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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 30 April 2015**

**Jeudi 30 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

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 30 April 2015

Jeudi 30 avril 2015

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE MOIS  
DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Mrs. Martins moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month / Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mrs. Martins.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today for the third reading debate of Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

As many of you know, this is something I have been working on for some time now. I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make this day a reality, and a special thank you to my staff, Michael Paolucci and Celso Pereira, who are joining us here today in the House, as well as Matt Iannucci. I'd like to thank all the House leaders for seeing the importance of this bill and for pushing it through to third reading.

Before I start, I'd like to point out that we have a number of members of the Hispanic community who will be joining us here for this important day. These are prominent individuals who publish newspapers, run cultural centres, and work in banks and posts in public service, all of whom contribute to shaping the lives of countless Ontarians.

I'm happy to say that we also have with us those who have signed petitions calling on this Legislature to pass Bill 28. I want to reserve special thanks for members of the community whom I have been consulting with at every stage of this bill: Fernando Valladares, Oscar Vigil, Claudio Ruiz and Claudia Montoya. I'm happy that they're all here, bright and early, listening to this historic debate in the Ontario Legislature.

Unfortunately, not in attendance today is Margarita Feliciano, professor emerita at Glendon College's Hispanic Studies department. Professor Feliciano does tremendous work within the Hispanic community and organizes the annual Festival of Images and Words.

Simply put, this bill provides our province with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the Hispanic-Canadian community here in Ontario. Our province must pay tribute to the culture that binds Spanish speakers together, and this bill does just that.

The strong influence that peoples of Hispanic origin have had on our world is evident. As I mentioned in our second reading debate, individuals like Frida Kahlo, Salvador Dalí and Gabriel García Márquez possess a unique influence over art and culture in our world. The rich contributions of these giants of the Hispanic community are well known. However, we must recognize the outstanding achievements and lasting influence of the Hispanic community right here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to discuss the history of this fantastic community in this great province of ours. As pointed out in the preamble of this bill, the Hispanic community in Canada was established by a few thousand Spanish migrants in 1914. The first significant surge in immigration came during the 1970s, which was a time of great socio-economic and political turbulence across Spanish-speaking countries. In the 1980s, armed conflict prompted a further influx of immigrants. Most recently, since the 1990s, immigration from the Spanish-speaking world has been characterized as a "professional wave" of individuals travelling to Canada to study or work.

For those who came during the early waves of immigration, life in Canada was often challenging. These early immigrants experienced unemployment and, in many cases, racism and discrimination.

Despite immigrating from a number of nations, each with its own distinct culture, Spanish speakers developed a shared community and gathered in certain hubs around the country, such as in Toronto's Kensington Market.

The Hispanic community has recently grown significantly in size and has now become one of the most prominent communities in the country. There are approximately half a million Canadians of Hispanic origin, but this number is substantially higher when we include non-citizens and permanent residents. Not only this, but the Hispanic community is also one of the fastest-growing populations in the entire country.

I used these numbers in our second reading debate, but I think they're quite powerful: Between 1996 and 2001, the number of Hispanic peoples in Canada increased by 32%, while the overall population grew by only 4% during the same period. Spanish is Canada's most spoken language after English and French, and has been the fastest-growing foreign language spoken by Canadians since 2001. Almost 50% of Hispanic Canadians have at

least a bachelor's degree and another 12% have a non-university diploma. Also, the Toronto Hispanic Chamber of Commerce approximates that the economic impact of Latin-American businesses on the Toronto-area economy is between \$49.2 million and \$73.8 million.

It's hard to argue with the fact that the influence of this population on our province is immense. In my riding of Davenport alone there are approximately 10,000 citizens of Hispanic origin. The Hispanic community continues to make such a tremendous impact on my riding. By just walking through Davenport on any day, anyone can see these contributions are very tangible. It's hard to dismiss the beautiful Lula Lounge on Dundas West, which has established itself as the premier venue in this city for Latin music and dancing. Club Amistad, located at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre, is a wonderful social and recreational group for Spanish-speaking men and women from various Latin cultures. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Villa Las Flores, the non-profit housing complex located off St. Helen's. The founder of this charitable organization is the very strong community leader Fernando Valladares. Every September, there is also the wonderful Viva Mexico festival, hosted at Earls Court Park.

The immense contributions of Hispanic Canadians are clearly not just felt in Davenport, or even just in the GTA. I have to say that during our second reading debate, I really enjoyed the very eloquent remarks from other members about the impact of the Hispanic community within their own lives and in their ridings.

One that immediately comes to mind are the very emphatic remarks from the member opposite from Timiskaming-Cochrane, on his constituent Martin Melendez, who brought his expertise of cheese-making from El Salvador to our province. The minister responsible for seniors spoke about the vibrant Spanish-speaking community he has in his riding of York West; of course, to showcase the Plaza Latina on Milvan Drive. And the member from York South-Weston, who will be joining this debate shortly, spoke about the great organizations in her riding, such as the York Hispanic Centre.

Mr. Speaker, it is no coincidence that all of us here in the Legislature can speak so highly of the valuable contributions that Canadians of Hispanic origin make within all of our communities.

**0910**

Last time I rose in the Legislature I told the story of Alberto Guerrero, an individual who embodies these rich contributions of the Hispanic community in our province. Alberto Guerrero was a leading figure in the vibrant Chilean music scene. Moving to Toronto in 1918, Guerrero single-handedly brought the music of modern, 20th-century composers to Canada. In time, he became the most important music teacher in the country. Mr. Speaker, he mentored young Canadian pianists, including Glenn Gould, arguably Canada's most celebrated classical pianist. I believe that this is such a fantastic story that embodies the real, tangible influence of the Hispanic community on our province.

Today, I'd like to speak on a more local level about a constituent of mine who I think embodies these characteristics. Severino Centritto, who lives in the beautiful Regal Heights neighbourhood in my riding of Davenport, I think deserves a lot of praise for his community service. Mr. Centritto originates from Argentina, and for 15 years he has been working to make our community the best it can be. He was a member of the Regal Heights Residents' Association and has provided great assistance for the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre. He was also a member of the Toronto Seniors' Forum to serve as a voice for senior residents in our community.

I first met Mr. Centritto at the Regal Heights Residents' Association community cleanup, and I'm happy to say that he and his wife, Hilda, are watching today, this momentous day. I'd like to give him a round of applause for all his hard work. Gracias, Severino.

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** It is precisely these individuals who make it important to declare October Hispanic Heritage Month. The celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month will allow us as a province to recognize the rich contributions Hispanic Canadians have made to the province's social, economic, political and multicultural fabric.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill. In 2015, it can be easy to accept our province's multiculturalism as a foregone conclusion. If you think back even 20 or 30 years, it's impressive to see how far we've come. But there is still more work to be done. We have to recognize that in Toronto, a city of nearly three million people with a substantial Hispanic population, councillor Cesar Palacio is the only elected official of Hispanic origin at any level of government. Not one of us here in the chamber comes from a Spanish-speaking background. That makes it so much more important that we proclaim October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

If this bill passes today, I encourage all members of this House to reach out to the Spanish-speaking community within their ridings, in preparation for the celebrations of Hispanic Heritage Month. With the Pan/Parapan American games coming to Ontario in just a few months, an occasion in which we will be welcoming so many delegations from Spanish-speaking countries, I can't think of a better time to do this.

I want to thank everyone for giving me this opportunity to speak, and I hope that you all join me in supporting this bill today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Buenos días.

I want to first of all thank the member for Davenport for her motion. This is a very historic day. For those who were following the debate yesterday, we had exceptional debate for Mr. Miller's child actors bill, Bill 17. And I know Mr. Yurek is in the media studio with some of his constituents, celebrating the debate that took place yesterday for Ryan's Law.

I'm pleased to speak, as House leader for the official opposition, in support of Bill 28. I happen to believe that

motions and bills like this, celebrating our cultural heritage, are very important in helping communities within our ridings be recognized and give them a chance to celebrate their heritage, but also it gives us an opportunity to shed light and raise awareness on the history and achievements that the Hispanic community have in all of our ridings. This is going to be a great chance for us to celebrate the over 400,000 Canadians of Hispanic heritage and origin throughout our province.

As you know, Speaker, Spanish is a very important international language and is increasingly important to speak and understand to function in our globalized world. Throughout my riding, I have a number of young students participating in Spanish clubs at our elementary schools, gaining a really important introduction into the language and into the Hispanic culture which I hope will carry them for many years to come.

I also want to recognize a couple of schools in my riding: first, Thousand Islands Secondary School, where Spanish is offered as part of their international studies program. They have a number of students who travel on an annual basis to Nicaragua for a comparative study trip in which they experience cultural immersion by living at a Nicaraguan family member's home. At Saint Mary Catholic High School they have an annual trip to Mexico, where the students gain knowledge about a specific issue that faces the area they visit. It helps create understanding for that part of the Hispanic community.

Let's face it, Speaker: In my riding, I only represent probably a couple of hundred constituents of Hispanic heritage, but no matter whether it's a couple of hundred or a couple of hundred thousand, I think it's very important that all three parties support this bill. I want to thank the member from Davenport for fostering this bill and fostering this debate today.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention an event that starts tomorrow in my riding of Leeds–Grenville. It's the 34th Annual Multicultural Community Festival. It happens every May. I was there when the festival began, when I was mayor of Brockville back in the early-1980s. I have to tell you that it's just a wonderful event in my riding that brings together and highlights our diversity and all the cultures that make Leeds and Grenville such a wonderful place to live in. This year, representing the Hispanic community, there will be performances by a Spanish folk dance troupe, a Venezuelan performance group and Mi Peru. There will be booths from Costa Rica, Peru and the Caribbean. In the past, we've had booths from constituents who find their origins from Mexico, Columbia and Argentina. It's a joy to watch those performances. I am going to be there on Friday night to help open the Multicultural Community Festival.

I want to close by saying to the member for Davenport: This is an exciting day for you. I've had private member's bills that go through this process. It's great to see that all three parties have agreed and have moved this forward. I want close by saying to the member for Davenport: Nos vemos en octubre.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's always an honour to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the people we represent in our various ridings. But it's a pleasure to participate in a debate on a legislative initiative that has such broad support from all members of the House; really meaningful support and authentic support, because I think that all of us have Hispanic constituents, and all of us recognize the importance of celebrating the contributions and accomplishments of the Hispanic community to Ontario's success.

I want commend the efforts of the member from Davenport in bringing this bill forward, the consultation she has conducted on the bill, the input she has gotten and the support she has generated around declaring October as Hispanic Heritage Month. This is a proud moment for me, as the member for London West, because a large number of my constituents are Hispanic—in particular, from Colombia.

As a nation, Canada is really built on the value of not just acknowledging but celebrating our rich cultural diversity and the heritage, traditions and values that newcomers—immigrants—brought to this country and made as Canadians. The bill before us today recognizes in particular the contributions of Hispanic Canadians to our social, economic, political and cultural fabric, and speaks to those core fundamental values that really define us as Canadians.

As stated in the preamble to the bill, Ontario is home to more than 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Canadians of Hispanic origin. We know that as early as 1914, Canadians who originated from the 23 Hispanic countries began the wave of immigration to this province, and today the Hispanic community is one of the fastest-growing immigrant populations in Ontario.

#### 0920

“Hispanic origin” means an immigrant from any Spanish-speaking country, so it can encompass a broad range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. These countries include Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and, of course, Spain.

When you look at all of those diverse countries, you see the kind of richness of the Hispanic cultural heritage that Ontario benefits from when Hispanic Canadians come to our province. In fact, some broader definitions of “Hispanic” would also include former colonies that are Spanish-speaking but not ethnically Spanish, such as the Philippines, which makes that diversity even richer and broader.

As I mentioned, my community of London, and actually London West specifically, is home to many Hispanic immigrants. That makes the profile of immigration in London quite unique compared to the rest of the province. In Ontario overall, Latin American immigrants make up about 5% of all newcomers, but in London, 17% of our immigrants are from Latin America. Also, as I mentioned earlier, they are from Colombia in particular.

For more than a decade, London has been the go-to spot for many Colombian refugee claimants. In fact, this has earned the city of London the nickname of “Londombia” because of the number of Colombian immigrants or Colombian refugees who have settled in our city. This gives Londoners access to experience the richness, the wonderful food, the music, art and culture in our community. You can frequently hear Spanish being spoken on the streets of our city.

The current influx of Colombians to London began in the late 1990s. In 1997, there were just 16 Colombians who came to our community. The following year, 1998, there were 43 Colombians who came, and the following year, there were 126. As Colombians came, they felt welcomed in our community. The word spread back home and we saw more and more Colombians coming to London. In 2000, there were 395, and the numbers have continued to grow. More recently, we have also seen refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala who have begun to join Colombians in seeking refugee status and settling in our city.

Colombia remains number three, actually, on Canada’s list of the top 10 source countries for refugees to London. Today, the numbers vary, but there are approximately 15,000 Colombians who are currently living in the city. As I mentioned, their presence has helped to diversify the local economy. We’ve seen many Spanish businesses, grocery stores, Latin American-style restaurants and a Spanish church being established all across the city.

Among all of the immigrants who currently live in London, Colombians make up the third-largest immigrant community. Again, this is quite different from the profile of immigrants both in Ontario and in Canada. Colombia does not even appear among the top 10 countries of origin for immigrant communities when you look at the census data from Ontario and Canada.

The other notable aspect of Colombian immigrants is that they are overwhelmingly the largest number of recent newcomers to the city. London welcomed about 2,000 Colombians in total between 2006 and 2011, which was almost three times as many as the next-largest number of immigrants, which was from the Chinese community, to our city.

Not only is Spanish the most common non-official language spoken in London, but it has also overtaken French as the second-most frequent mother tongue after English. So you can see that our city has really changed because of the influx of Hispanic immigrants.

We see this in our schools and we see this in our workplaces. We see this in the businesses that are being established and launched across our community, and in the services that are being developed to meet the needs of the growing Hispanic community in London. We had our first Spanish-language phone book created in 2007. This was obviously needed because of our exploding Latin community.

I just want to take a moment to recognize some of the individuals who have contributed so much to London’s

prosperity and cultural landscape through the Hispanic traditions that they have shared with our community.

I want to recognize George Perez, from Mexico. He is publisher of *La Jornada*, which is London’s bilingual Spanish newspaper. It has a circulation of more than 35,000 across the area, and it provides content that is tailored to the cultural needs of Hispanics. Some articles are in Spanish; some are in English. There is a page that provides content that is translated in both languages.

Jose Rey is publisher of *Latino*, a second Spanish media. He has been creating and distributing Spanish-language media through this bi-monthly newspaper, *Latino!* He has also created *Latino!TV*. It’s a weekly television program on Rogers cable.

In addition, he has established an annual recognition evening to salute Spanish-speaking people in our community across 10 categories, because the achievements of the Hispanic community in London are significant and also broad. He recognizes achievement in business, sports, community work and arts and culture.

I also want to recognize Felipe Gomes, who is the owner of *Aroma* restaurant, which was established in 2001 in London and has been delighting Londoners and tourists to our city for many years with their Mediterranean specialty dishes.

Finally, there is the incomparable Alfredo Caxaj, who is the founder and artistic director of *Sunfest*, the second-largest music festival in Canada and a showcase of the world’s best musicians. Last year, Alfredo was named one of the 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians by the Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance.

*Sunfest* has been around in London since 1995, and it has grown to become one of London’s largest attractions. It has become deeply embedded in London’s cultural and civic identity and enjoys ongoing support from a range of corporate and government sponsors. It is a world music festival, but Alfredo, who comes from Guatemala, has always made an effort to ensure that there is good representation from Hispanic musicians and performers.

#### **0930**

With this wave of immigration, there is also clearly a strong economic impact from the growing Spanish-speaking demographic in our community. In 2009, the London Chamber of Commerce launched the Hispanic Business Opportunities Task Force, the first of its kind, to help grow London’s economy by determining how best to meet the needs of the Hispanic business community.

The purpose of the task force is to identify the tools and skills needed by Hispanic business owners to make a positive, sustainable contribution to the local economy, and to assist in learning how to integrate Hispanic businesses with the larger business population in London. More recently, the task force has turned its focus to developing new business relationships in Latin America.

As the member for Davenport mentioned, the Hispanic community is highly educated. They bring incredible professional qualifications and skills that can certainly be leveraged to support our economic well-being both in London and in the province.

Before I move to the bill, Speaker, I also did want to acknowledge the contributions of Hispanic Canadians to the labour movement and standing up for workers' rights. Many Hispanic Canadians arrived in Canada after fleeing countries like Mexico, or in South America, where they were arrested or tortured for exercising their rights to unionize.

The Hispanic community has also made a tremendous contribution in my riding through organizations such as LACASA, which stands for the Latin American-Canadian Solidarity Association, which works specifically on issues of social justice. They have done a lot of work in solidarity with indigenous people to raise awareness of the challenges—the threats—facing indigenous people worldwide and in Canada. They have organized for peace, and they have spoken out strongly on poverty and climate justice.

As I said, our caucus is very much in support of this legislation. Bill 28 designates October as Hispanic Heritage Month because of the significance of the month for the Hispanic community worldwide.

We know—everyone knows—from our days in elementary school that Christopher Columbus arrived in the Americas on October 12, 1492, so October has significance from that historical fact alone. But as shown by the bill's references to indigenous resistance and cultural diversity, a number of holidays have been established that celebrate the arrival of Columbus to the Americas, but also offer an opportunity to reflect on the devastating impact of this arrival on the indigenous people who were already here in this country.

In appreciation to many of the Hispanic communities who have organized events in October, they have shifted from focusing on the celebration of conquest to celebrating cultural diversity. And so, each year around the world during the month of October, we see a number of significant celebrations, such as Hispanic Day, Day of the Cultures, Day of the Race, Day of Respect for Cultural Diversity, Day of Indigenous Resistance, and the commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month in North America.

In closing, I want to say that we're very appreciative of the efforts of the member for Davenport to bring this bill forward. We're appreciative of the opportunity to speak in support of the bill on behalf of people in our ridings who are of Hispanic ethnocultural heritage, but also in recognition of the number of Hispanics across this province and the contributions that they have made to our province and to enriching Ontario's cultural environment.

This bill is important. I really like the part of the bill that talks about not just celebrating Hispanic culture but also allowing us and future generations of Ontarians to learn more about Hispanic history, Hispanic culture and the accomplishments and contributions of Hispanic Canadians to Ontario's economic and social well-being.

So October as Hispanic Heritage Month, which I hope we could be celebrating as early as October 2015—I am sure it will be a wonderful, fantastic opportunity to recognize the achievements of the Hispanic population that,

one hopes, will just continue to grow and to enrich Ontario and make us, as a community, stronger.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Buenos días. Good morning. I am very pleased to join the debate this morning here in support of the MPP from Davenport and her bill. It's great to be here to work together to ensure that October will be the month that will recognize the Hispanic community in Ontario, whose ancestors, as we heard, came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America and South America.

Canada's Hispanic community has grown from a tiny group of pioneering Spanish and Latin American immigrants to a very vibrant community. Ontario is the province that has the largest amount of Hispanic descendants. In the riding of York South–Weston, which I have the privilege to represent, I am very honoured to have a very passionate community of residents, businesses, small businesses, restaurants, cafés and local organizations. A number of community organizations in our riding, such as, for example, the York Hispanic Centre, which the member from Davenport mentioned, the Community Action Resource Centre, the Jane Street Hub and the Learning Enrichment Foundation, all provide services to the Hispanic community that include settlement, for example, for those who are still newcomers, but also translations, educational workshops, student and volunteer placement, and legal aid.

The Hispanic migration contributes to the growth of our province through their continuous contribution toward our economy, and we are very enriched by their culture, their music, their food, the sports, which we all enjoy, and the language. It's so musical and so sophisticated. I always wish that I could be fluent in Spanish. It's one of the languages that I enjoy the most.

The Hispanic contribution in the province of Ontario is clearly visible in various ways. We have many examples of personalities, of people who have really become successful. For example, just in sports, one could mention Raphael Torres, who currently plays for the San Jose Sharks, in the NHL, and a Team Canada hockey player who was born and raised here in Toronto but his dad is Mexican and his mom is from Peru. Then we have Miguel Cañizalez, an El Salvadorian soccer player who was also raised in Toronto and who made several appearances in the Canadian national team.

In the musical field, I think of Carlos del Junco, a Cuban Canadian harmonica musician; and José Miguel Contreras, vocalist of the Toronto-based rock band By Divine Right. But it's also important to remember members of the Hispanic community that have made and continue to make a contribution to our political life.

**0940**

One person who was not mentioned is the Honourable Sergio Marchi, former MP for York West, former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Canadian ambassador. Now, he's contended between two communities because the Italian community will claim that Sergio

Marchi is of Italian descent, and that's where his parents or grandparents were from. But he was born in Argentina and moved to Canada in his early years, so he is of Hispanic background.

Toronto's city councillor for Ward 17 Davenport, Cesar Palacio, who was already mentioned by the member from Davenport, is the first Hispanic person elected to Toronto city council. He was born in Ecuador. He still holds that right of the first person elected—and the only one—at Toronto city council.

Mr. Speaker, proclaiming Hispanic Heritage Month here in our Legislature would provide the opportunity for the Hispanic community to celebrate their unique history and culture, but it would also give us—all Ontarians—the opportunity to recognize their contribution to our province and to our country. As we've heard, October is a significant month for the Hispanic community. That's when people of Hispanic origin around the world come together to celebrate their shared culture.

This is truly a shared culture. This is not a monolithic community. We have heard that they come from different nationalities. Two things unite them: One is their shared language, and the second is the determination to build a better life—a better life for themselves, for their children, for their grandchildren.

So I'm really glad that we have all come together here in agreement to help proclaim October heritage month for the Hispanic community.

Thank you; gracias, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's truly my pleasure to stand today and speak for a few minutes on Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. I know the member from Davenport has worked very hard on this. I appreciate that and thank her for this. It must be a good day that it is going through the next process of our Legislature and then the final stamp that may come forward.

I'll say "buenos días," and that will be about the extent of my Spanish. I really apologize for that. I've been learning some more words as I've been sitting listening to the debate this morning, and also about the Hispanic culture. I come from a predominately rural riding in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I'm always pleased to be exposed to different cultures, not only as I've travelled but within the city of Toronto I hear much Hispanic culture. Also, the member from London was explaining the extent of the Hispanic culture there. I will definitely, when I go to London, be checking that out and enjoying that.

As has been said in the Legislature, Ontario has been long home to this thriving Hispanic community. Over the years members in the House have supported motions and presented petitions to recognize this vital cultural and economic role that this community plays. As I say, I'm happy to lend my voice to theirs today, supporting this final formalizing of the recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month in Ontario every October.

Spanish-speaking communities around the world have adopted October as a time to celebrate their heritage. It's about time that Ontario joined in these celebrations too. Originally, when it was brought in, I believe that they were looking at April. October seems to be the month that is more in line with the rest of the world and some of the municipalities, which I'll get to.

When the member from York South-Weston mentioned the many celebrities in arts, culture and sports with Hispanic community names, they start to ring bells and I'm like, "Oh, yes, that's correct. They do have that heritage." Ontario is a diverse province and the Hispanic community is part of that success.

There are 400,000 to 500,000 people of Hispanic origin in the province—that's first-, second- and third-generation—and they've made a great contribution. I did not know until this morning that it's one of the fastest-growing populations in the province.

There was the time when April was brought in, as I said before, but October being more in keeping—I should keep to my notes so I don't get myself mixed up. The bill would enshrine in law the recognition and celebration of the contributions made by Canadians of Hispanic origin, but moving it to October makes sense.

I mentioned municipalities, so I'll say that just last year Toronto city council declared that October would be Hispanic Heritage Month as well. That brings us in line with what the city has declared. I always like it when we're keeping in the same line. Sometimes that doesn't happen all the time in politics and laws.

With the Hispanic population of Toronto among the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the city, representing over 20 Spanish-speaking countries in the world—which, thus, I should have learned Spanish—the city of Toronto has a formal friendship agreement with the city of Quito, Ecuador. Hopefully I'm pronouncing that correctly, but Hansard will get the correct spelling.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated throughout the world in October as the "Month of the Race."

October is a month that strongly symbolizes and celebrates the Hispanic heritage by encouraging and promoting all its traditions, cultural influences and enriching ethnicity of all Latin roots through North, Central and South America, and Spain. As all the Hispanic independence festivities conclude by the month of September, the idea of changing it to October will be represented as a closing ceremony for all the Hispanic independence days worldwide.

The concept of Hispanic Heritage Month and moving the celebration from April to October is supported in principle by the Hispanic Development Council, the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples, the Canadian Hispanic Congress, the Toronto District School Board, and a large number of Hispanic community leaders and community organizations.

I'm certainly pleased to support—as I know we've heard all parties are—this bill moving forward this morning. I think it gives an opportunity for all of us to go and enjoy this great Hispanic culture that we have been able



to have both in, mostly, our urban centres, but I'm sure it's rolling out.

In some of the high schools I know the kids are interested in speaking Spanish. It is a great thing as our kids in high schools have the opportunity of exchange programs and learn to speak Spanish, and go to those Spanish-speaking countries.

I'm more than pleased today to speak in favour of this bill and to thank the member from Davenport for continuing the push. I know she's a new member of the Legislature, and not quite a year that she's been here, so well done. I hope you enjoy the Legislature as well as the celebration of your private member's bill moving forward today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** It's an honour to stand and rise and speak to this important bill. I'd like to start by congratulating the member for Davenport for this wonderful initiative and her leadership for bringing us together around this important piece of legislation.

I have to say that yesterday I was speaking with the member for Davenport and she was talking about how honoured she was to have all-party support. I'm almost as honoured to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. I'd like to tell you why that is and what this bill means.

I know a number of the members from all sides have spoken to the importance of this bill. They've spoken to the contributions that the Hispanic community has made to our province and to our country. They are certainly absolutely correct about that.

I'm not of Hispanic heritage but my grandparents—like many of Hispanic heritage—came to Canada and immigrated to Ontario hoping for a better life for themselves and for their families. My grandfather, in particular, spent a lot of time with me when I was a young boy teaching me about my heritage, sending me to Saturday school, doing homework with me, sharing his history and sharing his culture with me.

I remember after Saturday school we would sit down and he would help me do my Saturday school homework. We would be studying things like history, culture and language. At the time, I maybe didn't appreciate it as much as I do today, how important that was. I remember this one particular occasion where I was frustrated and struggling with my homework, and I said, "Grandfather"—Dido, I used to call him—"can we stop? I've had enough. Why do I have to do this?" He said, "You can't stop, and I'll tell you why. It's not only important that you learn this because it's important that you learn about your own heritage and your own culture and where you come from; it's important because you need to learn about the people who came before you, who made this country—Canada—the great country it is.

0950

To me this bill is, of course, about celebrating Hispanic heritage and Hispanic culture, but it's also about celebrating the people who came before us of Hispanic heritage, who have helped to build this great country we

live in today. That's what this bill means to me and why I'm so honoured to stand here today.

As someone who is the son of immigrants—my mom was an immigrant—and the grandchild of immigrants, I know that when we celebrate our heritage, we maintain our ties, and we show an appreciation for the trailblazers who came before us, including those in our families but also those beyond, in our broader community. Hispanic culture has, for a long time, been an important component of our collective identity in our city of Toronto, in Etobicoke Centre, the community that I represent, and in our province more broadly.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Trinity–Spadina.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Even in Trinity–Spadina, absolutely.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** We have lots in Kitchener Centre—

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** In Kitchener–Centre and all across our province. That's what that speaks to, and others have spoken to that.

While the Hispanic community has a very rich heritage and gives us much to celebrate, this bill aims to recognize not only the cultural contributions of the past but also those of the present and those that will come in the future. You know, when I think about some of the celebrations—and so many of them have been named; I don't need to name them all. I think of the Hispanic Extravaganza, Salsa on St. Clair, the Mexican festival, Hispanic Heritage Week in Hamilton, and this, of course, just to name a few.

The contributions that the Hispanic community has made, as I mentioned, span our province, and they're reflected in many ways in our economic, in our social, in our political and cultural life. But I want to go back to the point I made at the beginning, which is that Hispanic Canadians have played an important role in the development of our province and the development of Canada. They've helped make our province and our country one of the most desirable places to live: As my grandfather used to say, "Canada is a paradise." Hispanic communities played an integral role in making that happen.

In Etobicoke Centre, in my riding, I've had the fortune of getting to know many members of the Hispanic community. I look forward to getting to know many, many more in the months and years to come, to learn from them, to learn about their culture and to learn more about the contributions that they've made.

I'm thrilled, I'm honoured, to be speaking to this bill. I'm so glad we have the support of the members from all sides on this. I look forward to this bill being the foundation of celebrations in the years to come, not only of the contributions of the past and Hispanic culture of the past, but the culture that we will celebrate together and the contributions that, together, the Hispanic community will make to our great country in the future.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Buenos días, Mr. Speaker.

I'm honoured to rise today to recognize the designation of October as Hispanic Heritage Month. Ontario is

fortunate to count over 400,000 individuals of Hispanic descent who trace their roots to over two dozen nations on three continents, as well as the Caribbean. Many came in search of a better life or to flee war, dictatorship or natural disaster.

We have to sometimes wonder about the weather; I don't think that they were moving here necessarily for the weather, since we all like to vacation so often in their home countries.

Our province is blessed to enjoy the fruits of the Hispanic community's incredible contributions in the realms of education, medicine, commerce, the arts, culture and, of course, sports. In formally proclaiming October as Hispanic Heritage Month, our province will recognize and honour these commitments and provide an avenue for those of Latin heritage to share the richness of their cuisine, language and way of life with all Ontarians.

We're also blessed to have a variety of delightful events that detail the rich culture of Hispanic people. This summer, the sensual sounds of bachata, merengue and reggaeton, as well as the sizzling scent of churros—I think I'm saying that right; I hope so—will fill Mel Lastman Square and dazzle visitors and tourists alike. The date is September 4 to 7, and I have a feeling in future years they might move it to October, weather permitting. They're going to have to decide, because this is an outdoor festival. I'm inviting everybody to join that Hispanic Fiesta for colorido, cultura, música and just a lot of fun and making some new friends, as we just heard.

There are obviously a lot of Hispanic clubs across the province. I think that we're just going to see more community groups and more events as the communities continue to grow.

As the member from London West told us, she has a huge Hispanic population in her riding. I think we're all going to have to go visit, and I'm sure there are some fantastic events and restaurants, and people to visit and people to meet, to learn a little bit about the different heritages that comprise the Hispanic population.

From 2001 to 2011, the Ontario Latin American population jumped 62%, from 106,835 to 172,560. I'm not sure how they get their census numbers, but I think that it speaks for a very growing population. The Hispanic community is the single largest minority in all of North America. That's evident in some of the cultural changes we're seeing through the decades in our lifetime in terms of TV shows and a presence in the movies and things like that, in terms of culture.

Yesterday, we were celebrating Jewish Heritage Month. As the only Jewish member of the PC caucus, I guess I'm an unofficial critic for everything to do with the Jewish community.

It's interesting that the people who joined me to attend the event—one of the sponsors was the member from Davenport, who is bringing forward this bill, so maybe she's going to be the critic of culture over there. Of the individuals who joined me, there were over a dozen from what is called the Sephardic Kehila Centre in my riding of Thornhill. They are basically what we consider to be French-speaking or Latino Jews from countries like

Morocco—and Tangier—and France. They bring their own culture—not just language but, really, culture. It's a very rich, lively, happy community that is definitely growing in my riding.

