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Tuesday 27 October 2015

Mardi 27 octobre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 October 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 octobre 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES
DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 22, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi édictant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate? The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The lead was stood down, so I'll be doing my lead this morning.

I am honoured to do my lead on this bill, Bill 115, which deals with electoral boundaries. First and foremost, I think it's important to note that the bill is an important bill. It addresses the fact that there has been a significant increase in population. Many areas in our province, many ridings, have a population that's far beyond what the provincial average for a riding was intended to be. As a result, I know there are some members in the House now that have some of the largest ridings not only in Ontario but, actually, in the country. Particularly in my region, the Peel region, we have a number of ridings which are amongst the largest in the country.

The recent federal election allowed for new boundaries which made the average population closer to the provincial average and, in addition, the federal average. We know that roughly 100,000 people is what is intended to be the average. In my riding, I represent close to 220,000. Other ridings in Brampton—Brampton West is one of the largest in the entire country at 240,000 people. These ridings are significantly large, and being so large, it makes it difficult to be able to reach out to all these individuals.

More importantly, for a representational democracy, there are people that are not having a proportional voice in the Legislature. That is an important point. If we respect the idea that in a representational democracy individuals are able to vote for someone to represent them, to be their voice in Parliament, and the population is not accurately or proportionately represented, people are losing their voice in Parliament. So it's important that this change has been brought forward. In effect, in my riding, with 220,000 people, there should be two members representing those voices, to make sure their voices are proportionally heard here.

In addition, the budget that we have that allows us to communicate with our ridings, with the people that live in our ridings, to provide them with updates on what's going on, to provide the services and to communicate with them, was designed to reach out to those approximate 100,000 people. In ridings where the population far, far exceeds that, our resources are tapped, and it makes it quite difficult to be able to reach out to everyone to provide the necessary updates and information.

So one of the issues that I'd like to bring up in this debate is that until this change takes place—this change that recognizes that certain ridings are far too large—the government should implement some measure to allow for members who have a large riding. I know that there is a member in the Ottawa region who also has this issue and raised this issue and championed it, so I am honoured that she raised that issue. But it's important that we have, perhaps in the interim, some funding allocated (1) to address the fact that there are ridings that are quite large and (2) to be able to provide those ridings with an increased budget to be able to communicate with and serve their riding appropriately until the changes take place. That's an issue that I'd like to raise.

If we look at the breakdown in terms of where the riding boundaries have been changed, most significant changes are in the GTA. There are significant changes also in other urban centres across the province. In the GTA, we've increased the number of seats, particularly in the suburbs, and it's important that we are representing our populations and providing them with representation through increased members.

While on one side, we're doing a lot of good work now in terms of representation based on population, this debate allows for an opportunity to talk about other areas where we need to improve representation. While we are certainly moving towards better representation by population, though this bill doesn't purport to do it, I think it's important to start talking about what we can do as a

Legislature to increase representation in other demographics, beyond just population.

There are a couple of areas that are important for us to address. One area is the fact that we are failing in this province, in this country and certainly in the entire world when it comes to proportional representation of women not only in positions of power in politics but in positions of power broadly speaking.

Let's talk about politics specifically. It's a tremendous honour that we have been moving in the direction where there has been increased representation by women, but it's something that we're certainly failing at, and it's certainly a major problem. It does not do justice to our democracy when we are so far behind in representation when it comes to women in politics. I think we need to start implementing strategies around how we increase that and what the government can do to increase that. There are a couple of strategies that have been discussed before, and one of those strategies—we can break those strategies down into two loose topics or subdivisions. One is supporting organizations that are already doing a lot of work in this area: non-government organizations which are encouraging women to get into politics.

I want to give credit to the member from Parkdale–High Park, who implemented a program, Girls in Government—an excellent program. One of the most important things to get into politics, or to get into any field, is that if you are exposed to that field, you're more likely to consider it as an option. The first thing that this program that the member from Parkdale–High Park initiated does is that it provides an opportunity for young women in high school to be exposed to politics, to be exposed to the Legislative Assembly in Ontario or to go to the House of Commons in Ottawa just to see what politics is all about.

The second thing that this program does, which is absolutely essential, is that it provides an opportunity for young women to meet other women who are politicians so they can kind of see, “Hey, that's something I could perhaps do in my life, that's something that I can relate to, that's something that perhaps would be a career I might consider.” I think it's absolutely important that people, especially young people, are exposed to various careers, meet those people face to face and are able to ask them questions and interact with them. It's only through that interaction, that experience, that as a young person one can visualize themselves in that position. I think that's incredibly important, and it's a great program.

I have to give credit to the Ontario Legislature for taking this initiative, which was absolutely needed, to have a particular wall of the House that's dedicated to the women who have been involved in politics in this assembly, whether it's on the political side or the bureaucratic side. I think that was a phenomenal initiative. I think more can be done, but it's important to give credit where credit is due.

