especially in the emergency department. We would focus on those individuals who had health conditions or medical conditions that would make it unsafe for them to drive—not only for themselves and their passengers but others on the road.

Future regulations could allow us to accept recommendations from a broader range of qualified medical professionals, a measure that responds to requests from the medical community about our mandatory medical reporting program. These changes would also help to keep our medical reporting program among the most stringent in North America and serve to help quickly remove unsafe drivers from our roads.

The legislation will also, if passed, respond to municipal requests for more assistance in collecting unpaid Provincial Offences Act fines. We would put yet another tool in the hands of those municipalities to help collect fines and keep municipal roads safe. Certainly in my conversations with Regional Chair Ken Seiling of Waterloo region and Mayor Doug Craig, as early as this morning, they are very, very much looking forward to collecting the fines. In Waterloo region alone, there is \$39 million of outstanding fines that they are very anxious to collect, to be able to put back into municipal programs.

#### 1410

If passed, this would represent a major step forward in helping all of our municipal partners collect the money that is owed to them. The bill could allow any municipality that chooses to use this fine-collecting tool to direct the MTO to not only suspend drivers' licences, but also to deny all vehicle plates registered to an

individual who has defaulted on driving-related POA fines.

One thing I'm very excited about in this bill is that we're also proposing to improve the safety of tow truck drivers in our province. Often overlooked, in terms of road safety, these are unsung heroes who deserve to be safe when doing their important role of rescuing drivers and their vehicles on our highways. Tow truck drivers can face significant risk when helping motorists on the roadsides of busy highways. If passed, motorists would be required to slow down and, if safe to do so, move over—as is the case with police officers and other emergency respondents—when they approach stopped tow trucks with flashing amber lights on the roadside.

These changes, and numerous others we're proposing, recognize that everyone, from the most vulnerable to the most seasoned, needs to feel safe and protected on our roads and highways. Unsafe drivers and vehicles have no place on Ontario's roads. The people of Ontario deserve no less. We are a North American leader in road safety in Ontario, and we are certainly committed to keeping it that way. I urge all members of this House to support this legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's a real pleasure to spend a few minutes to talk about Bill 31. I'm going to focus in a little bit more detail on what the meat of the bill is. Bill 31, really, is a combination of former Bill 34 and Bill 173, both introduced in 2013-14. Due to an election last June, they kind of fell to the side. Both of these bills were combined into Bill 31, frankly with some enhancements. What I want to chat about for a few minutes is a little more specific on those enhancements.

As you heard from my colleagues, one of the planks of the bill is to deal with distracted drivers. With today's technology, Speaker, I will admit that it's sometimes very, very hard not to look at your device as you're driving, because it's buzzing or vibrating and those things, but we do have to learn. What the legislation, if passed, proposes will happen on the distracted driving piece is that it would increase fines from \$60 to \$500, to \$300 to \$1,000. You know the saying we are all accustomed to: Money talks. Hopefully this makes drivers listen.

The other piece is that it will take away three demerit points. Once again, this will hopefully deter people from not paying attention. Speaker, I know that you drive quite a distance to get here, and I know I do. It took three and a half hours this morning. But sometimes it's not because of my action; we have to be cognizant of somebody else's actions and be alert to prevent that incident.

The other piece that we want to talk about is impaired driving. That has always been a problem. Presently the requirement for alcohol content ranges from 0.05 to 0.08. Extending that will only deter people from driving. This will also include suspension of licences for up to 90 days.

I would say that Ontario has got some of the safest roads, and these are just measures to maintain that.

The other piece that the bill touches on is a driver with medical conditions. This will enable expansion of medical reporting requirements to additional qualified health practitioners, clarification of mandatory and discretionary reporting requirements in future regulation, and set out what specific driver information must be provided by mandating the use of standardized reporting forms.

It also would improve customer service for drivers with medical conditions by allowing the drivers to keep their licence so that when they're back healthy again, it's a little bit easier to regain their driving privileges.

We heard also at the beginning from one of my colleagues about keeping that school bus yellow that we've all become so familiar with. It's retained for school bus purposes only, so by allowing that reflective yellow that we use on buses now—and only for buses—it's ingrained in our minds.

Also, this would allow B-train double trailers—I'm sure you've seen them, Speaker, as you drive the 401, the 400 or most four-lane highways: the extra-long transport trailers, the double ones. This would allow the extension of those trailers' total length from 25 metres to 27.5 metres.

These are all enhancements that will certainly help our economy as we move goods across this province.

When it comes to pedestrians: Require drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers.

Also, the introduction of new pedestrian crossing devices for low-speed and low-volume roads: Once again, this will combine added features when we are dealing with pedestrians.

On the POA and making municipalities able to collect POA fines, let me just say that I was in the municipal sector when the former government—I wouldn't say downloaded; it would be uploaded, because it was one of those revenue tools for municipalities. I remember it distinctly; that was a big gift when all the downloading was happening, but frankly, the ability to collect wasn't there. It was in big print; it looked good. I can tell you, in every municipality—in our case it's the county; it goes down to the lower tier—there were millions of dollars in uncollected fines. I can tell you, at every opportunity that I get to chat, either at AMO or Good Roads, or with my own municipal leaders, that's one of the things that they bring to the table because the cost of doing business in government, all governments, is increasing. Anything that they can do to enhance their ability to collect some money—this is money from people who broke the law. It's not extra taxation. It's something that, if you break the law, you pay a fine. Unfortunately, right now they cannot do that.

I'm going to close by saying that there are a lot of things here that I think are good for our environment. It's good for our economics. It's good for the safety of the roads. Let's get this piece of legislation in the books and let's put it to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. I want to thank the Minister of Education and the members for Cambridge and Northumberland–Quinte West for their additions to the debate so far this afternoon.

**1420**

Mr. Speaker, Bill 31 not only serves to protect drivers on our roads; it also introduces a number of provisions that will help keep pedestrians and cyclists safe in Ontario. Keeping our roads safe has always been a top priority for this government. I know that safe roads for drivers and cyclists is of great importance to my constituents in the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, as it is, indeed, for all Ontarians. That is why this bill has so much support, even outside of the Legislature.

The Ministry of Transportation did almost unprecedented consultation with stakeholders across the province in developing this legislation. They spoke to commercial vehicle operators: CUTA, OPTA, OMCA, OSBA, ORBA, the Teamsters and the Canadian Trucking Alliance. They spoke to the insurance industry. They spoke to the automotive industry: the Automotive Aftermarket Retailers of Ontario and the car manufacturers. They spoke to all of our key partners in road safety, such as Arrive Alive Drive Sober, MADD Canada, the Ontario Safety League and the CAA. The Ministry of Transportation consulted very broadly with cycling stakeholders throughout the province.

It's very important that we did this consultation, so that we could come up with a piece of legislation that will indeed have the effect that we seek to have. But we also spoke to our municipal partners, both through their organizations as well as individual municipalities, to ensure that the bill could be implemented effectively.

In particular, we spoke with municipalities about collecting defaulted fines, as the member from Northumberland–Quinte West mentioned. We appreciate the challenges faced by municipalities in trying to collect these fines. Over the years, the province has given municipalities more enforcement tools, including the ability to order licence suspensions for driving-related defaulted fines and plate denial for selected vehicle-based defaulted fines. This bill, if passed, would make various improvements to the fine-collection tools and processes available to municipalities. Perhaps most importantly, Bill 31 would expand the existing plate denial system to deny all licence plates of individuals who receive a licence suspension for defaulted fines under this system.

We also consulted with the towing industry. The proposed legislation extends the “slow down, move over” law to allow tow trucks that are stopped on the roadside with their amber lights flashing to safely do their work. This reflects the need to ensure safety on the roads for those who have already had a vehicle breakdown.

We consulted with the enforcement community, with our police services, as well as with the public.

We're very blessed in Ontario to consistently have had either the safest or the second-safest roads in North America for the past 13 years. This is something that my

constituents in Etobicoke–Lakeshore are rightly proud of, as well as Ontarians. We want to ensure that we continue this track and ensure safety not just for our drivers but of course for pedestrians, cyclists, children and families.

On the subject of cyclists in particular, I want to say that in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore cycling is not just a recreational pastime; there are many people who in fact commute as cyclists, whether they're riding their bicycle to a GO train station—to what will be much more frequent service shortly—or to a subway station, to school, to work, to places of worship, to shop, or, increasingly, even to other parts of the city. Whether it's on Lakeshore Boulevard West or Burnhamthorpe, The West Mall or Prince Edward Drive in my riding, people want to know that they'll be able to ride their bicycle safely and get to where they're heading in one piece.

This bill introduces very important amendments that address the safety of cyclists, including key recommendations from the #CycleON Action Plan that was released in April of last year.

As I said during second reading debate on this legislation, cyclists in my riding will be happy to know that Bill 31 addresses key issues such as contraflow bike lanes, bicycle-specific traffic signals and riding on paved shoulders, all of which will contribute to a much safer cycling environment.

I also wish to speak to how Bill 31 addresses other road safety issues that continue to be persistent challenges in Ontario, including the very serious issue of impaired driving. Especially with our young people, this is one of the most challenging issues that we face.

I was very pleased to have attended an event in my riding last week with Humber College students. Of course, their school year is winding down. They are getting ready for their summer jobs and the various things they're going to be doing over the summer. Nonetheless, they got together to put on an amazing event to talk about the safe consumption of alcohol generally, but certainly as it relates to drinking and driving and the need to drink responsibly.

Students all across Ontario are engaged in these efforts to ensure that our roads are safer and to be responsible. This legislation targets not only the issue of drinking and driving, but also, importantly, the issue of other forms of impairment—most notably, impairment by drugs as it relates to driving—and puts in place a framework to put in mechanisms to control that much better.

Unfortunately, in 2011, drinking and driving fatalities represented nearly one quarter of all fatalities that year on the roads of Ontario. But over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system.

While there are sanctions that allow police to remove drivers from the road when they are reasonably believed to be impaired by alcohol, there's no way under existing provincial sanctions for police to remove drivers from the road when they are reasonably believed to be impaired by drugs. That's why we need to pass this bill, Mr. Speaker. We need to support those students at Humber College

and other institutions across this province and their parents by ensuring that the measures in this bill become law, to make sure that we have the tools in place to ensure that people who are impaired aren't allowed to continue to drive.

If passed, the amendments to the Highway Traffic Act will be a first step in addressing impaired driving caused by drugs and will extend the alcohol-impaired driving sanctions to drug-impaired drivers, and that's a very important step.

I look forward to hearing more from my colleagues on this this afternoon. I know the member from Etobicoke Centre has more remarks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Etobicoke Centre.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It's an honour to speak to this bill. Before I get into the bill itself, I just wanted to share some quick thoughts about how important this bill is and the issues that we're debating here today.

Many years ago, my grandfather used to pick me up from school almost every day. He had one of the largest automobiles I think I'd ever seen. It was one of those old automobiles, the long ones, steel and sturdy.

One day, we were driving home and it was rainy. My grandfather lost control of the vehicle and we spun into oncoming traffic. I was sitting in the back seat; both of us were fine. But I remember one of the doctors in the hospital or a nurse or someone like that coming to see me and saying to me, "You know, if you weren't sitting in the back, you'd be in deep trouble." For whatever reason, the way the car was hit, the way that car was built, the safety precautions that were in place at the time weren't what we have today. I was fortunate, and my grandfather was fortunate. He was injured—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Exactly—but survived and lived a long life after that, which is great.

What that highlighted for me is a couple of things. One is the importance of road safety, of making sure that we're doing all the things we need to do to make sure people can get to school, to work and home every single day. We take that for granted. Some of us have had these awful experiences, or know others who have had these awful experiences, some of them unfortunately tragic.

**1430**

So the work never ends. We can always make our roads safer, and that's what this bill is about. We have a strong track record on this issue. If we think about the accident I had—that would have been 30 years or so ago—I think the progress that has been made in road safety, not just in how we build cars, but also in the actions our government has taken on road safety, have really been strong and effective in contributing to the safety we enjoy today.

Over the weekend, I was listening to a presentation by a doctor. He works as a trauma surgeon at the McGill health centre. He was talking about how the number of people who die—the mortality rates from trauma, at least

in Canada, have declined dramatically over the past 15 to 20 years. I think a lot of this has to do with what we're doing on road safety. So I think there is a lot of good work that has been done. As I think was mentioned by some of my colleagues, we have some of the safest roads in the world—certainly in North America—but the battle, the work, isn't over. There's more work to be done. That's why this bill is so important. We have to adapt to the world around us and make sure we're doing better to ensure people's safety.

I'm proud to stand in support of this bill. It's part of a broad package, and it's going to help us achieve our objectives of making sure we improve road safety. The issue of enhancing the collection of defaulted Provincial Offences Act fines was mentioned by my colleague from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, and strengthening or improving the Highway 407 East Act and addressing a number of outstanding housekeeping proposals.

When I talked about how there's more work to be done, that's because we have more challenges. According to recent data, over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs, or a combination of drugs or alcohol, in their system. Drinking and driving fatalities represented nearly one quarter of all fatalities in 2011. So notwithstanding what that doctor from McGill was telling me, there's a lot of work to be done, because there are many people who are, unfortunately, losing their lives to traffic fatalities.

From 2008 to 2012, an average of 14% of convicted alcohol-impaired drivers were repeat offenders. So it's happening, and then it's happening again. If current collision trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016. This is a good example of how we need to adapt to the world around us.

Driving under the influence has been a problem, and it's still a challenge for us. But we see increasing accident rates as a result of folks who are distracted behind the wheel. I think that most of us know primarily why that's happening, and this bill aims to address that. In 2011, pedestrians constituted approximately one in five motor-vehicle-related fatalities, so there's certainly a lot of work to be done.

I talked about distracted driving. What this bill does is increase penalties for distracted driving. It increases the legislative fine range from \$60 to \$500 as a penalty upon conviction for distracted drivers, to \$300 to \$1,000, so basically increasing the fines. At the top end, we're doubling it, and adding three demerit points for distracted driving through regulation and adding a distracted driving prohibition to the existing novice driver's licence conditions under the graduated licensing system through regulation.

Basically what that means, for the folks at home, is that we're helping people to form the right habits early on. When you're part of the graduated licensing system, you're learning to drive. You're forming habits that are going to persist for the rest of your life, and it is important that those habits be the right ones.

Impaired driving: We're going to increase alcohol-impaired driver education and treatment by expanding the requirements to complete remedial measures and the ignition interlock program for repeatedly driving with a blood-alcohol concentration exceeding—basically a high blood-alcohol concentration level—and extending the current Reduced Suspension with Ignition Interlock Conduct Review Program to repeat offenders, again going after repeat offenders, people who consistently commit and put people at risk on the roads, and expanding alcohol-impaired driving countermeasures to intervene against drug-impaired driving.

I could go on for quite a while, but I think what this bill does is a range of things. It imposes stiffer penalties and fines. What this will allow us to do is tackle some of those issues I talked about: impaired driving, distracted driving and people driving under the influence of drugs.

This is really about making sure that we're tackling what I talked about at the beginning. It's about adapting to the world around us and making sure that we're constantly working hard to make Ontario's roads the safest in the world, but also making sure that we take an issue that is so important to so many people and make sure that every single one of us can continue to have faith that when we get in the automobile or on a bike, or when we walk across the street, we can be safe in our province and our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Scarborough—Rouge River.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to share my time with my colleague from Scarborough Southwest, who is sitting at the other end of the chamber, and give him an opportunity to speak to this bill also.

I'm pleased to speak to this bill—I have a personal interest—and I will outline why. This is the second introduction of this bill by the Minister of Transportation, and it's a bill to improve road safety in Ontario.

It's a key piece of legislation being brought forward by this government. It has arrived here after many, many years of work by the Ministry of Transportation, and I can vouch for that, because I got involved with a couple of the staff there with regard to an issue in my own riding.

Hopefully, this bill brings much improvement to the Highway Traffic Act in terms of improving road safety. It's also going to enhance collections under the Provincial Offences Act, which municipalities have been asking for for years. AMO, year after year—when I was an AMO board member, I remember addressing this issue.

I think the minister has made some good amendments to the act here, because it's responding to some of the concerns that have been raised out there in the general community.

The most important one for me is distracted driving, because that was the issue that I raised here in 2013 as a result of an accident in my riding where a family lost a loved one, and we now have children without a mom, a husband without a wife, and we have many relatives left without a loved one in their family.

It was really sad, how this accident took place, and I would repeat it to the members of the chamber.

The person had just left the temple in my riding after practising her faith and doing her morning prayer, and walked to the bus stop to catch the next bus to go to work at midday, and was just innocently standing at the bus stop, next to the bus shelter, waiting for the bus to arrive.

As the bus arrived, as it came in to the spot, she started to walk towards the bus. At the same time, a vehicle making a left turn obviously was moving at a speed too high. The driver just realized, "I'm at the intersection and I need to turn left," and swerved and made contact with the bus and squeezed this person between the bus and the bus shelter and the vehicle. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Unfortunately, the driver of the vehicle that made the left turn was observed by many passers-by and folks on the sidewalk to be on the phone, and they did give evidence to the police. I'm not sure what happened in the courts yet, because I haven't followed the case, but I'm sure that there was enough evidence there that the family will get justice in the court system.