A couple of people who joined—one was Samuel Keslassy, who was born in Tangier. His wife is Gracia. They have three children and 13 grandchildren. I believe most of them are in Thornhill. Samuel is the vice-president of the Sephardic community in Toronto, and he's very active on Spanish TV, which is Telelatino. He's a real estate agent.

I think that something we all have to consider is that with all of these communities, they look for services in their languages. That just facilitates their adaptation to the country if they can find a real estate agent who maybe knows some of the cultural community that they're looking to locate, where they're looking to purchase a home, perhaps, or to start a business and to rent a place for that.

I really applaud people who move to our country but look for diverse professions that can also help serve their community and be active—on a volunteer basis sometimes, even—in their own community.

Joe Elmaleh was also here yesterday. He's also a member of the Thornhill community and is of Spanish heritage. He has five children with his wife, Shully. His business is Tiara Culinary catering, which is a kosher catering company that provided the food for one of my swearing-ins here at Queen's Park. Again, if we're inviting people from a certain cultural or religious community, we often provide the food for that community as well. I think that we're all aware that we enjoy all the different foods from all the different communities so often in downtown Toronto. We're very lucky to live in a diverse community, because that's part of what it brings. It brings that diversity in terms of culture and in terms of cuisine.

We see a real overlap. We're talking about all these heritage months, but there is a lot of overlap between all the different communities, and I guess what I'm trying to say is that within the Hispanic community there are many different religions and many different ways of celebrating their culture. I think that it behooves us all here to learn as much as we can about all the different communities so that we can understand their needs and provide for them.

#### 1000

When I was carpooling my kids—and they were a lot younger, obviously—a new family moved from Mexico City to Thornhill, the Gutfrajnd family. I started to carpool with the wife, Liza; and the husband was Moises. It was sort of cute to me because her three children, I felt like—they weren't triplets, but their names were sort of how you would see triplets' named: Ariela, Daniel, and Gabriel.

It was wonderful. I still remember the first time I showed up to pick up the kids. Usually the mother comes out that first day and you talk for a minute. As I was putting the kids in the car and I waved to her and she went back in the house, she said, "Hola!" That sort of said it all.

I really have to applaud Liza and the whole Gutfrajnd family because they came to a really new community, all on their own. They didn't come with any family members or friends. They quickly got themselves established. Their kids, that very first year, put on skates and learned how to skate. They'd never seen snow before. They were quickly learning how to ski. I don't know how I would have handled a transition without family members, without friends and all those supports in such a different climate—the language challenges. It's really a testament to the parents when the kids are so well adapted.

I'm just going to say to all of those who come to Ontario and Canada to establish a new life, welcome and hats off to you, but don't be shy to say to your neighbours, "Where can I find a dentist? Where can I find a doctor? Where can I buy certain things?" Just ask for help. Obviously the neighbours—in the old times, people would bring over something new to the neighbours. In many communities, I hear that's still going on, but too often it doesn't.

Just yesterday we heard on the news about a Catholic school that wanted to offer Spanish as one of the core courses. Basically, what they're suggesting is that we could teach geography in Mandarin and we can teach Spanish for history. We all know that children are sponges and they pick up languages so quickly. I really applaud anybody who makes that effort to teach their kids songs in other languages when they're toddlers, because that's really how they begin to learn the accent, and not just celebrate their own heritage but celebrate the fantastic heritage and culture of others in our community.

I look forward to celebrating many events for Hispanic Heritage Month. It's going to be a lot of fun for all of us here in the Legislature if we could do something here.

Gracias to the member for bringing this forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 29, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Mrs. Martins has moved third reading of Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Orders of the day.

## 2015 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 29, 2015, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I recognize the Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Thanks very much, Speaker. It's a very distinct honour for me to have the chance to stand in my place this morning to lend my voice in very strong support to Ontario budget 2015.

With the time that I have on the clock, Speaker, I'm going to do my best to cover off a number of areas.

I think that everyone in this Legislature, and beyond, would know that over the last number of weeks, as a result of the leadership shown by Premier Kathleen Wynne, Finance Minister Charles Sousa and a number of colleagues of ours on this side of the House, we are moving forward with a very ambitious plan. One of the core fundamental elements of this year's budget, as it has been in past years' budgets, was that determination to move forward with what we call the Moving Ontario Forward plan. This is \$31.5 billion that will be invested across the province of Ontario: roughly \$15 billion for transit, transportation and other forms of critical infrastructure outside the GTHA, and also about \$16 billion to be invested over that same decade in transit projects inside the GTHA.

We've seen evidence over the last number of days—in the run-up to the budget itself, around budget day and certainly following budget day—of a continued commitment on the part of this Premier and this government to make sure that we deal with those issues, particularly here in the GTHA, relating to gridlock, but also those issues outside the GTHA as they relate to making sure that we continue to invest in expanding and building out our highways, supporting our municipal partners with their infrastructure needs, and moving forward, for example, on natural gas initiatives and so many others.

I've had the real privilege over the last few days to be in places like Mississauga—not that many days ago—to announce that our government is moving forward with the \$1.6-billion Hurontario-Main LRT, which will assist Peel region residents, those living in Mississauga and Brampton, with connecting to GO regional express rail, which I'll talk about in a second, and also having that option to leave their cars at home.

Again, not that many days ago, I was in Etobicoke, standing alongside the member from Etobicoke North and the member from York West—the minister responsible for seniors—to announce that the government is moving forward with the \$1.2-billion Finch LRT, which will connect Humber College with the new Keele-Finch West station that's being built as a result of the Toronto-York Spadina subway extension right at the edge of York University, connecting two post-secondary institutions through to priority neighbourhoods, to give that kind of economic uplift to that part.

Also, the Friday before, the Premier and I were in Barrie—represented, of course, very capably by our friend and colleague the member from Barrie—to announce the government's 10-year plan: GO regional express rail, a \$13.5-billion plan that will literally transform GO—the entire GO network—into a fast and frequent regional rail service. What that means is that in core areas, we'll be running electrified, two-way, all-day GO service on most

of our corridors at up to 15-minute intervals, and we'll be dramatically increasing the frequency of train trips across all of our corridors. Communities from Kitchener-Waterloo to Richmond Hill to Stouffville to Barrie to Newmarket to Aurora to Bradford—and the list goes on—will benefit from these investments. I'm very proud to be participating in all of these.

When I talk about the GTHA—and I will talk a little bit more about outside the GTHA in just a quick second, including the Highway 407 East extension, of which I was very proud to announce phase 2, and \$1.2 billion, to support our friends in Durham region and Peterborough and elsewhere with respect to making sure we have that highway built.

By the way, Speaker, Highway 407 East, the highway that the tolls are collected from—we will make sure that it remains in public hands, not like what we all know occurred the last time. Another government, a Conservative government, decided to sell the original 407 ETR to the private sector.

When I think about the investments that we're making in transit infrastructure in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—and this list goes on; there's more that I could mention—what I think about is an individual living in the 905, as do I right now, someone who spent his entire life in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. I think of the options that we're going to be providing to people like my own daughters, and my seven-year-old daughter, in particular.

I think of a 10-year investment time frame for these projects, and I say to myself and to my wife that our daughter, Talia, who is seven years of age right now—in a decade, what will these investments mean for her and for people of her cohort? It will give them, because of these investments, because of the leadership of the Premier, so many additional options with respect to connecting across this network. Whether she ultimately chooses to live—or go to school—in the GTHA or in other parts of Ontario, she will have a wide array of options at her disposal.

We are making these decisions today to, yes, deal with congestion and gridlock on our roads today, but we are also making these decisions because they will provide a brighter future for people like my daughters, the children who live across this region right now, and for so many others as well.

Speaker, I don't have much time left on the clock. I do want to mention that as part of this budget as well—I think of communities like Ottawa, the fact that we are supporting phase 1 of their LRT and will be at the table for the discussion around phase 2. I think of the LRT that is currently being constructed, phase 1, in Kitchener-Waterloo, the ION. We're there at the table for phase 1; we'll be there at the table for phase 2. I think of future transit opportunities that will be existing in cities like London that we're going to be there for.

Not that many days ago, I was up in Sault Ste. Marie with two of my colleagues to announce that we are re-establishing a stand-alone Connecting Links fund to sup-

port nearly 80 communities across this province. When I think of highways in the north that need to be four-laned, including the highway from Kenora to the Manitoba border, it remains a priority for this government to make sure that we accomplish it over the next number of years.

None of these projects could proceed without the leadership shown by Premier Kathleen Wynne, Finance Minister Charles Sousa and the Ontario Liberal government, embedded in this year's budget. I call on everyone to support this budget and help us build Ontario up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

*The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to introduce, from the Canadian Cancer Society, the Peterborough chapter, which also represents my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Anita Record and Mark Donohue. If you're in the Legislature somewhere—there you are—please stand up. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Page captain Joshua Rosenberg's mother, Dr. Marsh Rosenberg, is in the private members' gallery. I'd like to welcome her to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to introduce Lera Ryan from the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for all her work with the Canadian Cancer Society, and all of the people in the gallery from the Canadian Cancer Society. Welcome.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Today is Girls Government from Parkdale-High Park. We've got Shannon Gill, Phoebe-jade Nuqui, Katie Delay, Maya Olszewska, Micah Joyce Marcelino, Heidi McIntyre, Elizabell Efrem, Eesha Manahil, Afia Lodhi, Sumaiya Uddin, Scout Collins, Ekshitha Gade, and Ms. Demmings from Holy Family school and Ms. Clarke from Queen Victoria, all here to see the House in session.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'd like to introduce to the House today a very active member of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mike Newell. Accompanying Mike today is Mike's nine-year-old son from St. Luke's in Clearview, Liam Newell. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I have quite a number of guests here today for the passing of Ryan's Law. We've got Sandra Gibbons, Judy Legg, George Habib, Chris Yaccato, Peter Glazier, Logan Glazier, Ayden Glazier, Kari-Anne Forsythe, Andrea Stevens Lavigne, Nicola Thomas, Lori Pallen, Sherry Zarins, Carole Madeley, Noah Farber, Rob Oliphant, Kate Wallace, John Chenery, Darren Fisher and, from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, for the cancer society, Carole Watson.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** It is my pleasure to introduce and welcome friends from the riding of Essex, Windsor-Essex and the surrounding areas who are here with the Canadian Cancer Society: Emily Brett, Eillish Coughlin, Samantha Girard, Alysha Rosaasen, Kamal Mann and Kelly Rosaasen. Today they were here—myself and my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh met with them. We had a great meeting. Thank you so much for taking part in all the work that you do. Thanks so much.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Speaker, I'd like to introduce to the House my brother Michael Ballard, who's here to keep an eye on me today, from the great riding of Willowdale.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome some very strong advocates for the Canadian Cancer Society from the Quinte region: Amy Doyle, Tracey Reid and Karen White. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'm very happy to announce that we have in the gallery with us today city of Toronto councillor, and chair of the Toronto Transit Commission, Josh Colle.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to make the commitment that all introductions will be done. You know that I try to do that. But just as a reminder, there is no wearing of the badges until unanimous consent comes, please. It's simple, not complicated.

The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, I would like you to help me introduce and welcome from St. Michael Catholic Secondary School in Bolton the students who are joining us at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** There are too many to read, but we have a lot of famous Canadian actors and actresses here with us. Some are up there; some are in other places. Welcome to Queen's Park. It's going to be a wonderful day.

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I would like to acknowledge Clarington fire chief Gord Weir and Chris Ostler, who are here today with the Canadian Cancer Society. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to welcome Leanne Waddell from the cancer society here to Queen's Park. I only wish that the Premier and half of her cabinet were here.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. As the member does know—not should know—that's highly inappropriate and unacceptable. He has not done himself a favour for today.

The member from Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It is my pleasure to also introduce people from the Canadian Cancer Society, starting with Pam Patry, who is from Sudbury. We also have people that I admire very much: Joanne Di Nardo, Kelly Gorman, Nicole McInerney and Elizabeth Harvey. Welcome to Queen's Park. It's always good to work with you.

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the House today Severino Centritto, Duberlis Ramos, Mauricio Ospina and Monica Linares, who are

here today to hear third reading of Bill 28, Hispanic Heritage Month.

I'd also like to introduce my parents, José and Arminda Bento, in the gallery.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to welcome from the Canadian Cancer Society, from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, our representative here today: Roger Martin. I hope that he enjoys the proceedings.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to welcome all those from Timmins–James Bay who are here with the Canadian Cancer Society and wish them well. I hope I can meet you back in the riding. I can't do it today—House leaders meetings and all that, I'm a bit busy.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I'd like to welcome Anita Record and the team from the Peterborough office from the Canadian Cancer Society. I couldn't make the breakfast this morning.

I'd also like to welcome Peggy and Elizabeth Shawnessy and Leonard Hall, who are in the east members' gallery. They're joining me today because they won lunch with an MPP.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I too would like to welcome the members from the Canadian Cancer Society in North Bay: Mr. Gil Pharand, the manager; "The Debster" Deb Marson; and Carly Brown from the Soo.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to welcome some dear friends of mine: Dr. Chris Richardson and lifelong friend Kirsten Richardson, who are visiting today at the Legislature.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to welcome to the gallery Mary Lou Tims, who is the mother of my legislative assistant Jeff Costen, and his brother, Sean Costen. Welcome to the gallery.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'd like to welcome teacher Chris Ford and his politics class from St. Joan of Arc in Barrie today.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to welcome my former staffer Jon Feairs to the gallery today. Welcome.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to introduce two good friends here today: Carole Paikin-Miller is here, as well as Margo Duncan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** On behalf of my colleague Minister Chan, I'd like to introduce a page from Markham–Unionville. Today, Jae Min Han is our page captain.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome over 90 Canadian Cancer Society volunteers and staff from across the province, who are here at Queen's Park today to raise awareness about cancer control with all of us. Welcome to the Legislature. In the members' gallery, we have with us Joanne Di Nardo, Kelly Gorman, Florentina Stancu-Soare, Julie Datta, Nicole McInerney, Shadi Nia, Kalaisan Kalaichelvan and Christie Liang.

#### WEARING OF PINS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on a point of order.

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear yellow daffodil pins in recognition of the Canadian Cancer Society's Daffodil Month and MPP education day at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is seeking unanimous consent to wear the daffodils. Just to make sure that everyone has access, both galleries have got them, and I saw that there was a rush to put them on as quickly as possible.

Do we agree? Agreed.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yes, I know. I noticed that.

It is now time for question period.

1040

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, yesterday's AG report makes it clear that your dogged refusal to hear ministry staff warnings about the severe impacts of your cost-cutting winter road maintenance contracts led to serious injury and even death. The auditor is calling you out on your careless decisions to save a few bucks on the backs of Ontario motorists. You toyed with the lives of Ontarians. You weighed the potential for \$36 million in savings versus the potential for injuries and fatalities, and you ran straight for the cash.

Now the auditor tells us that your inaction has led to hundreds of lawsuits, and this report will likely mean many more on the way. Deputy Premier, given the injuries and fatalities—as well as, now, the hundreds of lawsuits—could you tell us if the \$36 million in savings was actually worth it?

*Interjections.*

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

I'm going to immediately jump on anyone who, when I'm standing and getting quiet, starts talking. They will get it.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member opposite for that question today. Of course, it's a very important issue.

As I said yesterday in response to the auditor's report, we do thank her for the work and for the work of her team with respect to this thorough and thoughtful review. As was noted in her report, the Ministry of Transportation accepts all eight of the recommendations that the auditor has brought forward. I'm sure I'll have a chance to talk a little bit more about that in a second.

But I should also point out, Speaker, that in 2013, before the auditor was asked by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Five years after you let this happen.

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

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Before the public accounts committee made the request to have the AG come in, the Ministry of Transportation conducted a comprehensive review of the winter maintenance program. As a result of the work that the ministry undertook since 2013, we've added 55 pieces of equipment in northern Ontario, 50 pieces of equipment in southern Ontario, 20 area coordinators, a new director of maintenance and five area engineers to build in the oversight that we know is required in this program.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, the warning lights were everywhere, and your government turned a blind eye. Your own ministry officials were sounding alarm bells, and you covered your ears. Opposition members were calling on the government to throw this into reverse, but you stepped on the gas, ensuring that faulty contracts you introduced in 2009 would give you the savings you needed, and to heck with the consequences. Meanwhile, our highways were littered with pileups, closures and fatalities, calling out for attention and immediate action.

In the last year alone, Minister, we've seen every major highway—the QEW, the 401, the 400 and countless in the north—hit with pileups, gridlock and, sadly, fatalities.

Minister, what do you say to those motorists, to those injured, to those families who lost loved ones? At the very least, you owe them an apology.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member opposite again for his follow-up question.

As I said yesterday, I am quite determined to accept full responsibility for making sure that, following up on the auditor's report, we do take the action required to make sure that Ontario drivers, for next winter and for all winters beyond, have confidence in the system—as they certainly should. In addition to accepting all eight recommendations, and in addition to the concrete action that we took following our own comprehensive review in 2013, by next winter season, the Ministry of Transportation will have 28 additional roadside cameras to monitor road conditions, a pilot project in place for the public to track the location of the plows, more roadside weather stations to update changing weather, and a revamped 511 website that's easier to read and will have time-stamped information moving forward with respect to real-time display—

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

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, invest in the roads, not the bureaucracies.

Minister, your refusal to apologize shows a breathtaking, shameful lack of empathy, especially given legislation on the books allowing for proper acknowledge-

ment and apology in exactly these types of situations. Yet yesterday, as the Toronto Star reported, you as transportation minister refused to apologize.

Minister, where I come from, if you do the wrong thing and you've hurt someone, you say you're sorry. The AG report right here makes it clear that your government mishandled winter road maintenance. People were hurt. Do the right thing today, Minister, and apologize to Ontarians.

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Thanks very much, Speaker. Of course, what the member opposite, not surprisingly, would refuse to acknowledge in this House is that that same Auditor General's report acknowledges—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward—Hastings—second time.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** —that over the last 13 years, Ontario has ranked first or second in North America for highway safety.

That same auditor's report would also acknowledge that from 2003 until 2012, the number of deaths on Ontario highways relating to winter conditions had reduced. That same auditor's report acknowledges and praises the Ministry of Transportation for the concrete action that we took, following our own—

*Interjection.*

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

Carry on.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** As I was saying, Speaker, that same auditor's report acknowledges and praises the Ministry of Transportation for the concrete action we've taken since our internal review.

Do I accept responsibility for getting this right? I certainly do, Speaker. I'll keep working hard to make sure we deliver an outcome the people—

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

*Interjections.*

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

New question.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Amidst all the noise you manufactured about last week's budget, you tried to quietly slip past the public some very important changes, but yesterday, the Auditor General called you out. She said that your proposed changes to the Government Advertising Act would allow you to put out a bunch of self-congratulatory ads, all at taxpayers' expense.

To make matters worse, when asked why you were making the changes, you pointed the finger at the Auditor General, even though her office has rejected less than 1% of your proposed ads.

Deputy Premier, why are you once again attacking the integrity of the Auditor General to cover up your own partisan political moves?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss this. We introduced legislation in 2004, the Government Advertising Act, that would ban the partisan ads that we saw over and over and over again, starring none other than Premier Mike Harris. Those ads were a complete misuse of taxpayers' money. They were partisan ads. We wanted to ensure that would—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** If there's any doubt that I'm going to attempt to try to get some decorum—don't doubt.

Minister of Agriculture—second time. Member from Nipissing, and the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry—in case you didn't think I heard.

Please finish.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We wanted to ensure that taxpayer dollars would never be wasted on that kind of partisan ad again, and that principle will be maintained in the amendments to this legislation that clarify—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You'll have a wrap-up sentence.

The member from Simcoe North and the member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

Carry on.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This legislation expands her oversight of our advertising, and it clarifies what is in fact considered partisan.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** That answer is insulting to the Auditor General, and it's insulting to Ontarians. Your proposed changes would threaten the credibility and reputation of the Auditor General.

Yesterday, Ms. Lysyk basically said her office is not going to play the part of patsy for you. She called your proposed changes "free campaign advertising." You can't get much clearer than that.

Deputy Premier, will you heed the Auditor General's warning and withdraw the proposed changes to the Government Advertising Act?

*Interjections.*

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

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Our goal with the original legislation was to put an end to those Mike Harris-style ads. Now we find ourselves colouring red bricks brown. We maintain our commitment to restrict advertising. This strengthens and expands the oversight.

1050

I have to say I am quite surprised that a member of the Conservative Party is talking about government advertising. I look forward to the third question to discuss some of the work that's under way by their federal cousins.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Deputy Premier: We know this government is desperate to control the damage to its reputation. For the first time—

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** That shirt looks a bit too blue. Maybe that's an ad.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Finance, second time.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** —we see a sitting Premier being interviewed by the OPP in a criminal investigation. It's no wonder that this government is looking for any means to repair that damage, particularly when they can get someone else to pay for it—that someone else being the Ontario taxpayer.

Deputy Premier, your proposed changes to the Government Advertising Act are fooling no one, especially the Auditor General. Why are you asking taxpayers to pay for your partisan campaign-style ads? Smarten up. Be honest with the people. Do the right thing and withdraw these amendments in your budget bill.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think people will be interested to know that the entire PC caucus voted against the original Government Advertising Act. I think people will also be interested to know that we are looking at third-party advertising, which is a request that the Progressive Conservative Party has made. We are looking at third-party advertising.

But let's look and see what the federal Conservatives are doing. They spent \$52 million—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Government and Consumer Services, come to order.

Please finish.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, methinks I have touched a nerve.

The government spent 52 million taxpayer dollars advertising the economic action plan in 2009 and 2010 alone; another \$21 million in 2011-12; and \$14.8 million—

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

New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. The Premier's sell-off of Hydro One will pay for less than 3% of her transit infrastructure promises. You don't need to sell Hydro One to build transit or infrastructure in this province. The only people who are going to benefit from the sale of this hydro asset are a small group of bankers and consultants, and it will leave families and businesses with higher hydro bills.

The plan is bad for Ontarians, plain and simple. Will the Liberals stop their wrong-headed sale of Hydro One?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Before I go—the member from Beaches–East York will come to order. The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, come to order—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** —and if I hear another one, he'll get warned immediately.

Carry on.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I think only the NDP could pretend that billions of dollars was something to sniff at. We're estimating that the sale will be about \$9 billion. That is an enormous amount of money in assets owned by the people of Ontario that will be converted into assets owned by the people of Ontario.

The NDP pretends that they want to build infrastructure. Every time we have moved forward on an ability to build that infrastructure, they have stood in the way.

We are moving forward with our plans to build the much-needed infrastructure, and we will bring our resources to the table to make sure that happens and it happens soon.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Since Monday, almost 15,000 people from across Ontario have sent the Premier the message that they don't want to pay for another one of her wrong decisions. Families don't want to see their hydro bills going up. Families don't want to lose control of the future of our energy system in this province—

*Interjection.*

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Will the Liberals listen to Ontarians and pull the plug on privatizing Hydro One?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The third party is very, very good at saying what they don't want us to do. We would welcome their advice on how to accelerate investments in infrastructure.

Let's look at what we're doing when it comes to building much-needed infrastructure—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We're talking about the largest infrastructure investment in the history of this province, \$130 billion to build roads, bridges, transit and other badly needed infrastructure across the province. That's over 100,000 jobs each year that we are creating with this investment.

The third party has no plan. If they develop a plan, we'd sure like to hear it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier is ignoring the people of Ontario. They do not want her to sell their Hydro One. It is bad for families, and it is bad for business and our economy. The only people it's good for are consultants, bankers and Liberal insiders.

Why are the Liberals more interested—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Trinity–Spadina, second time.



**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —in helping out a handful of their friends than they are in listening to the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, that's kind of a stunning assertion, because the people of this province will benefit from the infrastructure we will be able to build as a result of this decision.

I think people who are looking forward to 15-minute service from Union Station to Bramalea would actually say they benefit from this. I think people benefitting from the Northern Highways projects will benefit from this. I think people in communities across this province will benefit from the Connecting Links program. I think people in London are delighted that we are moving forward on the environmental assessment for high-speed rail.

This is about benefitting the people of Ontario. It's about bringing our assets to their highest use.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is back to the Deputy Premier.

Selling Hydro One is going to mean higher bills. I haven't talked to a single Ontarian who wants higher bills. It's going to mean giving—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Children and Youth Services will come to order, as will everyone.

Please finish.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's going to mean giving away control of a strategic asset that supports jobs, innovation and growth.

Selling Hydro One might be the right decision for bankers, consultants and Liberal insiders, but it is the wrong decision for the people of Ontario. Whose corner are the Liberals in?

*Interjections.*

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

Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I have said, the people of this province are going to benefit enormously from the investments in infrastructure made possible by this and other decisions. I think former NDP cabinet minister Frances Lankin understands why this is a benefit to Ontarians. This is not about ideology; this is about making those new investments that are critically important to the prosperity of this province.

Maybe Don MacKinnon, the president of the Power Workers' Union, could convince the leader of the third party that this is good news. He says, "The Power Workers' Union welcomes and supports the decision by government to keep Hydro One whole in an IPO process that would, in partnership with government, broaden the ownership structure in Hydro One. This will position the company to grow and provide further high-skill quality jobs" for Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier's plan was sneaky. She kept Ontarians in the dark. People don't like the Premier's plan to sell Hydro One. Almost 15,000 people have sent that message to the Liberals in less than four days.

The city of Toronto will be debating a motion that says stop the sale of Hydro One. That motion was actually seconded by Shelley Carroll, who endorsed the Premier during the Liberal leadership.

Are the Liberals ready to listen to the people of Ontario and pull the plug on this plan?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member of the third party might call this "sneaky," but what that really tells us is that she hasn't been reading the budget, she hasn't been reading the economic statements, because we have been very, very clear, open and transparent. The 2014 Liberal platform and the 2014 budget, which outlined the fiscal plan that the NDP ran on, mentioned very clearly—I'll happily pass over the 2014 budget for the leader to remind herself what's in there.

1100

In October, the advisory council released their interim report. The report was made public before the budget. We've been debating this issue in the House for months. That will continue and the legislation will be subject to public hearings and debate. The council has consulted widely on this. We believe the right decision for the people of Ontario is to move forward. The NDP is stuck in their ideology.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier doesn't seem at all interested in hearing from anyone other than her hand-picked insiders. She doesn't want to hear what the auditor has to say about wasted billions and about partisan advertising. She doesn't want any public Ombudsman oversight, auditor oversight, freedom of information oversight or Integrity Commissioner oversight at Hydro One. She certainly doesn't want to hear from the most important people of all, the people of Ontario, the voters of Ontario. Her plan is arrogant and it leaves people paying the price for another bad Liberal decision.

Will the Liberals do the right thing, stop listening to their hand-picked insiders and listen to the hard truth that selling Hydro One is the wrong thing for the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think we're hearing loud and clear that this is about ideology, that they just believe it's the wrong thing, without being able to back that up with any kind of evidence. Their assertion that rates will rise is completely false. They have nothing that will back that up. In fact, the experts are saying that this will put downward pressure on electricity rates. There is a huge potential in Hydro One. I look forward to seeing what will happen to Hydro One as it gets more efficient.

Something that we haven't talked about much in this debate is that we're facilitating local distribution companies to actually consolidate—again, improving their efficiency and reducing, putting downward pressure, on those rates.

When it comes to oversight, the member opposite, although she is very clear about not trusting the private sector at all, which is kind of astonishing in itself—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh yes, you will.

New question.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Speaker, I'm going back to the Deputy Premier.

Last summer the government quietly released a report from pension expert Jim Leech about hydro pensions. It was quite scathing, actually. The government report stated that hydro workers in Ontario were getting \$5 of taxpayer money for every \$1 that they put in.

Now you're claiming and your government is claiming a net-zero solution by giving workers shares of Hydro One, which you're selling, and confusing it even more as you're giving OPG hydro workers these as well in exchange for reducing their gold-plated pensions. If the value of the shares and the value of the pension changes are equal, as you suggest, then the province hasn't saved a single dollar.

Minister, will you admit that the pension mess you've created in hydro is being put directly on the backs of ratepayers in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are very pleased that a tentative agreement has been reached with the Power Workers' Union. It is a net-zero deal, but it is out for ratification. I'm not going to comment on a deal that actually is before the members of that union so they can make their decision about ratification. I'm going to respect that process.

But I am very, very pleased that the leadership of the Power Workers' Union has expressed support. I'm actually very excited that workers who work in Hydro One are demonstrating that they may be interested in being owners of that—partial owners. I really believe when workers own part of the company they're working for, that makes for a stronger company.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Deputy Premier, that concerns me very much, the response that you just gave me, for two reasons. The first is, you're plugging one leak by starting another. Yesterday we talked about your mandate letter and your failure to meet it. Today you're just suggesting again that you're not prepared whatsoever to have any efficiencies in government or reduce the bottom line in this province. Your net zero really means this is going to go on the backs of the ratepayers.

This second thing really concerns me: The Premier has consistently said the selling of Hydro is going to invest in infrastructure, but now we know what's really on the books: Your plan to sell Hydro One is to pay off pensions. That concerns every single ratepayer in Ontario who is going to have to foot the bill for this so-called solution.

You can't even execute a fire sale properly. Will you admit to the ratepayers of this province that you are actually selling Hydro One in order to pay these pensions?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry—as I threatened and warned—is warned.

Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as I said earlier, I really do want to respect the process. This is a tentative deal that has been reached. It is in the hands of members for ratification. I can assure the member opposite that it is a net-zero deal. I am delighted about that. It is a deal that moves us in the right direction when it comes to addressing the pension issues raised in the Leech report.

Speaker, we were the ones who commissioned the Leech report, and we are the ones who are acting on it.

#### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday, Ontario's independent Auditor General said the Liberal government is trying to gut the rules that stop public dollars from being spent on Harper-style partisan advertising: "These proposed changes would allow the government to spend public dollars on partisan advertising with little of the current independent oversight."

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Deputy House leader—second time.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "The government could flood the province with self-congratulatory and self-promotional advertising that would be of little practical use to the citizens paying for it."

Why are the Liberals taking a page out of Stephen Harper's playbook so that they can spend public money on these partisan advertisements instead of spending money on schools, on health care or even on transit infrastructure?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, what we are doing is expanding oversight of the Auditor General, at her request, to include kinds of advertising that are not currently covered in the legislation. As I say, that was at her request, so we are moving forward on that.

We are also looking at how the act is being implemented. What we have seen is legislation that was intended to prevent any government ever again running the kind of wasteful ads that Mike Harris ran. What we are doing is, we are clarifying what we mean by "partisan."

We remain absolutely committed to ensuring that taxpayer dollars are not spent on partisan ads. This amended legislation will do exactly that.

I would like to comment, Speaker, that Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the country—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Simcoe North—second time.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:**—that has any legislation restricting that kind of advertising.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I just want to say we trust the Auditor General more than we trust what's coming out of the Deputy Premier's mouth, any day of the week.

It's important to also remember that the Deputy Premier sang a different tune when she was speaking to legislation that restricted partisan ads in the past. In 2004, in this Legislature, she spoke about some constituents who told her, "Please remember that when you spend money, you are spending our money."

Those constituents inspired the Deputy Premier to then add, "It's just outrageous to me that governments spend money on what are, in essence, political pieces."

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, Justin Trudeau, the leader of the third party, says he's got a problem with public dollars being spent on partisan ads. But in Ontario, the Liberals are gutting the rules so she can use public dollars to run their own partisan ads.