That initiative basically displayed the women who have been involved or are currently involved, past and present—ranging from the Auditor General now, who is

a woman, which is an amazing achievement, having that representation by such a skilled and qualified Auditor General. It provides that amazing representation so that women can say, “I can achieve the highest position, essentially, in terms of an auditor in the province of Ontario.” That's a phenomenal example of representation.

0910

Having the privacy commissioner—the previous one was a woman—represented on that wall is a great thing, and now seeing a Premier and the leader of our party being women is a phenomenal example of representation, showing young women, or other women in general, that you can be involved in politics and achieve the highest level in politics. That's a great step forward. So that's the non-government and some of the government side, making sure that the place we call the assembly for all people in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, is not only accessible, but that when you walk into the building it represents the people of the province. That was a good initiative.

But what more can the government do to make it easier and more accessible and encourage more women to get involved in politics? To do that I think there needs to be a discussion around some of the barriers to political life and what the government can do around ensuring that those barriers are addressed. One of the issues—we have a colleague who has experienced that first-hand—is that it's very difficult to be in a new family, to have children, and to be in politics. I know many people have struggled with that. The government and the Legislature can do more to make sure there are accommodations in place so that it's not something that prohibits people or creates a barrier to becoming a politician or being involved in politics. So we need to discuss what we could do in this assembly to make sure that there aren't these barriers or, if there are, ways we can address them by providing services, maybe in the assembly, that could address some of these concerns.

I think it's important that we create an inclusive environment. If we want to encourage—and it's absolutely something that I want to do and I'm sure many people in this House do—more women to be involved, we have to make sure that we have the services available to make sure that women are supported. I think that's incumbent on us as legislators to encourage more equal representation. That's a large area that we need to address in terms of improving our representation: improving it by increasing the proportion of women who are in politics. To put it bluntly, it's a travesty that we are so low, but there is some hope in the fact that we are increasing, and the numbers are certainly moving in a positive direction.

Another very positive example that we've set as New Democrats is that our party right now is the highest in terms of representation that we've ever achieved; we're at over 50% representation, and that's phenomenal. That's a model that I think other parties can strive towards. I'm really honoured that we have that. I think it also provides us with a great way of showing to others that this is possible. This is a good example that we've

set, and I think it will encourage others down the road. It's something that I'm very honoured to be a part of.

Beyond to increasing representation in terms of gender or increasing representation of women, there are other areas that we need to address to make sure our politics are more representational or, more accurately, that we have representatives who represent our population more accurately. The other area is racialized people or visible minorities. That's an area that we are still struggling with as a province, as a country, and certainly in our municipalities it's a large problem.

Let's start with federal. There have been some significant improvements. Most recently, in this past election a great number of racialized candidates have been elected, and I think that's a great sign and a great achievement. In federal politics, we certainly have a long way to go. There's a lot more that needs to be done.

Provincially, we are also lacking. Ontario is one of the most diverse provinces in the country, probably one of the most diverse places in the world. Given that diversity, we don't see that as accurately reflected in our representation as we'd like to see. So it's something we need to work on. Again, this is something that the government—the strategy could be two-fold. There are existing associations and organizations that talk about how to increase representation by encouraging parties to adopt requirements around diversified candidates, making sure that there are racialized candidates, that marginalized members of the community are supported in terms of nominations and are able to become candidates.

There are organizations that we can support, that are non-governmental, that are doing the great work of, again, exposing various communities to politics, teaching various communities about avenues to get involved and encouraging them to get involved. I think the government has a great role in ensuring that the barriers that do exist are addressed. We can look at various strategies around that. I'll get to some of those strategies, because I think they talk about participation broadly and improving our electoral system broadly. I'll get to those a little later on. That's another area that we need to really work on.

If you look at this assembly, right now, in terms of the opposition side, I think I'm the only racialized individual in the entire opposition, both Conservatives and New Democrats combined. I think that's a telltale example of where we need to improve, the fact that that's the current state of affairs. On the government side, there has been some improvement, but it certainly still doesn't accurately reflect the proportion of racialized individuals in our province, so we need to certainly address that.

We've talked about the need for increasing representation when it comes to women and increasing representation when it comes to racialized people. We also need to look at increasing representation of young people. Young people are not represented in politics as much as they should be. I think the 2011 federal election provided an opportunity in Quebec, particularly, where there were a large number of young people that were elected. It was a very positive thing to have a mixed assembly that way, or

a mixed House of Commons, where you have people from all walks of life and people from all age groups, Mr. Speaker.