But that's not what the family wanted. The family lost someone, and they wanted that person not to be forgotten a year later or two years later, or whatever. They approached me: What could I do, as the representative of the area, to make a change with regard to distracted driving and people who are on their cellphones while they're driving, either talking or texting?

**1440**

It's a real shame that this happens in our society, because you can buy a device for \$100 or \$25 that will allow you to use your phone if it's necessary, in an emergency or whatever, and not have to be on the phone so that you are distracted. But yet still, people are doing it. They're doing it even today, after the government has had media reports that we're bringing in this piece of legislation. I drive the Don Valley Parkway every day, morning and afternoon Monday to Thursday, and I can tell you that I witness two or three people on the phone, texting or talking, every morning as I come in and every evening as I go home. To me, we have to change the behaviour. We can't do it by outreach—it's not working—so we have to do it through legislation.

In my research when I was approached by the family, I was astounded to find out that the fines for distracted driving, or talking on the phone while you're driving, were as low as \$60, up to \$500. The chief justice in the court had set a limit—I believe it was \$260 at a time. To most people, especially salespeople or people on the run, that's the price of doing business—"I can pay the ticket"—but it's when you have a fatality that it becomes very important, that we need to do something.

That triggered me. I went back to the family and I said, "Look, here's the problem: The fines are too low. I can bring in a private member's bill or I can approach the Minister of Transportation." But then I went beyond that. I started to do some research on drinking and driving and realized that drinking and driving started out as a very

small fine and worked its way up. It included demerit points, it included impoundment of a vehicle etc. I thought, "This is the model I want to copy." But when I went to the Ministry of Transportation staff, I couldn't do it, because the minister is the only one with the power to do it in regulation. I decided, "No, I want to do something for the family in my riding," so I crafted a bill that actually took legislation and regulation and put it in one, so I could raise awareness for the Minister of Transportation, raise awareness in this House and actually put some pressure on somebody to move.

I have to say, I am pleased today to know that the previous Minister of Transportation did accept my request and brought forward legislation, which is the package that we have in front of us today. But unfortunately, as a result of an election, we sort of lost that momentum and it's here again. I would urge everyone to do whatever they can to pass this piece of legislation quickly, so that we can get out there and enforce it by the local police forces as soon as possible, because our community is not changing, behaviour is not changing, and I think that what we need to do is to affect people's daily lives by either affecting their pocketbook or taking away their vehicle etc. Then the behaviours will change.

With that, I'm happy this bill is here. This is third reading. I hope we don't debate it forever and ever. Maybe after the main speeches from all three parties, and probably one round of other debates, we could let it go forward, because if you really look at this bill and you listened to everybody speaking during second reading, we all support it. So let's get it done, and get it done because it's the right thing to do and it's long overdue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I want to thank all the previous speakers. It seemed that everyone else spoke about different parts of the bill, which doesn't leave much for me, but I'm going to mention some things that I think are important in this bill. As has been mentioned, the short name for the bill is Making Ontario's Roads Safer. That involves not only the vehicles—the motor vehicles that are being driven, or the cyclists, or the people who are on motorcycles or other motorized devices—but it also includes pedestrians and rules to try to protect pedestrians from getting hit.

There are always people who get hit—especially in my riding of Scarborough Southwest and other parts of Scarborough—who were just trying to cross the road, and the problem is that sometimes you cannot see the person crossing the road. It may be late, after the sun goes down, and I'll notice someone. I'll say, "Is that person crossing the road?" and I'll just slow down.

I've been with my dad in my car a lot recently. He's not driving right now because of his age. He'll say to me, "How come you're slowing down?" I'll say to him, "There's a person ahead of us." "Where?" I'll just say, "I'm slowing down."

We've got various improvements that have been made for driving and for bicycling and for other safety meas-

ures to make sure that when roads are used, people don't get killed or seriously injured.

One other point I just wanted to mention before I get into some details is that all of us know someone who has either been hit seriously or even killed by a motor vehicle. I have a relative who was killed. He was on a motorcycle. Someone went through a red light and struck someone that I know, and he died at 39 years old. People on bicycles are getting run over. Pedestrians, as I said earlier, are getting run over. So the nature of things that are being done on the roads has changed a lot. I guess I would sum it up that the nature of driving and moving on roads has changed a lot in the last 20 years, or even in the past 10 years.

As my previous colleagues mentioned, the introduction of cellular phones is a major distraction, and it accounts for a lot of accidents. All of us have been in a car. I can see when I'm in a car sometimes that a driver is still on the phone. I think those fines should be increased. I know we've passed legislation that makes it illegal to drive with a device either attached to you or for texting or for whatever else, but people still want to do it. The only way to do it is to increase the fines and to increase the penalties for people who do that.

I want to speak a little bit about one thing that we have in the bill, and that's the ignition interlock program. Basically it's a device installed at the front part of the car. The driver has to blow into the device that's attached to the car. It's kind of like a breathalyzer test in the car, and it will decide whether or not you can drive. If it reads a blood alcohol level above the permitted amount, the car will not start. We are providing some incentives for people who put this in their car and are convicted. If they are suspended, we can reduce the suspension time if they comply and co-operate and use this device in their car. I think that's one thing that is very important. It's called the ignition interlock program.

I also want to touch a bit on bicyclists and the nature of bicycling these days. Especially in Toronto, and outside of Toronto too, there are a lot of people on bicycles. A lot of people want to take their bicycle to work and back home, all kinds of people in all different kinds of professions. I think we need to create more rules to make sure that they don't get hit, but also rules to make sure that they ride properly in the bicycle lanes as well.

I just want to mention a few things here. Basically, it's called a one-metre passing rule. A motor vehicle cannot pass a bicyclist unless there's one metre between the bicyclist and the car. I think that's a good thing. Some drivers want to rush around and they complain about the bicyclists, but bicyclists have a right to be on the road. I think this is a good thing, and it's supported by bicycle groups. There are various things in the bill that provide help to bicyclists and a number of things that we've consulted with various bicycle groups and other stakeholders on to make sure that they drive better and that the motor vehicles are more aware of the bicycles.

One little thing that is now allowed is that bicyclists can carry flashing red lights either at the front of the bike

or at the back of the bike, or both. Sometimes at night it's hard to see the bicyclists, but if you have the flashing red light either at the front or the back of the bicycle, it's much easier to see the bicycle.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I won't get into that too much, about other cycling changes, but we've talked and worked with cycling groups and they're pleased with the changes that we've made.

I also want to mention that in the province of Ontario, for the last 13 years, we've either been ranked first or second in North America for road safety. Our government is proud of our record of having amongst the safest roads in North America.

**1450**

But again, as people have spoken today, we know there are ways that we can do more to improve road safety programs. This bill, Bill 31, not only serves to protect drivers; it also has a number of provisions to help pedestrians as well—and I've mentioned bicyclists—on roads. From 2008 to 2012, an average of 14% of convicted alcohol-impaired drivers were repeat offenders. In the numbers of the actual percentage of people that got hit, 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system.

It's easy to have the alcohol levels measured, but I think we need to start to have a conversation about people who are on illegal drugs or even on legal drugs who are impaired and shouldn't be getting in a motor vehicle. This is something that we need to talk about some more. There are a lot of issues around the whole thing of having drivers have to stop and get—not only a breathalyzer, but some measurement of the amount of drugs in their body, whether it be to provide a urine sample or even a blood sample. But that, again, has to be fleshed out and has to be discussed some more at some future date, because it is something that can be seen as intrusive to a person's privacy.

My time is limited here. I was just going to wrap up by saying that the bill is good. It's good for bicyclists; it's good for drivers; it's good for everybody else involved. As I said, it's more dangerous now to drive and to walk along streets and to ride motorcycles or other motorized vehicles than ever before. This bill is keeping up with and is actually above what other jurisdictions are doing when it comes to road safety. I think, being on third reading, as my colleague earlier mentioned, we've had a lot of discussion on this. Hopefully, we can have the debate over and make it into law, which would be a good thing, as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to have a chance to comment on the Bill 31 debate, the leadoff of the government: the Minister of Education and the members from Cambridge, Northumberland–Quinte West, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Etobicoke Centre, Scarborough–Rouge River, Scarborough Centre and Scarborough Southwest. It seems like the government now has a 10-minute limit

on how long their members can speak, so they're all speaking to bills and are talking about various aspects of Bill 31.

Certainly we have some questions on this side of the House to do with the details, because a lot of the details are not in the bill itself. I'm learning from the member from Perth–Wellington about what school buses might be used for after they're done serving schools. Of course, this bill deals with the fact that, after they've been used, they can't stay chrome yellow. So I was chatting with him, asking about it. Apparently, they get used for inter-barn pig transfers down in his part of the world. The painting of them isn't a big deal. They actually just rent a sprayer. It may not be the most beautiful paint job, but they get painted. That is one of the uses that school buses are used for in his area after they're done.

I'm really pleased to see that “slow down, move over” for tow trucks and other emergency vehicles is in this particular bill. That was something put forward by the member from Simcoe North. There are a lot of tow truck drivers and other emergency workers who are killed on the side of highways. I think that that will make a difference as people realize that they need to move over, as we now do for police cars. I think that will make a difference in making our tow truck and other emergency workers safer.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's always a pleasure and a privilege to stand here on behalf of the good people in Algoma–Manitoulin.

Bill 31: It's a combination of a couple of prior bills—a lot of good suggestions that have gone into it from my friends here to my right and also from colleagues we have within our caucus and also the government.

It's nice to see ideas coming together under one bill. The unfortunate part is that it takes so darned long to get it done. When I was part of the committee working on this particular bill, there were, again, some really good, positive discussions that were held at committee, quite a few amendments that were made there. I will allude to those amendments when I have my opportunity to speak to this later today.

There was a lot of good, constructive discussion and points that were brought by both opposition parties, who went out and consulted with their stakeholders. We all heard some of those individuals who came to us in committee and brought their suggestions as to how they felt about this particular bill in regard to how we could actually improve it: where we could go to make it safer for pedestrians, to make it safer for the tow truck drivers who are on the side of the road; to make it safer in identifying those who are caught up in distracted driving, and to make sure that fines are at a proper level, so that individuals could start reacting and start acting upon the bad choices they're making. But, unfortunately, none of those amendments were accepted.

The bill is what it is. We will work with this government, moving forward on it. But again, I look forward to some of the comments I want to make in my follow-up.

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak in support of Bill 31 this afternoon. It is not the first time I have spoken in support of this bill.

As the member from Algoma–Manitoulin remembers, this bill has been before the House before, unfortunately, and it went as far as committee. We had second reading, and it went through to committee. Unfortunately, things were interrupted by an election that we did not expect. But here we are again. We are presenting this bill because it's important. We're thinking of the road safety of Ontarians.

I want to just point out that my notes say that if current collision trends continue, fatalities just from distracted driving, which is part of this bill, may exceed those from drinking and driving by next year—by 2016. That tells us how important this bill is. It's important that it move forward; it's important that we debate it, that we improve it, that we send it to committee and that we make it into law as soon as possible. It would make a difference for a lot of people's lives.

Distracted driving is probably one of the most common issues we see on the road every day when we're driving. This bill would increase the penalties for distracted driving by increasing the existing legislated fine range of \$60 to \$500 as a penalty upon conviction, and it would add three demerit points. I think this would make a difference in convincing a lot of people to stop the texting in the car that happens today.

This bill actually incorporates the spirit of four different PMBs. A lot of members have come together to form this bill, and we should turn it into law as soon as possible.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Speaker, I'm going to narrow my comments down to two speakers that I listened to this afternoon. I remember, a couple of months ago, that I went across the floor and spoke to the member from Cambridge, who I believe is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation. I guess my issue was—and I can show you, Speaker; I drew all kinds of trucks in different combinations of what they look like, because I do have some experience that way. I asked the member why they were just focusing on B-trains, which is one type of a combination of trains—and trains are two trailers hooked together, for your information, Speaker. I was assured the explanation would come back to me as to why they were just focusing on B-trains. That never happened, so I don't know why the government is doing this.

**1500**

I see the OTA thinks this is a good idea, but I would guess that when I ask a question of the government in the House and those members of the government who have taken on the responsibility of being with the ministry, that these answers could come back to me. Then again, I remember the previous Minister of Transportation, who's

the environment minister now, never did answer any of my letters. I guess this is something that goes on with the government over there.

I would also like to address the comments by the member from Scarborough–Rouge River. I believe him when he says that they did take a lot of advice from people who supposedly know these things. One of them was AMO. AMO has been pushing for a lot of these changes throughout the years. I wish he would talk to the Attorney General and get her to listen to AMO when it comes to joint and several liability. That would be really nice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One of the members from the government side has the opportunity to respond.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I want to thank my colleagues this afternoon. I know the comment has been made that we're all taking turns here, but, to be fair to my side, there are many members who really want to speak to this important bill on road safety.

I want to thank my colleagues the Minister of Education, the members from Northumberland–Quinte West, Etobicoke Centre, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Scarborough–Rouge River, and Scarborough Southwest, and also my colleagues across the way, the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Algoma–Manitoulin and Perth–Wellington—and my colleague here from York South–Weston—for their comments.

I just wanted to say that this is a government that is really trying to get ahead of our safety issues that we still identify that are issues here in Ontario, with distracted drivers and drug-impaired drivers. It's a pretty sweeping bill with a lot of great things in it to protect our cyclists and passengers. We're really cognizant that many of our road safety partners, our municipalities, our police and our insurance industries all wish to see the speedy passage of Bill 31.

We also know that if we delay much further in getting this bill passed, lives can still be lost. We heard earlier that every 18 hours another person is killed on our roads. The sooner that this bill is passed, the sooner the legislation can come into effect in protecting our people, ensuring that our new legislation will protect cyclists from dooring with the one-metre safe-passing law, and protection from distracted drivers—all those things will ensure that we can reduce the fatalities on Ontario's roads and ensure that our municipalities can get their POA fines paid.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's a great pleasure to be back up speaking to Bill 31 today. I'll just inform those here that I will have an hour on behalf of the official opposition as PC transportation critic. So settle in, get a top-up of your water—for those at home, make yourself comfortable—because, once again, I have the opportunity to address Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, a bill that, while we in the official opposition support it in large part, could have done so much more to



actually make Ontario roads safer if only the government members hadn't followed their marching orders to choose partisanship over partnership in refusing to endorse any one of our 30-plus opposition amendments.

I know the general public and many of you here today didn't get the opportunity, like I did, to participate in committee, an important function of the Legislature where members of all parties go through the bill, clause by clause, putting forward novel ideas or suggested changes from stakeholders' groups. We would hear a lot about our road safety partners; many of them put forward exceptional ideas. I'll go through talking about that process. In fact, we had put forward 30 of them in addition to the ones that were included into the bill from previous sessions—like my colleague from Simcoe—Grey and my colleague for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

We felt it would have given much more strength to the bill had the government's members not voted out, in fact, one of their own sections of the bill to address impaired driving penalties, among other things. But I'll get to that later, of course.

Before going further down that road, I do want to state clearly that we in the official opposition share the government goals of making Ontario roads safer as well as many of the principles that drive Bill 31 when it comes to meeting those goals. I do feel it is our responsibility, as provincially elected representatives, to work towards safer roads for all, and I welcome the opportunity government has provided, in bringing Bill 31 forward, to discuss these important concepts.

That said, I would submit that it is also our responsibility to consider other approaches and opposing views, and work with elected representatives on all sides of this House to get this right, now.

Speaker, it was only nine months ago that Premier Wynne told us this government was going to be different—July 4, 2014. As a matter of fact, she told us that “our government must ... engage all Ontarians as full partners in solving the challenges we face as individuals, as communities, as businesses and as a province.”

She went on to contend that her government would “put evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship, and invite everyone to work together, with and through government, to overcome our challenges and to thrive as a result.” That's what she said.

As laudable as these goals were, and as eager as we in opposition were to see what this new, engaging, co-operative government would look like, I can tell you, after three days of committee, that it doesn't look a whole lot different than the arrogant, unaccountable, uncooperative government regime that has refused opposition input for more than a decade. And look at where that has got us today, Speaker: ballooning deficits, dwindling job prospects, labour strife and a whole lot of finger-pointing.

There is no willingness to put evidence before ideology. There is no choosing of partnership over partisanship. There is no invitation to work together. Over three days of committee on Bill 31, we saw none of any of that.

In fact, read the Hansard. I encourage anyone who wants to see the true nature of this government to check out the general government committee Hansard for March 23 and March 25 and, of course, March 30. Go through the debate: the strong amendments put forth by opposition to enhance Bill 31's goal to make Ontario's roads safer, each one with sound arguments, spelled out succinctly by members looking for that partnership Ms. Wynne had promised us so few months ago. I can tell you, Speaker, you can look for that partnership all you want. Go through every argument, every amendment. You're not going to find it, because it's not there.

It gives me no pleasure to report that over three days of Bill 31 clause-by-clause general government committee meetings, where members were to consider possible upgrades to strengthen the bill, not just rubber-stamp it, out of more than 30 amendments brought forth by the opposition parties, including those of the third party—I know the critic for the third party is here today, and I look forward to his remarks later on—not a single, solitary one was given support by the Liberal majority to allow the bill to be amended.