Can the Deputy Premier explain why the Liberals think Ontario families should pay for Stephen Harper-style partisan advertising that promotes the interests of the Liberal Party of Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are very, very clear: In fact, we are world leaders when it comes to restricting partisan government advertising—

*Laughter.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The members opposite may laugh at that, Speaker, but there is no other jurisdiction in this country—in fact, I think you'd have to go to Australia to find the closest jurisdiction that has anything like this kind of legislation.

Let's be clear about what we're doing. We're expanding oversight to include other forms of advertising. We're providing a clear definition of "partisan" advertising. We're requiring the government to submit a preliminary review of the ad to the Auditor General, and we're reinforcing rules around government advertising during elections.

1110

We are also moving to strengthen third-party advertising regulations, because we heard from the Chief Electoral Officer and we believe that we need to do something on this front. We are making changes that will strengthen the legislation—

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

New question.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** My question is the Minister of Education. Child care provides a strong foundation for our youngest learners, and we are committed to modernizing child care in Ontario. Giving children the best possible start in life and ensuring that families have access to safe and modern child care is a top priority for our government. I know that for the constituents of my riding of Barrie, access to safe and modern child care is a very important issue. As a former teacher, I know how import-

ant it is for families to know that their children are cared for and safe when they are left in the care of others.

Minister, can you please tell us how we are ensuring we are giving children the best possible start in life?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member from Barrie for her advocacy for children. Since 2003, licensed child care spaces have increased by 70% to 317,868 spaces, providing more than 130,000 additional children with safe and reliable care. Since 2004, child care funding has increased from \$532 million to over \$1 billion. That's a 90% increase. Just yesterday, our government announced that we are creating approximately 4,000 new child care spaces for Ontario families. We announced that over the next three years, \$120 million in new funding will be dedicated to building safe, high-quality licensed child care spaces in schools all across Ontario, another milestone—

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

Supplementary?

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Thank you, Minister. We know that our government recognizes the importance of investing in our children's future. We recognize the role that schools can play as a location for these programs that benefit children, families and the community. Increasing child care spaces in local schools is an important component of our government's commitment to community hubs. Our government wants to improve coordinated planning among the school boards, the municipalities and the community organizations.

Minister, I know that constituents in Barrie will be pleased to hear about the investment of \$120 million in new funding to create new child care spaces for Ontario families. Can you please tell this House how my community will be eligible to access funding to meet the demand for affordable child care in our community?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Our government is proud to invest in families by supporting a modernized child care and early years system with more capacity to care for our youngest learners. Adding approximately 4,000 child care spaces for pre-schoolers in local schools is an important step toward building Ontario up.

School boards and Consolidated Municipal Service Managers, or CMSMs, in southern Ontario, or District Social Service Administration Boards, or DSSABs, in northern Ontario, will work together to identify eligible schools that meet the criteria, and what we're particularly looking for is underserved areas—to support local need and apply through future rounds of the Ministry of Education's capital priorities and school consolidation capital. I believe that in Barrie, the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager is the county of Simcoe, so the Simcoe—

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

New question.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** My question is to the Acting Premier. I believe that honesty is the best policy, and the people of Ontario deserve honesty from their elected

officials. That's why so many were shocked to learn of your government's plan to sell off Hydro One as a quick fix for your spending addiction, without any mention of this radical plan during the election. On-peak hydro rates have gone up by over 49% since October 2011. This decision will drive hydro costs even higher. People deserve to know what's coming so they can get ready as best they can.

My question, Acting Premier, is simply this: Just how high will hydro rates soar to pay for your broken Green Energy Act and countless other boondoggles?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I, too, believe that honesty is the best policy. That's why we were very honest in the 2014 budget. Let me read from the 2014 budget: "The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as Crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

That was in the 2014 budget. That was repeated in the second 2014 budget. It was repeated in the fall economic statement. It was repeated in the 2015 budget. There is nothing that has been hidden from the people. It was also in our platform.

I look forward to the supplementary to talk about that.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Back to the Acting Premier: The people of Chatham-Kent-Essex and those throughout the province cannot plan their budgets based on platitudes. My constituents have been inundated with over 600 industrial wind turbines but have not seen any relief on their bills whatsoever.

Just yesterday, an elderly constituent of mine showed me his Hydro One bill. He's paying far more in delivery fees than he is on hydro.

The over 18,000-plus people in Ridgetown and other areas surrounding Chatham-Kent not being serviced by Entegrus deserve lower rates. They need a better hydro provider choice where they can have lower and more stable rates, especially for those low-income families and those on fixed incomes.

Seniors have budgeted for their retirement but they didn't budget for this government's reckless hydro abandon.

Acting Premier, my question is simple: Will you allow these residents to change their local distribution company provider before you sell off Hydro One so that they can afford their hydro bills?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm glad to hear the member opposite talking about the burden of energy rates on, particularly, low-income families. This is a challenge that we are really concerned about as well, which is why we are introducing programs—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, second time.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** —to help those low-income families who are struggling with their hydro bills.

I'm glad to know that the member opposite, and I assume his party, will support our initiatives to reduce energy bills for those with lowest incomes.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, as the government planned its Hydro One fire sale, the Auditor General released a report which showed that, once again, yet another Liberal privatization experiment has failed. The report shows that Liberal privatization has made our winter roads unsafe.

The NDP has raised this issue countless times and the government keeps saying, "Trust us. We know what we're doing. Things will get better." But they never do.

In light of the failures of this plan and the increased danger of Ontario roads in the winter, will your government admit that the privatization of the winter maintenance program has failed and apologize to the residents of Ontario for making our roads unsafe?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to thank the member from the NDP for that question. As I said earlier today, we certainly do take the auditor's findings very seriously, as it relates to the winter maintenance program.

One of the reasons that we launched the internal review back in 2013 at the Ministry of Transportation was because we understood that there were questions being asked. As a result of that review—I mentioned this earlier today—after the 2013 winter, 105 pieces of equipment were deployed both in southern and northern Ontario. Those pieces of equipment helped with truck climbing and passing lanes in the north, and they helped clear ramps and shoulders more quickly in the south.

Not that many weeks ago I had the privilege to attend, alongside many colleagues in this House, the OGRA/ROMA conference. At that particular gathering, I heard directly from municipal leaders representing communities like Red Rock, Red Lake, Terrace Bay, Ear Falls and others, who told me that following the action we took as a ministry following our review, they noticed a discernible improvement in winter maintenance in their communities.

It doesn't mean our work is done. As I said earlier today, we accept all eight recommendations from the auditor. We will keep working hard and we'll get it right.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Minister, the contractors should have had the equipment when you awarded them the contract. Taking responsibility isn't an apology.

**1120**

Mr. Speaker, the Premier was transportation minister when many of these winter road maintenance contracts were signed. She agreed to let contractors decide for themselves whether they felt like ploughing the roads after a snowstorm. She thought it was a good idea to put contractors in charge of policing their own performance, while keeping any performance penalties secret. Even today, her government refuses to release these contracts,

the inspection records and the penalties. Will this government stop protecting these private contractors and start protecting the public by releasing these documents today?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** One of the things that I didn't have the chance to mention earlier is that just last week, in budget 2015, measures were included that, if that budget is passed, will permit the Ministry of Transportation to provide dedicated funding to increase, for example, the use of what are called de-icing liquids before the start of a storm in winters to come. In addition, we'll be able to work with our contractors as a result of budget 2015 to add dedicated spreaders for sand and salt in select northern communities and also in congested urban areas.

The other thing that I said yesterday in response to the auditor, Speaker, is that because I have confidence that we will get this right, and because I also believe it's important for us to be held accountable, I have written to the auditor and I have asked her to come back in and provide a progress update following winter 2015-16. That's the accountability this government deserves to put forward to the people of Ontario.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. After learning that the Leamington District Memorial Hospital intended to close its obstetric services, many in the community began expressing their concerns through letters, media interviews, news reports and petitions. Concerns were expressed by Ontarians over the potential risk of having no birthing choice but travelling to Windsor. Having worked as a nurse, I understand the need for patients and mothers-to-be in emergency situations to have access to care close to home. It's much different in a large city, where alternative services are more readily available.

Hospitals in small towns like Leamington are important employers, playing a significant role in the local economy, helping to attract new residents and encouraging others to stay.

Through you, Speaker, can the minister tell this House, what is our government doing to ensure that the voices of the community of Leamington are being heard?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Thank you to the member from Cambridge for this very important question. When I first heard about this issue in Leamington, in October, I immediately reached out to the Erie St. Clair LHIN, the local health integration network, and to the hospital as well. Mr. Speaker, our government understands the unique role that hospitals in small towns and small communities play across this province. That unique relationship is part of the reason why I asked the LHIN to press the pause button before any decision was made. It was important to me and to the LHIN that more time be taken to consult with members of the community and to hear their thoughts and concerns before any decision was made.

Our government provided financial support to allow the hospital and LHIN time to consider all possible op-

tions. The LHIN created an expert panel involving municipal leaders, community members and clinical experts to review the situation.

I'm proud to say that we released the expert panel's report yesterday. Now that the report is complete, it's time for the community to provide their—

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

Supplementary?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you, Minister, for the great work being done to address this issue for the community of Leamington.

I'm really pleased to hear that the expert panel considered the content of all consultations and considered the views expressed by many who wrote to the hospital about the planned closure of the obstetrics unit.

I know how important hospitals are to communities, as my own constituents know how important it is to have quick access to the right care at the Cambridge Memorial Hospital. After many years of advocacy and work with our local LHIN, residents of Cambridge and North Dumfries saw the start of an expansion project that will bring new and expanded services, including an updated obstetrics unit, to Cambridge. In fact, the minister was with me to see the ground-breaking last fall.

I hope the public continues to be engaged and speak up for the community. Speaker, through you to the minister, how can the public continue to engage on the planned closure of the Leamington obstetrics unit?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly proud of the process that has been undertaken so far. This is the community's turn, so I don't want to prejudge their reaction to the expert panel's report, but the expert panel does recommend a very innovative solution that will in fact allow live birthings to continue to take place at the Leamington hospital and support that community.

The public can visit the Erie St. Clair LHIN's website and provide direct feedback to the report already. There's also a public meeting scheduled for next Tuesday, May 5, at the Roma Club in Leamington, where the expert panel will present their report to the public and to the Erie St. Clair board. They'll be there. Following that, the public will have a 30-day period to provide additional feedback directly to the LHIN.

I want to applaud both the LHIN and the Leamington hospital, and particularly the community, for coming forward—

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —with their advice, with some very innovative solutions and proposals as well. I'm confident that by working together—

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

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —closely together, we'll have—

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

New question.

#### GASOLINE TAX

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Earlier this year, your government once again

showed its disdain for rural Ontario by bringing in your cap-and-trade tax on everything, which is going to drive up the price of gasoline and motor fuels in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and all across rural Ontario.

The price of fuel, according to you, is going to go up about three cents a litre. If the Liberal record is the way the Liberal record always has been, it will probably be about eight.

You had a golden opportunity in your budget to at least share the gas tax rebate with all municipalities, like the federal government does. You chose not to, so as a result, I'm bringing back my gas tax fairness bill this afternoon.

I ask you, Deputy Premier: On behalf of your caucus, will you show some respect for rural Ontario and stand up and support it by voting for my gas tax fairness bill?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Less money for North Bay.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The deputy House leader is warned.

Deputy Premier?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The members of the opposition are talking about taxes. It's astounding to me that they're now suggesting we should increase taxes or dedicate taxes or even have any taxes, Mr. Speaker.

The problem is, we want to make it a very dynamic and competitive business climate. The budget does not talk about—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Charles, you'd better get some better notes. The tax is there.

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Don't throw him under the bus.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Speaker, what we already have is dedicated gas taxes to our municipalities to support infrastructure. We actually do support our municipalities and will be continuing to do so.

I will defer the supplementary to the Minister of Transportation, who can reinforce the excellent work that we're doing to support our municipalities—something that we've done as a result of the mistakes they made in downloading to municipalities.

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

Supplementary?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I was there to meet the Premier when she came up to visit Wade and Anne Schroeder's farm to meet with farmers a couple of years ago. Neither one of us got there by the subway. There is only one way to get there, and that's by driving a vehicle.

She likes to grouse about how the feds don't do their job, don't pull their weight. Well, the federal government will put \$2.5 million of gas taxes into my riding this

year—\$2.5 million. Only those with a public transportation system get anything from you.

So I'll ask you one more time: Will you show respect for rural Ontario, like Stephen Harper and the federal government does, and support my private member's bill?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister of Finance?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** To the very well-respected Minister of Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing: This government won't shift problems to the grandchildren in Barry's Bay, Ontario.

Here's what we're doing—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You never know. Finish, please.

1130

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. A couple of initiatives in our budget: We'll be investing \$15 billion in rural infrastructure for the province of Ontario. We also made—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Huron–Bruce, come to order.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, we also instituted, on the advice of our rural municipal partners, \$100 million for small community infrastructure in the province of Ontario—

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

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —\$50 million of that will be allocated by a formula, which was the suggestion of our rural leaders from across the province of Ontario—

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

New question.

## ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is for the Acting Premier. This government talks a lot about making Ontario competitive in global markets, but in their budget they've cut the Ontario Production Services Tax Credit, which supports the Ontario film and television industry.

This budget will make BC more competitive than Ontario. Domestic and foreign producers in Ontario will suffer from the immediate implementation of these cuts, and they've warned they will make an immediate impact on jobs. They employ tens of thousands of skilled, experienced actors and crews, not to mention all the residual businesses—caterers, coffee shops and local shoots.

Why does this government want to take us from Hollywood North to Hollywood not?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I just want to start by saying our government is proud of our record when it comes to the creative cluster here in the province of Ontario. In comparison to the rest of the country, we have the most

generous tax credits for the creative cluster in Canada. When you compare us to Quebec and BC, we are the most competitive jurisdiction. In fact, we compete with New York and Los Angeles.

With the change in the Canadian dollar, we're well positioned to change our tax credit. The dollar being low, it gives us a competitive advantage. We have been building a sustainable tax credit here in the province of Ontario, and we continue to draw companies into Ontario to provide the type of support we want for the economy by creating jobs. We're quite proud of the record we have as a government.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The Canadian Media Production Association says that it is the stability and availability of film incentives as well as Canada's talented crews that attract the producers. But what the government has done has changed the game for producers already filming here now. It jeopardizes current and future production and makes us an unreliable jurisdiction for them.

A producer in Hollywood knows what incentives there are in Ireland, Hungary, New York, LA and Vancouver and will go where it's competitive and predictable. Instead of X-Files and X-Men, the budget could leave us with ex-industry.

Will this government work with these valuable stakeholders to rectify this situation?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** In our proposed 2015 budget, we are continuing to support the creative industries through—and I want the member to listen to this. The Ontario Music Fund now receives a permanent \$15 million per year. There's more than \$439 million in 2015-16 for cultural media tax credits that's going out, and \$6 million in 2015-16 and \$10 million a year starting in 2016-17 to the Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to working with the creative cluster here in Canada, Ontario remains the number one competitive jurisdiction and the most generous.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. As we all know, investment in transportation infrastructure is very, very important for the health and strength of our communities. Last week, I was thrilled to be joined by my colleagues from Mississauga and Brampton when the Minister of Transportation made the fantastic announcement that our government would commit \$1.6 billion for the Hurontario-Main LRT. This is great news for the riding of Mississauga-Brampton South and Peel region.

However, having a federal partner when it comes to infrastructure funding is equally important. The federal government has released its 2015 budget. Mr. Speaker, my question through you to the minister: Is the federal infrastructure funding announced adequate for the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm really happy that the member has asked this question, because I think it's important to put the federal commitment to infrastructure into perspective. Over the next two years, all they're increasing their infrastructure spend by is \$750 million, and that's across the entire country. This brings their infrastructure spending up to what sounds like a lot—\$81 billion—but that's over 10 years, and that's right across Canada.

By comparison, here in Ontario, this government is investing a record \$130 billion over the next 10 years in our roads, in our bridges, in transit and in other important infrastructure. What that means is, this Ontario government is investing three times more than the federal government in infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I would conclude by saying there's no question that the federal government is abdicating their responsibility to help us build Ontario and Canada up through these investments.

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

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I agree with you. While our government is making historic investments in the GTHA, the federal government has been absent.

Peel region is growing at an incredible rate. We need a federal partner when it comes to funding our growing infrastructure needs. That is why, this afternoon, I will be debating a motion calling on the federal government to provide long-term, reliable and stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up.

For too long, the federal government has abdicated its responsibility. For too long, they have been giving tax credits to those who need it least, while the congestion in my community has gotten worse and worse.

My question, Mr. Speaker: Given the federal government's lack of infrastructure funding, Minister, can you tell Ontarians what our government is doing to build Ontario up?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to commend the member for her motion that she's bringing forward today, to make sure that the voice of Ontario is heard across this country, and to give all members of the Legislature a chance to stand up for Ontario in the efforts we're making to build Ontario up, because that's important: We need to stand up for Ontario.

Something that I think really drives all of us a little bit crazy in this province is when people stand up, the politicians stand up, and say they support infrastructure; they support transit; they support building roads and bridges across this province, but they say nothing about how they're going to fund it.

We're making the tough decisions to fund public transit, because we need to build Ontario up. We're creating 110,000 jobs across our province by doing that. If only we had a strong federal partner, like the member is suggesting, we could do even more.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In February, my

colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and I asked you to visit the Chesley Restorative Care Unit that was scheduled to close on May 1. Since then, we've read hundreds of petitions into this House, and we've sent you multiple letters about this valuable program. Yet two months later, you haven't come to visit the site, to see the great work that is being done—you haven't.

Locally, the South Bruce Grey Health Centre board of directors has chosen to dig into reserves to extend this program to June 1.

Minister, will you commit today to keeping the Chesley Restorative Care Unit open, and ensure this outstanding program is available to residents in rural Ontario?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. I know the health centre at the Chesley site is extremely important to the community. That's why, when that first question was posed; when I became aware—when my ministry informed me of the specifics with regard to one unit, the restorative care unit at Chesley—that was a pilot project that began a number of years ago.

When we learned of the intention of the hospital to close that unit, I immediately engaged the LHIN, the local health integration network, to make sure that we provided the resources we needed to do. In fact, they stepped in and created a review process. Despite the fact that the hospital actually wanted to close this on May 1, we implored them to give the review, through the LHIN, an ample amount of time to actually look at the situation and review it properly.

The hospital has agreed, in fact, with the support that we're providing through the LHIN, to extend that period of time, to allow the review to continue.

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

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Please come and let the community show you the amazing work they're doing, because, quite frankly, your government's blatant disregard for front-line health care in rural Ontario has to come to an end. Hospitals are in disrepair. Services are being cut. Front-line health care workers are being fired—68 RPNs in the riding of Nipissing alone.

And what did you announce last week in the budget? Sadly, it wasn't more investment in front-line health care, Minister. It was another bureaucratic layer of 69 community health links. Seriously, Minister, we need help in rural Ontario.

My colleague Christine Elliott, the Whitby–Oshawa MPP—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Education, come to order.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** —recently visited the Kincardine hospital, and she was appalled to see the condition your government has allowed the Kincardine hospital to deteriorate to over the last 10 years.

Minister, will you commit today to coming and visiting both Chesley and Kincardine hospitals and ensure that rural Ontario's front-line health care is the best it can be?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm astounded—well, just like she invited me to visit Chesley, I would invite her to visit any one of the 69 health links that already exist in the province, that if she was to visit those and understand the important work they're doing—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Huron–Bruce will come to order; you asked the question.

Carry on.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —so she would understand the important work that health links are doing to support the 5% of the Ontario population—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I find that a challenge to me, so you're warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I would ask her to visit any one of the health links across this province. She may want to go near Leamington because she can visit the Leamington hospital—as I was just talking about—and ask them about the process that I put under way with the local LHIN, as I did with Chesley, to ensure that the right decision is made and that it's a decision that supports the local community and that it's a decision that is driven by strong community support. I would ask her to start by informing—

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

New question.

#### BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Yesterday in this House, I asked if the Premier would tell us when it is that she's being interviewed by the anti-rackets squad. We find out this morning that, in fact, she did so yesterday.

So I'd like—and I think Ontarians would like—to have an answer to the following question: First of all, has the anti-rackets squad also gone in and talked to Mr. Thibeault? Have they gone and talked to Madam Sorbara and Mr. Loughheed? If they have, can you give us an indication of what was said?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What I can say is that the Premier has stated publicly that the OPP and her counsel mutually agreed upon a date for a meeting to be conducted before the end of April. I can confirm that that meeting has taken place.

The Premier answered openly. Her answers were consistent with the public statements that she's already made. The Premier has been very open with this Legislature, with the media and with the public about the allegations related to the Sudbury by-election. We are very pleased that Glenn Thibeault, the member from Sudbury, has joined our caucus, and is making a tremendous contribution already.

We will continue to co-operate fully with the police investigation, and we will let that investigation happen in the appropriate place.



## DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECTING CHILD  
PERFORMERS ACT, 2015LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry / Projet de loi 17, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All members take their seats, please.

On April 29, Mr. Miller from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek moved third reading of Bill 17. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Norm
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Clark, Steve	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Scott, Laurie
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Dickson, Joe	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Dong, Han	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Duguid, Brad	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Dunlop, Garfield	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
French, Jennifer K.	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

RYAN'S LAW (ENSURING  
ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2015LOI RYAN DE 2015 POUR ASSURER  
LA CRÉATION D'ÉCOLES  
ATTENTIVES À L'ASTHME

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect pupils with asthma / Projet de loi 20, Loi protégeant les élèves asthmatiques.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On April 29, Mr. Yurek moved third reading of Bill 20. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

## Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Norm
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Clark, Steve	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Scott, Laurie
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Dickson, Joe	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Dong, Han	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Duguid, Brad	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Dunlop, Garfield	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
French, Jennifer K.	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE MOIS  
DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ms. Martins has moved third reading of Bill 28. All those in favour, rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Norm
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Clark, Steve	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Scott, Laurie
Damerla, Dipika	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Dickson, Joe	MacLaren, Jack	Sousa, Charles
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Dong, Han	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Duguid, Brad	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Dunlop, Garfield	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
French, Jennifer K.	McGarry, Kathryn	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	McMahon, Eleanor	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On a point of order, the Associate Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** I would like to welcome a guest this morning, Laura Blair. She's the sister of my legislative assistant, visiting from Ottawa.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Windsor–Tecumseh on a point of order.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Point of order, Speaker: Famous Canadian actor Art Hindle came in late and missed the introduction earlier. We welcome Art.

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

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

*The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of guests. Introduction of guests. Last call for introduction of guests. When I mean last call, I mean that I'm asking for the last call to introduce guests who are here so that we can introduce them, and once we do—oh. The member from Brampton–Springdale.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** It looks like my guests are not quite here yet, but I am expecting grade 5 students from my riding who will be visiting us from one of our French schools. Thank you. Oh. It looks like they're this way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** They made it. It's called ragging the puck, if anyone didn't know what that was.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yesterday's Auditor General's report confirms what drivers in my riding have known all along: that something was terribly wrong on our provincial highways. Each snowfall, I would hear complaints from residents in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I brought their concerns to the attention of MTO officials time after time. However, we would never see any improvements.

Now, thanks to a request from my colleague the member from Leeds–Grenville and the work of the Auditor General, we now know the truth. For five years, the Liberal government knowingly lowered highway road maintenance standards and put motorists at risk.

The report is a scathing condemnation of this government's performance when it comes to protecting the safety of drivers. We now know the ministry approved contracts that led to fewer pieces of equipment on the road, fewer patrols to monitor dangerous conditions and less sand, salt and anti-icing liquid being applied.

Ensuring our roads are as safe as possible during the winter driving season is one of the fundamental responsibilities of the Ministry of Transportation. This is not just about poor service; it's about people's safety on our roads.

This winter, I worked with both Carillion and MTO officials in an effort to remedy the problems we're experiencing. However, it is the Ministry of Transportation that dictates the standards and the level of service.

These contracts fail to adequately maintain our provincial highways and need to be re-evaluated by the minister. The government knew about it five years ago but did nothing to address these risks, and people lost their lives as a result. I hope today he really means that he's going to correct the problem.

### OPP HELICOPTER BASE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'd like to share with you that the OPP detachment has had a helicopter stationed at Sudbury airport to assist in local search and rescue operations since 1991. I learned with surprise of a plan to move this helicopter out of Sudbury to Orillia, where it will sit beside the other OPP rescue helicopter.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot stress enough what a short-sighted decision this is. Orillia is a one-hour-and-20-minute flight away from Sudbury, and there is already an OPP search and rescue helicopter there.

To make matters worse, from November to March, the Orillia helicopter base is subjected to almost daily lake effects with snow, fog and rain limiting the flight opportunities, whereas the Sudbury helicopter base is exceptionally good for flying, with clear weather pretty much all year round.

The Sudbury base has been so successful that we were able to receive a new Eurocopter EC135 helicopter in 2011 to replace the old Twin Star helicopter that was quite dated.

Since the search and -rescue helicopter was stationed in Sudbury, aircraft and air crews have been responsible for saving hundreds of lives of northerners, responding to calls for service from a wide variety of policing agencies throughout northern Ontario, all the way to Thunder Bay.

Mr. Speaker, why does the government want to move these helicopters farther away from their target operational areas? I would say shame on the Liberals for refusing to consult us on this important decision.

### MOSQUE IN OAKVILLE

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and speak about an event that took place in Halton over the weekend. This past Saturday in Oakville, a dream project for World Islamic Mission Canada took another step towards becoming a reality. Joined by hundreds of people, dignitaries and my friend the Minister of Labour, we celebrated the groundbreaking of a new state-of-the-art mosque, the Masjid-Noor-ul-haram.

Once completed, this breathtaking new building will become the largest Islamic centre in Ontario. It will give members of the local Islamic community a beautiful place to come and worship. And it will not only give Oakville a beautiful new addition to its community landscape, but it will enhance its already rich and vibrant culture.

The energy at the groundbreaking was electric. It was very clear what this meant not just to the Oakville community, but to all local Muslims who have been eagerly awaiting construction to get under way.

This breathtaking new mosque will not only be a building for Muslims to enjoy, but for all residents from Halton and all walks of life to come and experience together; a place to come together with family, friends and neighbours to celebrate the diversity that makes us strong and to educate one another about our differences in culture and religion.

Mr. Speaker, we are grateful for the community's contributions, and I look forward to seeing this new mosque built.

### MINTO RURAL HEALTH CENTRE

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Speaker, on Tuesday, I was pleased to attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the Minto Rural Health Centre. This is a project that has been in the works for quite a while.

I want to recognize just a few of the community leaders who have championed this project. Thank you to the North Wellington Health Care team, including president and CEO Jerome Quenneville, and Tom Sullivan and the board of directors; the Waterloo Wellington LHIN, including director Dale Small; the town of Minto and Mayor George Bridge; Dr. Chris Cressey and the family health team; Luanne Ward and the Palmerston and District Hospital Foundation; and finally, David Craig and his team, whose leadership has made all the difference.

The Minto Rural Health Centre will be a main site for a number of community health partners and will provide space to primary care physicians.

This is truly a community project, with all the funding coming from the Palmerston and District Hospital Foundation, North Wellington Health Care and the town of Minto.

This project would not have been possible without the generous contributions from residents of Palmerston.

It may have taken some time, but I'm glad the government finally issued the approvals needed for this project to begin. We thank them for it.

Health care is so important to rural communities, and I know this facility will help to deliver the very best. That's why I want to continue doing everything I can to support this project, right up until its opening day and beyond.

### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Mr. John Vanthof:** After I was first elected in October 2011, that first winter we got all kinds of complaints about the roads. Being a new MPP, I went to the MTO and asked for a briefing from my local MTO, at which I was told, "Everything is fine. We're meeting our goals 95% of the time. Basically, your people are complaining for not really much reason."

I went back to the office, and my staff and I thought about how we were going to combat this, and we came up with the idea of organizing our own reporting system. So we created the northernroadreport.com, where we asked people to send specific times and pictures so we could go back to the MTO and show them.

Do you know what happened after that, Speaker? We got a letter from the Minister of Transportation telling us to take down the northernroadreport.com because we could be confusing people; they should talk to the MTO.

Well, now we find out that my people weren't wrong and the Northern Road Report did a lot of good; now we

find out from the Auditor General that my people were right. Instead of actually listening to the people—instead of the minister actually telling people to shut down their complaints, what this government should have been doing is looking at what people were saying, because in my riding, with road closures, accidents—and yes, people died in my riding from bad roads, and that has to stop. It has to stop now.

#### AGINCOURT COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Agincourt Collegiate Institute, a high school in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, for their impressive 100 years of operation.

Recognized as the oldest high school in Scarborough, ACI has continued to be a leader in education, with a strong academic record, award-winning music and sports programs, and an engaged and inclusive student body.

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In 2012, two grade 12 students, Mathew Ho and Asad Muhammad, made international headlines. They successfully launched a homemade balloon and Lego man into our stratosphere.

ACI teachers Ashley Lintott, Karen Randall and Tammy Cooper and students formed the ACI gay-straight alliance seven years ago to promote a safe and inclusive learning environment. Recently, the Premier and I visited their school on the 2015 International Day of Pink, celebrating diversity and combatting bullying.

It is not a surprise that many ACI students have gone on to become leaders in their community, including famous actor Jim Carrey; Michael Overs, founder and CEO of Pizza Pizza; Ed Clark, former president and CEO of TD Bank Group; and Jean Kennedy Campbell, former public health nurse and recognized Scarborough matriarch.

Tomorrow, I'll be joining hundreds of students and alumni and the community in celebrating the achievements in education that ACI has made for the past 100 years.

#### MARKETING COMPETITION

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's my pleasure today to congratulate a constituent of mine, as well as my alma mater, on their success at the National Agri-Marketing Association competition.

Matthew Cardiff from Brussels was one of 10 University of Guelph students who headed to Kansas City, Missouri, earlier this month to participate in a marketing competition. His group's project, called StrawBabies, created a comprehensive marketing plan for this bite-sized strawberry. Matt explained that his team focused on three marketable traits for their strawberries: health—because strawberries, as you know, are packed with vitamins and antioxidants and are deemed a super-food; they're easy to eat in a hurry; and they have bite-sized convenience.

They placed fourth out of 28 teams from across North America in the people's choice division. This Gryphon team was voted "most favourite team" by the other 27 teams. I'm pleased to say that they also won an Outstanding Chapter Award.

The University of Guelph team was the only school from Ontario and one of only two schools from Canada.

I'm extremely proud of Matt and my fellow Gryphons for doing such a great job at this prestigious competition. Hearing of a successful program like this and the success that we have from the department of food, agricultural and resource economics at Guelph should remind us of the true importance of agri-food education and the amazing opportunities that it brings with it.

#### DEAFBLIND ONTARIO SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I rise in the House this afternoon to speak about DeafBlind Ontario Services.

DeafBlind Ontario Services was at Queen's Park this past Wednesday, celebrating 25 years as an organization supporting individuals who are deaf-blind across this province through their residential and community services. I want to congratulate this incredible organization for the wonderful work they've done supporting people over the last 25 years. Today, DeafBlind Ontario Services cares for more than 60 individuals and operates 15 residences and three apartments in York region, Simcoe county, Middlesex-Oxford, Durham-Peterborough, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa.