I think that's absolutely important. It's important because it provides a very vibrant form of democracy. When your representatives are diverse—when they are made up of a wide range of experiences, occupations and demographics—it creates a more vibrant representation, and it would support a vibrant debate, the introduction of new ideas, the ability to accurately bring forward the voices of people from all parts of our country or all parts of our communities. I think that's absolutely important. In Ontario, I think more can be done with encouraging young people to be involved in politics. I'll talk about apathy in terms of voting a little later on in my discussion, but I think that's an area that we really need to work on: How can we encourage more youth to be involved?

While this bill talks about electoral boundary reform, more accurately representing the population of Ontario, increasing the number of seats and making sure that people have their voices heard, when we're talking about representation and making sure that the populations are represented, it also starts opening up the door around involvement in these electoral processes, in voting and what we can do to ensure that more people participate. Mr. Speaker.

So the whole purpose of changing the boundaries is to make sure that our populations are represented. To ensure that our populations are represented, naturally what flows from that is that people need to vote. They need to get out and vote to make sure that they're being represented, that their voices are being heard. But if you look at previous provincial, federal and municipal voter turnout, it's dismal. In terms of the G7 or G8 nations, our voter turnout is far lower than in many other countries. It's something that is very troubling. We can't have a very vibrant democracy if people aren't turning up to vote. There are strategies around that; there have been discussions around ways of increasing that vote. Many of them have proven to provide results that work, but there are also some drawbacks. I'll discuss some of those options.

I spent some time in Australia last summer—or last winter; it was their summer. In Australia, they have a mandatory voting regime. On one side, a mandatory voting regime certainly has increased the voter turnout. They have some of the best voter turnout in the world. But the problem, again, around mandatory voting is the way that they implement that in Australia: There's a fine. Now, the fine will disproportionately impact people that are already marginalized. People who are lower income would be impacted more by that fine; people who are transient, who are homeless, people who don't have the resources. Those folks are going to be disproportionately impacted, so there are some issues around that way of promoting voting.

0920

If you look on the positive side, there is phenomenal voter turnout and more participation in democracy, and that's something that's excellent. So maybe not the

Australian model, but it's something to look at in terms of how we can ensure that we have more turnout.

One of the things I think we need to do, and it's something that is absolutely important, is making it easier to vote. While we're talking about making our electoral boundaries more reflective of our population, we also need to make sure that our elections are more accessible and our people have the ability to vote, that it's not a barrier. People want to, but say, "The timings are difficult" or "I can't get off of work" or "It's just too far to go." That should never be the reason. That should never be the reason why our voter turnout is so low: that people just simply can't get to the polling station in time. The idea that polling stations close before people arrive bothers me and troubles me, because the hallmark or the foundation of a democracy is the ability to vote. If there are any barriers in voting, it just seems to me that we need to do whatever we can to erase those barriers.

There have been various discussions around how we can increase voter turnout. One of the strategies that's been implemented recently was around increasing advance polls, the amount of days that we have advance polls. I think that was a great strategy; it worked, and more people showed up. But there are other things we can do to make sure voting is easier and more accessible. I think we need to make sure that we look at that and have a discussion around what we can do around that.

There have been various ideas floated. Some folks are saying, "In this time and age, why aren't we at the point where we can vote electronically?" Obviously, there are going to be a host of issues around that and paramount in that are concerns around security and ensuring the identity of the individual who votes. But I'm sure at this point we can come up with some strategies that are more effective and make sure that we are able to get more people out to vote.

The other thing we can do, and this is something that may seem counterintuitive—one is to actually make the voting process easier so that people can get out to the polling stations: making the hours longer, making more polling stations and longer advance voting days. But the other area that has made people less likely to be involved in politics is the overall concept of politics becoming cynical. People have become cynical about politics because of what's been going on. I think that's something we need to address. There has slowly been an erosion, and there has been a loss of trust and a loss of faith in politics. Even the idea of a politician being a profession or an occupation that sometimes receives a lot of jokes or is the brunt of a joke—I'm always up for a good joke, but the problem is that as politics and politicians lose their status in society or, more importantly, the public loses faith in this institution, it will result in, and it has resulted in, less people being involved or willing to vote.

What people say is, "What's the point of voting? Nothing's going to happen anyway." It's interesting, because if you look at the way our system is moving, one of the things that has happened is that we've seen, particularly with this government, that promises are made

and those promises are blatantly broken. When you break promises or when you over-promise and under-deliver, what happens is that the public then becomes cynical: "We've been promised all of these innovations, we've been promised all of these investments, and none of them came through. What's the point in voting?"