It just boggles my mind. We had very strong amendments here, covering a wide range of aspects, to actually strengthen Bill 31. If I have the time, I will obviously go into each one of them. I do think it's important for those here today, and those watching at home, to know exactly what those were.

#### 1510

From improving the medical review of drivers' licences—something a lot of our constituency offices hear about, day in and day out—to left-lane hogs, to window tinting and roundabout rules, of course, among many others, not one of them saw the light of day—not one. What part of “partnership” don't they understand, Speaker? Partisanship, however, based on the results from the Bill 31 committee deliberations, seems to be well understood—very obvious. It's alive and well here in Wynne Ontario.

Just look at our attempt to call for the establishment of an advisory committee to analyze highway incident management and to develop a comprehensive program for the improvement of highway incident management, something I heard police call for. And it was part of the private member's bill of the member from Thornhill, Mrs. Gila Martow, Bill 30, the Highway Incident Management Act. This was a very important amendment, as it would have ensured that all highway incident management protocols are up to date. Something that we need to continue to do is modernize things, based on sound evidence and approved by, of course, experts in the field. The amendment would have also ensured that our highway incident management protocols are developed with input from all public stakeholders, including the public.

Despite the wide-ranging support for this important idea to make Ontario's roads safer, I was not even granted the time to actually discuss the initiative. While the amendment was initially ruled out of order, I got my

first taste of partisanship over partnership when government members refused to grant unanimous consent to debate the concept. The difficult part of it was that I would have liked to have seen members at least consider the arguments and their impacts on road safety. I think the onus is on the committee to at least discuss those amendments or motions. By just saying no, it immediately shuts down any potential discussion on an issue. Here, we had proposed thoughtful amendments to increase road safety in Ontario. I would have thought it to be incumbent on our committee to have a discussion, at the very least.

That was just the start of it, Speaker—the tip of the iceberg, as they say—with a lot more to follow. Shortly after being muzzled with regard to highway incident management, I faced new hurdles in attempting to enhance safety with an amendment to allow school bus drivers to use two-way radios, exempting them from some of the parameters of Bill 31. As I explained at committee, our motion would have exempted drivers of school buses from section 23 of the bill. The rationale here is really that two-way radios in school buses are an important tool used for vehicle safety issues or student safety issues.

Student safety could be enhanced by allowing, for example, a driver to call base, to have a dispatcher call a student's home and ensure a parent or guardian is home to receive a child when there is no sign of anyone at home. It just makes sense, right? Most operators, in fact, have definitive radio policies so that the radio does not become, of course, a social network but is used for the exact purpose it was designed for. When an emergency arises, the driver calls dispatch, then hangs up the microphone and awaits the response from the dispatcher. Bus drivers require this tool to be able to better ensure the safety of their passengers. Of course, all of them are loved ones.

This was something that the school bus association had put forward as an amendment, to ask us to add some clarity. That's what this is about. It's about bringing clarity. Yet once again, Speaker, today, just as it was two weeks ago at committee, Bill 31 fails to bring that clarity as Wynne Liberal members followed their marching orders and refused us the partnership over partisanship that the people of Ontario were misled to believe would be a hallmark of the Wynne government—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I believe the member made a comment that was unparliamentary, and I'll have to ask him to withdraw it.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'll withdraw that, Speaker.

It is unfortunate, because together we could have accomplished so much more. One of the things we could have accomplished was, finally, after a year of this government talking, we could have brought in demerit points to accompany fines for distracted driving. As we heard during second reading debate, Bill 31 does provide significant enhanced penalties for distracted driving. Just to be clear, when we are talking about distracted drivers, we are, and the bill is, talking about drivers who talk,

text, type, dial or email using hand-held cellphones and other hand-held devices while operating their vehicle. The law also prohibits drivers from viewing display screens unrelated to the driving task, such as laptops or DVD players—pretty basic stuff. If you have to grab it to read it, you can't and you shouldn't do it.

I think we can all understand the reasons behind that. We've all seen the impacts of those who have chosen to ignore hand-held restrictions. I don't know about you, Speaker, but I had the opportunity to watch some of the graphic commercials that were put out. We all remember the significant public education programs that Mothers Against Drunk Driving put out on impaired driving back in the day. There have been some extremely hard-hitting YouTube videos of teens in a car driving while texting; you see those awful accidents occur. That is the reality here.

Of course, another really important road safety partner, the CAA, has indicated that driver distraction is a factor in about four million motor vehicle crashes in North America each year, and that 20% to 30% of all collisions internationally involve some sort of driver distraction. In Ontario specifically, the OPP have indicated that distracted driving is a causal factor in 30% to 50% of traffic collisions here in the province.

As Bill 31 proposes fine increases up to \$1,000, we remain in full support of that increase, but more importantly, we want to ensure that this is part of a bigger picture which includes demerit points on driving licences. While fines provide a significant one-time deterrent, demerits are like a monthly reminder, when making that increased insurance payment, of why distracted driving just simply doesn't pay.

The surprising fact is that Ontario is one of only three provinces and territories that have absolutely no demerit penalty for distracted driving violations. It's a bit of a head-scratcher, perhaps, considering how often transportation ministers talk about it.

In fact, I saw news reports both this year and last, as well as in our ministerial briefing on this bill, that the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act would actually be imposing a three-demerit-point penalty for convicted motorists. Unfortunately, just as my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London found in the previous version of this legislation, Bill 173, there's absolutely no mention of demerit points in the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act—no demerits, no mention in the legislation, and still a lot of misleading information in media and on ministerial backgrounders indicating that the legislation would, in fact, include demerits.

What's even more concerning is that the minister doesn't even require legislation to implement demerits. He can do it any time he wants through regulation. Again, here we have a minister who says he wants to take on distracted driving, and yet this same minister has waited months to take the simplest first regulatory step to positively impact people's driving habits. Seriously, how many accidents could have been prevented while we spin our wheels reading headlines of demerit penalties that just simply are not there?

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It's for these reasons that we brought forth an amendment to end the waiting game, for the minister to act and get on with it by including legislated demerits as part of the bill itself. The motion would have ensured that three demerit points would be given to anyone convicted of distracted driving. We have waited for over a year for regulations to be enacted on demerit points, and it hasn't happened.

The best way to ensure that demerit points are applied is to put it into the legislation, make it the law, so that we absolutely know that it's going to happen. Yet, despite the logic presented here, and despite the government members agreeing that demerits are in fact an important part of the solution, I regret to report that partisanship again won the day, when it came to the vote, over partnership.

The government members talked in circles about the need for demerits. Eventually they went to great lengths to highlight the government's commitment to demerits some time after the bill receives royal assent—just as we've heard for over a year now. So we continue to wait, and we'll continue to wait after third reading for promised distracted driving demerits that have become more fantasy than reality.

Looking for other areas to strengthen the bill and sniff out that elusive partnership that Premier Wynne promised we would be shown, perhaps we would have a breakthrough on the need to make our roads safer through addressing the shared responsibility of all road users by instituting penalties for texting and cycling. I wouldn't hold your breath.

Current wording does not allow the Highway Traffic Act to be applied to those riding bicycles, yet, as we all know, bicycles are road vehicles and the same laws that apply to drivers of motor vehicles, in many cases, should apply to bicyclists. This is, of course, something that was brought forward by the Ottawa police, and I'll get into that in a few minutes.

We feel that there must be at least some acknowledgement of the shared responsibility that all vehicle operators, including cyclists, have when it comes to maintaining our road safety. I think we can all agree that the tragedies that can ensue from distracted cycling need to be addressed in law. Penalties and—with our amendment, we have suggested—fines must be in place to discourage this behaviour and recognize shared responsibility and safety.

The Ottawa Police Service provided a submission on this front on March 9. Sergeant Mark Gatien of the Ottawa Police Service noted that, "With this small change, it would encompass bicycles and implements of husbandry (mainly backhoes and front-end loaders). Our hands are presently tied with cellphone infractions being committed on bicycles and backhoes etc. using our roadways. There have been countless complaints to the police via social media about the use of phones with these methods of transportation, and with the present wordings our hands are tied for enforcement efforts."

Again, this is a suggestion from law enforcement themselves—in fact, out of our nation's capital, Ottawa, because there is a significant problem with cyclists using their cellphones or devices when riding a bicycle. That's dangerous to them and others, including motorists and pedestrians, yet again, I regret to report that despite the obvious benefits of making Ontario roads safer for all, partnership to get this amendment through was not on the menu for government members, who once again chose to vote against every opposition attempt to amend and improve the bill.

Again, I want to take the opportunity to clearly state that we in the official opposition share the government's goals of making Ontario roads safer. We support many of the initiatives contained in Bill 31 when it comes to meeting those goals. We all know that Ontario roadways could be safer. It is our responsibility as legislators to work towards safer roads for all, but I contend that it is also our responsibility to listen to opposing views—in fact, it's written on these walls, right in this very chamber—to consider their pluses and minuses, and to partner with elected representatives of all stripes, instead of voting according to invisible partisan lines, to ensure that, in the end, we get this right. That is an objective I think we could all unite around.

It is again to that end that we aspired in calling for section 100.2 of the act, as set out in section 33 of the bill, to be amended by adding the establishment of a vehicle inspection standards advisory committee to advise the director of vehicle inspection standards. You see, we would prefer that the government did not create a director of vehicle inspection standards at all, given the government's record on automobile standards programs—of course, Drive Clean comes to mind.

Currently, there is very little information about the regulations that will be put into place by the director of vehicle inspection standards. We want to make sure that the regulatory framework for determining whether or not a car is roadworthy is developed with broad consultation that includes experts and the general public. That sounds fair.

We do understand that 40% of recommended light vehicle maintenance repair is postponed, but would rather see government incentivizing customers to encourage vehicle inspection as opposed to enforcing a mandatory and costly inspection regime. That said, if this new regime is being considered by government, we on this side of the House want to ensure that there's accountability and of course transparency, which has, in fact, been absent from the aforementioned vehicle emissions standards program. That is why we crafted a motion to require that "The director of vehicle inspection standards shall, within 90 days of the end of a calendar year, submit to the minister an annual report on the administration of the program." That's what we asked for.

Oversight is important for the success of any government program. History has shown that the lack of oversight leads to corruption and scandal. This motion would ensure that there is at least some oversight over

the vehicle inspection program, and give the Legislature some sense of the effectiveness of the program. I don't think it is too hard to ask for an annual report. It gives the opportunity to the members of the Legislative Assembly to provide proper oversight, at least annually, through the submission of an annual report.

Unfortunately, while that oversight was the key to our vehicle inspections amendments, none were allowed to move forward, as the Wynne government members voted us down once again. Where is the partnership? We're still looking.

Perhaps it would come with the discussion surrounding our amendment to enshrine roundabout rules in law—a direction government members had already endorsed with the approval of, in fact, my private member's bill, the Safe Roundabouts Act. I felt that, with the support of all three parties, we could have proceeded with the intent of the House during second reading, and moved forward on needed roundabout rules.

As I reported to committee members, over the last two years, I have made numerous attempts to bring this government's attention to the fact that, with more than 40 roundabouts across the Waterloo region in my area and more being constructed in communities across this province, many in your own communities here today, it's our responsibility as legislators to move forward on enhancing roundabout safety throughout the entire province.

To be clear, I am fully supportive of roundabouts. Again, with the 40 in my area in the region of Waterloo, I have come to understand many well-established operational benefits that they can provide to traffic flow, speed and the severity of a collision. That said, I have also come to understand that while roundabouts have their advantages—whether it is in my region of Waterloo, in Hamilton, Ottawa or Windsor—concerns over consistency of rules for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists continue to grow as roundabout construction increases.

Quite simply, the Highway Traffic Act currently fails to address roundabouts whatsoever—no rules. My amendments sought to remedy that omission by both (1) defining roundabouts and (2) giving the Minister of Transportation the ability to establish clear, uniform rules across the entire province. Further, these amendments would have required the minister to consult with the public about the safe use of roundabouts and then table a progress report every year until a regulation to address the safe use of roundabouts is made. Pretty easy; pretty simple.

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This consultation requirement would have addressed a series of factors, including: the use of crosswalks; signs and markings; lighting; how commercial vehicles navigate through a roundabout; the speed limits; signalling; entering and exiting roundabouts; uniformity of road design standards, including consistency in lane width; and compliance, of course, with the accessibility standards, something extremely important. This would not only raise awareness on how to maneuver through a roundabout but increase pedestrian, cyclist and motorist

safety, helping to reduce accidents across the entire province.

Then my amendments would have required that, following consultation, the minister would in fact make regulations establishing rules of the road that apply to roundabouts. You see, currently without the guidance of one provincial law for all, the road is open for different areas to establish varying directions, leaving both drivers and pedestrians unsure as to how they're expected to navigate a roundabout. A motorist who follows the local rules, say, in Waterloo region may not necessarily be heeding the protocols of other areas. I'll give you an example, Speaker. Right now, we have a situation in the region of Waterloo where the Ministry of Transportation tells drivers to slow down and watch for pedestrians, whereas the region says that pedestrians go first and that when entering or exiting a roundabout, drivers should yield the crosswalk to pedestrians. It's the same for signalling. While both the region and the province agree that drivers should signal right when exiting a roundabout, the region directs drivers planning a left turn driving all or most of the way around the circle to signal left, while the province is mute on left-hand signalling.

As I told committee members, this is a problem across the board. Whether it is truck, bus or automobiles, the only consistency when it comes to roundabouts is the consistent concern for the lack of consistency.

Speaker, there are no partisan politics here, just a relatively easy fix to make uniform rules for all, a fix that the Wynne government committee members refused to endorse. Again I made the case that this is not a small issue. In fact, I don't have my head in the sand, as a former minister once put it. This is not a solitary community issue. This isn't blue or orange or red; it's just simply smart policy based on road safety. But, once again, much as the previous and current Ministers of Transportation chose to ignore my calls and tie on the blinders, my renewed efforts to get the attention of the committee were met with a similar lack of urgency.

Oh, we heard the excuses. Again we were told that the Highway Traffic Act already covers the actions a driver must take in a roundabout. I want to once more draw attention to the fact that the word "roundabout" is never actually mentioned once in the existing legislation or in the Highway Traffic Act. In the meantime, the silence of the Highway Traffic Act gives way to differing interpretations, with the provincial government and municipalities calling for different practices. The fact that there's a lack of any mention whatsoever in the HTA leaves everyone—motorists, truckers, bus drivers, pedestrians and cyclist alike—with questions: "When can I enter? How do I exit? Where do pedestrians cross?" And, ultimately, "Who has the right of way?" The answers we've received to date, even offered up recently by the current minister, amount to little more than updated drivers' handbooks and a ministry website page with frequently asked questions, a brochure and a video. It's not enough.

The police understand this. The CAA, the Ontario Safety League and a list of others support these important

amendments to enhance road safety, and yet again, when I called for support from my colleagues from across the floor, I was not met with partnership, but more red herring reasons why we couldn't move forward.

The parliamentary assistant, who is here today, from our region of Waterloo, even tried to tell me in the committee that passing these amendments would delay passage of the bill itself—ridiculous.

I'll read from Hansard, just so that we've got this right: "In order to be able to investigate, look at, and properly consult about what's needed, it will delay the passage of this bill."

Quite frankly, as I and my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington argued, the concern was completely unwarranted. Lawyers later confirmed that there was nothing that would delay passage of the bill should my roundabout amendments have passed. Bottom line: There was absolutely no mechanism in this amendment that would slow down the passage of the bill whatsoever. It was simply an amendment that would ask the minister to start the consultation. Unfortunately, that consultation will have to wait.

Similarly, motorists in Ontario will have to wait for any sort of action to address what are commonly referred to as left lane hogs. We in the official opposition proposed that the safety concerns posed by left lane hogs be addressed through Bill 31, calling for any vehicle travelling at or below 10 kilometres per hour below the maximum speed limit to move over to the right, depending on weather or traffic conditions.

As I reported in committee, we all know, especially in the GTA, about gridlock on significant highways—400-series highways—and we have all seen folks who want to continue to drive in the passing lane at a slower speed than that at which traffic flows, therefore making it a substantial road safety issue. Oftentimes, drivers have to then pull out and pass, making it an extremely dangerous situation.

In fact, the BC government has moved to bring forward legislation similar to this amendment to actually provide some clarity but give the act some teeth.

Similarly here in Ontario, we've called for those teeth, as the act currently fails to provide clarity and doesn't give law enforcement the teeth it needs so that when and if they do lay a charge in court, the ticket will actually hold up.

We suggested setting a target of 10 kilometres. If you're travelling at 10 kilometres per hour or more below, you're going to get a ticket. That allows the authorities, the police, to not be subjective.

I won't keep you in suspense, Speaker, awaiting the result of our call for action on left lane hogs. There will be no action, as this amendment befell the same partisan-directed voting that spelled the end of all amendments that came before it.

All that said and despite the short shrift given all previous amendments, I did hold out hope that the promised partnership would come to light in discussing our amendment to require slowing down and moving over for snow plows and other road service vehicles.