To think that this organization began in 1989 with a small group of dedicated parents who lobbied the government for community-based supported living programs for their children is simply an incredible testament to what a group of dedicated parents can achieve for their children. Today, we value community inclusion in supporting people with disabilities to become part of the everyday life of their community.

DBOS is a leader in the field of intervenor services, providing high-quality services with committed staff who serve some of the most complex cases in Ontario.

I wish to applaud their innovative approaches to delivering services. This is an organization that has done incredible work for some of the most challenged people in our community. They deserve our complete support and continued encouragement.

#### CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** Mr. Speaker, today we have had the pleasure of being visited by the Canadian Cancer Society, as the month of April is recognized as Cancer Awareness Month in Canada. Throughout the month, volunteers are involved in numerous activities and fundraising campaigns to spread awareness of the fight against cancer. Supporters are seen wearing the symbolic yellow daffodils to pay tribute to those battling cancer and also those whom they may have lost to the tragic disease.

During the month of April, many of the supporters canvass neighbourhoods seeking donations for the Canadian Cancer Society. I had the pleasure of meeting one such individual who knocked on my door and who happens to be a resident of Brampton–Springdale. Mr. Narinder Singh, who is a cancer survivor, has made it his mission to spread awareness not only by canvassing to raise funds, but he also encourages others to be tested regularly, in the hope that those who do have cancer will catch it early and increase their survival rates.

Mr. Speaker, as we are now on the final day of the month of April, I would hope that we will all continue to spread awareness throughout the year. Cancer does not take a day off, and nor should we. It is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year battle. Unfortunately, we all know someone who is either currently fighting or has lost their life to cancer. It does not discriminate against age, sex or race; it actually affects all of us equally.

I would like to encourage all of those in this House and all Ontarians to continue to spread the word, to ensure that you and your loved ones continue to get regular checkups and stay one step ahead.

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

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Brampton–Springdale on a point of order.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** I just wanted to correct my record for the introduction that I did earlier. I wanted to welcome Madame Morency and Madame Abi-Nader, and their classes from École élémentaire catholique Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Grant Crack:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2015 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES IN ONTARIO ACT, 2015

##### LOI DE 2015 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE ET DE LUTTE CONTRE LES DÉPENDANCES EN ONTARIO

Ms. Armstrong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to continue the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council and to amend the Ombudsman Act in respect of providers of mental health and addictions services / Projet de loi 95, Loi visant à proroger le Conseil consultatif pour le leadership en santé mentale et en lutte contre les dépendances et à modifier la Loi sur l'ombudsman à l'égard des fournisseurs de services de santé mentale et de lutte contre les dépendances.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This bill continues the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council. The council's mandate, set out in section 3 of the bill, is to advise on and monitor the expeditious implementation of the recommendations made by the select committee of the Legislative Assembly on mental health and addictions in its report released in August 2010.

The council is required to submit a plan to the minister within one year with respect to matters related to mental health and addictions set out in subsections 3(2) and (3) of the bill. The council is also empowered to make recommendations to the government with respect to improving mental health and addictions services in Ontario.

The Ombudsman Act is amended to permit the Ombudsman to conduct investigations in respect of providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

##### CANCER AWARENESS MONTH MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION AU CANCER

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** As members will know, the Canadian Cancer Society, Ontario division, is having its MPP education day here at Queen's Park. Some of their representatives are in fact here with us—well, they were supposed to be here—as we speak, and I rise to speak to the importance of what they're doing.

Earlier this morning, I was pleased to join their MPP breakfast, and I want to thank everyone who joined us for that breakfast.

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As it happens, today is also the last day of the Daffodil Month fundraising drive, which takes place every April. I would also like to take a moment to speak about that. I wear this daffodil with pride, knowing that money raised during this month funds life-saving cancer research and supports services that help Canadians avoid this terrible disease. Wearing this pin is also one way we show our support for Canadians living with cancer, and it helps raise awareness of cancer-related issues.

This is so important because the numbers around cancer incidence and cancer mortality are sobering. Every hour of every day, an average of 21 Canadians are diagnosed with cancer. Nine of them eventually die from the disease. Here in Ontario, we had nearly 74,000 new cancer cases last year, and more than 28,000 people died. This is the challenge that the people at the Canadian Cancer Society have taken on, and our government salutes them for that. We also fight alongside them.

Ontario is widely recognized as a leader in the battle against this disease. The Cancer System Quality Index, which tracks Ontario's progress on tackling cancer, continues to show that Ontarians receive some of the best cancer care in the world. We're also working very hard to reduce the number of people who contract the disease.

Our Making Healthier Choices Act, which is before this House, includes two pieces of legislation related to smoking, which, as we all know, is a major cause of cancer. It is fitting that it is today, April 30, the last day of Daffodil Month, that our bill, Bill 45, got referred for third reading. Tobacco use causes 13,000 deaths in this province every year. Our bill, if passed, would impose a ban on the sale of flavoured tobacco products, including menthol. This is in response to an emerging body of evidence that young people often become regular smokers when they start off with flavoured tobacco.

The second part of the legislation deals with electronic cigarettes. At this time, we do not know the health effects of electronic cigarette use or what, if any, relationship exists between electronic cigarette use and the uptake of tobacco smoking. But we don't want our kids being enticed to vape. Our bill, if passed, would ban the sale of electronic cigarettes to minors.

Tomorrow we will be marking the one-year anniversary of our government's tanning bed legislation coming into force. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has stated that tanning bed use increases the risk of the deadliest form of skin cancer, melanoma. That risk is 75% higher if tanning bed use begins before the age of 35.

We have heard the expression for years: Cancer can be beaten. We believe that, and we will continue fighting to make it a reality. We are very grateful to the Canadian Cancer Society, which has been leading this fight for so long. Thank you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Statements by ministries? Last call for statements by ministries. It is now time for responses.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus in recognition of the Canadian Cancer Society's daffodil campaign. We support this great national campaign that funds research and supports Canadians living with cancer. Today we ask all of us to take a moment to remember and reflect upon the people who have passed and all who are living with cancer and to support them in their courageous fight against this terrible disease.

I myself am wearing the daffodil pin to commemorate my sister Marjorie and my mom, Jean, who both passed away from cancer, as well as my sister Bonnie and my sister-in-law Joanne, who are cancer survivors. I'm wearing the daffodil pin to also honour my all-time hero, Terry Fox. To all of you who are on this difficult journey, we want you to know that you are not alone.

Just last month I was pleased to support Bill 61 to proclaim the second Sunday after Labour Day in each year as Terry Fox Day. Speaking to that bill gave this House an opportunity to honour this great Canadian hero and recognize the valuable work that the Canadian Cancer Society is doing every day to raise money for research.

I was also pleased to have had the opportunity to recognize how global this fight is, to acknowledge that people across the entire world, from the United Arab Emirates to China, are all taking action to raise awareness of prevention and early detection of cancer.

Today we have an opportunity to think about how we provide cancer care and supports here at home in Ontario. Just earlier today, I met and spoke with Canadian Cancer Society members and heard how we can strengthen cancer care for Ontario people and support the delivery of care for cancer patients.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that in my four years that I've had the honour and pleasure of serving in the deputy health critic role, I've had a number of meetings with health stakeholders. The cancer society are especially passionate advocates. When they speak, you listen—especially my local contact, Lera Ryan.

We know that there are things that we can do better. As cancer continues to claim the lives of 7.6 million people each year, four million of whom die prematurely, I think it is absolutely important that we do more. According to the Canadian Cancer Society, every three minutes cancer claims another Canadian. An estimated 186,000 new cases of cancer and 75,000 deaths from cancer will occur in Canada in a year. Prostate, lung, breast and colorectal cancer account for the top four newly diagnosed cancers.

Personally, I'm a strong promoter of wellness. I'm a runner, and I've always been a strong proponent of engaging people to lead healthier and more active lives. It's how I empower myself and how I fight back.

I also wanted to mention that our fight against cancer has had over 75 years of success. As a result, over 60% of Canadians diagnosed with cancer will survive at least five years after their diagnosis. This is a great accomplishment.

Again, a big welcome to the members of the Canadian Cancer Society, and a heartfelt and sincere thank you to all of the volunteers and all the staff for their incredible work. Thank you to all of you—to those listening, to those watching, those in the House—for wearing their daffodil to support the Canadian Cancer Society and for helping to bring the hope of Daffodil Day to full bloom: a day when no one will have to fear cancer.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was a pleasure for me to meet with close to a hundred volunteers from the Canadian Cancer Society when they hosted breakfast for us. I know many of the MPPs in this chamber took advantage of them being there. They are an amazing organization.

I agree with the previous speaker that when the cancer society does research, when they come to see you or any one of us, they are well prepared. We've talked a bit about some of the pieces of legislation that have gone through that support health promotion, and behind all of them the cancer society stood proudly. The volunteers from the cancer society also stood proudly.

It has been about a year since Ontario banned the use of tanning beds for youth, as well as regulated their use to make them safer. I cannot tell you, Speaker, how many thousands of youth got engaged with the Canadian Cancer Society to help us make that decision. It is through their work that it became a reality and that all of us voted in favour of passing this bill. The cancer society is able to reach across age groups, across geography, basically across our entire province and our country, and they do excellent work.

The same thing is true with Bill 45, a bill that just finished its second reading work and will hopefully come back for third reading soon. The first part of the bill has to do with calorie labelling. Calorie labelling is quite simple: When you go to McDonald's from now on you will see "Big Mac \$2.99, 450 calories." It's as easy as that. The number of calories will be right there on the menu board so you will be able to see. The Canadian society was there behind us with the research to show that if you give people information, if people eat healthy food, they decrease their risk of getting cancer.

The second part of the bill has to do with flavoured tobacco. This is an issue that the Canadian Cancer Society has been pushing for over seven years. You know very well, Speaker. You and I were there at a breakfast with the lung association and the cancer society telling us to ban flavoured cigarillos. You and I co-sponsored a bill that did just that, but the ink had not even dried on that bill before the tobacco industry had found a loophole, and they kept right on at it.

Right now the sale of flavoured tobacco is just exploding. It did better than even the tobacco industry would have hoped in hooking the next generation of smokers, making sure that our youth pick up smoking. They do this through flavoured tobacco. I'm really happy to say that the second part of Bill 45 will ban flavoured tobacco.

I'm still a little bit uncomfortable with one of the clauses in the bill, which would basically allow menthol to not be banned at the same time as every other flavour.

We are bringing this bill forward, we are banning flavoured tobacco in Ontario and it's time to ban all of them.

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I would say that we've also missed an opportunity to ban flavoured rolling cigarette paper because we all know that it won't take them long to put the flavouring inside the paper of the cigarettes, and then we're right back to where we were. Let's ban all flavours.

The last part of the bill has to do with regulating e-cigarettes.

I want to thank each and every one of you who gives their time, their effort, their energy to the Canadian Cancer Society. You are helping us make a healthier society, and we thank you for your dedication to this.

Ça me fait toujours plaisir de travailler avec la Société canadienne du cancer. Ils font tellement du bon travail. Lorsqu'ils viennent nous voir, ils viennent nous voir avec des documents qui ont une bonne recherche derrière eux et des arguments convaincants de comment on peut diminuer les risques de cancer et rendre notre société en meilleure santé.

Qu'on parle du projet de loi qu'on a fait par rapport aux lits de bronzage—ça fait un an maintenant que les jeunes n'ont pas le droit d'utiliser les lits de bronzage. Aussi, on parle du tabac aromatisé qui, on le sait, est une façon de s'assurer qu'on aura une autre génération de fumeurs. C'est la Société canadienne du cancer qui a mené la barque.

Merci beaucoup. Thank you to all of you.

**Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac):** Merci beaucoup. I thank all members for their statements.

## PETITIONS

### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

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

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** This petition comes from the good people in Sault Ste. Marie and area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sault Area Hospital is facing major direct care cuts, including: the closure of acute care beds and cuts to more than 59,000 nursing and direct patient care hours per year from departments across the hospital, including the operating room, the intensive care unit, oncology, surgical, hemodialysis, infection control as well as patient care coordinators, personal support workers and others;

“Whereas Ontario’s provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row; and

“Whereas these cuts will risk higher medical accident rates as nursing and direct patient care hours are dramatically cut and will reduce levels of care all across our hospital;

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

“(1) Stop the proposed cuts to the Sault Area Hospital and protect the beds and services;

“(2) Improve overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces.”

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

#### 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 petition, affix my signature and send it with Joshua.

#### PESTICIDES

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

“Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make regulatory changes to the Pesticides Act that will have a considerable negative impact on virtually all of Ontario’s corn and soybean farmers;

“Whereas comments on the proposed regulations need to be submitted by May 7, 2015; yet the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs plainly states on their website that ‘[t]he optimum planting date [for corn] is on or before May 7 in southwestern Ontario and May 10 in central and eastern Ontario. Delaying planting past the optimum date can result in yield reductions averaging about 1% per day of delay in May.’;

“Whereas the ministry’s website also says: ‘The highest yields of soybeans are obtained from early plantings, generally the first 10 days of May. Later plantings are likely to incur significant reductions in yield ...’;

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

“Instruct the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to extend the comment period on EBR posting number 012-3733 beyond the planting season for corn and soybeans as defined by Agricorn planting deadlines to allow farmers to farm, and be properly consulted on these proposed regulations that will significantly impact their livelihoods.”

I totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with Thomas.

#### LYME DISEASE

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

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”



It's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this petition to page Mira.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** "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 support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Luca.

#### TRESPASSING

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas when private property is damaged it is left to property owners to repair these damages, and the costs can quickly add up to thousands of dollars. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has asked for a minimum fine for trespassing and an increase on the maximum limit on compensation for damages;

"Whereas Sylvia Jones's private member's Bill 36, the Respecting Private Property Act, will amend the current Trespass to Property Act by creating a minimum fine of \$500 for trespassing and increasing the maximum compensation for damages to \$25,000; and

"Whereas the Respecting Private Property Act will allow property owners to be fairly compensated for destruction to their property, and will also send a message that trespassing is a serious issue by creating a minimum fine;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To support Sylvia Jones's private member's Bill 36, the Respecting Private Property Act, and schedule public hearings so that Bill 36 can be passed without further delay."

For obvious reasons, I support this petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Abdullah to take to the table.

#### PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

**M. Michael Mantha:** Une pétition présentée par les gens du nord, de ma circonscription d'Algonia-Manitoulin :

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l'Ontario continuent d'être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l'essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

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« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d'essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l'essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d'écart de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d'essence annualisés inférieurs.

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« D'accorder à la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l'essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

Je suis totalement d'accord avec cette pétition et je la présente à page Madison pour l'apporter à la table.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

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

"Whereas current federal laws are not a strong enough deterrent to stop criminals from driving around with unlawful handguns in their cars;

"Whereas in recent years there have been a number of innocent people shot and killed by unlawful handguns carried in cars despite the hard work of our local police;

"Whereas unlawful handguns in cars, drive-by shootings, and gun crimes are threatening innocent citizens and our police officers on duty;

"Whereas the constant flow of illegal smuggled guns into the hands of street criminals continues;

"Whereas only police officers, military personnel, and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess handguns;

"Whereas Bill 24 would help police take these gunmen off our streets and make our communities safer;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 24 MPP Mike Colle's PMB entitled Prohibiting Driving with Unlawful Handguns Act, 2014, into law so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful handguns and drive-by shootings in our communities."

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

#### HYDRO RATES

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I have a petition to lower hydro rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

“Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

“Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I will sign my name to support this petition and give it to page Olivia.

#### 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;

“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 wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and present it to page Ethan to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

#### STUDENT SAFETY

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I have another 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; and

“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 petition, affix my signature, and give it to Jae Min.

#### WIND TURBINES

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

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.”

I totally agree with this petition as well, Speaker, I’ll affix my signature and I’ll send it to the table with Cailyn.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

##### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, since the 2015 federal budget commits only \$750 million Canada-wide to new transit spending in a fund that does not start until 2017-18 and commits no new money for other infrastructure, the Ontario Legislature calls on the federal government to immediately reverse course by providing significant

long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for a presentation.

The member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It's a pleasure to rise today and ask for consideration of my motion by the members of this House, a motion that is meant to provoke a serious conversation about the role of the federal government in supporting vital infrastructure projects in Ontario and throughout the provinces of our Confederation.

I'm proud to be a member of a government that values investment in its people through essential projects that impact all of our well-being: hospitals, schools, colleges, universities and the roads, bridges, highways—and, increasingly, the public transit—that connect our homes, workplaces and places of worship to our communities and to each other. These are projects that, as our population grows, are important to the health and strength of the communities of Mississauga–Brampton South and Ontario. In fact, in our increasingly urban and competitive world, they help to define our economic success.

In the 1800s, roads cut by government workers through Ontario's woodlands opened up regions to prosperous futures. Canal systems, financed by government, allowed freight and manufactured goods to be shipped to markets using waterways such as the St. Lawrence River, the historic equivalent to our modern highways or rail systems. Today, proper transit can make the difference between business thriving or withering, and residents enjoying their community or scorning it.

If our communities are to be strong and attract new people, culture, business and private investment, they need to be made accessible and have well-funded infrastructure.

**1350**

That is why I was so pleased to join the Minister of Transportation, the mayors of Mississauga and Brampton, and my colleagues from Mississauga and Brampton last week to announce a game-changing project, the Hurontario–Main LRT, that will run through my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. I'm very pleased with the commitment of our government. They have committed a \$1.6-billion investment. Running roughly 23 kilometres, including 13 stops in my own riding, it will connect my constituents using an efficient, environmentally sound light rail system; a system that will connect residents with other municipal and regional transit systems, unlocking the province for them.

It is a project that, frankly speaking, would not be possible without the leadership of Ontario's Premier, and is all the more critical due to the lack of a federal partner. Like many Ontarians, and in fact many Canadians, I was disappointed, even shocked, to learn that the recently announced federal budget allocated very limited funding for infrastructure projects across Canada. In fact, a meagre \$750 million is being allocated over two years for transit projects in all the towns, cities and provinces in

Canada. It is a joke; it's laughable, Mr. Speaker—funding that will not even be in place until 2017-18.

To quote an article in the Toronto Star on April 23, "Even when fully up to speed this Canada-wide initiative won't cover the cost of building just one planned light rail line serving Mississauga and Brampton." In the simplest terms, this amount breaks down each year to just about \$37,500,000 for each province in Canada, or about \$10.40 for each Canadian.

What is lacking from Ottawa is not only funding for worthy projects that serve Canadians; what is lacking is long-term, reliable and stable infrastructure investment that municipalities rely upon for their health and future planning. Infrastructure projects are not the partisan projects that some political projects are, but they are essential to the health of our communities and our economy. Neglecting infrastructure puts Ontario and Canada at a serious disadvantage in our highly competitive world.

To be sure, the roles of the federal and provincial governments have changed over the decades. A 2013 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives indicates that in 1955 the federal government owned 44% of public infrastructure, the provinces owned 34% and local governments owned 22%. Ontario's finance minister said, as he tabled our budget, that the provinces, territories and municipalities contribute roughly 86% to infrastructure funding. According to a report entitled *Crisis and Opportunity: Time for a National Infrastructure Plan for Canada*, published in 2014, provincial, territorial and municipal governments were responsible for as much as 95% of public infrastructure in the country. This means, in the words of the finance minister, that the federal government has not only missed the transit train, but it is not even in the station.

Our recovery from the global recession has not stopped Ontario from investing in infrastructure under this government. On the contrary, we are making historic investments in projects like the Hurontario LRT, Mississauga rapid transit, increased GO train service and the Union Pearson Express, all projects under way in my region.

We are funding other useful infrastructure projects such as the Erinoak campus, the Brampton courthouse, the redevelopment of Peel Memorial hospital, and the expansion of Sheridan College in Mississauga.

In fact, since 2003 our province alone has invested over \$100 billion in public infrastructure, and we have a plan to do far more. Our government has committed to investing more than \$130 billion for transit and other infrastructure over 10 years, which will benefit the national economy. That is \$31 billion in infrastructure projects throughout Ontario—roughly \$15 billion for urban communities and another \$15 billion for rural ones. Consider that, Mr. Speaker: so much more than the federal government, which has far greater power to raise money for major infrastructure projects, projects that build Ontario's infrastructure up and which, during our recovery, sustain and create hundreds of thousands of jobs locally and regionally.

Municipalities, our other partners, are calling for long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding for their highways, transit, schools and hospitals. Communities which have been designated as growth centres, such as Mississauga, will see changes in the years to come.

There is, however, a limit to the amount of vehicle traffic that any road system can handle, as we know from our urban highways. Instead, we must look to a future that is already being heralded around the world; one where public transit, buses, streetcars, light rail and subways are essential to allowing people to move about efficiently, reliably and safely. The role of the federal government is to help build our nation, to share in investments that makes us greater. When Ontarians pay \$11 billion more to the federal government than they receive back in federal transfer programs and services, they know that a fiscal imbalance exists.

According to an article put out by the Mowat Centre at the School of Public Policy in June 2014, Ontario and its 13 million residents receive the same funding from the federal government for infrastructure as Canada's smallest province, Prince Edward Island, which has only 150,000 residents.

In regard to the provincial budget, Janet Ecker, former Ontario finance minister and president and CEO of the Toronto Financial Services Alliance, said, "This continued commitment" by Ontario "to invest in infrastructure positively impacts Toronto's increasing success as a growing international finance centre."

According to the Toronto Region Board of Trade, "Every dollar invested in transportation infrastructure increases real GDP by \$1.19."

A mayor had this to say about the federal budget—the mayor of Saskatoon, Don Atchison. He said, "It's a race to the funding.

"If you look at Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Kitchener-Waterloo ... those are all areas that we're going to have to compete with."

Having said that, I ask my colleagues to call on the federal government to do its share for the well-being of the people of Ontario, our common and shared constituents, and to provide significant, long-term, stable, reliable infrastructure funding to the province of Ontario to build it up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak on this today. I think the intent of this motion is good. Across this country, we have growing centres of economic activity. We have young people, dedicated and talented people, willing to work. They're also part of communities, both new and old, that require investments to be able to thrive. Looking around this province, it's clear where that investment can be used—in the areas of infrastructure and transportation.

1400

As many of you know, the NDP has called for the federal government to increase federal funding for transit for a number of years. This motion speaks to the fact that the federal Conservatives have put the desire to present a

balanced budget ahead of providing for the people of this country. Yes, being fiscally responsible is important, but looking at the federal budget, it seems that this budget was balanced more on cuts and asset sales than on fiscal responsibility.

A national transit strategy has nothing to do with just making money available. It's all about making sure that the money is spent wisely and is focused on long-term planning and growth. The problem is, it seems that with a number of these budgets, it's far more about political gain.

Let's take a look at what the Conservative government has put in their budget around transit. The amount they are providing for funding across this country for the 2015-16 year: zero dollars. We don't start to see money until 2017-18, and finally, the bulk of the funding comes in 2019-20. You can see what they've done here. They want to claim they're balancing the budget, and they want to claim that they're reinvesting in the country, so they do this down-the-road kind of investment.

I believe that's what the member opposite is also concerned about: that Ontario won't be receiving any infrastructure or transportation funds for years. Once it does come, it's not nearly enough to help this province invest in what it needs to.

We have incredible potential in this province, and we need the support of both the federal and provincial governments to realize it. So, yes, as members of the provincial Legislature, of course we'd like to see more out of the federal budget. In fact, we need to see more.

The motion before us sounds good, and it certainly is something we agree with. But there's a major concern here that I think needs to be talked about. The tactic that the federal Conservatives are using looks a lot like what the Liberal government has been doing here in Ontario.

The Conservative budget is all about big announcements and deferred spending. It makes promises to the people of Canada without the Conservatives ever knowing if they'll be fulfilled. Well, this is exactly the same thing that we're seeing here at the provincial level around transit spending.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It would help if my colleagues would please listen.

Let me just use a few examples—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order, please.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Let me use a few examples. The 2015 budget announced a new Connecting Link Program to replace the one that this government cancelled in 2012, but money won't begin flowing until 2017-18.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It won't be flowing until 2017-18.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** 2016—check your numbers.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister of Transportation, come to order.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Earlier this year, the government announced that it would defer construction of the

Toronto Sheppard East LRT until at least 2025, despite the fact—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** If it continues, I'll name people. It's getting out of hand. Your member had the luxury of speaking without interruption.

Continue.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. It's probably important that they do listen.

This government would defer the Sheppard LRT until at least 2025, despite the fact that the funding for this project was confirmed in 2009.

This government promised \$1 billion for the Ring of Fire infrastructure, but this budget revealed that money won't be seen until 2018-19.

The 15-minute all-day GO service to communities like Kitchener, Guelph and Brampton—which, by the way, was promised in the last election—won't be seen for at least another 10 years.

The government promised electrified trains on the Union Pearson Express by 2017. Now we know it will be deferred a lot longer.

The examples go on and on. The people of this province are promised one thing and then given another.

Do we believe the federal Conservatives need to invest more in this province? Absolutely. Do we believe they're kicking in their fair share of infrastructure and transportation money? Not a chance. But this motion attacks a federal budget that will not see any funding given to this province until 2017-18. It's right there in the wording; this is the focus of the motion. Yet this government has a long history of doing exactly the same thing. Both say one thing, "We need to get elected," and do another once they're actually in office. This province—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I'm going to talk about that, and I'm glad you raised it because I've only got 30 seconds left.

This province desperately needs transportation and infrastructure support. Look at my riding in Niagara. We have lost millions of dollars of business because of the horrible transportation problems on the QEW. This could be solved tomorrow by this government following through on its priorities and bringing daily two-way GO train service from Toronto to Niagara. We've given you an incredible business case. We've shown the community support and the unified support of Niagara.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate. The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Thank you so very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to stand in my place this afternoon and speak strongly in support of this motion that's being brought forward by our colleague from Mississauga–Brampton South. I want to begin by saying how grateful I am to that member from Mississauga–Brampton South for having the courage to bring this forward. She represents a community, like many of us do on this side of the House, that is desperately in need of the infrastructure investments that our government is

making thanks to the leadership of our Premier, Kathleen Wynne. To the member from Mississauga–Brampton South, I want to say thank you.

I will spend a couple of minutes, just in a moment, talking more about the motion itself with respect to the federal budget. But I want to take a quick second to acknowledge the immediately previous speaker from Niagara region, the member from the NDP caucus. It's unfortunate that time and time again in this House, members from the third party, from the NDP, consistently attempt to call us as a government on to the carpet for not investing enough in communities including those they represent. When they, in fact, had the opportunity last year, on May 1 and then again in June, when we came back after our consultation with the people, twice they voted or said they would oppose a budget that will help communities like Niagara region, like the north, like Kitchener-Waterloo, like Hamilton, like Peel, like Toronto, like all the communities across this province. It takes a certain degree of gall coming from that member and that party that they would deprive their own communities of support and then say they wouldn't support our budget.

To the Conservative members in this House, I sincerely hope, as we've said many times, that they will reach out to their federal cousins, to those people with whom they share a political philosophy, to encourage them to do what's right for the people of Ontario.

Thanks to Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario Liberal government, we are investing over \$130 billion over the next 10 years in crucial infrastructure right across the province of Ontario.

Just in the last few days, I've had the privilege of announcing that we are proceeding with the \$1.6-billion Hurontario-Main LRT for the residents of Peel region; the \$1.2-billion Finch LRT for the people of north-western Toronto—Etobicoke and North York; and the \$13.5-billion GO regional express rail plan over 10 years, which will literally transform the GO train network across all of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area into a consistent rapid train network for people across all of these fast-growing communities.

I was in Sault Ste. Marie with the member from Sault Ste. Marie, who is the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, not that many days ago to specifically announce that we are re-establishing a Connecting Links fund, as was asked for by our community partners, our municipal partners. Consistently at AMO and ROMA gatherings, they specifically asked for us to reinstate that plan, that program, and we've done it. And contrary to what the member from Niagara said, Speaker, Connecting Links funding will begin flowing in 2016, not 2017. I'd encourage that member to do better research before he speaks in this House.

Fundamentally, for the people of Ontario, for the people representing communities in every corner, outside the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and northern and rural communities, and of course here in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, the question that needs to be

posed to the federal Conservative government is, why does that government feel so inclined, why does that government feel so strongly—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Why don't they put you in jail for causing those deaths?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. The member for Ottawa–Orléans, I'd ask you to withdraw that statement.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Nepean–Carleton.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Nepean–Carleton—and I'll ask you to withdraw.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Withdrawn.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** And I'll ask all sides to come to order, as I've warned the other side.

Continue.

1410

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** As I was saying, the question for the federal Conservative government—and actually, beyond that, the question for Conservatives in this Legislature—is why do they feel so strongly that they need to support a federal government that's determined to turn its back on communities like Peel region, Kitchener, Hamilton, Niagara, the north, Algoma–Manitoulin, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and so many others?

Why would they go forward? Why would they go forward with an investment plan for infrastructure that is so meek in comparison to the totality of the challenge that we face here in this region and across the province of Ontario? I don't know why. I don't have a clear answer as to why.

What I know, representing a community on the edge of Toronto and the 905; what I know when I travel to the north, when I'm in the southwest; what I know when I stand in this House earlier today; when I'm here, and I hear the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talk about the need to invest more in rural communities, for example, as it relates to transportation infrastructure—I can't understand why that member wouldn't pick up the phone and call his federal counterpart and say, "Where in this \$1-billion plan will you be helping the people of rural Ontario?"

It's perfectly legitimate, when it comes to political discourse, even when we all represent the same party theoretically—it's perfectly legitimate for the member from Nepean–Carleton to pick up the phone and say, "Where will you be with phase 2 of the Ottawa LRT? Where will you be to match the province's support for the 400-series highways, the hundreds of millions of dollars that we've invested in Ottawa since 2003 and will continue?" It's perfectly legitimate for all of those members to pick up their phones, to reach out.

I'm sure the Conservative Party, like other parties, has plenty of opportunities to have those conversations between federal and provincial partners, to pick up your phones, send an email, send a telegram, send a homing pigeon. Ask the federal government why they won't

stand up for Ontario the way this Premier is, the way our government is.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Point of order.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I just want a clarification from the minister if it was his ministry that made the big debacle on the 400-series—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** That's not a point of order.

Further debate?

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'm really pleased to be able to stand and rise in support of this motion. First of all, I'd like to congratulate the member for Mississauga–Brampton South for bringing this forward, for her leadership and initiative, and for raising an issue that needs as much attention as we can possibly get, until the right thing is done.

Speaker, I've told this story before in the Legislature, and I'll share it again. When I first got elected, I received a lot of advice this past June and July. One of the pieces of advice I got was from somebody in the community who said, "You know, don't forget that you not only are elected to serve the people of Ontario today and their interests in the short term, but you also need to think about tomorrow, and you need to think about their interests over the long term." To me, that's what this motion is all about. It's really about saying we need to invest, to ensure our prosperity not only in the short term and medium term but over the long term.

We live in the best country in the world, in my view. One of the reasons we live in such a great country is because of our heritage, because of the tradition of governments, leadership, people across Canada making the right investments, thinking over the long term about what's needed to preserve this great country and to build this great country up.

The classic example is, of course, the railroad, which was built across this country. This took vision; this took initiative. It took people saying, "There's a vision for this country that we have—a unified country, a strong country, an example for the world—but to do this, we need to make investments in infrastructure." The railroad is a great example of that.

When my grandfather first immigrated to this country, one of his first jobs was building infrastructure across Ontario, to help build it up. His generation made sacrifices to ensure that our generation would enjoy the prosperity that we have today. It's our generation's job to make those same investments so that future generations enjoy that as well.