What's funny—or what's very ironic, probably not funny—is that the people who create that cynicism, the people who break their promises, the people who encourage people to not care about politics, are then re-elected because of that cynicism. Because fewer and fewer people are participating in politics, the status quo remains. Whoever is an incumbent or whoever is already in power remains in power because, by being cynical and not following through on commitments, you create a population that's cynical, and who then, in turn, have a lower voter turnout and who keep on electing the same people who created that cynicism in the first place. So it's kind of this vicious cycle. To break that cycle, we as legislators need to make sure that we follow through on our commitments. We need to ensure that people are not cynical about politicians or politics. We have a lot to do to restore that faith in politics. We have a lot that we can contribute to making sure that people don't lose their faith in the political system. If we increase that faith in this political system, in that belief or that trust that the system can work to the benefit of people, we'll see more voter turnout. I think that's something that we need to address. Things like the various scandals that this government has been a part of: Those scandals make people cynical, and when people are cynical, they don't come out to vote.

So while we're talking about electoral boundary reform, when we have a government that is consistently being investigated by the police for criminal allegations, it really impacts the ability of people to vote. If you look at the most recent allegation, the bribery allegation, an allegation of bribery by an affiliate of the political party that's representing our province will absolutely impact people in terms of their becoming more cynical and being less likely to vote. It is something we really need to work on. Right now in Sudbury this government is facing—now charges have been laid against an organizer for bribing an individual not to run in politics. What could be more cynical? That's exactly what people look to and say, "Why bother with politics? These guys are all up to corrupt activities, and they're not out to represent the interests of the public." They're feeding right into that, and that's exactly what people become cynical about. Whether it's the recent bribery scandal in Sudbury or whether it's the gas plants scandal—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, a point of order: I would like the member of the NDP to stick to the bill that is before us. I'm always very surprised to hear his comments. I'm not going to go any further, but I'd like him to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please. I appreciate the comments from the Attorney General.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Essex, come to order, please.

I have been listening very attentively to the points that the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has been making, and in my opinion he is making points relative to the bill that is being discussed, and so I will encourage him to continue along, please.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's absolutely important that we look at what we can do to increase voter participation. The whole purpose of this bill is to make sure that we have accurate or proportional representation based on population and that our boundaries are more accurately reflecting the realities of the people of our province. The entire purpose of that is to make sure that we have a functioning democracy, a democracy that actually speaks to the people that it purports to represent.

One of the ways to make sure that happens is by making sure that the number of people are represented by an appropriate number of members. To make that happen, we need people to vote. That's tied in; that's integral. If we're not talking about voting, if we can't talk about voting when we're talking about electoral boundaries, there is really no point in talking about electoral boundaries. They are tied together. The electoral boundaries are in place because there is going to be an election, there is going to be voting. To make sure that people participate in elections, we have to make sure that people aren't cynical.

People are cynical about politics because of the actions, many of the actions, of this government: the government scandal when it comes to the gas plants, the way in which they weren't open, transparent and accountable about the decisions they made. They didn't deliver those reasons to the public. The response to the questions raised: People questioned the cost of this scandal, and the government came out with one estimate, then came up with another estimate and continually changed their answers, again and again. It's going to make people cynical. Then the Auditor General had to come in and provide a more accurate number, and then said, contrary to what the government had been saying before, that it's actually close to a billion dollars, the cost of the scandal.

0930

But decisions are made by governments, and sometimes projects have to be cancelled. What's even worse, to fuel the cynicism, is the manner in which the government tried to hide the facts by deleting e-mails, by deleting information. That's an even bigger scandal. The gas plants scandal is actually a twofold scandal: One is the actual—

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Actually, it was a cover-up of a cover-up.

One is the actual end of the gas plants, ending those gas plants. The second part of the scandal is the fact that there was information deleted. And the way that information was deleted, the way that the government hid information from the public and wasn't providing the information in an upfront—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I just care to remind the member that we are, in fact—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Finally.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will take care of this, Attorney General, thank you very much.

I just want to remind the member that the bill at hand—I'm going to ask that you stay to the discussion with regard to the bill at hand and not wander into other issues that may be or may not be relevant at this point in time.

I'll allow you to continue, please.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Sure, thank you.

In general, without perhaps getting into the details, the government needs to ensure that there is faith, belief or trust in the political system for people to want to vote, and to make sure that we have boundaries that accurately reflect them.

We talked about provincial; we talked about federal; now, we have to look at municipal as well. The government is looking at boundaries that would accurately represent the federal changes, with some exceptions in the north, which are appropriate. Maintaining the current boundaries that we have was a good decision, and I support that.

With respect to the other boundaries, boundaries that would overlap with our federal boundaries would ensure that we are able to work in coordination with our federal counterparts. It would make our jobs easier and, I think, more efficient, which is more important than it being easier, if we make our jobs more efficient.

The government also has a responsibility in this province to look at municipalities. In terms of the representational issues that I was talking about before, it's in the municipalities that we see some of the biggest problems around representation. We don't have enough women represented—absolutely. We don't have enough racialized people represented. In terms of demographics of age, we don't have enough diversity of age represented.