Just so everyone clearly understands what we're talking about here, I'll read the actual, specific amendment out loud: "I move that section 159 of the act, as amended by section 48 of the bill, be further amended by adding the following subsections:

“Slow down for vehicle removing snow or ice

“(3.1) Upon approaching a road service vehicle that is used to plow, salt or de-ice a highway or to apply chemicals or abrasives to the highway for snow or ice control and that has a lamp producing intermittent flashes of blue light, whether the road service vehicle is stopped on the side of the highway or proceeding along the highway, the driver of a vehicle travelling on the same side of the highway,

“(a) shall slow down and proceed with caution, having due regard for traffic on and the conditions of the highway and the weather, to ensure that the driver does not collide with the road service vehicle or endanger any person outside of the road service vehicle; and

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“(b) if the road service vehicle is proceeding along the highway, shall follow the road service vehicle at a distance that is reasonable in the circumstances and shall only pass the road service vehicle if passing can be done in safety.

“Same, other road service vehicle

“(3.2) Upon approaching a road service vehicle, other than a road service vehicle described in subsection (3.1), with its lamp producing intermittent flashes of amber light that is stopped on the side of the highway, the driver of a vehicle travelling on the same side of the highway shall slow down and proceed with caution, having due regard for traffic on and the conditions of the highway and weather, to ensure that the driver does not collide with the road service vehicle or endanger any person outside of the road service vehicle.”

This amendment builds on the work my colleague Garfield Dunlop, from Simcoe North, initiated through a private member's bill that we see in Bill 31, requiring “slow down, move over” provisions for tow truck drivers who are at the side of the road. The amendment simply asks for the same sort of concept, perhaps, as applies to our snow removal vehicles and other road service vehicles.

This was, in fact, a suggestion brought forward by the Ontario Road Builders' Association. They're the voice of road building in Ontario. Their members build the majority of provincial and municipal roads, bridges and transportation infrastructure across the province, and employ in excess of 30,000 workers in peak season. Their association is constantly looking for ways to improve the health and safety of their workers, and continues to look for ways to collaborate with the MTO to ensure that our highways continue to consistently rank among the safest in North America—something I hear the minister talk a lot about.

One important step that can be taken to protect the health and safety of their workers is to expand the scope of this legislative amendment to include all highway

maintenance vehicles—including crash trucks, patrol vehicles and snowplows—on the list of vehicles that require slowing down by motorists.

Highway maintenance vehicles such as crash trucks and patrol vehicles are vital to the safety of their workers and the general motoring public, acting as first responders to accidents, closing lanes when safety hazards are present and creating security barriers to allow vital maintenance work to be undertaken on busy thoroughfares, among many other duties.

Workers in their industry perform work on Ontario highway networks daily, and, similar to tow trucks, their vehicles utilize amber flashing lights when performing this work. The road builders' association members have asked for equal consideration under the Highway Traffic Act to ensure the safety of their workers.

Additionally, the Ontario Road Builders' Association members would have liked to see snowplows included in the list of highway maintenance vehicles that require slowing down by motorists. Snowplows are equipped with blue flashing lights when performing work, and represent an essential component on Ontario roads, especially in the last few seasons, which saw a record amount of snowfall here in the province of Ontario.

I felt, and continue to feel, that "special consideration is warranted for snowplows, as statistics note that the majority of incidents involving snowplows are a result of motorists driving too close behind snowplows or attempting to pass snowplows. Following too close behind a snowplow can cause a driver to be blinded by the snow cloud ahead. Passing a snowplow can result in a collision, oftentimes fatal, with the side-mounted wing blade, a large blade mounted on the front which can swing to either side of the vehicle.

"On average, every winter, there are 132 collisions involving snowplows, a trend that is increasing every year, from 105 collisions involving snowplows in 2010 to 189 collisions involving snowplows in 2011. These statistics clearly reflect the fact that more consideration needs to be given to snowplows and the way they're regarded by the motorist public here in the province....

"Clearly, the numbers speak for themselves, and that's why we proceeded with this important road safety amendment: to simply include road safety vehicles like snowplows in this important road safety initiative."

While I asked the government committee members for their consideration to support this worthy amendment to make Ontario roads safer, we of course were shut down. Partnership over partisanship? I have yet to see it.

But it is not just me. Speaker, ask any of the opposition members who spoke out at committee. They were given the same treatment. In fact, my colleague from the riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex might as well have been speaking to a brick wall when he spoke so eloquently about the need for school bus cameras to be allowed as evidence in court. This is a very serious concern of school bus operators, simply because it is unfair for us to assume that a school bus driver, whose first and foremost obligation is to the safety of the children he or she is

either picking up or dropping off, will also be able to keep an eye on vehicles that fail to stop.

My colleague, in fact, had a situation back several years ago in his riding, when three children from a family were killed. He also had a serious incident back in his riding where a small child dropped a piece of clothing. The bus driver didn't see that the child actually went in front of the bus to get the piece of clothing that had fallen off. Of course, the child was unfortunately run over. Drivers don't have the time to ensure the students get on the buses or get off the buses safely when they still try to capture information, where they have to write it down in terms of perhaps the colour or the make of the vehicle and the time when it occurred.

The other challenge that the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, who just joined us here now, highlighted is that a lot of police forces are not in a position to actually go after drivers who fail to stop. Of course, they can go after them once they obtain the information. But basically, at that point in time, all they do is knock on their door. The member pointed out that this type of legislation is happening in many other jurisdictions in the United States, as well as Canada. There have been numerous states that have already passed laws allowing the use of cameras on school buses to capture video images of motorists illegally passing and endangering our children. Prince Edward Island has in fact passed specific legislation, and they've started many different pilot projects throughout the country. Manitoba also has school boards using cameras as well. The police services group up in Ottawa is also working with an independent school bus operator on a pilot project.

The member for Chatham–Kent provided a section of a letter of support that he received from the Ontario School Bus Association. They went on to say that they support this particular amendment, "which proposes the use of cameras on school buses to capture video images of motorists illegally passing school buses stopped with their red warning lights flashing. The video images can" also "be used by police as evidence to prosecute owners of offending vehicles rather than the driver. These cameras, commonly referred to as stop-arm cameras, have proven effective in other jurisdictions across North America by increasing the prosecution rate and raising awareness of the consequences of breaking the law."

The safety of our children is what is important here. Every day, hundreds of children are needlessly put at risk as drivers speed by stopped school buses. Catching drivers who endanger our children is critical.

This amendment would have made it easier for school bus drivers to do their jobs. Also, as the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex put it, it would have allowed us to "work together to support the people in our lives whom we love and cherish the most, that being our children, our grandchildren and perhaps even great-grandchildren as well." Unfortunately, that proposal to work together was again denied by the committee.

So, too, another of my colleagues, this time from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, saw his amendment pro-

posal slam up against the partisan wall of denial government had formed on the other side of the table. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke proposed an amendment that would have added a new section 53.1 to legislate penalties for motorists driving with accumulated snow on top of their vehicles. I personally thought that this was a well-reasoned and thoughtful amendment to Bill 31. However, the members opposite didn't seem to agree. We were fortunate to have the member speak to his amendment in committee, and I wanted to recap some of his main points here today.

This amendment was introduced as a private member's bill. It was introduced in response to a specific event in the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's riding. A man by the name of Gord Stickles was driving his Dodge Caravan on Highway 41. Around the Snake River turn, he met a tractor-trailer with a 53-foot trailer. There was a serious accumulation of snow on top of the trailer, 53 feet long and up to five inches thick. When he rounded that corner, the tractor-trailer lost all of the ice off the top of the trailer. It came crashing down. Had Mr. Stickles not acted in a very quick manner, it's likely he could have been killed. There was, however, very serious damage done to the vehicle.

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As the member stated, "This is not about when somebody's driving through a snowstorm and there's an accumulation on the vehicle, obviously. This is one where there had been a freeze-thaw cycle, and maybe more than one, as a tractor-trailer sat in a loading yard, and no attempt was made to free the ice and snow from that trailer. It's been allowed to go through a couple of these freeze-thaw cycles, embedding that and making it far more heavy and dangerous when they hit the road. Then you get a sunny day which, as you're travelling, starts to loosen that, and all of a sudden it can come off in one fell swoop."

This legislation exists in the province of Quebec and other provinces. It exists in several northern continental states. By having this in the legislation, it gives the police the authority to cite someone if they're not in compliance with the legislation.

This bill is about road safety. I think this amendment would have made our roads safer. I would say that, Speaker, because, of course, this was yet another amendment that failed to make it past the Liberal bloc.

Even when we attempted to help government deal with one of the most frustrating issues facing every constituency office across this province—the medical review of drivers' licences—even these attempts were thwarted.

My colleague from Lanark made an excellent argument for a little accountability that would go a long way when it comes to a system that is clearly broken when it comes to MTO review of medical reports for drivers who have had their licence suspended due to medical concerns.

The amendment was very simple in calling for (1) medical review subjects to be notified upon receipt of medical reports by MTO; and (2) ensuring that the

subject's report is reviewed and responded to within 30 days of receipt, which is something the minister claims is being done 98% of the time, so it really shouldn't be a problem to include it in the bill, right? Not so fast.

As the MPP from Lanark noted, our amendment would have taken the ministry's public service commitment and made it a statutory obligation that MTO must—not may, but they must—then inform the person who is impacted.

I'm going to quote the member for a second time here, from Hansard. He said that "we have a duty and an obligation by the state—if the state is going to take an action against an individual, at the minimum we have a duty to inform that individual first, especially if there are serious consequences—and driving under suspension is a serious consequence, not only monetarily but also demerit points...."

Yet, Speaker, we hear and see, time and time again, stories of unknowing motorists pulled over for a suspended licence that they were never informed had been suspended. We continue to hear and see repeated stories of motorists having to put their lives on hold while MTO drags its feet well beyond the supposed 30-business-day review timeline.

Now, Speaker, we all want our roads to be safe. There are those out there with medical concerns who, obviously, under supervision of medical professionals, have said that they are not fit to drive. That's not what we're talking about here. There are many instances when medical conditions should prevent a person from having a licence.

Obviously, we want to take the time to review and make sure we get it right. Absolutely we agree with that. But it's the time to actually get the folks to review the file that's the problem. Thirty business days is ridiculous, and I can tell you, from numerous reports, that even that ridiculous timeline is not kept.

That's why we're taking a stand on behalf of the many, many constituents across the province. We simply asked for notice that would require a review and response within 30 days, providing the ministry with one month, as opposed to business days, to ensure that subject motorists are not forced to unduly put their lives and livelihoods on hold, simply for an automatic review. Again, it's not to get your licence back. It's simply to review the file. It's far too long to have to wait.

While I again have to report that Liberal government committee members failed to put partnership ahead of partisanship, I must also report that the specific section of Bill 31 that we attempted to amend opens a Pandora's box of impacts and further delays, should it move ahead as written.

Speaker, instead of finding ways to tighten up the system and fix what's broken, government is going the other way, expanding the list of those who can report to MTO to take away a subject motorist's licence. Motorists across the province should get ready, because soon anyone from a massage therapist to your speech-language pathologist will be able to call for your licence to be removed.

Here's the list of occupations being considered to report: acupuncturist, traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, audiologist, speech-language pathologist, chiropract, chiropractor, dental hygienist, dental technologist, dentist, optician, optometrist, pharmacist, psychologist, respiratory therapist, and even veterinarian. I think it's pretty obvious that we're not enthused about the additional coverage.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Veterinarian?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** True story.

And we've heard recently that these professionals are being paid to do this. They're being paid. So how much is this going to cost?

All in all, Bill 31's direction toward medical review of drivers' licences is cause for concern across the province. The fact that government members failed to support amendments that would have at least brought some certainty to subject motorists only deepens that concern.

Speaker, we also introduced an amendment to update regulation 316/03 under the Highway Traffic Act and allow utility task vehicle, or UTV, owners the same rights to drive on designated roads and trails as ATV owners, something the government has already agreed to and yet continues to stall on, despite all-party support. The members from Timiskaming-Cochrane and Parry Sound—my colleague, of course—have both brought forth private members' bills to step in where government has stalled.

Even the government member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell put forth a motion to make rules fairer for off-road vehicle drivers across the board. When speaking in the House, the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell said that he received support from numerous people and organizations: Glenn Draper from ATV Ontario, Wayne Daub from the Ontario Federation of All-Terrain Vehicle Clubs, Peter Wood from the Ontario Federation of 4WD Recreationists, and the list goes on and on.

Down in my neck of the woods, in New Hamburg, Ontario Drive and Gear has been manufacturing the Argo since the 1960s, a vehicle that has a world-renowned reputation for its versatility and capability in traversing difficult terrain.

Updating regulations to reflect what is available to safely ride between trails and properties on rural highways will generate greater demand for these Ontario products and, in turn, help create well-paying jobs.

It has already been a decade too long. It's time to kick-start this needed change and allow off-road vehicle owners to drive on designated roads, highways and trails with other all-terrain vehicles.

And yet, despite the obvious support right across the board for this kick-start, we remain in neutral, or at the very least spinning our wheels, as government committee members failed to endorse an amendment that speaks directly to the Glengarry-Prescott-Russell MPP's previous motion. Never mind partnership with the opposition; these Liberal committee members wouldn't even partner with their own colleague.

Finally, Speaker, I do want to speak for a moment about one amendment that we attempted to put forward but were prevented from due to government members voting out a section of their own bill. Yes, you heard it right. Specifically, we had hoped to ensure that municipalities would be able to move on powers to collect unpaid fines as soon as possible, basically ensuring these powers would come into force the day the bill received royal assent.

After years of waiting for the government to grant municipalities the power to withhold licence renewal pending the payment of unpaid fines, AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and its municipalities definitely welcome the opportunity and added revenue that Bill 31 allows. For far too long, municipalities have been forced to wait for these powers to be granted, while watching countless millions of dollars in fines go uncollected.

Our amendment would have ensured powers for fine collection immediately after royal assent. Again, the reason we put this forward is that there had been talk as to when municipalities will actually be able to collect unpaid fines. Some have suggested it could take months, if not years, after this bill passes for municipalities to actually have the power to collect unpaid fines. Very simply, our amendment sought some clarity in fine collection for municipalities, putting an actual date on it to ensure that when this bill is proclaimed, municipalities will then have the power to collect those unpaid fines.

**1600**

That said, Speaker, I do have to report one final time that this amendment failed to be included in the updated third reading that we obviously see before us today, but not because government members voted against it. They actually never had that opportunity, because they had, in a bizarre turn of events on day 1 of clause-by-clause, voted out a pertinent section of their own bill that had impacts on unpaid fine collection, drug-impaired driving and pedestrian crossovers—day 1. Of course, in the end, the result was the same, unfortunately: partisanship over partnership.

And so, after three days of clause-by-clause and many hours of debate, we continue to question what happened to Premier Kathleen Wynne and the government that committed to partnership over partisanship, because we saw no evidence of that commitment in committee, none whatsoever. Where is the Wynne government that told us they would “engage all Ontarians as full partners in solving the challenges we face as individuals, as communities, as businesses and as a province”? Where is that government that would “put evidence before ideology and choose partnership over partisanship, and invite everyone to work together, with and through government, to overcome all of our challenges and to thrive as a result”?

Speaker, I've had an opportunity to meet with many of our road safety partners since my appointment as transportation critic by our interim leader, Jim Wilson. I want to thank them for the work that they do, the ongoing



work that they do. There are many, many organizations throughout the province of Ontario. We all think back to the work that MADD did to tackle impaired driving—we now know that distracted driving is one of the major leading factors in vehicle deaths today; and the great work that the CAA does, right across this province, educating their members and working with legislators to ensure that our roads are in fact one of the safest in North America; and the Ontario Safety League and our local police enforcement agencies.

I want to thank, specifically, the Waterloo region police, and its new chief, Chief Bryan Larkin, who stood with me and called for increased safety at roundabouts. I want to thank him for that, knowing that these are now a reality of our roads and that we actually need to do something.

Speaker, I submit that Bill 31 represented a true opportunity to put those words into action, to understand that government does not have ownership of all the answers, and to work with colleagues across the floor, enhancing and amending laws aimed at making Ontario roads safer. It was an opportunity that was missed, and I regret that government members chose partisanship instead.

I will end my hour here. I will look forward to questions and comments on Bill 31, and I'll leave it at that.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to congratulate the member for Kitchener–Conestoga on his very well-informed and comprehensive lead. I had the opportunity to review the transcript of the committee which he participated in and which he referred to during his remarks. I certainly am aware of the efforts that he made to introduce some changes to this bill, to address some of the issues that he felt were important, on behalf of the people he represents.

There was one particular issue he mentioned that really struck a chord with me as MPP for London West, because it is an issue of considerable concern to my constituents, and that is the reinstatement of drivers' licences after a licence has been suspended for a medical condition. Certainly, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga talked about the concern of a licence being suspended without the driver being aware that the suspension has been implemented, and some people who have been surprised to be pulled over to find out that their driver's licence is under suspension because a medical condition had been reported. Certainly that is a problem for drivers who are in that situation. It is something that should be addressed.