These investments are critical—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** —and I gather from the heckling on the other side—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member from Algoma–Manitoulin, come to order. The Minister of Tourism and Culture, come to order.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I will say that these investments are critical. They're critical to our economy and to our future prosperity, and they're critical to our quality of life.

The member who introduced the motion did a wonderful job of outlining why this is important. She outlined how significant the investment is that our government, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, is making in infrastructure across transportation, across energy, across schools, across hospitals—the things that are going to secure our services and prosperity for the future. I won't go any more into that.

But the federal government is investing meagrely in infrastructure—very, very little: no money over the next two years, \$750 million after that. When you think about how little that is in the context of how vast our country is, it is really sad, Mr. Speaker. Add to that the fact that Ontarians are sending \$11 billion more than they're getting back. The federal government has balanced the budget on the backs of Ontarians.

I would call on all members to stand up for Ontario and do the right thing. The federal government needs to make those investments to secure our future and continue that tradition of looking to the long term.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to weigh in on this private member's bill. I know the member from Mississauga–Brampton South. I have great respect for her. I think that she serves her community very well, and I think she brings this motion to this House with great earnestness.

It is true that the 2015-16 federal budget, which was just issued last Tuesday, announced a new national transit fund. The amount of the promised transit funding through the fund for 2015-16 is zero; \$375 million per year will start flowing in 2018, and \$1 billion will flow in 2019-20. It is completely back-loaded. It's purely politics at play on transit.

I guess I have to challenge the motion, though, based on the record that we've seen from the Liberal government. I think that's our concern: that the Liberals are challenging the federal Conservative Party to fund transit in an open and transparent way, when the Liberals have not been transparent or open about transit funding in the province of Ontario for quite some time. In fact, it is the new pattern, and I suspect that's why we garnered that response.

I'm going to remind the people of this province of the announcement just this week. There is some serious backpedalling on transit, and there's a lot at stake in the province of Ontario.

Just three days ago, the government deferred the Sheppard East LRT project, which has been formally funded since 2009. The minister, who just had some words to say to me, said that there was not enough capacity—crews and workers—available to handle two LRT construction jobs at once. Imagine that. This government is so busy selling off Hydro One that you haven't focused on the work actually at hand.

If \$250-million-per-year worth of long-planned LRT construction can no longer be accommodated at the same time as another long-planned LRT project that will cost \$300 million per year over four years, then how does the government expect to accelerate transportation infrastructure construction in this province by over \$3 billion every year for 10 years, above existing plans? For the next year, at least, it doesn't, and that's the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker.

Most of the infrastructure spending announced in the 2015 budget, Building Ontario Up—the counter-title is Tearing Ontario Down—is deferred by a year or more. The numbers in that budget do not lie.

The Minister of Transportation can stand up and say, “We are aggressive in accelerating transportation.” They are actively moving backwards on the transportation infrastructure file, all the while saying, “\$130 billion.”

This is another key piece that I want to get in Hansard. The 2015 budget revealed that the government saved \$1.5 billion in 2014-15, by deferring infrastructure spending under the Building Canada Fund, which was celebrated last month as faster-than-expected deficit reduction. This government is bragging about not completing infrastructure projects that have been on the books for five to 10 years.

It is embarrassing that this government stands in this House every day and is willing to gamble the entire future of this province. The economic reality in this province is that for 13 years, they have been promising—the only thing that this government is good at is breaking promises on transit, Mr. Speaker.

**1420**

Of great interest, actually, for the people in my riding, in Kitchener-Waterloo, is that there have been—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, come to order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** —promises. It's astounding: The politicians, the candidates, the Premier, the Minister of Transportation—they have come to Kitchener-Waterloo, they have all stood on that rail platform, and they have made promises that honestly would make your head spin. Really, they have. They have said “two-way, all-day,” they have said “every 15 minutes,” they have said “electrified,” and you stood there and you said the same thing.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** You know what? I don't blame you for being mad. I don't blame you for being mad, because you ran on it, and you broke that promise to my community.

Kitchener-Waterloo is an economic engine in this province. The two-way part—which this government never got and they probably never will—is that 10,000 people try to get into Kitchener-Waterloo every single day. That's would be the two-way part. Peak service, peak time—you cannot backpedal any faster on a transit promise from this government. You know what? Our community has had it. They see right through you—

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** How did you vote on that budget?

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. The Minister of Transportation, you're warned. The deputy House leader, you're warned.

Continue.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** So the budget—you know, they can say whatever they want, and they can spin it. They're going to change the advertising rules in this province. They're going to use taxpayer money to spin the people of this province. It is unconscionable, in the province of Ontario—but the budget doesn't lie; the numbers aren't there to fund those promises. You broke so many promises on transit. You should literally be ashamed of yourselves.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Thank you—to my one colleague that's left here—for the opportunity to speak to a motion that is actually little more than another thinly veiled, pre-election attempt to take shots at the federal Conservatives in order to sway voters in the GTA.

The few hours that this Legislature actually devotes to private members' business every Thursday is the one legislative opportunity for members—especially those backbenchers without portfolios—to stand up on behalf of their constituents and residents, and address key issues directly impacting their lives and those in their area.

I would like to say, off the top, what a shame it is that a provincial Liberal backbencher would have to use the one opportunity she has to work on legislation to address important issues in her community to instead engage in partisan attacks against the federal government to prop-up Mr. Trudeau's chances in the GTA. Frankly, it's a missed opportunity for her community members, and I question the continued and obvious attempts to point fingers at the feds when there's so much to be addressed here in the province of Ontario and—I'm sure—in her riding of Mississauga–Brampton South.

That said, Speaker, as we've heard from the member for Mississauga–Brampton South, this first part of this motion suggests that “the 2015 federal budget commits only \$750 million Canada-wide to new transit spending in a fund that does not start until 2017-18.”

I would like to, first, take a closer look at that particular statement. The truth is that, while the budget does call for \$750 million for new transit spending in 2017-18, the Public Transit Fund will actually provide \$750 million over two years and then \$1 billion annually thereafter for new public transit infrastructure in Canada's large cities. Further—and the member should know this—the federal government is actually directly funding new public transit infrastructure in her riding already.

Brampton's Züm, a bus rapid transit system once known as AcceleRide, is an essential piece of her area's transportation plans going forward and, yes, Speaker, it is funded in part by the same federal government she is calling out for lack of funding.

In fact, the first phase of AcceleRide was funded by the Harper government in Ottawa to the tune of \$53 million. Furthermore, phase 2 of the project is receiving another—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Would the member for Barrie come to order?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** —\$42 million. By my calculations, that's close to \$100 million right there being injected into the member's community for transit. That's not chicken feed. I think, given the motion being debated today, that deserves to be recognized.

Now with the second part of the motion: The member's motion calls for the federal government to provide “significant long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up.” Here again, I wonder if the member has only been reading the Trudeau Liberal talking points for her direction, as the fact is, Ottawa is already providing significant long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up.

The very same budget the member for Mississauga–Brampton South is criticizing for lack of funding also saw the government reaffirm its infrastructure commitments outlined in the 2013 budget known as the New Building Canada Plan. The New Building Canada Plan will see the government of Canada invest over \$53 billion in infrastructure across the country over the next 10 years.

Here in Ontario, this represents almost \$11 billion in dedicated federal funding, including more than \$2.7 billion under the New Building Canada Fund and an estimated \$8.12 billion under the federal Gas Tax Fund. Again, in the member's riding itself, the federal Gas Tax Fund alone has meant \$91.7 million for the city of Brampton from 2006 to 2014. Going forward, from 2015 to 2018, the city of Brampton will receive \$63.7 million from the fund.

It doesn't stop there. Through the federal government, Ontario also stands to benefit from \$4 billion available for projects of national significance, \$1.25 billion in additional funding available for P3 projects and \$10.4 billion via the GST rebate, which provides municipalities across the country with additional resources to address their infrastructure priorities.

It seems to me that the only thing standing in the way of Ontario building itself up, as the motion notes, is the Wynne Liberals' legacy of economic mismanagement that has diverted funding away from the very infrastructure investments this motion speaks to.

Just imagine what we could do if Ontario didn't have to spend \$12 billion a year just to pay down interest on the debt, after a decade plus of McGuinty-Wynne government economic mismanagement. There would certainly be a lot more to spend on needed infrastructure if this government spent more time on reducing its debt load than crying poor to Ottawa.

With all of these billions of dollars in dedicated federal funding coming to Ontario, it is up to the Wynne Liberals to get their fiscal house in order to ensure the



province is doing its part instead of pointing fingers at Ottawa with one hand and grasping for federal handouts with the other.

But it's always the same with this regime: redirecting the blame to cover over the fact that their spending addiction has created a sad situation where this once strong province doesn't have enough left at the end of the day to spend on all the priorities that we share. All the while, Ottawa continues to do its part even as they shoulder the blame accusations fired off daily by this Liberal government.

In fact, since 2006, federal investments of over \$4.91 billion under the Building Canada Fund, the Provincial-Territorial Base Fund, the Green Infrastructure Fund and the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund have assisted the government of Ontario and its municipalities to make infrastructure improvements for the benefit of all Ontarians.

Municipalities have benefited from the approximately \$4.63 billion provided to Ontario through the federal Gas Tax Fund I mentioned earlier. Combined with investments under other federal infrastructure programs, Ontario has actually benefited from over \$12.3 billion toward infrastructure improvements across the province. This has meant that, according to Stats Canada, the average age of Ontario's infrastructure has essentially declined by 1.9 years since 2006, down to 13.4 years in 2012. So when the member opposite calls for significant long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up, I would tell her that she may want to open her eyes because it's already there.

**1430**

But again, they've been using the blinders-on approach for so many years that I don't know if they'd even recognize stability if they fell over it. We see it over and over again here. Today's motion only continues the partisan gamesmanship in which the Ontario Liberals call out the feds on the lack of funding, to bolster Mr. Trudeau's campaign.

Just earlier this year, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure's shot across the bow to the federal Minister of Infrastructure provides another sad example of the gamesmanship at work. In a December 2014 public letter to Minister of Infrastructure Denis Lebel, Ontario's economic development minister informed him that the Ontario government would be forwarding, in early 2015, (1) a "final list of priority projects under the Small Communities Fund; and (2) the second submission under the New Building Canada Fund" focusing on "transit and economic development projects."

We are now entering the fifth month of 2015, well past "early," and the only submissions received have been more rhetoric over lack of federal funding, when Ottawa is already at the table with available funding that the province is failing to access.

It begs the question: Is the province purposely holding back on project submissions in an attempted pre-election smear to make it appear that federal Conservatives aren't

funding transportation infrastructure? It's a legitimate question. The games continue.

When we look at last week's Ontario budget, on page 288 it clearly shows that the Canada Health Transfer increased by \$652 million this year—money the federal government has specifically earmarked for health care in Ontario. Yet, just one page later, on page 289, it shows that the Ontario health budget actually only increased by \$598 million. That's a discrepancy of \$54 million. They took \$54 million from the health care budget to pay for their fiscal mismanagement and then turn around and cry poor to Ottawa when they don't have enough to pay their bills.

The complete polar opposite approach to government was on full display last week in the tale of two budgets. Luckily, I had the rare opportunity in Ontario to see what it looks like when a government puts their work into getting its fiscal house in order—something we don't expect to see in this province for another three and a half years, at best.

While the Wynne Liberals wait for the day when, in the words of Justin Trudeau, "The budget will balance itself," the federal Conservatives were making the tough decisions that have resulted in a balanced budget. Ontario has seen \$14 billion in transfer payments flow from Ottawa since the Liberal government dragged us into have-not status, and somehow still can't balance a budget and continue to call for help. While Ontario has struggled through more than a decade of Liberal waste, mismanagement and scandal, the federal surplus in Ottawa has meant new opportunities for Canadians.

You see, when a government gets its fiscal house in order, it can actually help families and businesses. Example one is the federal initiative to deliver a \$27-billion package of family-focused tax cuts, including an expansion of the Universal Child Care Benefit. This is what leadership looks like: first taking care of our economic priorities so that we could take better care of our people.

Bottom line: I will not be supporting today's motion's thinly veiled pre-election attempt to take shots at the federal Conservatives in order to sway votes in the GTA. It's beneath this member to bring it forward but, unfortunately, par for the course in an indebted, spending-addicted Wynne Liberal Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** I want to start by thanking the member for Mississauga–Brampton South for bringing this very important motion forward and recognizing the importance of investments in public transit and infrastructure, something that we don't hear around the House. We recognize the importance of investing in critical infrastructure and public transit. Infrastructure investment is critical to creating jobs and improving the quality of life for all Ontarians. Investments in infrastructure build on our public transportation network, and this critical infrastructure helps thousands of citizens get to work, run errands and visit family. Public transporta-

tion is key to getting cars off the road, improving our environment and increasing mobility, particularly for seniors and youth.

That's why our government is investing over \$130 billion in infrastructure across our province over the next 10 years—including roads, transit, schools and hospitals—making this the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario history, something we would like to have had our federal counterparts in Ottawa substantiate by their own investment in Ontario infrastructure.

In addition to this, our government has a long track record of investing in transit. Since 2004, the province has committed \$3.1 billion in gas tax funding to Ontario municipalities. Our government has shown its commitment to helping municipalities to maintain their road and bridge infrastructure, something that our federal government has not seen fit to do in its latest budget.

Over the last 10 years, the province has provided municipalities with approximately \$14 billion in infrastructure money. A billion dollars over this vast country of ours in the federal infrastructure program, starting in 2017, is shameful. We've included over \$200 million for small, rural and northern communities over the last two years alone. This funding has helped communities prepare asset management plans and address critical infrastructure needs.

These investments are important to the people of Ontario. Our investments in building roads, transit and transportation projects all benefit the national economy. While our government here in Ontario has a predictable long-term infrastructure plan, the federal government does not.

I fully support the motion brought by my colleague.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to thank all the members who spoke on my motion.

I would like to thank the member from Niagara Falls, and I agree with him that it's too little and it's too late. I would also like to thank the Minister of Transportation, the member from Cambridge and the member from Etobicoke Centre for their perspectives on this motion. I would also like to thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Kitchener–Conestoga.

It is a shame that some of my colleagues chose to look at this motion as a partisan issue, when they could recognize it as an opportunity for leadership in the service of Ontarians. I have great respect for the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, but I would like to clarify that we are not selling Hydro One; we are investing and building new assets. When we build, we grow. When we invest, we grow.

It's a shame to see that the member for Kitchener–Conestoga has chosen to take it partisan. It is a reality—it is a truth—that the money will not flow until 2017-18. The money he is talking about that was spent in my riding was actually spent on building action plan billboards—nothing on the ground. It's zero on the ground, Mr. Speaker.

It is time for a new economic union, so that all governments can work together in support of the high-quality services Ontarians and Canadians rely on. I urge all members of this House to support this motion. Think about the well-being of the people of Ontario—our shared constituents—and about providing significant, long-term, reliable, stable infrastructure funding to build Ontario up.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will take the vote on this item at the end of all private members' business.

## GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS

### FOR ALL ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

Mr. Yakabuski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities / *Projet de loi 59, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun à l'égard des remboursements de la taxe sur l'essence similaires consentis aux municipalités par le ministre.*

1440

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I really didn't plan to be doing this again, because you see, Speaker, when the government instituted their cap-and-trade-tax-on-everything plan and mentioned it in the budget and talked about it this year, that this is the way they're going to—they'd like to say they're going to save Ontario, but what they're going to do is raise \$2 billion to cover parts of the debt and deficits that they've run up on the people of Ontario.

When they brought in this scheme, it is very much directed unfairly at rural Ontarians, a tax on everything they do. One of the first things they talked about was, how is it going to impact motive fuels—gasoline, diesel? They say three cents a litre. In my experience, when the Liberals say three cents a litre, count on seven or eight because it never, ever amounts to what they say it was going to be. They undersell everything when they're raising taxes and oversell everything when they think they're providing you a benefit. This is the way the Liberals work in this province.

I see that Acting Speaker Miller has taken the chair. One of the reasons I say I'm bringing this back again is because—congratulations to him, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He was rewarded today when his private member's bill was passed through third reading because of his persistency. Well, I am hopeful that if I have the same persistency, maybe these folks on the other side of the aisle, who always talk about fairness,

might actually inject a little into their thinking and some into their legislation as well.

They've had all kinds of opportunities to pass this. I did not plan to bring this forward again. But when the budget did not address the rural disparity—the disparity with which rural people pay the gas tax but do not get a share of it back—I said I'm sorry, but I've got to bring this back again because someone has to speak for rural Ontario. We do it on this side of the House, but unfortunately we're in the minority. The majority is on that side of the House, and they ignore rural Ontario. So again we have it one more time: Gas tax fairness for all here in the province of Ontario. Motive fuels are going up; the cost of driving in rural Ontario goes up again.

Before I go too far, I want to introduce two of my constituents here, who we had lunch with today. They were part of an auction to raise money for the Ottawa Valley Music Festival, and they lost and got lunch with me—John Hilborn and Elisabeth Van Wagner from my constituency of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I know they can't answer questions in this House but I know they drove here—no public transportation. So there we go. You see, in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, our roads, our sidewalks, our streets: That is our public transportation. You're inflicting more pain on to my rural people, raising the cost of gasoline because of your tax-on-everything.

You would think that there would be some balance on the Liberal side of the House and they would say, "Look, we're making it harder on rural Ontarians once again. So what we're going to do to balance that out is, we're going to do something that the federal government"—you know that government that you people like to grouse about all the time? We heard about it today in a motion. They're always going on and on and on about how the federal government is not doing its share. Well, perhaps they could learn something from the federal government.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And I say this to the member from Scarborough: I understand you don't live in rural Ontario and you probably don't understand it, but please, you should just come up and visit once in a while. There is no LRT that's ever going to get to Deep River, I can tell you that much.

So I say to you, why don't you spend some time looking at the program that the federal government provides to all of the residents of every municipality here in the province of Ontario? You provide gas tax to 96 out of 444 municipalities; everybody else is cut off—96 out of 444. The federal government provides a share of gas tax revenue to all municipalities—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Newmarket–Aurora and the member from Barrie.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's not just the gas tax. It's not just the rise in gasoline. Rural people have been penalized because they have no choice but to drive. There is no choice. I see all of these urban members here, and they're laughing. They think it's funny. They should

have to live in rural Ontario and put up with the reality of rural Ontario and how difficult it is.

So what do you people do? A couple of years ago, you raised the price of vehicle licences. You can live in the city of Toronto here and never have to own a vehicle if you choose not to. You can't get away without a vehicle in rural Ontario. If you live in a small town in rural Ontario, you have to have a vehicle or you're homebound—homebound. What did the Liberals do to rural Ontario a couple of years ago? They raised all the prices for vehicle licences—one more nail in the coffin.

Then we've got hydro rates—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The three amigos down there are very aggressive. Mr. Paul doesn't like it.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** And our little friend from Scarborough–Agincourt is very, very active. Can we cut it back a little bit? I know you may not like what the member has to say, but we'll give him some leeway. Thank you.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** He's awfully loud.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The minister says I'm too loud. Perhaps she should get some earplugs. When I'm speaking for the people in my riding and the people of rural Ontario, I'm going to speak up. Somebody has to because you ignore them; all of you urban members on the other side of the House continue to ignore them.

Let's talk about hydro rates. When you live in rural Ontario, chances are you live in a detached home. You don't live in a condominium, you don't live in an apartment; you live in a detached home with four walls facing the elements each and every day of the year, whether it's the cold of the winter or the heat of the summer. So we're getting penalized more by the exorbitant increase in the rates of hydro put on by this government. What do you get in return from the Liberals' government? Nothing.

So I'm asking again, why don't you do the right thing? Do what the federal government has been doing for years. It just boggles my mind when you people sit there and complain about the federal government and say the federal government is unfair, but you have the opportunity here today to show some fairness. You've ignored it repeatedly each time that I have asked for it.

I'll just give you a little bit of a list here from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Arnprior, federal government gas tax allocation last year: \$234,944; provincial gas tax allocation: zero—zero. Bonnechere Valley: \$108,959 from the federal government, and how much did they get from the provincial government? Zero. Deep River—my friends from Deep River are here today. Deep River got from the federal government last year \$121,410, and how much did they get from the provincial government?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Zero.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, I say to the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. He an-

swers the question because he knows the Liberal policy. When it comes to money for rural Ontario, it is zero.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, come to order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Laurentian Valley, neighbours of Deep River, up there in that area: \$279,622 from the federal government; from the provincial government, absolutely nothing.

Speaker, I don't have a lot of time left, but the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, the wardens of all of the counties of eastern Ontario, have repeatedly asked you to do exactly what I'm calling for you to do, and that is to share the gas tax revenue with rural municipalities. You continue to ignore them. You continue to say no. They're only asking the same thing. They get the federal money. They want you to do the same thing. Why do you continue to turn your nose down at the people of rural Ontario? It is unfair. It is a matter of fundamental fairness.

1450

You see, Speaker, whenever someone in rural Ontario needs to go anywhere, they've got to get into a vehicle to do it. And every time they get into that vehicle, they burn fuel, and every time they burn fuel, they have to fill it up, and every time they fill it up, they pay gas tax. They pay a proportionately greater share of the gas tax to the province of Ontario than you could ever pay, living here in the city of Toronto. A much greater proportion of the gas tax is paid by rural people.

It would only seem reasonable and fair that if you're paying a higher proportion, a higher percentage of your income—and hey, folks, let's not kid ourselves. If you think the incomes in rural Ontario are anything near what they are in urban Ontario, you're dreaming in technicolor. They've got lower incomes. They have to spend more money on fuel; they pay a much higher percentage of the gas tax than the urban people pay; and they get nothing back—nothing.

So ask yourselves this question: Does that sound fair to you? I say to the member from Scarborough, does that sound fair to you? Does that—

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Check your facts.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** My facts are all verifiable, I say to you. Does that sound fair to you? I say, does that sound fair to you? She cannot stand up and say, "Yes, it sounds fair," because no one who speaks about equity and equality could look at those numbers and say that it is fair.

Speaker, I'm hoping—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You'll have your chance to make your point. We'll be glad to hear it, because it will be that fluff stuff you get out of the corner office on the second floor that doesn't make any sense anyway.

But will they speak for rural Ontario? I doubt it very much. It is time that your government—you know, when the Premier came to my county and came to the farm of Wade and Ann Schroeder, she didn't come there by the subway. She drove there, just like I did. She heard first-

hand the concerns of people in rural Ontario, and she left, and then she must have got a selective case of amnesia, because she has done nothing to address them since.

This is an opportunity to do that. I ask you to do the right thing: Stand in your place and support rural Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Wow.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Yes, wow. How do you follow that? For whatever reason, every time I seem to get up, I'm following you, my good friend. Darn.

You've put me in a very difficult position in regard to this one and, actually, for many municipalities in my riding, I'll try to highlight the difficulties that I'm having with your proposed private member's bill.

I want to thank the member for introducing this. It's my pleasure and privilege, as it is always, to stand on behalf of the good people in Algoma–Manitoulin. My riding covers communities that do have transit and others that don't. But all of them are united in saying that their challenge is they need definite, focused, targeted infrastructure funding.

I want to thank the Speaker for providing me this opportunity: An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

As I alluded to, some of the challenges across Algoma–Manitoulin are that in certain areas, you don't have a choice to jump on a bus. Quite frankly, some of those communities are feeling the negative impacts of the policies of this government by losing some of those services that were once there, not just across my riding but across northern Ontario. That transit, those bus facilities, the ONTC—all of those are under attack across northern Ontario. And you don't have to look very far. You just have to look across the way, because it's their policies that have affected those communities across this province, particularly across northern Ontario.

Yes, I completely agree that small municipalities need secure and predictable funding for highways and bridge repairs. That's absolutely needed. Nobody is questioning that. A lot of the municipalities across the north are definitely asking for that.

However, we're disappointed. For all the government's talk about building infrastructure, the latest budget shows mainly a plan to defer building infrastructure. We've talked about long-term plans and 10-year plans, but there's no targeted concrete plan that is going to be reflected in order to help the individuals across Algoma–Manitoulin or northern Ontario. All that we see is the north still being ignored in this budget—to its detriment—for other parts of this province.

When you read this budget, northern Ontario is completely left out of it. I constantly hear from mayors and groups in regard to, "Well, what about us? What happened to our infrastructure? When is it going to come? When do we hear about our news?" I'll try and touch on that a little bit later in some of my comments.

As for this bill, while we agree that small, rural communities absolutely need more stable and predictable funding for infrastructure, this should not come at a cost of reduced funding for transit, which this bill, as it is written, would do.

I agree with the member that we shouldn't be taking away funding that is existing, that is dependent—that already cash-strapped municipalities are receiving. We should be increasing it. I agree with you, my friend. There should be a fair share of the pie, but not taking it away from others who rely on it so much. There's been so much downloading that a lot of these dollars are so desperately needed for some of these municipalities—actually for all of the municipalities, and you know that.

The 2% of the gas tax is a fixed amount of money amounting to roughly \$300 million a year. The bill, as it is written, would take away from the current rebates that municipalities receive to help fund their transit systems. In other words, there would be an absolute reduction in funds going to fund transit operations. I know you don't want to see that. I know this is not the message that we want to put out there. What we want to see is stable funding in order to provide a piece of the pie for everyone, but not at a reduction of some.

I have some municipalities, like Elliot Lake, Espanola and Chapleau, which do have transit systems. There are others that are starting to develop their own transit systems in order to benefit from some of the funding that is there. But again, we don't want to see this move forward and hurt them.

Those are some of the struggles that I have with your bill, my friend.

During the OGRA/ROMA meeting this year, delegates from communities across my riding and across the north made it clear that funding for municipalities with transit systems should not be reduced, but rather that the pool of funds that are made available through the gas tax program should be expanded so that municipalities without a transit system would be able to benefit from the funding stream. My riding of Algoma-Manitoulin has many smaller municipalities who would benefit greatly if this sort of funding was made available.

I want to mention in some of the discussion some of the municipalities that many in this House have not heard of because they don't fall under municipalities. They're roads boards, they're local services boards, they're unorganized territories—like Agawa Bay, Amyot, Dalton, Dunns Valley, Fire River, Franz, Frater, Girdwood, Goudreau, Island Lake, Leeburn, Lochalsh, MacDuff, Montreal River, Oba, Ophir, Parkinson, Poplar Dale, Ranger Lake, Ryerson, Swanson, Wabos; and some of the local service boards such as Aweres, Batchawana Bay, Dawson, Goulais, Hawk Junction, Missanabie, Peace Tree, Rainbow Country, Robinson, Searchmont, Wharncliffe and Kynoch. These are areas that I feel are not being reflected right now in this bill, and they too want a piece of the pie. They are also struggling with some of their infrastructure. They want to be considered as well.

Northern communities are also waiting for the infrastructure dollars that would come out of the Ring of Fire, but we're going to have to wait another three to four years before anything happens with the Ring of Fire. I've read the budget. I've looked at the budget. I hear some of the comments that this government has made in that regard. I see a recommitment of a billion-dollar strategy, and then it refers me to another section to get a more detailed account of what it actually says. It just reiterates that there is a commitment once again, but we won't see any funding in the Ring of Fire. This is the spending that we desperately need in northern Ontario in order to address the infrastructure that we so desperately need.

**1500**

The mayor of Timmins, Steve Black, highlights in some of his comments in a newsletter that he put out; if you want to look it up, it's called [www.kisstimmings.com](http://www.kisstimmings.com). He says, "The government clearly has a lack of understanding when it comes to the challenges it has created when it abandoned the 90% funding it used to contribute just a few years ago."

He goes on to say, "Sure this amount is good news compared to where we were yesterday, but it falls far short from where we need to be! This funding will barely cover the patch work that needs to be done across the Connecting Link on an annual basis and will fall significantly short from the costs of the major reconstruction work required in the coming years...."

"I can't understand how our share of the \$15 million annual amount for all municipalities is going to address our challenges ahead for a highway that used to be funded 90% by the province. In addition, over \$60 million in funding was removed from the Connecting Link program when previous funding of this program was terminated in 2012" by the Liberal government. "There is no mention of the transition funding to make up for the four years this program was not funded."

These are just some of the comments that are being put out there by our mayors and organizations.

In closing, I want to share whatever time is—

**Interjection:** Keep going.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Okay. Then I'll keep going. I'll be able to finish off what I started.

Just last year, we heard the Premier make a recommitment, to commit \$1 billion towards the Ring of Fire. The development of the Ring of Fire would lead to huge, huge infrastructure dollars which are so desperately needed in this province. However, when you read the budget, you hear the commitment of the billion dollars, but you can't find it. All you hear is the commitment and the wording that is there. To find those actual dollars in their budget to determine where and how that money is going to be spent—you can't find it.

That is what this province actually needs so much. That influx would provide us the infrastructure dollars that we need for our roads, our hydro, our health care and education. We need a real commitment.

We heard a commitment during the campaign that we're going to do this with or without our federal part-

ners. However, when you read the budget: “The province has committed up to \$1 billion for strategic transportation infrastructure development in the region. The province calls the federal government to the table as a willing and active partner to match Ontario’s investments and seize the opportunities in the Ring of Fire.”

Once again, that \$1 billion is going to stay on the shelf, collecting dust, taking away opportunities from those First Nations in order to build their capacity, in order to bring the much-needed jobs to those areas, in order to bring the roads and the infrastructure we need, in order to balance some of our expenses that we have in this province, in order to bring the monies back to this province to enhance our revenues in order to bring the proper infrastructure that we need. That is the reality of what’s in this budget.

Back to my friend in regard to his bill: I agree that stable funding is needed. I have many small municipalities, many small communities, that would love to see more stable, targeted infrastructure dollars that they would benefit from and that would enhance the infrastructure in their community, but again, it is not at the penalty of others that we’re going to benefit everybody.

I congratulate the member for his tenacity in bringing his bill forward. It’s because of individuals like the member that I always enjoy sitting in the House; speaking up for all members in your riding is an important issue. I feel the passion that the member does, but I know that he would not want to penalize some to the benefit of others.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** It’s my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 59, introduced by the member opposite. I would like to clarify a few aspects of the gas tax program that I believe this bill overlooks and ignores. All of the members in this House know how committed this government is to partnering with municipalities to ensure strong infrastructure for transit and transportation. The Ministry of Transportation is dedicated to ensuring accessible public transit across Ontario’s municipalities.

Since 2004, the Ontario government has pledged \$3.1-billion worth of funding of revenue from the gas tax to help Ontario municipalities provide adequate funding for their public transit systems. Municipalities will additionally receive \$321 million in the 2014-15 year and 132 communities covering 90% of Ontarians will receive gas tax funding to supplement funding for their transit systems.

Bill 59 would alter the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act so as to allow municipalities without public transit systems to acquire funding from the gas tax in order to fund projects other than public transit, including the building of bridges and highways.

We all know that the purpose of the gas tax program is to provide municipalities funding from the province for transit. This has always been the goal of the gas tax. That’s not to say this government is not committed to municipalities without public transit systems as well.

This past August I was proud to be part of the government that introduced the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, which provides smaller and rural municipalities with a regular source of funding for infrastructure. As PA for transportation, I met with municipal leaders at AMO and ROMA asking whether the gas tax funds could be used for projects other than public transit. I encouraged them to apply for the OCIF if it was an infrastructure project because the OCIF provides a stable \$100 million per year for preserving roads, bridges and other key pieces of infrastructure.