In our biggest city, which is probably the most diverse city certainly in Ontario, and in Canada as well, and probably amongst the most diverse cities in the world—for a city as diverse as Toronto, the fact that we don't have the diversity represented in the council is something that's a big problem. While this bill is going to change electoral boundaries for the province, it does raise the issue or the question around what we can do to make sure that we have better representation, not only by population, but also by other factors like race and gender, and what we can do to ensure that happens. There have been discussions around changes to the municipal voting regime. Some of those changes have been around looking

at ranked ballots. There have been discussions around looking at proportionality.

The ranked ballot system, particularly when it comes to municipalities, might be a way to ensure that we have better representation. There has been a lot of discussion around it. There have been some great activists who have done significant work on it, and what they have found is that where ranked ballots are implemented—or a ranked-ballot-like system—you find that there's a greater number of racialized individuals that are supported or voted in, you find that there's a greater number of women that are voted in, and it creates a more diverse result. That's absolutely important. That's one mechanism that has been raised. I think this government—now, when we're opening up the discussion around elections and electoral boundaries, this is a great opportunity for us to look at ways to improve not only our province's representation, but also that of our municipalities.

Another area that I talked about in terms of making—oh, I didn't talk about it yet, but I talked about race, gender and age in terms of making sure we have diversity. There is also the importance of making sure that our representation is proportional when it comes to the disabled community in our province. For folks with disabilities, folks who have different physical capabilities, there are significant barriers to their access to politics, and representation is not there. There is certainly a big gap when it comes to that representation, and that's another area where we need to ensure that there is accessibility, that there are ways of promoting folks who have various abilities and capabilities, to make sure that they're able to be represented in politics. We have to ensure that we take the right steps to make sure that happens, making sure that our cities are also given the tools to ensure that there is more diversity. What can we do around that? There needs to be discussion around that.

In terms of the boundaries, we've looked at different ways: whether the ward system is going to provide the best way to make sure we have diverse candidates coming forward, or another system that perhaps could encourage more people being voted in. The ranked ballot system is another idea that's come up, but there are other ways to ensure that they happen.

The government has a lot of resources at their disposal to ensure that we support initiatives that would increase voter turnout and that would also increase diversity. There have been a number of community members who have created initiatives around increasing votes. Last year I was able to attend a great conference that was put together by members of the African-Canadian community. The theme of the conference—which was the second annual conference of the African Canadian Summit—was #BlackVotesMatter. It's important to one particular community that has faced a lot of difficulties and has certainly faced great barriers in terms of being accurately represented and proportionally represented. So the theme of the summit was #BlackVotesMatter.

One of the initiatives that was talked about was ensuring that communities that historically have low voter

turnout were able to come out and vote. One of the strategies was to let people in those communities know about the election, let them know about the issues that were going on, and also to show that communities that vote are able to make sure their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed—making that connection.

The work at that summit and some of those organizations was phenomenal. They were demonstrating that their strategies were working. They were increasing participation, they were increasing civic engagement, and I think those are the types of organizations that need more support. I think the government can certainly provide that type of support and funding to groups that look at how we can increase the turnout and how we can increase participation.

If we turn back to some of the electoral boundary reforms, one of the things that I wanted to note is that there was a lot of work that went into these boundary discussions. I participated in some of these discussions, and I think it's important that we look at the process as well. To come up with these boundaries, one of the most important ways to do that is to speak to the people in those communities and make sure the boundaries are reflective of the realities on the ground. There were certainly some great points about it and there are certainly some things that we can improve moving forward.

Whenever we have the opportunity to redraw boundaries, there are a couple of factors that should be in mind. Some of those factors were implemented, but I think we can improve upon them. One of the things that we've noticed in this set of electoral boundary reforms, and a principle that was brought up in the consultation process, is that we want to make sure, as much as possible, that wherever possible, if a member can represent one municipality versus representing multiple municipalities, it's a more efficient, more effective way of representation. I know there are folks who have to represent multiple municipalities. My colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin brags about representing probably upwards of 20 municipalities in his riding, with the geographical size of it. I can't compete with that. I understand that's very difficult and it's, I'm sure, very taxing on him, but he's more than capable.

0940

In my riding I was representing Brampton and Mississauga. There are others members I know in the Peel region who had to represent Brampton and Mississauga. We were faced with some difficulties, from things not as deep or not as politically relevant, but on a community-based level. Being able to attend two Canada Days was very difficult. If Brampton residents wanted to see their political representation there on a Canada Day event, and that Canada Day event was also being held in Mississauga, it created a lot of difficulties. Now that the changes have been implemented that would ensure each member represents one municipality each, either Brampton or Mississauga, I think that was a great change. That was done through a lot of consultation. That was a positive sign; that was something we all raised. We

thought it was important to make sure that our representatives, wherever possible, could represent one municipality only. It makes it easier in dealing with city councillors, dealing with the mayor of that region and the school board trustees.