The main concern of my constituents is about the time that it takes to get their driver's licence reinstated, not just the process of review. As he said, we want to make sure that that review protects the safety of other motorists on the road as well as the driver, but also the process to get to the review stage, because we know that sometimes people have waited months and months for their review to take place.

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

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I'm glad to have an opportunity to do a couple of minutes, a wrap-up, on the member opposite's hour-long conversation on Bill 31. I am very glad to hear that he is supportive of road safety, but I'm still a bit surprised that he talks about partisanship over partnership because, interestingly, the policy adviser from MTO contacted the member from Kitchener–Conestoga a number of times during this process, and he chose not to meet with them. MTO offered to discuss Bill 31 amendments but he didn't respond to them. Any out-of-order amendments that he talked about could have possibly been worked out if he had chosen to respond and to meet with them, because some of the sections he's talking about from the Highway Traffic Act weren't open. The email showed that the PC transportation critic refused to discuss ways to make his amendments work. He didn't respond, so I believe that he chose partisanship over partnership.

As a matter of fact, the member opposite wanted to discuss roundabouts and was told that Bill 31 was not the particular vehicle to deal with them and that we could look at his concerns later, as looking at it right now was going to delay the bill for a number of months.

He also mentions that, inadvertently, a staff procedural error meant that one minor section out of 64 in total was inadvertently removed from the bill. Immediately upon realizing this, PC and NDP committee members were asked for agreement to reinsert that minor section 4. They chose to play partisan games and did not agree to this. The minor section of the bill has no impact on what the bill will achieve regarding an increase of penalties to distracted and alcohol- or drug-impaired drivers. The minor section is administrative and is included in Bill 85, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

I call upon all members of the House to save lives and make sure of the speedy passage of Bill 31.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I was very impressed with this one-hour speech on Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, presented by our opposition transportation critic, Michael Harris. Obviously, someone has been burning the midnight oil in pulling this research together. To craft 30 well-thought-out amendments, I understand, is something; it took over the course of three days to present these amendments. Every one of them was shot down by the government.

As the critic has pointed out in this case, partisanship trumps partnership. That's the obvious theme of this legislation. That really is quite regrettable. As he has just indicated, the government members sitting on the committee got so used to shooting down amendments that they inadvertently shot down some of their own amendments. I guess it's one more reason to lose confidence in what's going on across the way.

I picked up on the use of language, the mantra, with respect to cellphone use on a bicycle, which doesn't

make a heck of a lot of sense. As he has indicated, “If you have to grab it to” use it, “you shouldn’t.”

**1610**

The bill increases fines for distracted operation of a vehicle, but there is no mention of demerit points. Something that our critic has advocated for, that must be crushing for this member, the work that he has done on roundabouts—to present his case for roundabout legislation and to have that rejected, that is really getting personal.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It’s once again an honour to be able to stand in this House and to comment on the member from Kitchener–Conestoga regarding Bill 31.

I’d like to pick up on an issue that he brought up, and that was UTVs. We have been pushing for a long time to make UTVs legal. Actually, it’s something that we all agree on. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga and the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka brought it up. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell actually put a motion forward, which we all agreed to.

Lo and behold, in Bill 31, they did make some changes regarding off-road vehicles. They did. In subsection 178(4), they are going to amend subsection 191.8(3) by striking out “and low pressure bearing tires.” That allows municipalities to permit “off-road vehicles with three or more wheels and low pressure bearing tires.” So they took out the low-pressure-bearing-tire part, but they didn’t fix the problem where they had the opportunity. We all agree that we need to change this legislation, because, as we speak here, there are people in my riding, seniors who are changing the oil in their UTV, and they’re probably going to commit a criminal act by driving to their camp.

I demand to know when the Minister of Transportation and the Premier are actually going to fix this problem, which we all know is a problem. It’s not going to cost anybody any money, and they are refusing to act. The time to act is now, before these vehicles are out on the trails, out on the roads. We need to do it now, and we could do it now. It’s a regulation. They chose not to do it here, but it could easily be done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We return to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga for his reply.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I think, to summarize the previous member’s two minutes in a few words, it would be that they chose partisanship over partnership, quite simply said.

Look, I’ve got only a minute and 48 seconds left, and I really just want to, again, thank those road safety partners who day in, day out do the important work on our roads to make them safer in Ontario. I’ve listed the stakeholders throughout my remarks, but I really want to thank them again for their hard work.

Of course, I want to thank the official opposition members for bringing forward some novel, insightful, progressive ideas that I’ve mentioned today that I included in those amendments. Some of them were

included in the bill previously, like the member from Simcoe’s and the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka’s, but, as you can see, there are many more that were supported by many of our road safety partners that could have easily been included in Bill 31—take them out of committee—we all know that there are backlogs in committee—get them into the bill and make them law when we, in fact, have the Highway Traffic Act opened up and before us at this time.

Now, I know the kids in the short pants bring the notes over to the members, and they read them and they recite them. I really hope that they don’t believe a lot of the things that they read oftentimes. I know they don’t get a chance to read them and understand, perhaps, what they all mean. That’s unfortunate, because I really think that the parliamentary secretary’s two minutes will actually inform viewers of what we experienced in committee, that, in fact, it was partisanship over partnership here.

We all want to make roads safer—absolutely. We support many of the aspects of Bill 31, and we’ll, in fact, be supporting it, because that is our end goal.

I want to thank my staff Rob, Rebecca and Aaron for putting the time in to bring this all together. They’ve worked hard, and I want to leave it at that.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Before I begin, I’d like to seek unanimous consent for the NDP to stand down its lead.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for London West is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to stand down the NDP’s lead on third reading of this bill. Agreed? Agreed.

The member for London West has the floor.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It is always an honour to stand in this House on behalf of the people we represent in our various ridings, and it’s a particular pleasure for me, as the MPP for London West, to participate in this debate today around third reading of Bill 31, the Making Ontario’s Roads Safer Act.

As I mentioned a couple of minutes ago, I took the opportunity when I was preparing for this speech to read the transcript of the committee on general government that considered the bill after it was referred to committee following second reading. I have to say that I was interested to see that the bill before us today, which went through that committee input process and very detailed clause-by-clause consideration, is identical to what was passed at second reading. Really, the only thing that changed, as a result of those six long days of committee deliberation, is one minor change to the definition of “pedestrian crossover.”

There really are two ways that you could interpret this: Either the Liberals got it exactly right the first time—the legislation was so perfect that it didn’t require any amendment at all—or the Liberals felt that they didn’t need to listen to what the people of Ontario had to say in the amendments that were brought forward by elected MPPs who were participating on the committee, each of which was rejected by the government members on the

committee. Frankly, I think it is much more the latter than the former interpretation.

Bill 31 is a comprehensive piece of legislation that combines two bills that were brought forward earlier, in the last Parliament. It brings in the Highway Traffic Statute Law Amendment Act, which was previously known as Bill 34. This legislation was designed to give municipalities additional tools to collect defaulted traffic fines from drivers.

Bill 31 also brings in the former Bill 173, which was the Highway Traffic Amendment Act. That bill was designed to enhance pedestrian, driver and cyclist safety, and also reduce impaired and distracted driving.

In addition to these two former pieces of legislation, Bill 31 also includes some important new measures to address drugged driving, as well as introducing stiffer penalties for distracted driving and, finally, amending the Highway 407 East Act.

We hear from the OPP that, without question, distracted driving has become the number one killer on Ontario's roads. OPP statistics show that 78 people died in distracted-driving-related collisions in 2013. That is many more than the 57 impaired driving deaths and the 44 speed-related deaths. So this is a real concern. It has to be a priority for the province to get those fatalities down, and these distracted driving provisions are an important strategy to do that.

I suspect that many of us in this Legislature—certainly more than one of us—have been guilty, at some time or other, of looking at our cellphones while we are driving. Maybe we are stopped at an intersection, and we just want to steal a moment to look and see what's going on. But sometimes we look at our phones while we are on the road.

**1620**

This is a particular concern when we think about young people. We know how addicted young people are to their technology and how hard it is for them to be away from their technology and unconnected from social media and how tempting it is for young people to want to look at their cellphones while they are driving.

One can't help but feel a sense of real and profound grief when you read about the final tweets that people sent just before they are involved in a head-on collision, and a fatality results. I think we've all seen those stories in the media of these very poignant final messages that were sent out.

With Bill 31, drivers who are caught looking at display screens or handheld devices while they are driving will face increased fines and also demerit points. Importantly, the graduated licensing system will be revised to also include a prohibition on distracted driving. Hopefully this will help deter young people from looking at their phones and will engrain good driving practices in young people before they become fully licensed drivers and they won't be tempted to look at their phones while they are behind the wheel of a vehicle.

The new provisions that are included in the bill to address drugged driving are similar to those that are in

place in other jurisdictions. New physical coordination tests will now be conducted in the field. This provision should help increase convictions for drugged driving, which have typically in the past been very low. MADD points out that in 2012, there were 60,000 charges laid in Canada for impaired driving, but less than 2% were for drug impairment. We also know that without the evidence to convict drivers who have drug impairments, there have been some very high-profile cases of drugged driving that have resulted in acquittal.

Bill 31 also allows for administrative driver's licence suspensions, which are identical to the existing provisions that apply to drunk driving in the Highway Traffic Act. When a police officer who is trained in administering a standardized field sobriety test reasonably believes that the driver is drug-impaired, the legislation will allow for escalating licence suspensions of three days for a first offence, seven days for a second offence within a five-year period, or 30 days for three or more offences within a five-year period. Bill 31 also allows for 90-day licence suspensions and seven-day vehicle impoundments when a trained drug recognition expert believes that the driver is impaired.

These changes are all welcomed and supported by many groups, like MADD and the CAA, that have been advocating on these issues for years. On this side of the House, I can say that New Democrats and the people that we represent in our ridings welcome these changes as an important step to improve driver safety on Ontario roads.

What we are concerned about, however, in this legislation—there are several things that concern us, but one of the very problematic aspects of Bill 31 is the privatization of motor vehicle inspections that the bill introduces. The bill enables the introduction of broad regulations that will replace the current vehicle licensing system with a completely new system under an unspecified model. The model will be prescribed in the regulations.

This effectively allows the outsourcing of vehicle inspections to a private operator. We understand that a fully private model that is similar to Tarion—and I don't think I'm the only MPP in this House who gets emails raising major concerns about Tarion's lack of accountability. Another private model that has many Ontarians concerned is the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. This is another model that the new vehicle licensing system could be fashioned after. We do understand that these are the models that the government is looking at as it moves to outsource motor vehicle licensing.

Under these models, the administrator of the new vehicle inspection centre system would not be an agent of the crown. The administrator would be exempt from normal oversight by the government agencies committee, the Ombudsman and the Auditor General, unless there is a service agreement with the ministry that allows for such oversight. As we know, the province currently licenses and oversees private motor vehicle inspection centres to certify regular passenger vehicles and commercial

vehicles. We are aware that there is considerable variation in the quality of the inspections, and we do recognize that there is a need for action to prevent what are called “lick and stick” services that fraudulently certify unsafe vehicles in exchange for a payoff and as a result undermine public confidence in commercial vehicle safety. This is a problem and it has to be addressed.

But these were problems that were identified as far back as 2008, when the Auditor General released a report that found that “the ministry does not exercise adequate oversight of this process and has little effective control over the issuance of safety standard certificates to inspection stations.” This was in an Auditor General’s report of 2008. The ministry has had several years since that report to look at how oversight can be improved, how some of these flaws can be rectified and how we can assure the public of the safety of motor vehicles.

We agree that there is a need to overhaul the existing system, but we have serious reservations about the path that the government has chosen to address these concerns. We have serious reservations about the lack of accountability, the lack of transparency and the lack of oversight that is associated with a private model. Frankly, Speaker, who can blame us? Just look at what happened when the Tories, under Mike Harris, privatized the driver licensing system in 2003. At that time, they signed a 10-year contract with Serco, the multi-national outsourcing corporation. This turned out to be a disaster, basically from day one. There was a prolonged strike in 2009 that inconvenienced hundreds of thousands of Ontario drivers. Yet, despite all of the problems with the outsourcing to Serco, the Liberal government renewed the Serco contract in 2013. Not a year later Ontarians learned, through the Toronto Star, that Serco was not testing tractor-trailer drivers on highways and that a loophole was allowing unregulated licence mills to train truck drivers without any ministry oversight whatsoever.

However, under the terms of this renewed contract, the contract that was signed, again, in 2013, Serco is allowed to self-police and self-report, and is also permitted to keep its reports secret, removed from any kind of public scrutiny. Serco doesn’t even have to let the government know how many inspectors, if any, oversee its operations.

**1630**

Clearly, Ontarians’ experience with Serco and with unregulated truck driver testing shows the risks of outsourcing to unaccountable private companies. Instead of fixing poor oversight over the existing, publicly accountable, motor vehicle inspection centres, the government has chosen to move ahead with legislation that will outsource the motor vehicle inspection centre system to a private administrator. This, as I said, is a major concern for New Democrats and also for Ontarians.

In my remaining time, I want to focus on some of the provisions of Bill 31 that deal with cycling safety. When I spoke to Bill 31 at second reading, I talked about some of the great work that is going on in my community to promote cycling and encourage more Londoners to cycle. Following that debate, several Londoners contacted me

to express their support for Bill 31, precisely because of the measures that it includes to improve cycling safety. While we do have very legitimate concerns about some of the provisions of Bill 31, I do want to say that New Democrats will be supporting this bill. That’s not to say that it couldn’t have been improved, but we will be supporting it, even though the Liberals refused to make changes.

Some of the Londoners who support Bill 31 are members of London Cycle Link. I wanted to share with MPPs some of the research that they gave me about cycling in London and why cycling safety is such an important strategy to encourage people to cycle. What they have found is that less than 2% of Londoners cycle regularly and only 9% choose active transportation: cycling or walking. London Cycle Link has a goal to increase these numbers to 8% for cycling and 15% for active transportation. They want to make cycling the simplest, most convenient and safest option available so that citizens can easily choose cycling as their preferred mode of everyday transportation. To achieve that goal, cycling safety provisions and new protections for pedestrian crossings are important and welcome new measures that will contribute to increasing the number of cyclists.

Earlier today we talked about the gender pay gap because it’s Equal Pay Day today. In that discussion, we talked about the importance of applying a gender lens to public policy issues. I want to commend London Cycle Link for doing some gender-based analysis of cycling issues in the city. They found out that there are less than 2% of Londoners who now cycle regularly, but almost three quarters of those who cycle are male. Increasing the number of cyclists in our community requires some effort to shift gendered perceptions of cycling to make sure that everyone feels welcome to take up cycling and participate in cycling.

Another part of their research showed that there’s a general perception within the community that cycling is unsafe. They welcome the measures that are included in Bill 31 to improve cycling safety through contraflow lanes; through the one-metre distance, which was originally proposed by my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park; and also for cyclists to have flashing red lights and to ride on paved shoulders of unrestricted highways.

This bill includes a number of welcome safety protections for Ontarians. It also includes some new approaches that are of concern. But on the whole, New Democrats support the bill and will be pleased to see it through third reading.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Cambridge.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Can I—

*Interjections.*

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Trinity–Spadina. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You’re both standing.

The member for Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Thank you. It was very kind of the member from Cambridge to give me her time to respond to the debate just offered by the member from London West.

That was a very in-depth debate. I applaud you for some of the points that you brought forward. There were some valid concerns that you listed. I look forward to the discussion at committee and, hopefully, some of those will get answered there.

This bill is a great bill for Ontarians in terms of enhancing road safety. It has measures on impaired driving and controlling drugs and alcohol, which we all know might result in disaster and pain that would potentially be suffered by Ontario families. As a parent, I think this is very timely, and I applaud the government for doing so.

The member from London West spent time talking about safeguarding cyclists across the province. I'm very proud that our government has taken a very progressive step towards ensuring that cycling is part of our transportation culture. We're really enhancing this culture. When you look at the suburbs—not just in the downtown core, but in the suburban areas—there are more and more users of our roads who are cyclists, and that one-metre rule will help them to feel safer on the roads. I know that through our Cycle Ontario strategy, we're building more bicycle lanes, not just in the urban areas but in the suburbs as well.

I'm very pleased to be part of this debate. I have been hearing a lot of good points coming from the opposition side. I'm very proud of our government for actually putting this on the discussion and moving forward on this initiative.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pretty happy to provide a couple of moments of comment to the great speech by the member for London West. I thought she did a very good job.

I was a little bit surprised, with all due respect, through you, Speaker, to the member for Trinity–Spadina, because I think I heard him talk at first about this bill going to committee. Well, the bill is back from committee. We're now having third reading debate.

I think the speech from the member for London West really highlighted what the whole problem was. We had six days of hearings. We had numerous suggestions. There was amendment after amendment after amendment tabled at the committee, and the government members voted them down.

I think she used the words “did the government get”—because the bill is essentially the same as it was before it went to committee, other than the section of their own bill that the government voted down. Did they get it exactly right? I think we all know the answer: No, because there were some very pragmatic ideas that were shot down, just because the government became partisan.