My friend from Algoma–Manitoulin can encourage his many municipalities to apply for these funds for infrastructure programs.

Indeed, there are rural municipalities that do not receive funding under the gas tax program, but they are eligible for funding as soon as they introduce a public transit system, no matter how small a project it is, which I have said is the target of the program.

There are many problems with this bill. The new formula for funding under the proposed change to the gas tax program is confusing. It bases funding upon the total distance of highways and municipalities and suggests that transit ridership is comparable with highway distance. The member from the opposition does not specify in his bill how the funding would be spent, nor whether there would need to be an alteration in the existing gas tax in order to fund the change.

If it does not require a change in the actual tax, the effectiveness of this program would be diluted and municipalities that currently use the program to fund their transit projects would be worse off. If the bill does require a change, then it violates the stipulations of private members’ business, which, we all know, cannot procure funds.

This bill also aims to pit municipalities against one another and attempts to claim that this government is not ready and willing to support rural municipalities and help rural communities to build the roads and bridges that they need. This is simply untrue. This government is committed to rural development and has invested over \$97 million in rural economic development projects since 2003.

We have attempted with the gas tax program to right the wrongs that the Progressive Conservatives began. It was Mike Harris and Ernie Eves who downloaded the responsibility of transit upon municipalities and prevented them adequate ability to invest in their public transit systems. It was also the Tories who shifted the responsibility of provincial highways and bridges onto these rural municipalities, which negatively affected the condition of their infrastructure.

The gas tax program is a fundamental program for investment in public transit, and dozens of municipalities rely on this funding for the growth and vitality of their economies. Bill 59 would impair the gas tax program and hurt municipalities across Ontario.

**1510**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak to my colleague's bill, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has been a relentless advocate for municipalities, and I'm happy to lend my support to him today.

This bill will amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to give all municipalities the opportunity to benefit from the provincial gas tax. Under the current funding model, only municipalities with a rapid transit or public transit system are eligible for a tax rebate. This bill is about creating a level playing field among all municipalities.

In 2014, gas tax revenue was only distributed to 96 of 444 municipalities, even though all municipalities contributed to the fund. This is a glaring inequity that needs to be corrected. Speaker, all municipalities should have access to the funds they need to build and maintain their transportation infrastructure.

We all recognize that there is a glaring infrastructure deficit in this province. Giving all municipalities access to the funds they contribute to the Gas Tax Fund is one important step to address the issues facing our transportation system. The longer this government waits to fix the current funding model, the worse the infrastructure deficit will become.

Speaker, when we talk about transportation, we talk a lot about public transit. I think we all admit that public transit is, in fact, very important; however, we must not forget about roads, highways and bridges. We have to take a holistic view of our infrastructure priorities to ensure that all Ontarians have safe and efficient transportation options.

This bill is about fairness. Gas tax revenue should not be limited to municipalities with public transportation. For rural areas, roads and bridges are the only form of transportation. Rural municipalities should be able to use the gas tax funds they contribute to maintain their roads and bridges. We should not simply continue to support a funding model that benefits just urban municipalities to the detriment of our rural ones: one Ontario.

This bill would also provide a stable and predictable funding structure for municipalities. This is something that municipalities have been requesting for years, and I commend the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for introducing this legislation.

In my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, I have three townships: Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich. All of these townships would undoubtedly benefit from having increased funding under the provincial gas tax.

Currently, the federal government distributes their Gas Tax Fund to all municipalities. The federal government's effort to fund transportation infrastructure using their gas tax has been evident in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. The township of Woolwich received approximately \$1 million in 2012-13 to resurface roads. Also, from the beginning of the program to 2013, the region of Waterloo has received over \$94 million from the federal Gas Tax Fund.

It is time for the provincial government to step up and expand their gas tax program to all municipalities. The

gas tax should not be limited to building public transit. It should be used to ensure that all municipalities have the ability to build and maintain their roads, highways and bridges, as well as their public transit systems.

For too long, many rural municipalities have had to go without receiving money from the provincial gas tax. As the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has pointed out, there is nothing stopping the government from expanding the benefits of the gas tax rebate to all municipalities. The only way we can fix the infrastructure deficit we currently face is to fix the broken funding model.

I ask the members of this House to support this bill. Together, we can help to correct the inequities of a flawed funding model and restore fairness to the gas tax rebate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Mr. Speaker, I look at this bill and the efforts of the member to expand the use of the gas tax to rural municipalities and municipalities that do not have transit systems. The very purpose of establishing this fund was to enhance and expand public transit across the province. Were there not other pots of money for rural Ontario—the area he talks about—I think he would be justified. But there are. The government has specifically made other funds available that my community of St. Catharines, for instance, is not eligible for, nor should it be. The rural economic development funds that are put forward, other infrastructure funds—some \$200 million for small, rural and northern communities over the last two years—are important funding; it's justified funding. But the specific purpose of the gas tax at the provincial level is to establish, enhance and expand public transit, something that is a purported goal of all political parties and most people in this province. That is why I say to the people who want to expand this to other communities, that means less money for St. Catharines. It means less money for Niagara Falls, less money for the municipalities that have transit services or are beginning transit services.

I think it's quite justified for the government to have—and it should have other funds available for the municipality. I understand the argument that the member puts forward about the fact that people drive in his community; I understand that. That's why I like the other funds that are available to those municipalities, particularly funds for provincial highways, but also for local roadways. When I was Minister of Transportation, my hand got sore from signing all of the allocations of money to rural Ontario for road purposes. When I was Minister of Municipal Affairs, same thing. People would say, "Well, were they Liberal ridings?" No, they were Conservative ridings, but that didn't mean anything to me. It meant, do we have a separate fund to assist those municipalities? The answer is yes. If I see people in my own community, my Conservative friends, who say, "Why aren't you supporting it?" I'll say, "Would you like to have less money to expand and enhance our transit services in St. Catharines and other communities?"

I understand the intent of the bill. I understand the member wanting to see funds made available for the projects he's talking about. That's quite legitimate. That's why this government has established those other funds, for which my municipality and others are not eligible. For this reason, I will not be able to support this particular bill, but I will continue to support funds that would be available for municipalities that don't have transit systems from other pots of money within the jurisdiction of the provincial government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm pleased to stand today and speak on my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's bill, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act, 2015, which I believe I have spoken to many times in this Legislature. As he has said, he has tried many times to introduce this bill that would actually be fair to people in rural Ontario.

Everybody in Ontario, and anybody in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, pays gas tax and they want more benefit from it. Currently, the gas tax revenue is only distributed to municipalities with public transportation systems, and only 96 out of 444 municipalities receive it. This bill would ensure that gas tax revenue is shared with townships and smaller municipalities for roads and bridges instead of designating it solely for public transportation systems.

We all know rural Ontario. We all have to drive everywhere to get to jobs, school and work. Our young people have to get their driver's licence as soon as they can to go to their summer jobs, if they're lucky enough to get one. Roads and bridges are our public transportation system. The member has eloquently said that you can't take a subway to get to destinations in our ridings. You can't even take a subway to get from Toronto to my riding.

This has been supported by municipalities in my riding in the past. The government says they have other ways that they give money to rural municipalities. It is still primarily a lottery system. Some of my municipalities cross their fingers. Some get money for a local bridge. One gets money; five, six, seven do not. It makes it tough for municipalities to plan.

The federal government giving their portion of dedicated gas tax money has brought millions more dollars to municipalities to help them with their infrastructure. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke wants this mimicked for the provincial portion of the gas tax.

We all pay more in rural Ontario for gas, as he said, because we're more likely to own a car. We have more vehicles. He mentioned the increase in the vehicle licence fee we now have to take upon ourselves. We pay more for hydro. This government has to acknowledge the fact that they are not treating rural Ontario fairly. This bill was brought in with fairness in mind for all Ontarians, and I implore the government to consider again and to pass this bill. I'm sure they can go, in the back of their minds—that there must be some hope that they'll be positive towards this bill.

1520

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** It's my privilege to stand in the House to speak to Bill 59, the Gasoline Tax Fairness for All Act, 2014.

As the minister without portfolio has already noted, the gas tax program is specifically there to address transit ridership in municipalities across our province, with the intent of increasing it, of course. For this reason, the gas tax funding is dedicated to municipalities that provide a public transit service.

With climate change a significant issue in our province, and indeed across the world, increasing the number of people who use public transit across our province is in everyone's interests. Of course, our efforts to mitigate climate change will not only benefit my community by encouraging the development of sustainable development technologies, increasing our economic leadership; it will also enhance the health and well-being of citizens across our province, including those who live in the honourable member's riding.

How do I know this, Speaker? I used to live there. I had the privilege of living in Eganville. The natural beauty of the honourable member's area is highly treasured. Places like Algonquin Park, the wetlands and the wildlife are all significant, and all will be significantly impacted, and already are, by climate change.

I also know and understand the importance of transportation infrastructure, and I know the member does too. That's why I'm hoping that he will pick up the phone and call his federal cousins and ask them to step up, because their funding for infrastructure pales in comparison to our \$130 billion over the next 10 years, including \$16 billion for infrastructure—wait for it—outside the GTHA.

Speaking of communities outside the GTHA, in August of last year, our government launched the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, designed to provide predictable and steady funding to—wait for it—small, rural and northern communities for the maintenance of their infrastructure, including roads and bridges. This \$100-million fund, half of which is based on applications—and I know that our ministry officials and the Ministry of Transportation would happily accept an application from Bonnechere Valley, Quadeville or Barry's Bay. That fund will help communities repair or replace critical infrastructure, without taking funding away from other municipalities that need it for public transit.

There's also the Connecting Link Program, provided to municipalities to assist with road construction, maintenance and repairs—355 kilometres of roadway and 70 bridges. It's something municipalities asked for, and we're doing it. Why? Because we listened.

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** We listened.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Exactly. Over the past decade, our government has provided infrastructure funding to municipalities across our province in excess of \$14 billion, including nearly \$200 million for small, rural and



northern communities over the past two years. Clearly, we're committed to ensuring that all communities in Ontario are able to maintain their crucial transportation infrastructure.

By the way, municipal leaders from Windsor to Wawa, from Kitchener to, yes, Calabogie and, I'm sure, Arnprior too, are all pleased about our investments in infrastructure. Why? Because we are building Ontario up.

In closing, while I understand the spirit of the bill, I will not be supporting it. Pitting one community against another, rural against urban, is not leadership. It may be good politics, but it's bad public policy.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's a real pleasure to join the debate right now in support of my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

If you want to talk about somebody with determination for fairness; if you want to talk about somebody with a dedication to rural Ontario; if you want to talk about somebody who believes in the inherent unfairness, with this Liberal government, particularly to our rural Ontario communities, it is Mr. Yakabuski. I think he has highlighted this issue time and time and time again.

If you want to talk, I say to the member from Burlington, about pitting one community against another, try representing a rural Ontario riding. Our communities have been consistently, time and time again, the object of the Liberals' disaffection.

This is a government that has not only forced wind turbines onto our communities and destroyed our horse racing industry, as my colleague from Kawartha Lakes–Brock will tell you, but this is also a government that has two-tiered government when it comes to fairness for our roads and our highways with respect to the gas tax. My colleague Mr. Yakabuski has been so forceful on this issue that the 2007, 2011 and 2014 Progressive Conservative platforms reflected this inherent unfairness and have tried to rectify it.

If the Liberals want to talk today about picking fights with the federal government, if the Liberals want to talk today about infrastructure, if they want to talk today about roads, transit and transportation, if they want to talk today about fairness and pitting communities against communities, they can go right ahead. At the end of the day, the person who is morally right on this issue, the person who deserves support for this private member's resolution, is my colleague Mr. Yakabuski.

I will say this in closing: I happen to have a riding which is inside the city of Ottawa. Part of my constituents receive this funding from the government because they buy into something I support, which is LRT.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Nice new bridge.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** You can listen and then you might learn. Honest to gosh, it's true. I could actually teach you something.

The fact is, my constituents in the rural part of Ottawa are being shortchanged, and I don't think it's fair. I don't think it's right. As a result, I congratulate my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order. Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I got a few extra minutes there, and I really appreciate it. I want to thank the members for Algoma–Manitoulin; Cambridge; Kitchener–Conestoga; the deputy House leader; Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Burlington; Nepean–Carleton—

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Beaches–East York.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I missed one.

Let's talk about the comments that my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin made. He's right. He doesn't want to see money lost from other programs because it would be dedicated to a rural gas tax. This would cost about \$40 million. The government is about to pass, with their majority, a budget that has \$132 billion of spending. This is about \$40 million. This is the same government that wasted \$2 billion on eHealth, \$1.1 billion on cancelled gas plants and \$1.9 billion on smart meters when it should have cost \$1 billion. And they gave \$200 million to Cisco. If you don't think they can come up with \$40 million, then I think we need to do a better job of managing the money. It's there; they just have to have the commitment to fairness.

I say to the members on the other side—they keep talking, and the deputy House leader said, "Oh, we have programs." The member from Burlington talked about the \$100-million fund, and she talked about pitting communities against communities. That's exactly what that fund does, because it is a lottery. There is no sustainability. There is no assurance that you will get funding. The federal government gas tax program ensures—and it has been made permanent—that, each and every year, those communities get their share of the gas tax rebate. Your program is a lottery. You have to apply. You may win; you may lose. It pits communities against one another all the time. It picks winners and losers. You want to talk about fairness. It boggles my mind that you can even use the word "fairness" when you bring in one of your funding programs.

The minister said that he used to get tired signing the orders of funding for a rural transportation or infrastructure project. Well, you know what? It shouldn't come down to the signature of a minister. It should be guaranteed, sustainable, long-term, assured funding. It doesn't come down to the stroke of a pen or as to whether the minister says yes or no. It comes down to a legislated program that says, "We respect rural Ontario. We will share the gas tax revenue with them because they pay more than their share into it." It would cost \$40 million out of \$132 billion.

**1530**

You've got to figure it out, folks. This government wastes—in fact, the debt: They spend \$32 million more a day than they take in in this government. So a day and a few hours would take care of the rural funding for a gas tax rebate in this province. They can't find it, because they don't want to find it. They would rather have a lottery program where we can have one rural community

begging on hands and knees to the ministry: “Would you give us funding for this infrastructure project?” Then, when the government says no, they have to go back to their taxpayers and say, “We can’t fix the sidewalks on Jones Street. We can’t fix the sidewalks on Main Street. We can’t do it this year, because we didn’t win the government’s lottery program.”

A hundred million dollars? That’s a joke. If you could say \$100 million and it will be shared, that every community gets this share, that’s another story. There is no fairness in a lottery. I’ve never won the lottery, and most of the communities under your program won’t win it either.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. We’ll take the vote at the end of private members’ business.

## CHILD CARE

### SERVICES DE GARDE D’ENFANTS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, child care should be accessible and affordable for all Ontarians regardless if they live in urban, suburban or rural Ontario or what their economic circumstances are, and further, that parental choice and responsibility be respected; to accomplish that goal, the regulations accompanying the Child Care Modernization Act should allow flexibility for independent child care operators—consideration for age and own children allowances; an appeal mechanism to ensure all child care providers have equal access to due process; and that the regulatory regime allows for a fairer distribution of inspectors to child care case files based on input from operators and associations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. MacLeod has moved private member’s notice of motion number 44. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It’s my pleasure to introduce this resolution for something that I have really believed in for a number of years, starting out first as an activist and then, of course, upon entering this assembly in 2006, and that is choice in child care.

First, before I speak, I would like to recognize two people, and through them a number of others who they have coordinated over the past year and a half, as they have been confronted with challenges to independent child care operations across the province. First and most notably would be Heidi Higgins of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario.

Heidi has created a group right across Ontario of mothers, of parents and of child care operators who are concerned with the Child Care Modernization Act and who would like to have a voice in the regulatory framework. I know Heidi is watching at home, and, Heidi, I want to say thank you on behalf of all of the parents who you are fighting for. I want you to know that I will continue to raise your voice and your ideas and your issues here on the floor of the assembly.

The second is a friend of mine, someone who I became very close with over the last year because of her advocacy for choice in child care. She is a mother from Oakville. I don’t think our paths would have ever crossed unless I became an MPP, and her so vocally and passionately supportive of the other parents and mothers who own in-home child care facilities. Her name is Tracy Skelton. Tracy, throughout this process, has found her voice, a very strong voice as a passionate advocate, someone who has coordinated people throughout the province in talking about how we can best address child care challenges in the province of Ontario.

I would be remiss not to recognize the efforts of Tracy Skelton in my brief run for the leadership of my party. Tracy believed in me, as I believe in her, and created a group called #moms4lisa right across Ontario. Through Tracy, I was able to meet parents not only from my own city of Ottawa, but from her city of Oakville, from Burlington, from Brampton. I met people from Thunder Bay and Sudbury and in Belleville—right across this great province. She opened those doors for me to meet people who had never thought they would ever be impacted by the Ontario Legislature until perhaps it was too late.

To Tracy, I know you are at home and I know you are watching this while you care for the children in your home, and I want to say to you: Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Everything you have done for me has been meaningful, and I hope to do you justice with this issue.

As I mentioned, my record on child care predates my visit to this assembly. I was elected in 2006, but prior to that, in 2005, I had my daughter, Victoria. In the 2006 federal election, it was at the facility where my daughter went to Gymboree where Prime Minister Stephen Harper held his “choice in child care” press conference to announce the first ever Universal Child Care Benefit. That was a very poignant day for me, and it was there that I recognized the need for mothers and fathers, not only across Canada but in particular in the province of Ontario, to have choice in where they send their children for care.

In 2007, I was the children and youth services critic for the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, and then-leader John Tory tasked me with putting forward a plan. We reiterated our plan to give money directly to parents rather than to bureaucracies because we felt it was necessary for them to have a choice in child care as well.

Through 2009 and 2010, and again through 2011 and 2013, I advocated for choice in child care again as the government plans to bring in full-day kindergarten challenged many of those agencies throughout our ridings, particularly those at the YMCAs and other areas. Again, between 2014 and now, 2015, I’ve been talking about the Child Care Modernization Act and the impact that that has had on independent child care operators from Ottawa to Oakville, all the way to Sault Ste. Marie.

I’ve always firmly believed that parents are responsible for their children but they should also be

respected and allowed to choose which child care options they feel best fit the needs of their family as well as their child.

In fact, just in today's National Post, Tasha Kheiriddin, someone I've known for quite some time, probably well over 20 years, had written an op-ed about busting Canada's daycare myths. I'm not going to quote her article, but I do want to point this out because there was a study that was done.

I'm going to quote this one part, and then I think I'll talk a little bit more about my philosophy and why I think we need to move forward with some regulatory environment that does include independent child care operators. It says: "When asked what child care they prefer, parents name themselves, followed by family members, home daycare, and lastly, centre-based care."

I think that's very important to recognize because it does initiate a discussion in Ontario where I think one group would like to have only centre-based care and another would say, "Okay, give us some choices." I tend to be with more choice. I think the best way to achieve affordable and accessible child care is by respecting parents' wishes and allowing the government to have a good regulatory environment by which to enforce the law, rather than to dictate to moms and dads where they should send their child for care.

With Bill 10, I've often warned that we may be at risk of losing 40,000 affordable child care spaces, not in downtown Ottawa, not in downtown Toronto, but predominantly in suburbs, particularly growing areas like my riding of Nepean—Carleton and areas in the GTHA.

In addition to that, because we're dealing with some of the accessibility issues, we're going to deal with affordability issues. It's very difficult today, given high hydro prices and the increase we're going to see on our gasoline prices, to raise a child. I think it's important that we do have a cost balance within our minds about how we can best address this.

I think if you're going to talk about child care you must always include independent child care operators. I know there will be some in this assembly who will point to an Ombudsman's report that they neither read nor understood, and they will want to use certain quotes. But I took the time, actually, because André Marin, the Ombudsman, is a constituent of mine. We often will meet and have lunch or we'll have a meeting in my office back in Barrhaven. We talked about child care just before Christmas. I said, "The Liberals are suggesting, for example, that you're recommending getting rid of independent child care operators." He said, "No such thing. My children have actually gone through the independent child care system." In fact, I must admit, Speaker, my daughter has as well, and I value that. I know other members, even in the government, have used that as well.

1540

But what the Ombudsman talked about at that time, when he put forward a report on independent child care, was this: The government, particularly the Ministry of Education, was unable or unwilling—I'm not sure,

either—to enforce its regulations, and inspectors weren't being sent out. As a result of that, children were put at risk.

What this resolution would specifically aim to do is to have the voice of an independent child care operator sit with the minister through the regulatory framework and discuss issues that would allow all child care operators and providers to have equal access to due process, and the regulatory regime would require a fairer distribution of inspectors to child care case files.

I think that's the government's role here. I think the government's role is not to tell moms and dads which child care provider they go to. The government's role—and it is necessarily the job of government—is to have strict regulation and strict enforcement, particularly when children are at the fore.

I respect all folks' options. I know we've made a choice, my husband and I, to have our daughter cared for by two individuals: the first from zero up to six, in an in-home child care facility, and from six to now 10 years old and probably beyond, she's in the loving care of one of our neighbours, Myrna Hay.

Myrna is in her seventies. She spent 40 years looking after the kids in my daughter's school, Manordale Public School in Ottawa. Myrna is an institution. She's one of the most respected volunteers with our community association and the school. She's like an adopted mother to my husband and I, and I couldn't think of anyone who would be better suited to care for our child than this woman, because I know she loves her.

What concerns me about this bill is that we're telling Ontarians, moms and dads, that they don't necessarily have the right to have that same choice. Again, I respect the fact that the Legislature decided to move and pursue Bill 10. I respect the fact—I don't necessarily agree with it—that they turned it into law. But what I'm asking for today is some fairness for those mothers and fathers who choose the options that I've chosen and that so many others have chosen. I'm asking them to respect the independent child care operators who would like to be part of the process and part of the solution for accessible and affordable child care in our suburban, rural and urban communities, regardless of one's income.

The implications of not allowing this important voice to be heard are 40,000 child care spaces to be lost. When I visited Sudbury last fall, we heard that 1,200 local spaces in that area, the Nickel Belt/Sudbury area, would be lost. We also heard, not too long after that, a study that cited that the most expensive child care spaces in all of Canada were actually in Brampton, and as a result, that would even increase the costs more.

Speaker, I don't think it's unreasonable to have early childhood educators, independent child care operators and private daycare providers that own a centre be included in the regulatory environment and to discuss some of the issues that I have raised in this resolution.

I'm seeking support from members of this assembly. This is a resolution that must be respected, because it is important that we have all voices in child care at the table when we set the regulatory environment.

I would like to say thank you to all members for indulging me in this debate so that I was able to put my ideas forward. To those at home—and I know there are many of you, as you look after your children, watching this debate, thinking you would never be involved in politics, but you are today—I want to say thank you for taking your time to become part of the process and understanding that the legislation that we implement here at the Legislature impacts you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to note that Amin Ali, Steph Brown, Sue Craig and Matthew—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Just a second. You can ask for a point of order, but I've got to recognize you.

The member for Toronto–Danforth, on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Why, thank you, Speaker. I'd like to recognize Amin Ali, Steph Brown, Sue Craig and Matthew Griffin from the Scarborough-area NDP youth. Welcome.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I am pleased to be able to participate in this debate this afternoon, and I want to thank the member for Nepean–Carleton for her efforts on this issue and for bringing this motion forward.

Without question, New Democrats wholeheartedly agree with the first part of this motion that child care should be accessible and should be affordable for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live in this province and regardless of their economic circumstances. We also recognize that independent home child care operators have an important role to play in the child care system. We know that the quality of child care is not determined solely on the basis of where the care is provided: in a home or in a centre.

The member from Nepean–Carleton talked about her experience with child care. I have had a perspective on both sides: home-based care and centre-based care. When my first child was seven months—that was before women had a year's maternity leave—I had to return to work, and I placed him in a licensed child care setting; the Queen's Park daycare, in fact. He had an amazing caregiver, a loving, warm and reassuring-to-a-new-parent caregiver whose name is Anne Vautour.

Much later, after I had moved from Toronto to London—this is an aside—I was delighted to learn that Anne married her partner, Elaine, in 2001, and was Ontario's first legal same-sex marriage. I never had an opportunity to officially congratulate Anne on her marriage, and also to thank her for the wonderful quality of care she provided for my son.

When my second child was born in London, we faced a dilemma. We wanted a licensed child care centre that could accommodate both children—my son was in JK at the time, and my daughter was a toddler—but nothing

was available. We were able to find an unlicensed home child care provider right in my neighbourhood who turned out to be absolutely wonderful. She was a warm and loving caregiver who welcomed my children into her home, and it was a wonderful experience for a parent. Her son was the same age as my son. She walked the two boys to JK, and the two boys formed a friendship that remains to this day. In fact, our two families have remained close 20 years later.

So I have nothing but positive things to say, from a personal perspective, about both these experiences, and I know that many people in London and across the province have shared similar positive experiences. There are many, many home child care providers who are warm and welcoming with the children in their care. They take their responsibility seriously to engage in professional development activities, they provide nutritious snacks and opportunities for safe outdoor play, and organize stimulating activities for the children they care for.

Sadly, Speaker, this is not the case for all unlicensed home child care providers, nor is it the case even for licensed child care centres. Many of these centres face challenges recruiting highly qualified early childhood educators because of the low wages the sector is able to offer because of provincial underfunding.

Given this reality, the reason that New Democrats will not be able to support this motion is that the word "quality" does not appear anywhere in this motion. The motion says nothing about the quality of child care, which has to be our first obligation—our absolute top priority—as legislators. Children need secure, consistent, sensitive, stimulating and rewarding child care environments, and parents have the right to expect that government will do everything possible to ensure high standards of care.

Speaker, we need to look at what the research tells us and what the evidence says about the best way to provide the highest standards of care. Experts agree that ensuring high standards of care, as well as ensuring accessibility and affordability, means establishing a publicly funded child care system.

If we are serious about ensuring child care quality, if we're serious about ensuring access and affordability, we should be debating today how to move forward on a high-quality publicly funded system of child care instead of this tinkering-around-the-edges kind of motion from the PCs.

**1550**

In closing, I wanted to remind MPPs that just 10 days ago, on April 20, 2015, Ontario observed Equal Pay Day, the day that marks how much further into the next year a woman has to work in order to earn the salary that a man earned the year before. There are many factors that contribute to the gender wage gap, but one that is indisputable is that a lack of access to affordable, high-quality child care creates significant barriers to women's participation in the workforce and therefore exacerbates that gender pay gap. When you have a predominantly female child care workforce that is undervalued and

seriously underpaid, the gender wage gap is made wider still.

Not only would a publicly funded system of child care provide enormous benefits for children and families, but it would have an immediate and direct impact on closing the gender wage gap.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** I'm pleased to be able to rise and respond to the motion from the member from Nepean–Carleton.

I know the member is very passionate about child care and about children. She was a trailblazer in this place in ensuring that those of us who have young children are able to be home more often and spend some more quality time with our kids, as I do with my five-year-old. So I do respect very much her intentions on this file. However, I disagree with the narrative that she brings forward.

The steps taken by this government over the last decade have dramatically increased the number of child care spaces throughout this province by some 70%. Just yesterday, the Minister of Education announced an additional \$120 million over three years for more child care for preschoolers—a significant new investment.

I know that the member from Nepean–Carleton seeks to have more input, more dialogue about issues around early childhood care, but the minister has posted the regulations to support the Child Care and Early Years Act. They're online. They're open for public consultation, so there is the opportunity for the public to respond to those.

The minister has also struck an advisory panel, broadly based, to have that dialogue about how to best implement this act. The measures are in place by this government to have a good dialogue about how we can ensure good child care for our most vulnerable young people.

When the member opposite claims that there will be a dramatic loss in the number of child care spaces throughout the province, I reject that premise. What this government is doing is actually trying to ensure that we have more quality and safe spaces for young children.

As the member from London West spoke about quality, the other issue that I believe is missing in the member's motion here is safety. This is what has been very much a driver in the initiative of the government in this regard, not just to increase the number of child care spaces, but to ensure the safety of the children in those spaces. There is nothing more important than the government ensuring the safety of children in child care, whether it be in a school, in an institutional environment or in a home-based environment.

The rules that are being proposed around unlicensed daycares, home-based daycares, allowing them to continue to be able to operate, but in a way that guarantees the safety of children—those are very important steps that have been taken by this government to address some very serious incidents that, unfortunately, occurred over the last few years.

As a parent who has had a child in daycare, has interviewed home-based daycares looking for what would be the best fit for my child, I can tell you that my wife and I were always very concerned about what we saw with home-based daycares. We weren't certain that the same protections were in place as are with other types of daycare.

The legislation that has been brought forward, I think, will address that. It would make my family more secure in moving forward in that direction, if we had another child that needed that kind of care, because that guarantees quality and safety.

I won't be supporting this motion, because I think the government has put in place those steps that the member is actually seeking, and this is about a narrative that I completely disagree with.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I will be supporting this motion, and I appreciate the member from Nepean–Carleton bringing it forward. She's always been a tremendous champion for offering choice in daycare and that's important, particularly to us in rural Ontario.

You may have heard me speaking about rural Ontario in the past, maybe even today. But I want to just relate some of our own experiences. I say with all due respect to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, his comments about home-based daycare are insulting to so many of those people who provide unbelievably compassionate and genuinely loving care to children in their homes. Our children were recipients of that, from our next door neighbours, Georgine and Carl Lorbetskie. We could have never asked for more from a home daycare provider than what our children received from Georgine. So when the member puts everybody into that pool, I'm disappointed.

This is about choice. We would have never been able to find a licensed daycare for our kids in rural Ontario. It's the same challenge that our daughter is having today living in Whitby, Ontario, where it's just impossible. On many occasions, on short notice, do you know who the daycare provider is?

**Interjection:** John Yakabuski?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, it's not often John Yakabuski, but it's somebody that lives with him. My wife ends up, on short notice, having to take care of the kids because there's nothing available.

This resolution actually speaks to that to ensure we have quality daycare available. Yes, there have been incidents, but there have been incidents at licensed daycares too. All of a sudden, we think that we can somehow regulate everything in this world, that it's all going to be fine. You have to look at the individuals. I'm going to tell you, I wouldn't trade where our kids received their daycare for a licensed daycare for—as they say—all the tea in China. Never. We had the best. I thank Georgine Lorbetskie for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I appreciate the fact that this motion is before us. I think that we actually should be talking about child care more in the province of Ontario.

It's interesting though, just to take a step back and think about where we came from with regard to Bill 10. There were some heated debates about this issue—as they should be.

When the bill was first brought forward, it was responding to the changing landscape, if you will, of child care. When child care came under the Ministry of Education, following years, really, of an underfunded, destabilized system of child care in the province, most people thought this was going to be a really good thing. People thought, “Okay, well, if it's under the Ministry of Education, then they can't ignore it.” Of course, we've seen that based on the lack of inspections on licensed and non-licensed child care in the province of Ontario, that this is still a very systemic issue of oversight over early learning and care facilities—be they home care or licensed not-for-profits.

**1600**

We shouldn't forget, as well, that there's been a huge infusion of for-profit, big box child care because the government left a gap, and that gap—so for-profit companies look at Ontario like they could just come to the trough because, quite honestly, they still have access to subsidies, which is ridiculous because they're making money off of cutting the quality factors of child care. I think that's really where we want to focus our attention: What are the benchmarks for quality child care? Invariably, the quality of care comes down to the quality of the caregiver, and that's also tied to training and professional development and the safety of those sites as well.