An area, though, that could have been improved upon in terms of process was the discussion around the federal boundaries impacting the provincial boundaries and involving the provincial representatives. Because the discussion was around changes that initially were for the federal government, the focus was more so on federal representatives. I think that when we see that, historically, changes that happen federally will also happen provincially, we need to make sure that up front in the process it's very open that this is a process that very well might be adopted by the province and to ensure that there is provincial input right from the beginning, that there is a lens through which this decision is made that both provincial and federal representatives will be—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would just ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke if you could perhaps move over just a little bit. The reason for that is that I like to maintain eye contact with the speakers and you're right in the way. In fairness to him, he's not trying to dodge around you. Thank you for your indulgence and for obliging.

Back to the speaker from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much.

That's an important factor to consider. I note that it wasn't very clear initially and it wasn't presented with that analysis in mind, that whatever changes will be made federally will certainly be adopted provincially, so let's discuss it with both in mind right off the bat. I think that's something that we can improve upon in terms of the process moving forward.

Beyond the process itself, there is a certain independence we need to maintain around the process. These decisions might have impact on political parties, might have impact on which ridings are more favourable or not favourable, so we need to ensure that the process has this in place. This is something we need to turn our minds to, to ensure that these decisions around electoral boundaries reflect, first and foremost, the communities historically—which communities, how they live, how they work—and on-the-ground realities—which parts of the city, which parts of the riding naturally will be aligned geographically in terms of interactions and in terms of their concerns—so that the ridings accurately reflect the realities on the ground. These are some of the things that we need to ensure, and then to ensure the process remains independent. This process was independent and we need to make sure that it remains so, that it's not something that is political in nature, that it's just factual and evidence-based in nature.

On that issue of evidence-based decision-making, one of the concerns that we had when we were in this process was that we didn't have the data to raise some of the concerns that were coming up about what are the realities of this particular riding. Other ridings I'm sure face the

same issue. When you don't have data about the demographics, about the languages spoken, about the details of the residents, it makes it difficult to make these types of decisions. So I think we really need to look at what we can do to increase our access to some data. With the census now being significantly reduced, we need to look at other ways of making sure we have that accurate data so that people can make decisions around the riding and the riding profile so that electoral boundaries reflect the actual realities on the ground. That's something we need to discuss or consider: what we can do to obtain the accurate data to make those decisions in moving forward. That's an area of concern.

Overall, the increase in representation in this House is a positive thing. Having more members will certainly bring more voices and more debate to the Legislature and to the assembly. But one of the areas that I'm concerned about is that while the boundaries have been changed, during the process we raised certain concerns around how, within a couple of years, there's going to be a significant influx of new residents, particularly in our riding. The way the process was designed was that they could not take into consideration population growth. They were only allowed to consider population as it stood at the moment of the consultation.

I know members for Brampton will talk about this as well: The problem is that in Brampton, particularly east of the 410—which would involve my riding as well as Brampton–Springdale, which will now become Brampton North, as well as Brampton Centre, which is part of my riding, Bramalea–Gore–Malton—there's going to be a significant influx. Estimates are that around 50,000 people are to come into those areas. Some projections are even higher than that. So while the boundaries are now set and are close to the provincial averages, with this influx of new residents, the population will already well exceed that provincial average, and it has only been a year since these changes have been made. By the next election, in my riding, I know I'm going to well exceed the provincial average again because of the influx of new residents.

During the process, we raised these concerns, saying that based on the population growth, we're actually going to be beyond that boundary again. But in fairness to the individuals who were involved in the process, they said, "Our hands are tied. Based on the way the process has been laid out, we can't actually accommodate for population growth." Perhaps we need to look at a more robust or more flexible system for electoral boundary changes when there's going to be, in the next couple of years, again, a need for boundary reform.

We need to look at what we can do to ensure that we are constantly updating our boundaries in a way that ensures that each member is representing the appropriate number of constituents and residents and, more importantly, that the residents of each community have their voice heard in Parliament, that they have a voice in terms of their population being represented accurately in Parliament. That's something we have to look at.

While the boundaries, as they're currently drawn—I think it's important to note that this is a good step forward and something that's necessary. The federal government moved on this, and naturally we needed to address this issue as well, so I'm happy to see the government doing this. This is not a controversial issue, so this is something, certainly, we support and will be supporting once it comes to the vote.

The government has moved quite quickly on this issue, so I think it's important to give praise where praise is due. The government has moved in an efficient and timely manner with respect to the electoral boundary bill, Bill 115, bringing it forward in a timely manner. We're discussing this bill right after a federal election; it's very timely. That was an appropriate thing to do.

The changes, again, are appropriate. The increase in the number of members was the right thing to do, as well as ensuring that the boundaries reflect the communities and reflect the realities.