Did they want to listen? I think that was the other point that the member made at the start. I think it's pretty obvious they didn't want to listen.

The member for Kitchener–Conestoga brought up that even something like his Safe Roundabouts Act could have been incorporated in some way in this bill to really—the name of the bill is the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. He had some great amendments that would make our roads safer. He had some great suggestions that would make our roads safer. Time after time, the government just blindly becomes partisan and votes them down.

I was glad that the member for London West put so many great points on the record today, not just from her own riding but looking at the bigger picture for the province of Ontario.

Again, make no mistake: This government was partisan. This government was closed-minded. There were many, many improvements to this bill that aren't part of it because of that.

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

1640

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It is a delight to comment upon my colleague from London West. She does something that's unfortunately quite unusual in this place, and that is that she actually does her own research. She actually spends some time to, first of all, read the bill and to look at her own community and the impact the bill has on her community. She doesn't just read off the canned notes provided by—whichever political party, really; we all get them. She does her own thinking, she does her own responses, and I think that's really admirable, so I want to herald that in her talk.

She also talked, of course, about the fact that none of the amendments were listened to. In fact, it was so bad that the members of the Liberal Party actually voted against their own amendments, because they were so used to voting against all the amendments.

I have to say, one of them is particularly shameful. I want to herald the work of Share The Road, a phenomenal organization. Share the Road were in absolute agreement with the coroner's report that said we need mandatory sideguards for all large trucks, to save cyclists' lives, and sadly, the Liberals voted against that amendment as well, something that a federal member of the New Democratic Party put forward.

Obviously we are all very concerned in the New Democratic Party about increasing privatization, and here's yet another example: the motor vehicle inspection centre system. It begs the question, Mr. Speaker, that after the Conservative government has privatized this and then the Liberal government has privatized what's left, what is the role for government? What is the role for government when we have privatized all the services that our citizens use? This is a right-wing dream in this place.

I'm going to talk more about that maybe a little later, but seriously, yet another privatization move, yet another poison pill in a bill that has some good aspects for which we're going to vote.

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

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** I'm proud to rise this afternoon to speak on Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. Mr. Speaker, as you know, for the last 13 years Ontario has been ranked either first or second in North America for road safety, and our government is proud of our record of having among the safest roads in North America. But we know that there is always more that we can do to improve our road safety programs. As always, keeping our roads safe is the highest priority for our government.

Bill 31 not only serves to protect drivers on our roads, it also introduces a number of provisions that will help keep pedestrians and cyclists safe in Ontario. The road safety issues that the bill aims to address continue to be persistent challenges in Ontario, and while we have seen success with our distracted-driving law and public education efforts, distracted driving continues to be a growing problem on the province's roads.

The proposal would change the existing legislated fine range of \$50 to \$500, and increase it to \$300 to \$1,000 as a penalty upon conviction for distracted driving. This is part of why we have seen so much support, even outside this Legislature, for this particular bill. MTO has consulted with a number of key stakeholders who collectively would have and have contributed to the cycling amendments being brought forward by this bill.

The safety of all road users, including cyclists, is of paramount importance to the Ministry of Transportation, and we encourage all road users to share the road. These amendments are largely responsive to requests by municipalities and key stakeholders, including the Office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario's Cycling Death Review released in 2012.

#CycleON Action Plan 1.0 was released on April 14, 2014, which committed to introducing legislative and regulatory amendments to promote cyclist safety. This is good news for all the cyclists I have in my riding of Davenport, and for cyclists across the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments, and I return to the member for London West for her response.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina, the member for Leeds-Grenville, the member for Parkdale-High Park and the member for Davenport for offering some thoughts on my remarks.

I want to continue on where the member from Davenport left off, on the issue around the safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Certainly, we couldn't agree more that this has to be a high priority for this government, but as the member for Parkdale-High Park pointed out, one of the measures that has been found again and again by the coroner as critical to protect cyclists and pedestrians—that is, mandatory truck side guards—was rejected by the Liberal government. That's a concern for us.

There was a report in 2010, another report in 2012 and a renewed call in 2013 from the Ontario coroner to introduce mandatory truck side guards, but the government chose not to proceed.

There are some good measures included in Bill 31, but there is still a lot of work to do if we are going to create a culture where people feel that if they cycle they will be safe on the roads. As I mentioned, the work of London Cycle Link in my community certainly has found that people's concerns about the safety of cycling is a real barrier to them taking up cycling.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I want to commend the member for London West for her advocacy. I know London Cycle Link; I hope they're watching today. It's a great group of people. When I ran Share the Road, we had a great relationship with London Cycle Link. Good for you for noting their hard work today in the House.

It's my pleasure to stand in this House today to speak to Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act (Making Ontario's Roads Safer). As many of you know, prior to my election to office here at Queen's Park, I founded and ran the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Before I start, please permit me—my apologies. I'd like to share my time with the member from Kitchener Centre, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, and the member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

While at Share the Road, we worked closely with the provincial government on the creation of this bill in its previous form, and I'm very proud of what we accomplished. It is also worth noting that this bill is an amalgam of many pieces of opposition-led and opposition-driven legislative amendments. In doing so, it's so important to note that co-operation is part of the hallmark of this place. It is what Ontarians want us to do and it's when we're at our best. In doing so, I'd like to give a shout-out to the member from Parkdale-High Park for her work on cycling and her cycling advocacy work—it's of long standing—and the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who has done excellent work on paved shoulders in this place when I was at Share the Road. Now that advocacy work continues.

Through the hard work of dedicated officials, elected members and advocates in the cycling community, along with many others, we've been able to produce a piece of legislation that will do much to make the roads safer for every Ontarian, whether it be a pedestrian, a cyclist or a motorist. Promoting active transportation and cycling safety in our province is of the utmost importance.

The member from London West noted the coroner's review. I sat on the coroner's review. I was privileged to sit on the coroner's review into cycling deaths. Between 2006 and 2012, 125 souls lost their lives in Ontario while riding their bikes. That review comprised a great deal of Share the Road's work, and I'm proud to say that as a government we listened and a number of those recommendations are now being realized in Bill 31. By making simple changes to the rules of our roads, we can drastically reduce the number of fatalities and collisions in our province, saving lives and reducing the negative impacts on families right across our province.

The one-metre safe passing law, notably, included in this bill, will require drivers to give cyclists a minimum

of one metre safe passing, where practical. While this may not seem significant, giving cyclists adequate space when passing them on a road or highway will help to avoid collisions and near misses, preventing serious injury and even death.

It is also a critical mechanism for education and awareness. When I was at Share the Road, we worked closely with CAA, a valued partner to this government, in communicating the importance of safety and of sharing the road.

Also included in this bill is a provision to allow cyclists to cycle on the paved shoulders of highways. Earlier I mentioned the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka; he’s been working at this for years. This is something that is currently not allowed under the Highway Traffic Act and it was a long-overdue amendment. Bicyclists, like motorists, use highways all across this province to reach their destinations, whether it be cycling to work, school, for a journey or for fun. This is a critically important mechanism to keep people safe. Allowing cyclists to use paved shoulders will help to keep them out of harm’s way, creating a buffer space between them and motor vehicles. As I stated previously, simple changes like this can greatly improve our ability to share the roadways that we all use.

**1650**

By increasing safety measures for all active transportation users, we don’t just reduce or mitigate the number of collisions and injuries. When people feel safer riding their bicycles in the areas where they live, they are far more likely to do so. I think several members have alluded today to the importance of cycling and the contribution that it makes to congestion mitigation, to improving our air and so on. It also contributes significantly to economic development. But six out of 10 Ontarians are afraid to ride their bike, and that is why these amendments and Bill 31 are so important. By encouraging more people in communities across Ontario to get out and ride their bikes, we can help grow our economy. In 2010 alone, two million Canadians visited Ontario to participate in cycling activities, and they spent \$391 million.

Of course, Quebec’s economy benefits from about \$140 million a year from cycling tourism as a result of La Route verte, a 4,300-kilometre system that spans their province. I’m proud to say that as a result of Ontario’s cycling strategy, launched in 2013, our province is also moving in that direction and that will mean jobs and vitality for Ontarians right across this province. It will mean increased safety, too, to the betterment of all of us. Bicycle tourists spend more per day than non-cycling tourists. They tend to pack lightly and pick up supplies along the way. I know this; I’ve done it myself. When we make people feel safer on our roads, they are far more likely to ride their bikes in these communities, ride more often, and encourage their friends to do the same.

Speaking of making our roads safer, another key element to this legislation is substantially increased fines for dooring. These are aligned with North American standards, and they contribute to significantly reducing collisions. They create awareness as well.

This bill does not just improve the safety for active transportation users; it also does much to reduce collisions and raise awareness between motor vehicles and drivers in many ways. It will also introduce stiffer penalties for impaired driving, both for drivers who have consumed alcohol and those who have taken drugs. It cracks down on distracted drivers and helps to keep those off the road who should not be operating a vehicle for medical reasons. Ultimately, it covers a wide array of factors that infringe upon the safety of all road users in our province.

I encourage all members of this House to support Bill 31. The changes that will come about through its implementation will help improve the lives and safety of every Ontarian across every community. There are far too many injuries and fatalities in our province for us not to act swiftly and appropriately. I believe this bill does both.

I want to say in closing, very quickly, that it was my pleasure and honour to have worked on this particular piece of legislation before I was elected, and I stand here proudly today knowing that we are on the cusp of adopting this critical bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** I’m delighted to rise in the House today to join the discussion on Bill 31, the Making Ontario’s Roads Safer Act.

Road safety has always been a top priority for our government. The fact that we have been ranked as either first or second for road safety in North America for the past 13 years truly underscores that point.

But even with this great record, we know that there is always more that we can be doing to improve road safety for Ontarians. This is why the Minister of Transportation introduced Bill 31. This legislation is a key piece of a broader package of legislation and regulatory amendments to the Highway Traffic Act, the Provincial Offences Act and the Highway 407 East Act. Bill 31 not only serves to keep drivers on our roads safe but it also introduces a number of very important provisions that will also keep pedestrians and cyclists safe in our province. You just heard the member from Burlington speaking at length about cycle safety.

This package is aimed at tackling many different issues such as impaired driving; distracted driving; medically unfit drivers; truck, vehicle and bus safety; pedestrian safety; cyclist safety; and the collection of unpaid fines. I would like to use some of my time today to highlight a few of the important points in Bill 31.

With the new emerging technologies, distracted driving has become a more relevant and a very complex issue on Ontario roads. Ontario first implemented a distracted driving ban back in 2009. Since the ban was put in place, the province has laid over 300,000 distracted driving charges. That is a shocking number, but people are still not following the law. They’re not paying attention. They continue to talk on their phones, and they continue to text. We have made strides through legis-

lation and public education, but changing habits isn't always easy, and we continue to see distracted driving as a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I'll share a quick story with you. In my previous role as a news journalist, I covered many stories on texting and driving and being on the phone while driving. After the legislation first came in, in 2009—it was about six months in—I said to my cameraman, "I'm going to do a story on this, this week, so I want you to head out and collect some videotape, if you can find people on the phone or texting." He said, "What if I don't find anyone?" I said, "Give it an hour or so, and let me know how it goes."

Within half an hour, he came back to my office at the TV station. I said, "Did you forget something?" He said, "No. I'm done. I got lots and lots of videotape." I said, "Really?" He said, "I had no trouble."

He had set up on King Street, just up the street from the TV station in Kitchener. He turned the camera on at an intersection and had about half a dozen people on their phones or texting. He also saw people eating or putting on makeup, and he had some videotape of one gentleman doing a very unpleasant thing with his nose.

Anyway, if the trends continue as they currently are, fatalities from distracted driving could exceed fatalities from drinking and driving by as early as 2016. This is why Bill 31 will impose higher fines, as well as three demerit points on conviction. The increase in penalties will be considerable. The lowest possible fine will be increased by 500%, and the highest penalty by 100%. Distracted driving will also be added to the existing list of novice driver conditions under the graduated licensing system. This will drive home this message to younger drivers.

We realize that these penalties may seem very steep, but we have learned in the past with other dangerous driving behaviour, such as speeding and drunk driving, that stricter penalties do help change driver behaviour and create a kind of social norm that makes distracted driving as socially unacceptable as drunk driving.

According to recent stats, more than 45% of drivers killed on our roads were found to be impaired by drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol. This is why, with Bill 31, the government is proposing to expand requirements to complete remedial measures and the ignition interlock program for drivers repeatedly caught with a blood-alcohol concentration limit. As of today, these requirements only apply to second and subsequent occurrences in what's called the "warn range."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to let you know that, with Bill 31, the government is proposing dramatic new changes to road safety laws by recognizing drug-impaired driving. This is just as serious as alcohol-impaired driving, and the consequences should reflect that.

Bill 31 and the broader plan to improve Ontario's road safety have been carefully planned with the help of our safety partners. This bill is a great step forward in optimizing road safety for all Ontarians and everyone using our roads: people who are driving, pedestrians and

cyclists. We want to make the roads safer for everyone. I can tell you that, as a parent with three young adults who are driving—they're in their 20s—I'm very concerned about everyone staying safe on the road.

Thank you very much for this time today. I encourage all members of the Legislature to support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to begin by thanking our other members who have spoken, to this point, on this issue. When I speak about highways and driving and distracted driving and the like, I always like to begin by thanking MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Driving. They are a remarkable organization that has been around for a very long time. I would suggest that all of us who have been driving for a long time end up sort of forming our own habits, and habits are difficult to break. Twenty, 30 or 40 years ago, I would say there were people who drove who had a particular habit that was very dangerous, and shifting attitudes and trying to change attitudes is a very difficult thing. I would say that we all owe a debt of gratitude to MADD and their organization, in terms of their ability to impact people's driving habits over the last several decades. So I always like to thank them.

**1700**

I also want to start by thanking my parliamentary assistant behind me, the member from Burlington. I hope that people who are following this debate on television are acutely aware of the work that she has done on the cycling component, with the organization that she started and that she led for a significant period of time. Individually, she has had a huge impact on cycling safety in the province of Ontario. I know that as being part of her organization that she has left behind, she's very proud of them and the work that collectively they've been able to do and will continue to do in terms of making cycling and sharing the road safer for all of us in the province of Ontario. So I want to thank her for that.

Speaker, I want to speak just briefly—I still have one more member who is going to use some time here—on the penalties piece of what's in this legislation. People who are following the debate will know that Bill 31 has increased penalties included in it. I don't mind saying that sometimes I wonder about that piece, and that piece only. I think when we do include pieces like that, the point is to make it a deterrent to a particular behaviour. I'm not sure that penalties and penalties alone can necessarily prove to be a deterrent. If someone has deep pockets, if they're well-to-do, I'm not sure if a fine is going to be the deterrent that we would want it to be when it comes to driving and bad driving habits, and distracted driving in this particular case.

That's why I think it's important to underline, for people who are interested in this debate, that included in Bill 31, in this legislation, there will be demerit points attached to distracted driving. I think it's three. It's the first time. I think that's a brand new piece. It's not an increase, but a brand new piece. I think about it often



when we talk about penalties. I think that when we're looking at a deterrents package, penalties are one thing, but I think the demerit points that are included that would be withdrawn from the driver are significant. I think that's a very good, very progressive piece in this particular piece of legislation.

A couple of pieces before I wrap up and hand it off to our member from Mississauga–Streetsville: Speaker, you've heard other members say that in Ontario, we have the first- or second-safest roads—I'm not sure if it's in Canada, North America; I always forget the jurisdiction. But it's significant. We do a good job. We always frame these as accidents—and they're accidents in the sense that nobody's doing it on purpose—but they are predictable. We know that there will be accidents, so called. I think, as a result of that, being able to know for sure that we will continue to see serious consequences for families in Ontario—that even though we have highly rated safe infrastructure and highway infrastructure in the province of Ontario, we need to continue to do as much as we can to improve upon what is already a great safety record, relatively. There are still a lot of tragedies out there.

The last piece: I would say, as a member from northern Ontario, we have made massive investments, relative to any government that has come before us, in the highway infrastructure, four-laning, passing lanes, safer infrastructure for northern Ontario drivers than heretofore has ever been the case. It is not even close. Much of that money from the Ministry of Transportation flows through our northern highways program, contained within the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. It's a piece, as northerners, that we are very proud of. Significant pieces of highway that have been four-laned will continue to be four-laned, as a result of our commitment to more infrastructure spending in the province of Ontario. As a northerner, it's a piece that I take great pride in. I'm happy that it will continue.

Speaker, my time is up, and I'm happy to yield the floor to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have just a few remarks to add to the very thoughtful suggestions and remarks of my colleagues, who have done such an excellent job of covering this bill. Two of them actually relate to some stories.

I can remember the member for Oakville telling me about a particular instance in which the Halton Regional Police had posted a sign saying, "Don't use your cellphone, distracted driver. Police officer ahead." They just basically told people, "Don't do it." If you were not driving distracted, you could see the sign. They were doing a great business hauling distracted drivers over who were blithely driving past an in-your-face sign saying, "Don't talk on your cellphone." They were hauling them over and writing tickets.