Also, more and more we're talking about inclusivity as it relates to child care. Still, in the province of Ontario, if you have a disabled child, finding accessible, affordable, quality-based child care is a huge challenge—just a huge challenge. What a missed opportunity, one at the federal level—which I'm sure my Liberal friends and colleagues will agree. When they brought in this so-called choice in child care, this \$100 a month for parents, they had the craziest plan at the time, that if the dry-cleaner and then the shoe store in a strip mall thought they could get together—if those employees had some kids, they could get together and maybe rent some space and create a child care. Of course, no spaces were created like that because that's not how child care works. Certainly, it is not the way that it should work. But for parents to receive \$100 a month really doesn't expand their choice in child care because those options just don't exist.

I go back to the comments of my friend from London West. We both come from education so we do know the value of investing early in the life of a child. The return on investment is huge. The Centre for Spatial Economics actually did an assessment that for every dollar you invest in child care in the economy, in educational and health benefits, the social determinants of health—the investment is there. The research is there. This is why public policy should be based on evidence and research.

Unfortunately, though, there are still people on that side of the House who think that full-day kindergarten is child care. It is not. People do not work from 9 until 3. When Charles Pascal advised the government of the day, of Dalton McGuinty, he proposed a community hub in schools: that you build services where the children are, which is in the schools. This would address the issue that my friend here has said about the lack of rural child care spaces, because there are schools there, although they're becoming fewer and fewer. It's hard to create community hubs when the schools are closing. But what a missed opportunity. Ottawa and Waterloo did build the original design around a community hub school, and in Waterloo we've created almost 2,000 child care spaces at no cost to the taxpayer because it's a not-for-profit model. It's fee-based. Those fees keep going down because the more people that come into the schools, it lowers the cost. It actually truly will be, one day, the most accessible region for child care.

I go back to the main concern with this motion: that it addresses accessibility, which is some options; it addresses affordability in some regards, but it doesn't address quality. What we should all be focused on in this House is building a system of care which has children at the centre and has supports built around them, but at every turn, every dollar invested is reinvested back into the quality of care that that child is receiving.

I think that if we had that vision and if actually we worked together, we could create a system of early learning and care in the province of Ontario which truly would be second to none in the country of Canada.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mr. Han Dong:** I'm very pleased to speak to this motion brought forward by the honourable member from Nepean–Carleton.

As a parent, I heard the comment made by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo with regard to full-day kindergarten. Both of my kids benefited from full-day kindergarten. I can tell you: It works. They learned a lot of stuff at full-day kindergarten. So I do agree with the notion that it's not just a daycare; it's a school. It's an early learning strategy that this government put forward.

When I read this motion, which talks about accessibility and affordability of child care, I can't help but go back to 2003, when we were first given the privilege to govern in this province. We had to deal with a deficit. It was a hidden deficit, though. Just so you know—I just want to remind the House; I know that you know this—since then we passed a law that no future government can hide any deficit.

But we entered a very serious social deficit as well. There had been serious downloading of previously provincial services to municipalities. In the last 12 years, we've seen clawbacks on child care from the federal government. I would love to see a comprehensive federal child care strategy, which we haven't seen.

We have stepped up to the plate to compensate for some of the deficits that the previous government left us.

Especially when the federal government came forward and clawed back on the child care strategies that were introduced by the previous federal government, we stepped up to the plate. I think it was \$72 million that we had to fork out during those years.

I want to point out Bill 10, which we passed. Once proclaimed, it will help to increase the availability of licensed child care, and even more, will provide additional incentive for home-based providers to join the licensed sector. So it's clear that we're not against anyone in the industry. We just want to make sure that the quality of service and the safety of the service is available to every Ontarian who needs it.

As a parent and as an MPP, a representative of a great riding in downtown Toronto, I think it's important for me to stand up and speak up for the kids and parents who are in need of this service.

I want to make clear again that the government recognized the role of unlicensed child care providers. With Bill 10 being passed, once proclaimed this act will continue to permit unlicensed child care providers to care for our children. I think that's a very good, very thoughtful measure in the act. For that reason I feel it is adequate, and I feel that I can't support this motion because it does not address the issues of quality, availability and accessibility.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** I hope the member from Nepean-Carleton is feeling a little bit better soon. She managed to give her talk on a sprained ankle. Keep your leg elevated.

I just want to mention that I hear the struggle between rural ridings and urban ridings here in the House. Do you know the expression, "Walk a mile in my shoes"? I think it's very hard for us, in downtown Toronto, to imagine what it's like in a small community. It doesn't have to be a rural community; it can just be a small community. In many small communities, there are not enough children for a large licensed daycare. It could be that there is a fair number of people in the population but not that many babies. All of a sudden, there is an influx of kids over a couple of years, and then it disappears again. You need to have a big centre with a large population to have the licensed, regulated, large centres we think about when we think about large daycare centres here in Toronto.

It shouldn't be a struggle between large daycare centres—which, I might mention, are unionized centres, and is possibly why they have a stronger voice than smaller centres that are just struggling to take care of their families and take care of the neighbourhood families.

I think we have to focus on the fact that there is also the issue of choice. These home daycare centres are an extension of people's families. It's not just an industrial setting. It's a small setting, and very often there's flexibility in terms of when you pick up your kid and when you drop off the child.

**1610**

With the traffic in an urban centre, or with the distance travelled, and with our winter storms and tough weather

conditions, many families need and want those kinds of flexible hours that a home daycare can provide, that a large institutionalized—as I'll call it—daycare cannot provide.

Many people work flexible hours. They're in sales. They're often single parents. They don't have family nearby to help out and pick up kids or drop off kids. I think that, if we want to have a workforce so that we can kick-start our economy, then we have to help out those parents who need to have somebody available to look after their kids.

I was at the social policy committee, and I heard over and over from stakeholders that Bill 10 is going to dramatically reduce the ability for home daycares to provide child care. We heard that by having all-day kindergarten—even though a lot of families count on it and love it, the fact is that it reduced children from daycare settings. Proportionally, it reduced kids from the larger centres, which often don't take kids under 18 months. Most parents have to return to the workforce before the child is 18 months old. I haven't heard what this government is suggesting, in terms of providing daycare availability to those children who are under 18 months and need a daycare.

I don't hear this government providing solutions for special-needs kids—who need to be in a smaller setting, in a home-like setting—with physical challenges, with emotional challenges. I don't hear this government offering solutions for families who have transit issues. Most large daycare centres are not accessible for families who don't have cars or transit nearby. The small home daycare settings are often within communities. It encourages walking, it encourages a healthy lifestyle and it also encourages communities to get to know each other and to work better as a community.

We all know of people who send their kids to schools with specialized programming, or possibly independent schools. If your children are travelling a long distance to get to that school, chances are that they're not meeting children in their own neighbourhood. That's a struggle for many families. If families are sending their kids to independent faith-based schools—which I have a lot of in my riding—Bill 10 is actually going to restrict those schools to be able to provide preschool programming and nursery programming.

Maybe some of these consequences are unintended, but they are consequences nevertheless, and I haven't heard this government adequately explain and offer solutions for some of these consequences.

I'd like to see some discussion on unlicensed versus illegal. These home daycare centres might not be licensed, but they are perfectly legal centres. In my riding—in fact, walking distance from my house—a little girl, Eva Ravikovich, died in an illegal home daycare that was reported on. There were two or three reports to the ministry, and they weren't even acted on. Two of the reports were not acted on. Now we see a \$3.5-million lawsuit against the owners and operators, of course, but also against the Ministry of Education. If this case is

settled and the court decides that the Ministry of Education is liable, it's the taxpayers who are on the hook.

Are we going to see a real concerted effort to make daycares safer for our children, instead of just reducing choice and taking parental rights away from parents?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I am proud to rise today to discuss an issue that is important to me but also for the constituents of Ottawa–Orléans.

This government, on this side of the House, since 2003, has committed to ensuring that all Ontarian families have the ability to ensure that their children get the best care and the best education available than almost any other jurisdiction in the world. We should be proud of this.

The member opposite's motion, which I believe we have addressed in the House through Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act—lorsque nous avons présenté le projet de loi 10, nous reconnaissons que nous devrions réétudier et revoir le système de garde en Ontario.

Tragedies had arisen from certain sectors of the child care industry, and this government and all members would agree that we in the chamber have a higher level of duty to our youth and our children. That's why, actually, we brought forward the Child Care Modernization Act, which, after debate in this session and last session, was passed with considerable say from all sides of the House and numerous stakeholders.

Nous reconnaissons l'importance du rôle joué en Ontario par les services de garde sans licence et de l'importance qu'ils ont comme une option pour les familles.

Realizing that many sectors of child care have not been updated—in some cases, the regulations have not been updated in more than half a century—we needed to establish a modern framework that kept our children safe but allowed the flexibility of unlicensed daycare to still serve the public. We've respected the invaluable work that unlicensed child care operators provide, while making sure that our children are safely looked after and receiving the appropriate amount of attention they need.

Our new child care legislation has had years of input, and we've gone to considerable lengths to make our updated frameworks and regulations balance.

Ma collègue à l'opposition propose une bonne motion, mais sans valeur, puisque nous adressons ces points à l'intérieur du projet de loi 10.

She has motioned that the Child Care Modernization Act should allow flexibility for independent child care providers. We've done that, and done it with considerable input.

Again, the member opposite has also motioned “that the regulatory regime allows for a fairer distribution of inspectors to child care case files.” Yet again, we've done this. We have made sure that our inspectors are on the cases that need it, and those who violate regulations within the act are the ones who garner the extra attention,

while we do not needlessly disturb the good work of those who obey the law.

I rise today in support of our Bill 10. I hope that all members understand today the hard work this government has done in addressing those concerns, and therefore will not be supporting the motion of the opposition.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to stand in support of my colleague from Nepean–Carleton. She has put a lot of thought into this particular situation, and she has reached out to a number of individuals who have been negatively impacted by the bill that came through last session, Bill 10. In particular, I appreciate the fact that she, again, consults. This is something that we're seeing less and less of from this government. I could go on with many examples, such as neonic and carbon tax, but I want to focus in on something that's very important to this particular motion that my friend from Nepean–Carleton has presented.

Essentially, the coalition of Child Care Providers Resource Network agrees with the proposed regulation to remove the requirement to care for a minimum of three children under the age of three years. IPCs have been caring for more than three children under the age of three for years—very successfully, I might add, in terms of safe, high-quality, age-appropriate programs. But the limit of two children under the age of two is already causing parents and caregivers problems. They're seeing parents and caregivers literally in tears.

A caregiver recently contacted the CCPRN, stating that she turned away three one-year-olds the previous day. She said that one of the moms actually burst into tears and stated that she didn't know what she was going to do, as she had to start work the next month. The coalition of Child Care Providers Resource Network is suggesting that we're going to see more and more of this angst in the months to come.

I just want to share a personal perspective, that independent caregivers typically become members of the family. When my husband was the primary caregiver for my three stepkids, two of the three of them were not in school. If it wasn't for Mary and if it wasn't for Audrey and if it wasn't for his sister Elaine, he wouldn't have been able to confidently go to work every day, knowing that his children were being well cared for. This particular motion takes that into consideration.

**1620**

For that, I thank the member from Nepean–Carleton because we need to take into consideration that in rural Ontario our conditions are very, very different. An individual may not have the resources or time to drive 20 minutes out of their village, off their farm, to get their kid to a registered daycare and then turn around to drive in the opposite direction to get to work. They have totally, yet again, shown their disconnect with rural, northern and suburban Ontario when it comes to daycare and quality care across this province.

There are also unintended consequences as well to what the Liberals have set up. In terms of Bill 10, we're



seeing in the province of Ontario that some school boards have essentially frozen out independent providers, causing uncertain futures for these small businesses—yet again, another example of the Liberal government's total disregard for small business across this province.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for Nepean–Carleton. You have two minutes for a response.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to respond to the debate today. I'm very happy that we had it. In fact, I'd like to have more debates on child care quality, accessibility and affordability in the province of Ontario.

I would like to say thank you to the members from London West and Kitchener–Waterloo. I know we fundamentally and philosophically disagree on a number of things in this House but I think at the end of the day I appreciated the respectful tone in which you chose to debate, and I appreciate the fact that I might not necessarily accept the fact that we disagree, but you do have a point of view, and I respect it.

To the members from Trinity–Spadina, Ottawa–Orléans and Etobicoke–Lakeshore, thank you for joining in the debate. I must admit I was quite disappointed that the Liberals on the one hand were saying that they're addressing the challenges that I'm asking to be addressed, and then on the other hand saying that they don't need to be. I think that if we could have an adult conversation—you are impacting people's lives; you're impacting parental choice. I think it would behoove the government to actually act like adults here and not be partisan. Unfortunately, I guess we aren't going to see this motion pass, but I want to say to the people that I represent and to those who had their hats hanging on this motion and its success, I'm very sorry.

To my colleagues the members from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Thornhill and Huron–Bruce, I really appreciate your kind words today. I think you all understand the challenges that fast-growing areas face—Gila Martow and I represent very fast-growing areas in Ontario—as well as two rural members bringing forward the challenges for child care in their respective communities. I really appreciate that they brought this forward and I'm grateful that they had this conversation.

To those who are watching at home: The fight is not over. I have been talking about this issue since 2006 in this assembly, and I can tell you, with the rest of the three-year mandate I have in this House, you'll be hearing a lot more on choice in child care from me, as the member from Nepean–Carleton.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 46, standing in the name of Mrs. Mangat.

Mrs. Mangat has moved private member's notice of motion number 45. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I already ruled. Order.

#### GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 59, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

#### CHILD CARE

#### SERVICES DE GARDE D'ENFANTS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. MacLeod has moved private member's notice of motion number 44. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it. I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

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

*The division bells rang from 1626 to 1631.*

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mrs. Mangat has moved private member's notice of motion number 45.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura  
Anderson, Granville

Fife, Catherine  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

McMeekin, Ted  
Milczyn, Peter Z.

Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	Zimmer, David
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	MacLaren, Jack	Thompson, Lisa M.
Harris, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Walker, Bill
Hudak, Tim	Martow, Gila	Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 40; the nays are 12.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Open the doors.

Close the doors.

### GASOLINE TAX FAIRNESS FOR ALL ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ POUR TOUS À L'ÉGARD DE LA TAXE SUR L'ESSENCE

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Yakabuski has moved second reading of Bill 59, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act with respect to matching rebates of gasoline tax that the Minister provides to municipalities.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	MacLaren, Jack	Thompson, Lisa M.
Harris, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Walker, Bill
Hudak, Tim	Martow, Gila	Yakabuski, John

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fife, Catherine	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	Zimmer, David
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 12; the nays are 40.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I declare the motion lost.

*Second reading negatived.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUILDING ONTARIO UP ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 POUR FAVORISER L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 91, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Sousa.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the wonderful member from York South-Weston.

I am pleased to stand today in this House and support the second reading of Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015. This bill is the result of consultations with many Ontarians. Through direct talks and town hall meetings and telephone town hall meetings, as well as through our Budget Talks website, Ontarians have spoken, and we have listened.

Bill 91, which, if passed, will be known as the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015, outlines our government's plan to address the needs of Ontarians now and to build Ontario up for a strong and prosperous future.

We are accomplishing this, Mr. Speaker. Our government's plan to create jobs and promote more growth has four major pillars. We're being disciplined, to control spending, and determined to return to balance by 2017-18.

First, we will build modern infrastructure, because today, one of the biggest barriers to creating more jobs and fostering greater growth in our province is congestion. Our roads and highways are filled with parts that need to get to manufacturing plants; products that need to get to market; and people who need to get to work. But today, congestion is costing and choking our potential.

Gridlock costs our economy up to \$11 billion per year in the GTHA alone, yet government after government has delayed investing in infrastructure. We can't afford any more delays. We must build. Ontario must build.

That's why our long-term plan calls for investments of more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure over 10 years. This includes dedicating \$31.5 billion over 10 years for public transit, transportation and priority infra-

structure right across the province, under our Moving Ontario Forward plan.

To help in part to make these investments, Mr. Speaker, we're also taking steps to unlock the value of some of our provincial assets. We're following the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets to help create jobs and growth for tomorrow.

#### 1640

First, we're modernizing Ontario's distribution and sale of beer, improving choice and maintaining our commitment to social responsibility in the process. For the first time in history, Ontario would permit the sale of beer in grocery stores. We are doing this while taking the necessary steps to mandate in law social responsibility measures to ensure the safe sale of alcohol. It's the biggest change in alcohol distribution and sale since prohibition.

Second, we're proposing to broaden the ownership of Hydro One through an initial public offering that will unlock billions in value for the benefit of Ontarians. We will do so while protecting the public interest. Following the IPO, the Ontario government would remain the largest shareholder and is proposing, by law, that no other shareholder or group of shareholders be permitted to own more than 10%. Most importantly, the new Hydro One will not set rates for consumers. This will continue to be the job of the independent regulator, the Ontario Energy Board. By broadening the ownership in Hydro One, we will invest billions of dollars more in critically needed infrastructure that will fuel our economy.

The second part of our plan is to invest in our talent and skills. We know that a well-educated workforce is a competitive workforce. This government has been making the right investments to ensure Ontario's competitiveness. Today, there are 130,000 more Ontario children in licensed child care than in 2003. We've raised the wages of child care workers, invested in full-day kindergarten and lowered class sizes. Now we're providing more than \$11 billion over 10 years to build new schools and improve existing school facilities. I'm proud to say that we've seen results, Mr. Speaker. Today, more kids are meeting or exceeding provincial standards. More kids are graduating from high school and more adults have a post-secondary credential.

We're making it easier to pay for post-secondary education as well. Last year, we provided more than \$1.3 billion in grants and loans, and helped more than 380,000 students achieve their dreams of post-secondary education.

We're investing in skilled trades to support more than 28,000 Ontarians who registered for apprenticeships last year.

I'm proud to say that we're also renewing Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy by investing an additional \$250 million over the next two years. That will bring our total investment in youth employment programs to more than \$565 million over the next two years to help young people get that first job, find a mentor or start their own business.

This government recognizes the value and the need to continue to help our young people get the education and skills training that they need. That's why we're also supporting the apprenticeship system through an additional \$55 million invested over the next two years. This will enhance in-class apprenticeships and training and support programs that will help develop job skills and readiness to find work as apprentices. Investing in talent and skills is helping to ensure we have the workers we want and need for continued economic growth.

The third part of our plan for growth is to help create an environment where businesses can be more competitive. It is worth noting that Ontario's combined federal-provincial general corporate income tax rate is lower than the comparable tax rate in every US state. This has also been an attraction for investors. Ontario is the top destination for foreign direct investment in North America as a result. That means more jobs, more economic growth and a better standard of living for all of us.

But there is more to do. We launched our 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund to partner with Ontario companies to increase productivity, innovate and export. We're enhancing the Jobs and Prosperity Fund by an additional \$200 million to attract even more business, more investment and create more jobs. It's not about more government; it's about more opportunity, recognizing that businesses create those jobs.

Also, for the first time, we're making the forestry sector eligible for support through this program. We will extend the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program. This ongoing and annual investment of \$120 million will help Ontario's large northern industries reduce energy costs and increase their competitiveness.

We will also establish a new innovation initiative which will bring together senior business leaders to find ways to help scale up Ontario start-ups.

We also will continue to cut red tape. Since 2008, we have eliminated 17% of all regulatory requirements. These were regulations that were getting in the way of people's businesses growing.

Our fourth pillar is ensuring that everyone has a secure retirement. That's why we have introduced the Ontario pension plan to help ensure that all Ontarians can retire securely. Retirement security is a necessary part of keeping our economy strong. The reward for a lifetime of contributing to the economy should not be financial insecurity at retirement.

More than half of all Ontarians unfortunately do not have a workplace pension. Too many are at risk of not saving enough. Low retirement savings put everyday people at risk, and the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, or ORPP, like health care and great schools, would be a way to add to our strategic advantage by attracting and retaining the talented workforce that businesses need.

We're moving forward by proposing the creation of the ORPP's administrative body in this budget. This initiative would further enhance retirement security and help sustain economic prosperity for years to come.

I've spoken of the four pillars of our government's plan to build Ontario up, but to continue with the

analogy, all four pillars are underpinned by strong financial management. This government continues to surpass its fiscal targets year after year after year. We are now projecting a deficit of \$8.5 billion in 2015-16, and when achieved, it will be the lowest since the onset of the global recession. We project a deficit of \$4.8 billion in 2016-17 and a return to balance by 2017-18.

We're doing this by holding the line on spending and making sure that every dollar counts. The year 2014-15 marks the sixth year in a row that program spending is expected to be lower than forecast.

In addition, over the past four years, the province has held average annual growth in program spending to 1.5% below CPI. We did so without cutting critical services. We controlled spending not by slashing and burning, as some would do; we did it by closely examining programs. We introduced a new multi-year planning and allocation process, and we're looking across government to achieve better value for your money.

Our approach is working. We have the lowest rate of per capita program spending of any provincial government in Canada, while keeping health care, education and social services strong. This coming year, we will do even more. We will revamp the way we purchase, dispense and bill drugs under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, saving Ontarians over \$200 million per year. We'll make our business tax supports more focused and effective as well, saving another \$165 million per year by 2017-18. And we're holding the line on public sector compensation, with net-zero agreements to find savings in the system to support our fiscal balance. There is no new funding for compensation increases unless savings are found to offset them.

In conclusion, Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015, continues this government's plan and reinforces what we have to do to get to balance. It invests in modern public infrastructure, such as roads, bridges and transit; it creates an innovative and dynamic business environment; it invests in people's skills and talents; and it builds a strong and secure retirement income system. We have a sound, prudent plan to balance without harming our economic recovery, and more importantly, bolster the livelihood of Ontarians.

That is why I ask the members of this assembly to support Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015. Together, we will build Ontario up by making investments that grow the economy and create jobs.

Now I turn it over to the next. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for York South–Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you to the minister. I am pleased to have the opportunity to stand today and add my support for second reading of Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the budget measures bill contains a wide variety of initiatives and amendments. I am happy to speak in detail about a few of them.

Of great interest to many Ontarians has been our plan to reform beverage alcohol sales in the province. Bill 91

contains a proposal that would enable the province to expand beer sales to up to an additional 450 retail locations, including grocery stores, across the province. This would mark the biggest change in the way beverage alcohol is sold in Ontario since the repeal of Prohibition.

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If passed, this bill would allow more convenience and choice for Ontarians, while maintaining a strong commitment to social responsibility. To put this into numbers that people can understand, expanding the sale of beer by up to 450 more locations is roughly equal to the existing number of Beer Store outlets and is in addition to the more than 600 LCBO stores across the province.

Bill 91 doesn't stop there, though. The Ontario government is finalizing a new beer framework agreement with the Beer Store that will return the framework closer to its original co-operative roots, opening up ownership to small and craft brewers; create a new craft category to better profile craft beer; extend the Beer Store's role in the successful delivery of the Ontario deposit return program beyond 2017; and change retailing and marketing practices to ensure fairness and equity for all brewers.

It also proposes an additional \$100 million a year in revenues to be generated for the province, phased in over four years. If passed, Bill 91 would permit these changes to be implemented.

I am pleased to note that the industry's largest brewers have separately committed to comply with the government's request that they cap their price increases to no more than the rate of inflation for some of their most popular beer products until May 2017, unless there are material changes to the industry. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker, and, indeed, all the members of the Legislature, that the government will continue to uphold the principles of social responsibility by mandating in law strict controls over how beer is sold in these new locations.

For example, the province would ensure that the sale of alcohol is restricted to set hours, that it is in a designated section of each store and that all staff selling alcohol in grocery stores are properly certified and fully trained to ensure Ontario's standards for social responsibility are met.

Let me be clear: Ontarians will pay the same price for the same beer regardless of where it is sold. Under Ontario's uniform pricing policy, the beer price that is set by the brewer is the price that the consumer pays whether the product is sold in the LCBO store, the Beer Store, the brewer's own on-site store or, now, in a grocery store.

The Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets will continue to refine its recommendations on how to maximize the value in the beverage alcohol retailing sector, including how to modernize the sales of wine and spirits.

Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act, 2015, has more positive changes than this for Ontarians. Ontario's moving ahead with its plan to unlock the value of certain public assets to help support unprecedented investments in transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure projects through the Moving Ontario Forward plan.

Moving Ontario Forward is part of the government's plan to invest more than \$130 billion over 10 years in public infrastructure, representing the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history.

These changes, following recommendations from the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets chaired by Ed Clark and subject to approval by this Legislature of Bill 91, would strengthen the economy, create thousands of jobs and generate an estimated about \$4 billion, subject to market conditions, that would be set aside for infrastructure investments.

In order to generate value for the people of Ontario, the government intends to broaden the ownership of Hydro One, starting with an initial public offering, an IPO, later in 2015-16. Following the IPO, the Ontario government would remain the largest shareholder, and, by proposed law, no other shareholder or group of shareholders would be permitted to own more than 10%. The opportunity to buy into Hydro One would be made available in stages in order to maximize return to taxpayers.

Bill 91 would also make sure consumers are protected. As currently is the case, Hydro One does not set the rates for consumers. Rates would continue to be set by the independent regulator, the Ontario Energy Board, OEB. The government also intends to strengthen the regulatory and enforcement powers of the OEB to protect ratepayers.

If passed, Bill 91 would enable net proceeds from broadening Hydro One's ownership to go to the Trillium Trust and be used to fund transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure projects across the province.

As highlighted by the Minister of Finance, we must build the roads, the bridges and the transit that a 21st-century economy needs to make sure Ontario continues to grow and to produce jobs. When Ontario invests, it is building, and when it is building, it is growing.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, our Moving Ontario Forward plan, first announced in the 2014 Ontario budget, called for making nearly \$29 billion available over 10 years for public transit, highways and other priority infrastructure projects in the province. These infrastructure investments will help address congestion and keep people and goods moving. Studies show that congestion in the GTHA alone costs Ontario's economy between \$6 billion and \$11 billion a year. I am pleased to state that higher-targeted revenues from assets mean that there will be an additional \$2.6 billion in Moving Ontario Forward funding available, for a total of \$31.5 billion in dedicated funds available over 10 years.

All told, investments made through the Moving Ontario Forward plan are expected to support over 20,000 jobs per year, on average, in construction and related industries. These investments will have a positive impact throughout Ontario. They will further improve GO train service, for example. Our regional express rail plan will mean more trains, more trips and faster service—electrified service on many of these corridors. It will mean GO trains running every 15 minutes in core

areas. It will mean two-way, all-day service on weekdays, evenings and weekends in core areas. It will mean enhancing the GO network, making it faster and easier for Ontarians to get around, more than ever before.

But these investments are not just being made in the GTHA; these investments will mean new and renewed infrastructure across Ontario. Through Moving Ontario Forward, we will invest about \$16 billion in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and about \$15 billion elsewhere in Ontario. For example, we will be investing \$100 million annually to help small, rural and northern communities build and repair critical infrastructure and create jobs across Ontario. We are making highway improvements between communities, like widening Highway 11 and 17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, and building a new alignment of Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph. I was speaking to my colleague the member from Ajax, who told me about the new Highway 418 between Ajax and Durham that is going up.

These investments will improve connections within and between communities, allowing goods and people to move freely. All of this supports a strong economy with growth and with jobs. We know that renewing and expanding public infrastructure supports Ontario's industries, creates jobs and provides long-term benefits to Ontarians and to the economy. That is why investing in infrastructure is the key pillar of the government's plan for Ontario.

This bill, through its ongoing and planned investments, furthers this government's plan for the renewal and expansion of transportation and other priority infrastructure. Over the last decade, the province has made unprecedented investments in infrastructure, supporting mobility and economic growth.

Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015, ensures that we continue to build Ontario up by investing in our future. That is why I ask for the support of this House in passing this really important legislation for everyone.

1700

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I rise today to speak on the comments made by both the Minister of Finance and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance.

They introduced a budget; they're still trying to tell the people of Ontario they're going to balance the books by 2017-18. We know that sounds pretty much impossible. It's not just me saying it. The rating agencies are looking closer. The banks have said it's impossible. In fact, instead of bringing the deficit down, which is what one would think you would do—bring the deficit down in order to balance by 2017-18—you actually increased from \$10.5 billion to \$10.9 billion. The debt is increasing. It's going to be increased by \$14.7 billion. I know it's a lot of numbers, but we're talking about the budget. Your spending is increasing by \$2.4 billion.

So I just don't understand how you're going to be able to actually balance the books by 2017-18. In fact, the

largest-growing thing is the interest on the debt, which is the highest growth area. It's an average annual increase of 5.7%. When paying off the interest on the money borrowed is the third-largest budget item, you're in trouble. You've got health care, education and what you're spending to pay interest on the money you've borrowed. The province of Ontario is in a critical situation.

You see that especially in the health care sector. You see nurses being laid off across the province of Ontario. You cannot hear enough about how disastrous the home care system is. So what did they do? In typical Liberal fashion, they actually added another level of bureaucracy to deliver home care. That is not even practical, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately the people of Ontario are suffering under this Liberal government's budget.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It is a pleasure to speak to this bill, because it is so important. I listened closely to the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistant, and I still can't believe how much we're talking about beer in the province of Ontario, quite honestly—the fact that we have a beer ombudsman—with all of the issues that are going on in our economy. Pretty soon, we're going to have a white wine ombudsman and a red wine ombudsman. Why not? “Look over here; there's some beer over here.” Because you certainly don't want people paying attention to the fact that you're selling off Hydro One. I cannot emphasize enough how critical this decision is for the future of the province of Ontario. Quite honestly, you're losing annualized income with this sale. You did not run on it. You have no mandate to it.

But today, when ACTRA was here and we were talking about protecting child performers, it was really interesting because the Minister of Finance was talking about job creation. The revenue side of job creation in this budget is almost non-existent, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to give you an example of one of the ways this budget actually is going to cut jobs in Toronto.

Let's just focus on Toronto for a second. FilmOntario is already in the process of looking at investment in the city. Film productions are happening across the province and in downtown Toronto. On page 342 of the budget, you are cutting tax credits to incentivize investment in film production in the province of Ontario—and you're doing it mid-year. What ACTRA told me today is that people are already losing their jobs. Those jobs are already going. When you think of the economic value of the film industry to job creation, when a production comes into town, they eat at restaurants, they rent cars, they stay at hotels, they take taxis. It is an economic driver. It's a success. Why would you undermine a successful job creation strategy? You cannot afford to lose any more good jobs in the province of Ontario, so you should at least defer this tax credit cut. You should if you care about the people of Toronto.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I want to thank the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments.

I want to tell you that, in my opinion, this budget and Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act, is probably one of the most important budgets that this government is moving forward. This budget not only looks at the days and weeks and months ahead, but also at the decade ahead. It builds for us through infrastructure, through planned investments and yet at the same time will be on track to balance the budget.

As we know, the budget deficit for the year 2015-16 is forecast to be \$8.5 billion. That's the lowest deficit forecast since the onset of the global recession. That means we're on track. It also means that we're on track for the next few years. The Minister of Finance has told us that in the year 2016-17 that deficit will come down to \$4.8 billion, and by 2017-18 we will have wiped out the deficit.

How are we doing this? We're using a number of tools, but we're also keeping the promises we made to the voters of Ontario. We told the voters of Ontario that we will continue to deliver the supports and services they need in order for Ontarians to live a fair and just life, and a comfortable life. We are doing that, and at the same time unlocking very important assets so that we can pay off the debt and the deficit. And yes, we're doing that by broadening the ownership of Hydro One.