On a moving-forward basis, though the process itself and the mechanism by which we actually come to these boundaries is a federal matter and we're adopting that federal matter, we might want to look at what we can do to amend our legislation so that we have our own, perhaps, independent assessment as well so that we can look at those boundaries from a provincial perspective. One way is to look at it at the same time, which I indicated earlier, but there might be some benefit in having, perhaps, a parallel analysis of the ridings so that we can compare and contrast our notes of the federal Legislature and the framework around coming up with these boundaries and having a provincial framework around it as well.

0950

We have seen that, for the most part, we do adopt the federal boundaries, with the exception of the north. I think there may be times, moving forward, that there might be additional exceptions that are required and may be necessary. So it's important that we have an independent perspective. I think it also speaks to the federalist nature of our country that the provinces are entitled to a strong say in terms of their own sovereignty and their own decision-making process. So I think it is an important fact that should be protected and should be considered by this Legislature.

In my last 10 minutes, I'm going to just wrap up with a summary of what I'm proposing that we do. One is that while the boundaries are going to better represent our population, now that we're talking about better representation of population, we need to also look at better representation based on factors beyond just population. I want to reiterate, first and foremost, one of the major areas of representation that doesn't exist, and that this bill, obviously, doesn't address: representation by women in our assemblies. It's absolutely important that this government take the necessary steps to increase that participation and increase that representation. While I'm talking about it on a political level, I think it's also important to note that this is something that's a problem

in all areas and all spheres of influence. We need to do more to ensure that women are represented more proportionately in all areas of power.

The government has taken some steps. There have been some steps around board membership being more diverse, including more women and more racialized individuals. That's an important step. I think that those recommendations could be stronger. We could ensure that there is greater representation in all spheres of influence, whether it's our school boards, whether it's our boards of directors for corporations or for non-profits. This is an area that we need to address. Whether it's on the political or on the bureaucratic side, I think we need to make sure that we have that representation.

Of the two steps that I have suggested, one is supporting existing organizations that are increasing that representation, implementing programs and supporting programs that would actually encourage representation and encourage participation. I think that's essential. Providing the funding where necessary to support those types of organizations is also important. Then the government itself can take steps to make sure that those barriers that do exist are torn down and that there is accessibility, that there are ways of promoting and encouraging on a government side—on a legislative side—that participation.

With respect to diversity of candidates for a better representation of racialized individuals, that's an area where we've not done enough work. We need to see a greater role of the government in encouraging and supporting these initiatives. There are various groups that are encouraging it. The government needs to support those groups that are independent. The government needs to do more on its own part to expand strategies around encouraging more racialized people.

Back on women, I forgot to mention, with respect to the wall in the Legislature, that it is only one wall and it's in one corner of the building. I think there needs to be more, so that when you walk into the Legislative Assembly, it more accurately reflects our population, keeping in mind the importance of tracking and honoring tradition and history. There needs to be more, though, so that when you walk into the building, in all parts of the building, there are as many people of this province represented in the halls, through the imagery, through the pictures—while that one wall that commemorates women in politics and women in the assembly is a good step, it's still not enough. I think it's just too localized to one part of the building. So that needs to be improved.

With respect to youth, I had indicated we need to do more to encourage that. There's one program that I think is quite effective: when we invite youth to come and participate in mock debates here in the Parliament. I have been present for some of those debates, and I think it is a phenomenal strategy. You have young people that sit in these chairs. You have a Speaker that's elected from them. They get to experience what it's like to be here. I think that has a phenomenal impact on young people, and it certainly exposes many people to the idea of being

involved in politics. I think it's a great strategy, and I think there could be an expansion of that.

This House should be used more often by the people that we serve, that we represent, and particularly the young people. I think it's so inspiring when you see young people sit here, and they stand up, being referred to as members. When you see their faces light up, you can tell that this is having a big impact. Simply just being in this chamber—there's a certain inspirational element to the way that this building looks and this chamber looks. I think it's important to make sure it's open and accessible.

In my experience as a lawyer, we often used the courts for mock trials. Those students who were able to engage in those mock trials went on to feel more encouraged and more excited about becoming involved in the legal system, and many of them went on to apply to law school. Similarly, making sure this building is more accessible and open to the youth will encourage more participation.

Finally, I talked about the importance of voting in general. These electoral boundaries are only as relevant as the people who come out to vote. If we change our boundaries and we make them more representative of the population, but people aren't coming out to vote, then we're not doing our job. We're only doing half the job. Half the job is making sure the boundaries are accurate, but we need to do the second part of the job, which is to make sure people come out and vote. What we can do around voting, the strategy we can do to encourage more people to vote, what we can do around making sure it's easier to vote, that there are no barriers, that people aren't not voting because it was just impossible to, or it was too hard, or they simply couldn't find the time—we need to make sure that isn't an issue and that we do a lot of work around that.