Very clearly, there are some people who haven't gotten this message about how lethal distracted driving is. Distracted driving is every bit as lethal and in many cases more so than driving impaired. Many of us in our

baby boom generation will remember when there were no impaired driving regulations, and when they brought them in, such as they were, they were a minor misdemeanour. My recollection is that, at the time I was growing up in the province of Quebec, the first threshold was either 0.12% or 0.15%, subsequently lowered to 0.1%, 0.08% and I believe it's now 0.05%. But at the time, there wasn't the recognition that this was a problem. Over time, we realized how much of a problem it was.

What alcohol impairment was two generations ago, distracted driving is today, because back then there weren't distractions—distractions, such as it were or might be, would be the person sitting beside you or it would be the radio that you were playing. You didn't have a screen, a video device or a telephone that you could talk on. Today, all of those things are also present in your car and they're competing for your attention inside a car that more effectively seals out sound and more effectively isolates you from the road.

Driving a car today, a machine that is quieter and smoother, makes it a lot easier for you to forget you're driving at, in many cases, two kilometres a minute. As you let your attention drift and your gaze drift, it could very well be lethal. That's the reason that these amendments are being made today. This bill is about saving lives.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yes, a few comments on the presentations recently presented: We heard earlier this afternoon our transportation critic, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, outline the work that was done through 30 amendments in an attempt to co-operate with this government, amendments following the spirit of this legislation, amendments with respect to distracted driving that has just been mentioned.

For example, there was a proposed regimen of fines with respect to distracted bicycle riding with respect to cellphone use. According to our critic, there just didn't seem to be any co-operation on that one from the other side.

I do know that Bill 31 requires, for example, all drivers to slow down and move into another lane if they're approaching an emergency vehicle when the blue lights are flashing or the red lights are flashing. In the spirit of that, the opposition brought forward advice through amendments with respect to pulling over or slowing down for snowplows, advice that was rejected and advice that had been presented as required in the form of an amendment.

Amendments were put forward in a similar approach with respect to tow trucks, based on a private member's bill that was debated in this Legislature by MPP Garfield Dunlop. I just think it's unfortunate that the partisanship kicked in. There was an attempt for partnership. This was rejected by the members opposite. I just regret that 30 amendments seem to be rejected out of hand.

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

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I'm pleased to be able to rise and add some comments. I'm looking at the clock and hopefully I'll have an opportunity later to comment in more detail about the bill—to have a second opportunity to speak to it. I got to speak to it in second reading.

Many of the members from the government side have spoken about distracted driving and the increase in fines for distracted drivers. We all know how dangerous it is. Unfortunately, that seems to be not just the youth but we have several adults as well who tend to text and drive, or talk on their phone and drive, or take pictures while they're driving and tweet them out. We all know how unsafe that is.

What I find interesting is that there was a proposal to increase the fines if somebody was to hit a pedestrian and potentially end the life of pedestrian. The government side had voted against that. I think often that's what we see when someone is distracted while driving: Not only are there motor vehicle accidents that could potentially be fatal, but it's often people that are crossing the road, could even be on the sidewalk, walking, and a vehicle goes off the road and up the sidewalk and hits a pedestrian. So I think there needs to be consideration to increasing fines when somebody is not only distracted while driving—maybe they choose not to stop at a crosswalk when a pedestrian is trying to cross. I think we need to look at a stiffer penalty for people who harm somebody, harm a pedestrian or potentially end their life, because they either choose not to stop or they're too busy talking on their phone or reaching for something from the seat beside them and not paying attention to the road.

1710

So I would ask that among many other amendments which I hope we have the opportunity to speak to, that we brought forward and were voted against by the government side—I would hope that when they're talking about distracted driving, that is an amendment they would take into consideration.

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

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** It gives me great pleasure to be able to speak for two minutes on Bill 31. First of all, I wanted to support what the member from Kitchener Centre was saying about distracted driving. There's not one time that I am being driven to Pearson airport that I don't see at least—at least—five people speaking on the phone, texting, putting their makeup on. Imagine, they're not driving at 20 kilometres an hour. I would like to be able to take their licence plate. I hope that there is nobody in this House who does that—I hope not—that we are all very cautious. But what I'm glad to see is that, in the same vein, we are adding a distracted driving prohibition to the existing novice driver's licence conditions under the graduated licensing system, to the regulations. You see youth doing that because, of course, when you are young you're not going to have an accident, you're not going to be injured and you're not going to die from a car accident. But it's not only the youth, because those that I see are people of your age or

my age. It's very dangerous, not only for them but for those around them.

One more issue that I'm very pleased about—and it has come to my attention from residents in my riding—is pedestrian safety. It requires drivers to yield the whole roadway to pedestrians at school crossings—not just at school crossings, but at pedestrian crossings. That's what I hear. Representing the downtown, people don't—they just wait at the red light to turn right and it's very dangerous for the pedestrians. I'm glad to see that.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to begin my time with thanks to the member from Cambridge for getting that note across to me. I think that is something that needs to be understood, and certainly I, personally, would like to understand that. I used to do that for a living. So I just wanted to understand why we're changing lengths for B-trains.

Speaker, as I said, I used to be a trucker. I did that for quite a few years. I was very disappointed when the member from Kitchener-Conestoga suggested putting legislation in for training for roundabouts. I want to tell you about the first time I went around a roundabout with a truck. When they were sending me over to that part just south of Elmira, all the company told me was to be careful of the roundabout. I had never been through one with a truck. This truck I was driving was about 80 feet long. I approached the intersection and saw a bunch of traffic in there. If you're driving a truck, you always have to be over to the one side; if you're going left you have to allow some room. Fortunately, the truck was big enough and maybe imposing enough that the cars let me go, because the truck took up the whole thing, and I had to go three quarters of the way around to get out of it. So cars couldn't go anywhere when I was in there. Maybe that was a good thing, because it was a little difficult, a little scary when I first went around there, because I had never been through one with a big truck. That's maybe something that should be taught in driver training, not only with young folks who are starting off driving cars but with truck drivers. There should be some kind of a system where they take you around those things. Also size-wise, the roundabout should maybe have been a little bit bigger because the back wheels of my trailer were actually up on the curb on the left-hand side, in the grass, as I was going around, and I was as far as I could be on the right-hand side.

I think there are some issues with roundabouts. It's unfortunate that this government wouldn't listen to us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One of the government members can now reply.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I want to begin by thanking the members of this House for their contributions in this conversation today. In particular, I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry for his very kind comments about my cycling advocacy, which was a tremendous pleasure, the members for Kitchener Centre and Mississauga-Streetsville, and the

Attorney General—so much talk about cycling today, Speaker. It's been very heartening.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry mentioned the northern highways program, and I'm so glad he did because I was unaware of the extent of our investments in northern Ontario. Sometimes it takes our northern colleagues to remind us of the importance of that, and it really is so important.

In the history of this province too, though, I think it's worth noting that there's never been a more significant modernization of the Highway Traffic Act from a cycling perspective, and we're about to do that. I think that's critically important and worth noting. I'm proud of that, and I know that this pride is shared by members on all sides of this House. I certainly heard that reflected today.

Given the time of year it is with the nice weather here, cyclists from across our province—even on the roads in your riding, if I may say, Speaker, which is contiguous to my own, cyclists enjoy the Halton Hills. It's a beautiful place to ride. They will now begin to have greater confidence, with 600,000 cyclists riding their bikes on average every day in our province and 132,000 of them in Toronto alone.

If I may close on a personal note, Speaker: On June 6—this year, nine years ago—I lost my husband in a cycling collision, as many members of this House know. This year, we will re-mark that time with special reverence, as we always do, and in laughter and in celebration of the life he had and the person he was, but we will also reflect on the work that's been accomplished on cycling in the past five or six years in particular. I'll be able to count this legislation as part of that record of service from members of this House to our province to make cycling safer. If this legislation had been passed, Greg might be alive today. There are provisions within it that are long overdue.

Speaker, thank you for permitting me to close on a personal note and to thank the members of this House for the significant debate that this bill has had. It's a very important piece of work, and I'm proud to be here.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act.

The member from Burlington was just speaking, so I feel I should respond in that this bill does contain quite a few bicycling—cycling—provisions which I look forward to bringing up as it's debated.

I think I had a private member's bill to do with paved shoulders three times. The member from Burlington, in her role at that time with the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, was very supportive and helpful. As she just mentioned, her passed husband was an OPP officer. We have a similarity in that my spouse is an OPP officer as well. I remember, in doing that private member's bill several times, that the member from Burlington, as the

Share the Road Cycling Coalition—she played a big role in press conferences etc. and supported the private member's bill, and I thank her for that.

I guess we'll start with some of the details of Bill 31. Perhaps we'll start with the impaired driving section. I note that the bill will expand the scope by which a person can have their licence suspended or car impounded to include non-compliance with remedial programs, such as the ignition interlock program. I think that's a positive thing.

I have had, I think, in my riding, a strange scenario where a person was charged with impaired driving, but the only vehicle they had was a motorcycle. So I guess my question is, can an interlock device be hooked up on a motorcycle? If not, then what other sort of provision can be made for that scenario where the person might be very dependent upon that? Just a question for the government on that.

**1720**

Of course we have all kinds of rules to do with impaired driving, but the bill also brings in rules to do with impaired driving from drugs. The bill adds two new sections that mirror sections 48 and 48.3 where a person is driving a motor vehicle or operating a vessel while impaired by a drug or by a combination of a drug and alcohol. I guess the challenge will be, certainly, how you determine if someone is impaired by a drug, and I'm sure that will come up in courts etc., but I note that they talk about someone trained as a drug recognition expert to be able to determine that. Representing an area that has a lot of boating in it, and lakes and, of course, beautiful Georgian Bay, the bill also deals with vessels as well.

Moving on to a section to do with bicycling: There are quite a few different aspects or details on that. First of all, of course, it had been illegal to actually ride on the paved shoulder of a highway. As I mentioned, I twice debated a private member's bill so that when a secondary designated provincial highway is being rebuilt, a minimum one-metre paved shoulder would be added to that highway. The benefit that I see in doing that is, as was mentioned by the member from Burlington, one of the main reasons that people don't cycle is that they're worried for their safety, so if you provide more safe places to cycle, then people will be inclined to do it. So you get the benefits of more people riding—a healthier population—and obviously safety for both the cyclist and the automobiles and/or truck drivers.

With a paved shoulder in the wintertime, for example, when you don't actually see where the shoulder is, you don't drop onto the gravel, and then correct and lose control of the vehicle. Or, on a secondary road, if you have two trucks that are meeting, there's often just nowhere to go, so if there's a paved shoulder there is a safe place for a cyclist. Of course, there are lower maintenance costs as well—so I've been arguing for paved shoulders.

As well, there are tourism benefits. The area I represent is Parry Sound–Muskoka, an ideal place for cycling, with the lakes and beautiful vistas etc. With

more paved shoulders, we will have more people who—it may not be the only thing they do when they come to Parry Sound–Muskoka. They might go fishing, they might golf, but also there are a lot of people who would add cycling to the mix of activities that they would do. That’s part of the reason I’ve been so supportive of paved shoulders. What this particular bill does is, it just makes it so it’s not illegal to ride on certain paved shoulders.

It also does some small things: It allows bicycles to have a flashing red light on the rear—that seems like a no-brainer to me; obviously as much visibility as you can get, as possible, is preferred. It allows that traffic control signals that are specific to bicyclists would be allowed. We’re starting to see that in the city itself now. The bill does away with the prohibition against riding or operating a bicycle along a crosswalk. The bill would require the driver of a motor vehicle passing a bicycle to maintain a distance of at least one metre between the vehicle and the bicycle—certainly that’s a good idea; I do wonder a bit about how that will be enforced. It seems to me that that’s going to be difficult to enforce. The bill allows a bicycle lane to go in the opposite direction on a one-way street, and section 156 of the act is amended to permit bicycles to be ridden or operated on the paved shoulder of a highway that is divided into two separate roadways. It seeks to prevent dooring and increases the fines significantly for dooring—so, quite a few different aspects to cycling.

I’m a member now, with the member from Burlington and the member from Brampton, Mr. Singh, of the all-party cycling caucus. I’m happy to say that we had our first meeting and invited quite a few members and had a really good presentation from Marlaine Koehler, who is with the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and has been doing tremendous work around the province, trying to make more cycling routes. It’s pretty impressive to see what is already there, and more in the works.

One of the dotted lines in her presentation that I’m particularly interested in is an around-Georgian-Bay loop, so you’d be able to cycle completely around Georgian Bay, with side trips into places like Killarney, which is absolutely spectacular.

But there are some challenges right now. Part of the reason I have an order paper question in to the Ministry of Transportation, to do with the four-laning of Highway 400 from Parry Sound north to Sudbury, is that in the original design, I think it actually cuts off areas to cycle, and there is just no other alternative to cycle. It hasn’t been built yet, so I hope that the government works into their design the provisions that there will be some route for cycling—obviously, not on Highway 400—in that design, before the remaining section of Highway 400 is actually done. That is something that I absolutely hope gets done. Then that will be a wonderful cycling route when it is eventually finished, right around Georgian Bay. I’m sure there will be great views out over what is one of the natural wonders of the world.

They are also working on the Trans-Canada Highway, because a lot of people do cycle across the whole

country, and cycling on Highway 17, with the traffic etc., is worth your life at this point. It’s very dangerous. But the fact is that a lot of people do cycle across the country.

Marlaine pointed out that they’re working to get—I believe it was roughly 350 kilometres where currently, right now, you have to cycle on Highway 17, and they’ve got it down to something like 40 kilometres. I wish her well in that work and hope that the government and MTO assist in that regard.

I presented a petition today, actually, to do with paved shoulders, which came to me from the Parry Sound–North Bay health unit. Also, people were signing it at Parry Sound Bikes and at some of the municipal offices. That was a petition, when the construction is being done on Highway 124—which joins Parry Sound to Sundridge—to pave the shoulders of that highway. It does have sections that are done right now, but there are some gaps in that highway.

Also, another one that I’ve spoken of before is Highway 559, which connects Killbear Provincial Park, which is one of the most beautiful provincial parks in the province—it has spectacular beaches, and it’s about 30 kilometres from Parry Sound, so it’s a reasonable cycling distance. There are about 5,000 people in that provincial park in the summertime. Right now, they have to ride along Highway 559, and there are no paved shoulders, so obviously, there is a risk there. I am hopeful that when that highway is rebuilt, they will rebuild it with paved shoulders. It’s a bit involved because, just with the nature of the highway, it looks like it’s going to need some fairly major construction when it is rebuilt. But it would be a natural, because it would connect into the Nobel area, which does have paved shoulders.

I know that McDougall and Parry Sound are right now working on getting the last couple of kilometres right into Parry Sound. The active transportation committee is actively working to try to get paved shoulders and a separate pathway from Parry Sound out to the baseball diamonds—which lots of people ride. That connects to Nobel, which has very good infrastructure right up to Highway 559. I’m certainly very supportive of that.

#### 1730

I’m also supportive of trying to get more safe cycling routes to schools. I know that when the new Almaguin high school was being built between South River and Sundridge, some of the local councillors came to me to make sure there would be safe cycling routes to it because it’s not right in a town. Obviously, it’s a great way to encourage young people to get daily physical exercise.

It was actually Elgin Schneider, who was the long-time mayor of Sundridge—I remember him mentioning it to me. I just happened to be at an event last weekend recognizing Elgin because Elgin had been elected for 44 years, 34 of those as mayor. I was at the event with lots of municipal people and lots of people there to thank Elgin for his many years of service and all the countless evenings out and meetings etc. I said at the meeting that I have been elected for 14 years, so I only have 30 more to

serve to match Elgin's record, except I think I'm going to need a walker to get in this place if I actually do try to achieve that record. I don't think there's any danger; I think his record is safe. Certainly Elgin and Myrna are great people from Sundridge. He did a lot of wonderful work.

As was noted by our critic when he spoke, there were some 30 amendments to this bill from the opposition that were put forward and none of them were passed. I'm disappointed by that because I think there were some very worthwhile amendments. I will go through some of them.

I guess we'll start with my own private member's bill. I have a private member's bill, number 58. I believe that there was an amendment put forward by our critic that would have incorporated that into this legislation. Bill 58 essentially updates the rules for ATVs to allow, where they are allowed to be driven on roads—certain provincial highways, secondary highways or municipalities decide if they do or do not want ATVs on the roads, and which particular roads. My bill would amend the rules so that where ATVs are allowed, some of the newly designed vehicles that weren't around 10 years ago would also be allowed. They are commonly called UTVs, utility task vehicles, or ORVs, off-road vehicles, or two-ups, or side-by-sides. These are the various names used for them. So I was disappointed, obviously. That was an amendment put forward.

The government looks like they're moving on this because they just finished a survey, and people could give input on the possibility of changing the rules to do with ORVs, so I am hopeful that they are actually moving forward on this, and I hope that it actually comes to happen.

I'll get back to the amendments in a second because I can see I'm running out of time.