Why am I saying “broadening the ownership”? Because it is not selling off Hydro One; it's broadening the ownership. Forty per cent of Hydro One will be retained by the province. The Premier has already said that she is going to start by initially offering—on the advice of people like Ed Clark, who I think really know what they're talking about, the first offering will be 15%. It allows us to retain ownership.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** That was fascinating Liberal-speak there for a while. I thought I was in an Orwellian novel.

I'm pleased to provide some comments for the Minister of Finance and his parliamentary assistant. He talked about the four pillars that are in this budget motion. Indeed, there are four. I would question why they've chosen those, but we'll get into that a little further on when I have my speech.

After Thursday's budget, I was involved in a home show this past weekend, and I can tell you, to bolster the Kitchener–Conestoga member's comments about beer, that nobody was talking about beer. Nobody cared about the announcement about beer. What they care about and what they are worried about is the cost of energy: the cost of hydro, the cost of gas. Everything that relates to energy—heating homes and air-conditioning homes—has been going up consistently under this Liberal government, and they see no relief in sight. It was very disturbing to the people I spoke to at the home show in Bolton over the weekend, and it is without doubt the number one issue I am now dealing with in my constituency office.

Five years ago, I'd get one call a month, "I can't pay the hydro," or about issues with hydro. Now I'm getting them daily. People see the social experimentation that is happening with our energy. The government's inserting itself into how energy is delivered and how energy is manufactured is a real problem that is now transposing itself with the cost of hydro. I can tell you that it is making a difference in my riding, and they are concerned.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for York South–Weston.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I want to thank the members who have commented and thank them for their comments: the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the member from Halton and the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Mr. Speaker, I highlighted just a few of a number of initiatives and amendments that are contained in Bill 91.

I think the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock was commenting on balancing the budget. I think we're doing that through a thoughtful and fiscally responsible approach. We are on track to a balanced budget by 2017-18, and it's not only us saying that; it's the experts.

We are conducting a program review of renewal and transformation of programs. This is a fundamental new approach to multi-year planning and budgeting, using evidence to inform better choices and improve outcomes.

1710

We are managing the compensation costs. This is an area that needs to be addressed within Ontario's existing fiscal framework. It is very important. We need to address that, and we are doing so. There are more measures that are contained in this budget that speak to that. We're maintaining tax fairness and a level playing field for businesses. So we're enhancing auditing to address the underground economy activities and also corporate tax avoidance. Adjusting tax credit programs—and this is for the member from Kitchener–Waterloo: That's to ensure that the supports that are provided to business are effective, efficient and sustainable. That's the reason why we're doing it, but always in a thoughtful, considerate way. We're also strengthening the government's transparency and fiscal accountability. I think they're all measures that are valid and that should be supported by this House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Deputy House leader.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to revert back to motions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The deputy House leader has said that we have unanimous consent to revert to motions. Agreed? Agreed.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Speaker, I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward

a motion without notice regarding the time allocation motion on Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act, 2015.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The deputy government House leader has put forward a motion without notice regarding a time allocation motion on Bill 80, the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I move that the order of the House dated April 22, 2015, providing for allocation of time on Bill 80, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animals for Research Act with respect to the possession and breeding of orcas and administrative requirements for animal care, be amended by deleting the second bullet point in the third paragraph and substituting the following:

That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Tuesday, May 5, 2015;

That, following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear;

That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 12 noon on Wednesday, May 6, 2015; and

That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Bradley has moved that the order of the House dated April 22—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Dispense.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Dispense? Agreed. Carried? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

#### BUILDING ONTARIO UP ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 POUR FAVORISER L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, I understand that we have unanimous consent to stand down our lead on Bill 91.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has asked for permission to stand down her lead. Agreed? Agreed.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure this afternoon to take this opportunity to speak on Bill 91, the Budget Measures Act. The first point I'd like to raise is that, over the last month, my PC colleagues and I have asked this government to make commitments in five areas that we believe will make Ontario a better place to live and work.

The first ask we asked from the government was to back off implementing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, or ORPP. We also asked the government to shelve

their carbon tax proposal. We requested the government to fix home care in Ontario by dealing with the underlying issues at community care access centres across the province. The government also needed to make a firm and transparent commitment to reduce energy rates in Ontario. Lastly, we asked the government to prepare a detailed and credible plan on how they intend to balance the budget by 2017-18.

Our calls for action were ignored by this government. The Liberals' arrogance to not listen to our advice and the warning calls from experts like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Auditor General and credit rating agencies will lead to the further deterioration of Ontario's economic climate. This budget will simply do nothing to get Ontario back on a firm economic footing and balance the budget by 2017-18.

In the budget, the amount spent on the interest on the debt is the highest-growth area—higher than education, higher than health. In addition, the third-highest spending line in our province, after health care and education, is paying interest on the debt. What's worse is the fact that there is no plan to deal with the debt. The consequence of this, as noted by the Auditor General, is, it will lead to the crowding out of services, because money will need to be diverted to pay the interest. Cuts to programs and services, like nurses and other front-line health care workers—which, by the way, we've already seen—will only continue as the interest rates increase.

Speaker, I'd like to take the rest of my time to talk about the five budget asks and the rationale behind them. Once again, my PC colleagues and I asked the Ontario government to not implement the ORPP. The ORPP is nothing short of another payroll tax on businesses of all sizes. My PC colleagues and I believe the ORPP would hurt businesses and families by forcing them to save money without taking into consideration the budgets of the businesses or the families. Effectively, the ORPP is a new tax on everyone's paycheque and on businesses' payrolls. At the end of the day, if implemented, it will mean less take-home pay for everyone and may force businesses to lay off staff and halt the hiring of new employees because of the unaffordability of having this extra tax imposed upon them.

My PC colleagues and I are not the only ones to raise concerns with this particular part of the budget. Organizations like the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Fraser Institute and the C.D. Howe Institute have all raised concerns with the ORPP.

The CFIB has stated that "A recent CFIB survey of almost 3,200 small businesses found that 79% are opposed to a new mandatory pension plan, with two thirds saying they would freeze or cut salaries, and 42% would reduce the number of jobs." In addition, Ontario's CFIB vice-president said, "It doesn't matter whether you call it a premium or an investment, a mandatory pension contribution on top of the CPP is a new payroll tax on jobs and will result in wage and job losses."

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has stated that they and their "network of 160 chambers in communities across the province are urging the government to defer legislation that will pave the way for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The business group is calling on the government of Ontario to answer outstanding questions about the impact the plan could have on the province's economic competitiveness. Businesses are concerned that the proposed pension plan will lead to job losses in the province."

In addition, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture has come out and said it "estimates the ORPP will cost Ontario farmers, as employers, approximately \$30 million annually. This additional cost will likely be deducted from farm net farm income as it won't be added into prices for farm products.

"The ORPP presents a one-time inflationary jump in farm labour costs that" is simply not recoverable. "If we can't recover the cost from sales, farmers will look to wage caps, increased mechanization and fewer employees to cover rising employment costs. These actions could significantly lower farm employment and dampen Ontario agriculture's ability to achieve the Premier's job growth challenge."

I would now like to spend some time reading out statements I've received from individuals in regard to the proposed ORPP. I suppose if there was one advantage to all the leaked documentation and announcements that came before last Thursday's budget, it is that there have been a number of leaks and conversations about the implementation of the ORPP. Proactively, I reached out to the chamber members and business owners in my community and asked for their feedback comments, because I feel I have a responsibility to listen to what they say. Ultimately, they are the job creators in my community. More importantly, I asked them to participate in the public discussions that were taking place with the parliamentary assistant. I know that many of them took me up on that offer, and I very much hope that the parliamentary assistant is going to be looking very closely at the feedback from experts in the field, front-line individuals and business owners who are going to be impacted.

**1720**

This was one response I got. One individual stated, "After reading about the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, I feel obligated to write and voice my opposition to it. What is particularly worrisome to our company is your treatment of a defined contribution plan, which our employees are currently enrolled in.

"From what I have read, a company offering a defined contribution plan would not be exempt from enrolling in the ORPP. We believe that we already offer a great plan and are assisting our employees in reaching their retirement goals. Why would you not allow companies such as ourselves to continue with their current defined contribution plan instead of burdening us with yet another payroll tax? Please consider redefining your definition of a comparable plan or scrap this idea altogether."

A constituent of mine stated, "As a local small business owner, I am not in favour of this plan. I do feel very



strongly about helping people save for retirement, including my employees. I think that can be achieved, however, in ways that provide owners with greater choice and flexibility. Being forced to contribute to another plan, such as the ORPP, handcuffs employers and takes away that choice.

"I would much rather be able to assist an employee by making an RRSP contribution on their behalf or a tax-free savings account contribution. This type of saving is far more beneficial to an employee upon retirement. It allows the employee the opportunity to plan their income needs throughout retirement.

"A pension such as the ORPP is not flexible and only provides a relatively small monthly pension benefit that cannot be customized for a person's needs. It also is more beneficial for estate planning purposes in the event of death. The asset, be it an RRSP or a TFSA, can be left to a surviving spouse or beneficiary. Would the entire amount of the contributions to the ORPP be left to a beneficiary as a lump sum? Not likely. So, again, I have issues with income streams that are not flexible. Those things aside, it is just another expense that an employer has to budget for in a time when costs of doing business are rising.

"I certainly do not support this initiative and feel it is unfair to impose it upon business owners. I would much rather be able to choose how and when I can help an employee to support their retirement income.

"In a year like 2008, when some businesses suffered, coming up with the extra money to contribute to the ORPP would have been a great challenge. We don't want to force those businesses into debt when another 2008 rolls around."

Again, I'm reading excerpts from emails, letters, meetings that I held in my community with businesses owners.

Another constituent of mine stated that "as a business owner, my primary concern is keeping people employed. In what has become a highly competitive market, we are constantly looking for ways to cut expenditures in order to keep market share and keep people working. ORPP would add another 1.9% expense, plus additional administrative costs, that small businesses in Ontario don't need at this time.

"I believe that the majority of Ontarians are currently more preoccupied with short-term employment rather than long-term retirement. Not having a job doesn't help ORPP. If our current Ontario government would look at running our province as a business and look at reducing waste—just a few examples; too many to mention—reducing government," such as "gas plants, eHealth, Ornge, costing Ontarians billions, and the increasing costs of energy—closing generating plants, not having alternative solutions in place, buying US energy at much higher costs—putting money back into taxpayers' pockets so that we could have extra money that could be saved for retirement.

"Few Ontarians have little if nothing left to give the Liberals who have imposed environmental taxes, in-

creased hydro rates and now a new carbon tax. The well is dry. It's time to get the \$12.5-billion deficit and \$300-billion debt under control before looking for handouts and hiding the real problems our province is facing. It's time they come clean with Ontarians and let them know how close we really are to the financial demise of what was at one time the economic engine of Canada, and not smoke and mirrors or fearmongering of Ontarians not having enough to retire. Time for the Liberal government to face the music."

Another business owner in my riding stated, "On behalf of" my business, "I would like to present our view of this proposal and its impact on our business. As a small business in the manufacturing centre in Ontario, we are becoming a smaller and smaller group of companies as most manufacturing has either relocated or closed its doors. This is mainly due to the overwhelming cost of doing business in this province due to the Liberal government. We are inundated with out-of-control WSIB charges," Ministry of Labour "targeted inspections, unnecessary red tape, not to mention the most ridiculous hydro rates in North America.

"Now we are obligated—no, forced—to provide another 1.9% of our payroll total to this government, which amounts to a grab of approximately \$72,000 annually. No dialogue with small business and, once again, no regard for small business, the engine that drives Ontario. This government continually supports large American-based automobile corporations with handouts and bailouts, yet shows no regard for companies such as" ours.

Another constituent of mine stated: "I have reviewed the ORPP consultation paper, and I would like to express how deeply opposed I am to the provincial government implementing such a plan. As an employer of about 65 people in this province, I can assure you that our company cannot afford to add yet another burden of tax. Such a program would most assuredly result in us reducing our workforce to make up the difference.

"If you are truly concerned about 'undersaving,' the responsible thing to do would be to initiate an education program to help people understand the need for them to take care of their own financial futures.

"The larger threat to the individual's financial security is our overall economy. Further tax burdens such as this will do nothing more than drive more business, ergo, more jobs, out of this province. This program is just another example of how the current government wants to take us further down the road of a nanny state. Enough is enough. Please stop now before it is too late."

Speaker, these are real people, real business owners who have questions and concerns with the proposed ORPP. This government cannot ignore these concerns. These are legitimate concerns from Ontario businesses. However, this government fails to see that every family and business has different circumstances and need to make their own financial decisions that best suit their needs.

Everyone here understands that saving for retirement is important, and there are many opportunities to do so.

The federal government has put in place options to encourage us to save for retirement, which include the tax-free savings account or the Registered Retirement Savings Plan. But the proposed ORPP will do more harm than good for Ontario residents.

This government needs to focus their efforts on tackling the deficit they created. Instead of telling the people of Ontario they need to save more for retirement, maybe this government needs to look themselves in the mirror and realize that they have a spending problem.

Next I'd like to discuss our second budget ask: We asked the government to shelve the carbon tax. Recently the government announced that they intend to implement a cap-and-trade system, which is simply another name for a carbon tax. The proposed cap-and-trade system will be a tax on everything, and is just a way for the government to get money from Ontarians to pay for the government's mismanagement of their economy.

Ontarians can't afford another tax or higher costs for goods. In addition, companies cannot afford this tax, considering Ontario already has some of the highest energy rates in all of North America. This tax will lead to a decrease in the number of companies here in Ontario, and will result in job losses. We cannot trust the government, especially with their history of mismanagement, to accomplish anything good with this extra tax.

The third budget ask by the PC caucus is for the government to fix Ontario's floundering home care system. CCACs across the province are unable to help Ontarians who need medical assistance when they are released from hospital. There are countless stories of this problem at the Central West CCAC that serves my riding of Dufferin-Caledon. Honestly, I could go on for hours citing examples of people we have tried to help over the years.

For example, one lady from my riding required a personal support worker only one to two times per week. Unfortunately, the Central West CCAC turned down her request because, as the CCAC continues to claim, there is no available funding to send a PSW.

In another case, a lady in my riding had been trying to care for her disabled husband in addition to her mother-in-law who had experienced a terrible accident that required her to go to the hospital. Upon the release of her mother-in-law from the hospital, the daughter-in-law requested help from CCAC but was denied. To get the needed assistance, the family actually moved to another city to get help from a different CCAC. The sad part is, there are many more cases like this.

**1730**

There is an example—I was trying to help a friend. Her mother was in the Grimsby area—only child. She wanted to move her mother up to Dufferin-Caledon so that she could be closer and offer more immediate hands-on assistance. Then she started looking at the available support that was currently being provided to her in the Grimsby area, comparing that to—let's be blunt—the non-existence of any kind of support that would have been available to her if she had moved to Dufferin-Caledon. Here's a family member who wants to step up

and help her mother, but it makes no sense for her to move her closer. How is that compassionate at any level? Clearly, this mother would have been more confident and more comfortable having her family member close by, but the other side of that argument, being able to say, "No, I'm not going to—I'm going to go with absolutely no support"—it's an untenable choice that the family was put into, and one that we have to fix now. We can't leave this CCAC mess continuing.

Again, on the weekend, at the home show I spoke to someone who, over the years, has been quite active with the CCAC. I can tell you we've had a number of heated discussions about it because, in the past, he's been quite a strong defender of the CCAC model. This weekend he said it's a complete mess. It has to be dealt with. The CCAC actually got to point where last summer, after the election, one of the first pieces of mail that I opened as the MPP for Dufferin-Caledon was from the CCAC, saying, "Oh, by the way, we have no more money and we're not accepting any more patients." Come on. What happened to need? What happened to, "We're going to manage our workload"? What happened to, "We're not going to give the CEO another 27%, and maybe put it towards health care"? It was a damning indictment that someone who for years and years had been defending the CCAC model came forward to me on the weekend and said, "It's not working, Sylvia. It can't be fixed. It's not a matter of tinkering. We need to start finding a model that works."

I can assure you, in Dufferin-Caledon the CCAC model is not working.

Unfortunately, this government is choosing the opposite. The government is taking more money away from health care. These are services that people across the province rely on and expect their hard-earned money to go towards.

I'm not sure that I'm going to have time to go through all of the asks, but I guess I just want to finish with: As parliamentarians, we have many opportunities in the course of our daily work and work back in the riding to talk to people about how government policies impact them. I think we need to do a lot more listening to people about how this budget is going to impact the vast majority of people in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened with interest to the remarks from the member for Dufferin-Caledon, and I have to say I warmed up to her comments as she went along. Certainly, when she talked about the experiences of her constituents accessing CCAC services, this is something that I think every single MPP in this House has been hearing about day after day after day in our constituency offices.

Despite the proclamation by the government that they are going to be topping up funding for the community care sector, I heard one analyst refer to the amount of money that's allocated to community care—it's like a rounding error. It's such a minimal amount of the money

that is allocated to health care that even topping it up makes no difference. It doesn't address the serious levels of need that we have in our community.

Yesterday, the member from London—Fanshawe and I held meetings in London with registered nurses and with community agencies that provide services for people who are experiencing mental health challenges. These community agencies are cut to the bone. They are not able to respond to the levels of need that we hear in our community. They are getting nothing—nothing from the government, nothing in this budget, despite the brand of being the activist centre and a progressive government.

This is an austerity budget. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. People who are living in our communities know it. They feel it. They get it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I'm pleased to be able to speak about the budget this afternoon. I haven't had a chance to do that since the budget was presented last week.

What I have had an opportunity to do is attend a number of post-budget events, including with yourself, Speaker, in Scarborough. On Friday morning, the Scarborough MPPs got together with the Rotary Club of Scarborough. That's an annual event that has been going on for a number of years. It's always a pleasure to be there with my colleagues but also, more importantly, to hear what the initial reactions are to the budget. At that post-budget event, we had questions about hospitals. We had questions about infrastructure. We had questions about dental programs for young children. I just thought that was fantastic.

On Monday, I facilitated a post-budget event with the Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade—again, another great opportunity to meet with business leaders in the community. They had some good questions. They want to know more about infrastructure investments. They wanted to give us some feedback about how pleased they were with the investments in apprenticeship programs. They asked some really great questions.

Tonight, Speaker, I'm heading out to the Highland Creek community centre AGM, and we're going to talk about the budget there. So I should have this budget thing down pat by tonight's event.

Every time I go to an event, I realize that different parts of the budget mean different things to people. Overall, my sense is that people understand that this budget really benefits all Ontarians. There are some pieces that are targeted at certain groups, but the feedback has been very positive.

I'm happy to have shared my experience with the House today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments.

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** The word here is “budget,” and I think that people in this House have forgotten what the word “budget” means. “Budget” means, “This is how much income you have, and you have to work within that

income.” It doesn't mean that you borrow from the banks that future generations have to pay and so that your revenue is decreased by the amount of interest that you have to pay. Some people don't realize this, but guess what? Governments, just like individuals and families, have to pay interest on what they borrow.

We just heard that the federal government is managing to balance their budget and is going to start working on paying down—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Gila Martow:** Well, you know what? You have the money you have to work with. We need to work. What it means is, we have to prioritize. It doesn't mean that you ask the grandchildren of the children that are now being born to pay for interest on the debt. It doesn't mean that you ignore the fact that we have an aging population and that health care costs are going to skyrocket, as all the experts are telling us. It doesn't mean that you speak about little tiny programs and try to distract the public with things like beer sales.

It's pretty sad when the Premier has to go to speak to the OPP finally after three months just to distract from the mess of highway maintenance. It's pretty sad when we have to use a scandal, an OPP investigation, to deflect from another approaching scandal.

Mr. Speaker, I think that what we need to do is we need to start setting an example for the people of this province. I hear from my constituents, “Don't you guys understand that there's only one taxpayer who is expected to pay sales tax, gas tax, municipal taxes”—in York region, we have a regional tax—“provincial tax and federal tax?” People are taxed, and we cannot continue to destroy the fabric of our society by taxing them more.

1740

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Toronto—Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I appreciate the comments made by the member for Dufferin—Caledon. I won't explore the CCAC matter very deeply, other than to say that I've had to deal with the CCAC in Toronto recently—decent people in a situation where they don't have the resources to provide the services that our constituents need. Everything that was said by the member from London West about the difficulties with CCACs is spot-on. This is a dangerous situation. It puts people's lives at risk.

I want to take a bit more of my time to talk about what I see as an extraordinary part of this budget, and that's the fire sale of Hydro One, because the consequences of that will reverberate down through the decades in this province. We built this province. We built it as an industrial power on publicly owned power, starting with Niagara Falls. It made us an attractive destination for investors and an attractive destination for manufacturing. The Conservatives first and then the Liberals started this privatization of our hydro system, continue to privatize generation and frankly, now want to privatize the distribution.

Speaker, we've seen huge increases in the price of power. I'm sure you've heard from your constituents

about it. I have. We'll see huge increases coming out of this privatization of Hydro One; make no mistake. As much as you, the public watching this, will be paying out of your pockets, we'll see it burn a hole through your wallet.

I say to the Liberals here in this chamber today, when people get whacked with hydro bills that are substantially higher than anything you've projected today, you will hear about it. The form letters that you're sending out now to cranky constituents will not be enough to protect you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I now return to the member for Dufferin–Caledon.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you to the members who provided some additional comments.

I'm going to spend my last few minutes talking about the last ask that I didn't get to in my 20-minute speech, and that's the credible and detailed plan to balance the budget. We hear this "balance in 2017-18" a lot. What we're not seeing or hearing is any kind of details and specifics on how that will be achieved.

The other thing I want to talk about is, people always say, "Oh, but you're asking for more things." The minister across the way is famous for it: "You're asking for more things." You're collecting \$50 billion. It's up to you, as a government, to spend it wisely and prioritize it where people need it, where there is an expectation.

I often go to schools. This week, I had two schools here at Queen's Park. Without question, the kids understand that health care is our number one spend and education is our number two spend. But there isn't a school yet and there are very few people who understand that the third-highest spending line in the province of Ontario is interest on the debt, money we've already spent. When people hear that, it puts it into perspective. Let's keep in mind that interest rates are pretty darn good right now. There really is only one other way that they're going to go. We get downgrades. We get threatened with downgrades. We have to rein this in, if for no other reason than, let's not make it our number two spend in the province of Ontario. We have to figure out a way to stop paying interest on money we've already wasted.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I first ask unanimous consent to stand down the lead for our party on this debate.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested to stand down their lead. Agreed? Agreed.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker. Thank you, colleagues, who are agreeable at this late hour on a Thursday afternoon.

There are some things in the world, in life, that make me particularly crazy. One of those things is a bill whose name is directly contrary to the contents of that bill. There are bills—and I'll just give you an example here. This is a Conservative example: the Safe Schools Act. As soon as I saw that title, I thought, "Bad news for kids,

because this is going to mean an act that's going to make things much less safe."

The Liberals had a great act. It was called the Putting Students First Act, Bill 115. You know right off the top that students are going to be in trouble, that their considerations are going to be at the end of the line. In fact, that was true. It led to huge disruption in the education system. That bill's title was directly contrary to its content.

Today, following that dreary tradition, we have the Building Ontario Up Act. It's guaranteed to break down this province, to cause deterioration, to make life more difficult. That is the content of this bill.

I want to talk mostly about the sale of Hydro One, because, as I said in my comments a few minutes earlier, this is a decision that will reverberate down through the decades. It is an act of breathtaking irresponsibility.

Before I get to that content, I want to note a few things. A \$90-million cut in tax credits to the cultural sector: As my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo said earlier, some of these cuts are retroactive, causing disruption of contracts that are already in place.

I was talking to someone today working for a production. The producer was called by the bank and told, "I hear you don't have the money that you're supposed to have. We'd better talk about whether or not this film will go forward." This industry, critical to Ontario, critical to the east end of Toronto, has taken a hit.

This government needs to rethink this. It needs to rethink it, because if we're going to have a credible, dynamic, growing industry in film, digital and animation, we can't mess around like this. If you're going to have changes, talk to the stakeholders. If you have to have changes that are related to the fiscal position of the province, then figure out a way that everyone gets to survive and get through it. The way the government is approaching it now is irresponsible and it's destructive.

The youth jobs strategy is being cut by \$45 million. I don't know about you and I don't know about the rest of my colleagues in this chamber, but I get young people coming into my office, saying, "We can't get work." I get their parents coming into my office, saying, "My son or daughter can't get work," and yet this money is being cut.

The Toronto subway relief line isn't getting funded out of the projected investment in transit. Speaker, that's a vital line. I know many colleagues who have been on the Danforth line in the east end in the morning and find that it is packed.

My colleagues will address other cuts and reductions in service and education and health care when they speak, but I want to focus on the privatization of Hydro One. First, most critically, this sale will drive up the cost of electricity in Ontario. And there are a lot of other ramifications from this sale. There are environmental ramifications and there are ramifications around economic development. But for people across Ontario who are having a hard time now keeping their nose above water, paying their bills, people who've been hit hard with bills

this winter of 1,000 bucks a month, the idea that we would further privatize the system and further drive up their bills must seem totally crazy.

What has been our experience in Ontario with privatization on the generation side? In 2002, the Conservatives, with their big bang, launched the deregulation and privatization of the hydro system. Prices go through the roof, regulation is put back on, but the privatization part isn't ended. It's regulated, but the Liberals continue the privatization.

Every year, as more and more privatized generation is put on stream, more and more money comes out of our pockets to pay the profits of big corporations, money that didn't used to be on people's hydro bills, money they're now having to pay and take away from groceries or rent or clothing or entertainment, take away from the rest of their lives; money that enriches some corporations extraordinarily.

**1750**

I'll just note this, Speaker: This profit that's baked into our hydro bills—and the Tories and the Liberals are great chefs. They know how to bake up something that people will find hard to digest. Right now, TransCanada owns one third of Bruce Power—one third. It reported, at the end of 2014, a profit of \$314 million, out of Bruce Power. Now, I don't know what the others were paid, but let's just assume they have a third of the ownership. They get a third of the money—close to \$1 billion.

I've done a little bit of research on this, and it's very hard to find how much profit is now coming out of electricity power generation in Ontario, because there are some annual reports that are in Japanese. I can't read those; I just can't. Some are just not open and available on the Internet, but the best I can figure is somewhere in the \$600 million- to \$1 billion-a-year range—not part of our hydro bills in the 1990s, but part of our hydro bills today. So when people say, "How come I can't afford to pay my electricity bill?"—thank the two other parties in this chamber, who thought it was a good idea to privatize.

I was on Gerrard Street in my riding in February. I came across a constituent, a pensioner. She had gotten a hydro bill for \$1,200 from the month before, higher than her pension. I have constituents in my riding who live in Toronto Community Housing—housing that needs money from the provincial government to deal with a huge backlog of repairs—living in units that have electric baseboard heating, and they're paying in the \$600- to \$1,000-a-month range. It hits them very hard, Speaker.

Keep that in mind when you look at the history of privatization. We've seen our prices go up dramatically. In Nova Scotia, when they privatized, their prices went up dramatically. So why would Hydro One be any different? What is that magic ingredient that would allow the Hydro One privatization to be radically different from all the others? I don't think that magic ingredient has been revealed. I don't think it exists. I think what happens with Hydro One's privatization will have the same upward pressure on prices as the privatization we've seen on the electricity generation side.

The majority of the shares will be held by companies and interests that want to maximize their return. They may have a regulated rate of return, but when billions of dollars are on the table, you get some very creative minds in the room figuring out how to get more billions of dollars on the table. That's the way it works; that's the way it will work. Despite everything the Liberals say, this is the wrong decision, and you, the people of Ontario, are going to pay the price.

We've had assurances from cabinet ministers, from the Premier that we're safe: "Don't worry. We've got regulatory authority in place to protect you and the families that depend on you." Well, Speaker, don't believe that. Don't believe that. They say that the OEB will regulate prices, but I want to remind you: Just a year ago, when Enbridge came to the OEB with a request for a 40% increase in gas prices, were they told to go away? No. They were told to stage it, but indeed, that's what we got. That's a bit of a bump, a bit of a hit—and that's now.

I want to say to you, Speaker, the experience in the United States is that as you deal with more politically powerful, regulated corporations, the more power is imposed on those regulators. It's something called regulatory capture, where the regulated companies have enough political muscle to dictate to the regulator how they're going to operate through their political masters. Regulators leave a company, leave their regulatory job and get hired by the companies that they were regulating. Or they leave that company and get hired by the regulator. It's a very cozy arrangement. You have to understand—you who are watching this, you who are going to be paying the bills—that that's what door is being opened today in Ontario, and that bill is not going to be a small one.

Ed Clark, who was hired by this government to figure out what to do with finances, what to do with these assets, says that the Ontario Energy Board will be beefed up, will be made stronger. Well, I look forward to seeing the clauses in this bill that make the OEB stronger. I look forward to the demonstration that they've worked in other jurisdictions and actually put in place the control that allowed us to avoid any unpleasantness with companies that have the political muscle to force through bigger and bigger increases. There's a lot of hand-waving here but unfortunately not a lot of real substance.

It isn't just that we'll be left only with the Ontario Energy Board to deal with regulation. It's that we will also have a variety of safeguards that exist now that will be swept out the door. The sunshine list will no longer apply to Hydro One. It will never apply to Hydro One. So if the new board of the new Hydro One decides to pay the new CEO and the CEO's vice-presidents tens of millions of dollars a year in salary or decides to give them shares worth tens of millions of dollars, we won't know, because it all goes behind a black screen.

The ability of this Legislature and the people in this province to hold Hydro One to account through that one particular measure will be swept away—gone. We'll pay, Speaker. Don't make any mistake: We will pay. But where the money is going will no longer be clear.

The Auditor General will no longer have control, responsibility, authority in dealing with Hydro One. If we hadn't had the Auditor General, then we wouldn't have known the Liberals blew a billion bucks on gas plants to protect their seats—a useful thing to have. We have an officer of the Legislature, someone who reports to the Legislature as a whole who can go into crown corporations, look at the books and see if things are going wrong and can give us the information that we need to protect ourselves.

I'll tell you, when the private energy corporation Enron was looting the people of California in the 1990s, their auditor, Arthur Andersen, didn't protect the people of California, didn't protect the investors who had money in Enron. That auditor didn't have the power that our Auditor General has. That auditor was pressured by Enron to let things go by. We will no longer have an auditor who reports to us about what's really going on, but we will pay the bill. We will pay the price.

Speaker, we lose the sunshine list, we lose the Auditor General's authority, and we lose the power of the Ombudsman to investigate abuses within that corporation.

The people of rural Ontario have dealt with Hydro One for the last few years. We've had instances of over-billing. We've had instances of people being given

notices just before Christmas that their power is going to be cut off. Who would shine the light on this kind of thing if it weren't for an independent Ombudsman who reports to this Legislature?

What's been proposed is an Ombudsman who will be an employee of this new Hydro One. Yes, I'm sure that that Ombudsman, confronted with the situation of an abuse of power, of threats to ratepayers, would never embarrass its employer, ever. It would not happen—another layer of protection stripped away.

Freedom of information no longer applies. If you think something's fishy—if we, in this chamber, think something needs to be investigated, if we want to ask questions and look at documents, we no longer have that power.

Speaker, you're being very subtle. You may be indicating that you want to stand. If you want to stand, Speaker, and say something, I shall sit.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
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Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<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 Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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**

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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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