Another part of the bill that I'm quite happy about is that the member from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop—his “slow down, move over” bill that he had put forward has been incorporated into Bill 31. Just as we now have rules—if you see an OPP vehicle on the side of the highway and its flashing lights are on, then you are to slow down and move over to the lane to provide some breathing space around the vehicle, which I think makes a lot of sense just because it's a really dangerous spot to be getting out of a vehicle. This bill will make the rules apply for emergency vehicles and tow truck drivers because the tow truck drivers are out there all the time, and they've got a really dangerous job. That is a very, very dangerous spot to be getting out of your vehicle. This legislation would require that you pull over to the left lane and give some space around the tow truck. A lot of operators are killed each year around the world, and this will make it a safer place for them, so I'm pleased to see that.

There are, of course, bigger fines for distracted driving. There is some question—I heard one of the government members talking about how they are intending on also attaching demerit points. That's one of the things

that we've been critical about, that they haven't just put demerit points right in the bill. In fact, I believe we had an amendment to do with that as well that would have incorporated demerit points right into the bill. It's something we would like to see.

There's a section on crosswalks as well, trying to make it safer for crosswalks. I think we should be talking about not only distracted driving but distracted walking, because I walk in to Queen's Park every morning—a 20-minute walk here—and I'm amazed how many people will be either listening to music or texting as they walk, looking down and not even looking at the road as they cross the road. They don't assume any responsibility for their own safety and just assume that whatever vehicles, whether they be bicycles or cars or whatever, are going to absolutely see them. People don't always see them, so they should not be making that assumption. I think maybe education on that to make people more aware of it—so when you come to cross the road, you should be looking in all directions and being careful.

When you're over in England—it's very different in London, England, for example, where they have far more people and vehicles and it's really busy. When you go to step onto the road, you'll see down—of course, they're driving on the opposite side. It will say, “Look right,” or, “Look left.” When you're not used to looking that way, you look, and the cars do not even slow down. If you step on the road, it's not a good thing. I simply think that here in Ontario maybe educating people about not texting while they're crossing at a crosswalk or at an intersection would be a good thing.

I know we have some concerns with medical reviews. I think just about everyone has had situations in their constituency offices where someone loses their licence, sometimes because it's a mistake—not always. But the length of time to get your licence back is just way too long. That's something that is dealt with in this bill a bit, but timeliness is not necessarily addressed.

Some of the other amendments that we had—and I'm down to my last few seconds—our critic had rules to do with roundabouts. We have a few roundabouts in Parry Sound–Muskoka, and it is true that drivers are often not familiar with roundabouts, particularly when they're first built in Ontario, and the rules are unclear for people. We probably should have both education and some standardized rules to do with roundabouts.

Mr. Speaker, I can see I'm out of time, so I will end there.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's a pleasure to follow the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. Of course, he has done his own groundbreaking work that is, in part, incorporated into this on fighting for paved shoulders so cyclists can travel between jurisdictions. That's really important and should be acknowledged. I'm very happy to see that in this bill—and also, of course, my one-metre rule bill that has been incorporated as well. We hoped that the language would be a little stricter. The wiggle

phrase “as may be practicable” is a little concerning, but, hey, it’s there. So that’s important as well.

I just wanted to reiterate—and I’ve had some conversations with the member from Burlington about this—about mandatory sideguards for trucks. We had a death in our community, Tom Samson, and I just want to say his name. He was a grade 2 teacher at Swansea Public School who died on his bike. Really, his death influenced the entire riding—very, very sad.

Again, anything we can do, because, as we all know, that is the major reason that people do not ride their bikes in the city of Toronto: safety concerns. Those concerns are valid. They’re valid. Because until we have really separated bike tracks allowing you to get everywhere, that concern is going to be real. So everything we can do, and anything we can do, provincially is absolutely essential.

Because I didn’t have a chance, I just want to, again, say thanks to the member from Burlington for her work with Share the Road, and also condolences. We share a sad reality. Both of our husbands—the father of my children—died in traffic accidents many, many years ago. I know what that’s like. I just want her to know that all of our prayers and our love are with her.

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

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** It’s my pleasure to be able to rise and speak to this bill and to speak to the interventions by both my colleagues from Parkdale–High Park and from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I do want to pick up a little bit on some of the comments from my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka when he was talking about paved shoulders and many other instances to make our highways safer. I, like I think hundreds of thousands of other Ontarians, am a huge motorcycle enthusiast. Right now, I’ve been busy polishing my motorcycle, getting ready to start doing a lot of the tours, most likely into the riding of my colleague in Parry Sound–Muskoka and then back up to Sudbury.

One of the things as an enthusiast of riding a motorcycle is, you have to be very cognitive of the road and others on the road. For me, the importance of the new pieces of this legislation that are coming into distracted driving are so critical. As a motorcycle enthusiast, we have to be so cognitive of others on the road. To see individuals that are still utilizing their cellphone or whatever smartphone while driving is concerning.

I’m actually very pleased to see how we’re increasing the fines for distracted driving. I think that is something that’s truly critical to really move this point forward to start making our roads safer. I know we’ve done some great work over the last few years when it comes to that, and the provisions, I think, are really going to start sending a clear message that it is so important for all road users to ensure that we’re on the road being safe and cognitive of what’s going on around us. At the same time, we need to learn to share the road.

With that, I’d like to thank my honourable colleagues for their interventions earlier. I’m glad I was able to participate in this debate.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I’m pleased to join in the debate. I want to thank the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his comments. He has been a great advocate. I know he has done so well with his first bill that talked about paved shoulders and cycling. I just wish the government would have included the aspect of designated provincial highways that was in his original bill. They didn’t put that in this.

But I do have one complaint, and I’ve levied it to the member. He knows my complaint. We have a great cycling community in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. In fact, we have a beautiful waterfront trail along the Thousand Islands Parkway that the St. Lawrence Parks Commission was involved in. So to him and to the member for Burlington and the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, I don’t know why I wasn’t included in the bike caucus, but on behalf of cyclists all across Leeds–Grenville, I want to put the request in that whatever list I was left off of, I want to be put on.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** You’re blacklisted.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I don’t know about that. I wouldn’t go that far, Mr. Miller.

Anyway, I wanted to put that on the record. I also wanted to put on the record my support for the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka’s Bill 58. Today, I had a petition from all across the province. People picked it up from my website. It’s not an electronic petition, I want to tell the table. It’s a petition that conforms to the standing orders. I hope we will be able to put electronic petitions in at some point.

Bill 58, which deals with UTVs and ATVs, is just a huge issue in rural Ontario. I really wish that the government would have included that in this bill. At the very least, they should announce, as part of the budget, that they’re going to change that regulation that’s so out of date and doesn’t keep up with what happens in rural Ontario right now.

I want to thank the member for his comments today on Bill 31. I want to applaud him for his private member’s bill, Bill 58, and I just want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me that two minutes, plus, plus, plus. Thanks.

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

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It’s my pleasure to get to rise again to speak to this bill. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has touched on many aspects of the bill, some of the good points and some things that are lacking in the bill. He talked about roundabouts. In my riding of Windsor West, and across all of Windsor and Essex county, they’re starting to introduce roundabouts.

Something that I found interesting when my husband and I had the opportunity to vacation in Europe: We noticed that in many of the cities it’s very congested. The

traffic moves very quickly, but it's very close together. They often have scooters in amongst them, but they know how to navigate the roundabouts and know how to use them fairly safely. I'm sure they do have their share of accidents, but they do use them fairly safely. We're seeing more and more of them introduced across Ontario, and there's not necessarily the education for those motorists that use the roundabouts on exactly how they work. Often you'll see people come to a complete stop, when it's a yield, to get into the roundabouts. I think there definitely needs to be some education around that because they're a valuable tool in helping traffic move along.

Something else he had talked about, which I kind of chuckled at when he brought it up, was distracted walking, which is not in the bill, but several times I have joked, walking down the halls here at Queen's Park back to my office and I'm on my phone and someone else is coming the other way and we almost bump into each other. I say, "You know, really, there should be a law about distracted walking." So I found that kind of funny.

It's funny in here, but it's not funny outside, though, when people are out looking to cross the street at a crosswalk and they're not paying attention as they step out into traffic. I think that just reiterates the importance of increased fines not only for distracted driving, but should someone be driving and hit a pedestrian in the crosswalk, we need to look at increased fines for that.

I think that's just about my time, Speaker. Hopefully I'll get to speak to it further.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments.

We go back to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his reply.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the members from Leeds–Grenville, Sudbury, Windsor West and Parkdale–High Park, who all had comments.

To the member from Leeds–Grenville: The next bike caucus meeting is May 27. It's a morning breakfast meeting. So, please, I'm sure you're invited to come, despite all the blacklists that you're actually on. The Thousand Islands is a beautiful area, almost but not quite as nice as the 30,000 Islands region of Parry Sound–Muskoka in Georgian Bay.

The member from Sudbury was talking about motorcycling and distracted drivers. I did motorcycle until a couple of years ago and found in this job that I never got time to use it, so I sold it. But at least on one occasion, I was riding along on a secondary highway and a car just started coming straight at me all of a sudden. I don't know whether it was because they were texting or somehow distracted or whatever, but it is a scary thing, on a motorcycle, when that happens because you don't get much time to react—or any—so he makes a good point. One good place he could ride, of course, on his motorcycle would be to Killarney for fish and chips, which I think is a very popular spot. A lot of people from Parry Sound ride up there or they fly in, if they happen to have an airplane; it's a popular place to fly to as well.

Of course, I thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for his comments about Bill 58 and his support.

Roundabouts, as was mentioned by the member from Windsor West, certainly seem to be getting more common. We have a few in Parry Sound–Muskoka. I think there are few enough that people just don't know how to handle roundabouts, so we probably do need rules to deal with them. I think that pedestrians should be kept out of roundabouts—that's my personal feeling—and maybe cross just up the road from them, as they do in England. Thank you for the time to speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member from Windsor West.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Thank you, Speaker. I did notice you check the clock before I started. I'm cognizant of the time. I did prepare for 20 minutes, so we'll see how much I get through.

It always gives me great pleasure to rise in the chamber on behalf of the people of my riding of Windsor West. Today I'm here again to speak to Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. I had the opportunity to speak to this bill at second reading and, from what I understand, this bill hasn't had much change since. The bill hasn't changed despite several excellent amendments put forward by New Democrats that would help strengthen this bill. In fact, the Liberals voted against every single amendment put forward by the NDP at committee—every single one. One of our main concerns is that this bill empowers the government to outsource motor vehicle inspection centres to an unspecified third party that would be exempt from the oversight of the Auditor General and the Ombudsman.

A number of my colleagues compared this to the creation of Drive Clean on steroids. I think that's a correct depiction. This unaccountable delegated authority could have the power to tell drivers how often they must bring their vehicles in for inspection and what they need to do to pass inspection. I don't think it's too much to ask that this government clarify the vague provisions that allow for this outsourcing.

**1750**

This is why New Democrats tabled amendments at committee that would improve transparency around this issue. We asked for some accountability mechanisms, be it the Auditor General or the Ombudsman; the Liberals voted this down.

We offered an amendment that would ensure that the director of vehicle inspection standards must be an officer of the ministry—a public servant, for instance. Again, the Liberals voted this down. Currently, under this legislation, the director could be anyone, including someone chosen by special interests such as insurance companies. It could even be another Liberal patronage appointment, which so many Ontarians are growing tired of.

I think you'll soon find a theme in my speech today, Speaker. Another amendment that the New Democrats tabled would require motorists to stop at an unsignalled crosswalk if there was a pedestrian waiting to cross. I

think people across Ontario would be shocked to learn that this isn't already a law. As I understand it, once you step off the sidewalk and onto a crosswalk, motorists have to stop for you and allow you to cross. Of course, this is obvious. What we would like is for this level of protection to be extended to pedestrians waiting at crosswalks.

The NDP proposed an amendment that would match the law with people's expectations of the law. How do you know when it is appropriate to step off the sidewalk and onto a crosswalk if there is nothing prompting you? Are children able to measure traffic effectively and know when it's safe to enter a crosswalk? Wouldn't a requirement that all motorists stop at a crosswalk where a pedestrian is waiting greatly improve public safety?

New Democrats also sought to increase the maximum fine for hitting a pedestrian when they are in a crosswalk. Currently the fine is \$500, even in instances where the pedestrian is killed. We proposed that the maximum fine be increased to \$1,000, just as the maximum fine for distracted driving is being increased. The Liberals voted against this.

Again we have an instance where New Democrats were looking to improve this bill and add to the discussion on safety. In a bill that seeks an increase in fines for illegal activity like distracted driving, we simply added to the list and proposed an increase in the fine one faces when one hits a pedestrian in a crosswalk, but, like with all of the meaningful amendments we put forward, the Liberals were more interested in playing politics than truly improving the bill.

I'd like to go back to the point about unsignalled crosswalks and talk about that for a moment, if I have the opportunity. The argument for voting against the amendment that we had proposed, the Liberals' argument against the amendment, was that someone might point at something while near a crosswalk, and then a car would have to stop for nothing. I would say that pedestrian safety—someone's life—is certainly more important than someone in a vehicle having to stop for a minute or two to assess a situation and know whether or not it's safe for them to continue on their way.

Also, we spoke briefly about mandatory sideguards for large trucks, to save cyclists' lives. This has long been a recommendation of the Ontario coroner, and truck sideguards are mandatory in both Europe and Japan. The government members of the committee voted against this, even the member from the government side who was the former ED of Share the Road, which had endorsed truck sideguards, along with all other recommendations of the Ontario coroner following the report on cycling deaths.

Another issue I'd like to highlight is that the current form of this bill still allows the operators of Highway 407 East to use the same ruthless collection tactics as the operators of the 407 ETR, which is not surprising, since they are mainly the same people. New Democrats proposed that the bill keep the notification requirements for the 407 East act, but again, this was voted down.

I think it's worth paying attention to this provision. As a member of the opposition, I'm skeptical any time the government removes a provision mandating public consultation. I think this is something Ontarians want to see more of, especially when it comes to user fees.

I'm speaking from experience here. I receive letters every week about the bridge fees at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, which the bridge company is allowed to increase without consultation. It's important to point out that this is a privately owned bridge, and my understanding is that even though those who utilize the bridge already have concerns about the toll, the fee is set to rise again. I'm certainly looking forward to a new publicly owned bridge where Ontarians have a say in what the fees would be.

While I'm on this topic: When the Highway 407 East Act came into force in 2012, New Democrats demanded amendments that required the registrar of motor vehicles to notify drivers via registered mail or bonded courier that their plate renewal was about to be denied because of unpaid 407 ETR fees. Bill 31 removes this notification. Again, I must ask: Why? What is the point of doing this?

I'm sure my colleagues on the other side of the floor remember that the 407 ETR admitted to practising bill suppression. It admitted to a practice of ceasing to mail bills after three months, only to track down a driver years later with a whopping bill complete with compound interest. If anything, this demonstrates the need for this notification.

This bill also makes a number of changes to the Provincial Offences Act, including changes that allow the province to deny licence plate issuances or renewals to people with parking infractions, photo radar system violations and red light camera system violations, just to name a few.

I think I would agree that municipalities need more tools in collecting unpaid fines and that the province needs to work with municipalities to make this collection possible. This portion of the bill, I will admit, is a good first step in streamlining the collection process and giving municipalities more clarity. However, it can be improved upon.

I was fortunate enough to participate in AMO this past summer, and this was a major issue for many municipalities across Ontario. I do hope we can work to properly address uncollected POA fines in the coming months. At AMO, I learned that, currently, whenever money from the POA is collected, a portion of it is paid to the province but the remainder stays with the municipality. The estimated amount owed to municipalities in uncollected POA fines is estimated at up to \$1 billion. Some more drastic examples of money owing include cities like Sault Ste. Marie, which has lost up to \$12 million. Speaker, I'm sure you know that \$12 million is a great deal of money for a municipality. That's money they could put into infrastructure.

Municipalities have complained that the 407 Express Toll Route has more power to collect fines than municipalities. This is something I heard at AMO this summer. This was also one of their top asks as far back as 2011.



I'm glad that this government is finally taking steps to address these issues. We've seen other examples of action on this file in 1999, 2002 and 2010. I hope that we will continue to see work on this file to better coordinate fine collection with the provincial government and align the authority of municipalities with their actual responsibilities.

Speaker, it looks like I'm going to come in just under the wire. I enjoyed my time speaking to Bill 31 today. I would very much have liked to speak to an improved

version of this bill, and I think I would have if this government would have passed at least one of our amendments at committee. Unfortunately, this didn't happen, and as a result, there are still a number of ways to improve this bill and the safety of Ontarians.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

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<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**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: Vacant  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor  
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard  
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo  
Han Dong, Michael Harris  
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala  
Monique Taylor  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn  
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker  
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife  
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton  
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson  
Mike Colle, Grant Crack  
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky  
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala  
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins  
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser  
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde  
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins  
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney  
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri  
Todd Smith  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop  
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon  
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett  
Garfield Dunlop, Michael Mantha  
Eleanor McMahon, Laurie Scott  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Han Dong, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
Lou Rinaldi  
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 / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry  
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter  
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry  
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh  
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde  
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow  
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /  
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère  
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott  
Han Dong, Randy Hillier  
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi  
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon  
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler  
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short



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