I can still think of an example in this past election when there were a number of folks who were challenged in terms of mobility. They didn't know there were processes available to make sure they could vote remotely; they could vote by mail. They weren't aware of those mechanisms. I think we need to do more to make sure people know about that. They came a week before the election, or a couple of days before the election, saying, "Hey, listen, we have some folks in our house who want to vote but aren't able to get to the polling station." The fact that they didn't know there were ways to do it but that they needed to come earlier is something that is troubling. As a government, we should have made sure that people were aware that they can vote by mail or other ways when they are not able to actually physically come to the polling station. We can do more around that, to make sure more people vote.

I touched on this briefly, and I won't get into detail, but in general, as a broad concept, we as legislators can do a lot more to ensure that we re-instill belief and trust in the political process, so that people are more likely to vote. We need to ensure that the government doesn't engage in cynical activities, or activities that create cynicism in our public, because that will reduce voter

turnout. That again is going to contravene the whole purpose of Bill 115.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the time. It was a pleasure to share my thoughts and concerns around this bill. I'm certain that we will support this bill. I think it's an important change, and we're in support of it. But it raises a broader discussion around things we can do to strengthen our democracy at a fundamental level.

The hallmark of our system is our democracy. Whatever we can do to strengthen this democracy, to instill more trust in it, will just make for a brighter future for us in this province and in the entire country.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to Bill 115.

As we all know, this is a very important piece of legislation. The overall intent of this legislation is to strengthen democracy and offer fair representation to Ontarians, no matter where they live in the province of Ontario. They may be living in the northern region, southern region, eastern region or western region, or in the urban ridings or the rural ridings.

1000

The intent is also to increase the number of electoral districts to 122 in the province of Ontario. I believe that if this bill is passed, this will definitely provide a fair representation to all Ontarians in the Ontario Legislature by the 2018 election.

As we know, parts of southern Ontario are growing quickly. Peel region, where my riding of Mississauga-Brampton South is found, is expected to grow by 600,000 people in decades to come. Ridings in fast-growing areas are very diverse, with many ethnic and cultural communities and with varied socio-economic features.

My colleagues would agree that those areas are very vibrant and active places, with many people who need and deserve fair representation in the government. That is why I'm pleased to find that Bill 115 will add 15 new ridings in southern Ontario. This reflects the principle of representation by population.

It's a fair bill and it promotes democracy. I will support this bill and I urge all members to support it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hope it's not the only time I get to speak to this bill. I want to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton; he talked about a lot of things in his address here this morning, not all of them about the act, but he wanted to cover a lot of things with regard to electoral reform. I'm going to speak just about the act.

I hope I get the chance, when I say "the act"—I hope I'm getting the act and not the axe. I'm afraid, with what has been going on in this House with regard to time allocation, that we're going to hit 6.5 hours—we've already hit it—and once these questions and comments are done, I'm afraid that the ruling from the Liberal politburo is going to be, "Shut 'er down."

My riding is not affected by this because of some of its geographical realities. I'm bordered by the province of Quebec and the Ottawa River on one side; I'm bordered by the city of Ottawa on one side; and on another side I go into Algonquin Park. It's almost impossible to do something with the boundaries of my riding without going into some other riding that is not subject to the same kind of reform as well.

I do understand the need for electoral reform as our boundaries change. When the population of a province grows, and in a greater way in some areas of the province than others—in fact, some might even shrink at times—it requires to rejig the boundaries from time to time. The federal government made those changes federally, and for the most part we believe the right thing to do is for our boundaries to mirror the federal boundaries.

I am one of the fortunate ones in that I don't have to get ready to campaign in a riding that isn't mine today. My riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, as I said, is unchanged, so I have the luxury of only having to deal with the same electorate in 2018 that I dealt with in 2014 and whom I deal with on a daily basis as a constituency representative.

I hope I get the chance to speak to this again and that the guillotine doesn't fall on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm proud to rise today on behalf of the constituents of London–Fanshawe, whom I am honoured to represent.

The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton always brings education to bills when he talks about the bills that we debate in this House. One thing he mentioned and pointed out was about more representation of women, and I couldn't agree with him more. More representation for women in politics is really important. We represent 50% of the population.

One nice thing about the New Democrats is that we have 11 women out of 20 in our caucus, so we are meeting that quota, so to speak. We're fulfilling those obligations that we talk about, having more women in politics.

I was reading the Toronto Star yesterday—I actually picked up the paper itself, not online—and there was an article in there about how aboriginal communities organized in this election. They started organizing months before the election happened. They were organizing because, of course, they wanted a change in government, and it was really important that they got their voices heard. There were a lot of issues that were important to the aboriginal community, one of them being missing aboriginal women.

One of the things they pointed out was that the polling stations—four polling stations, I think it was—were so busy that they actually ran out of ballots. That was very encouraging to see, that people are more engaged, especially in this federal election. I think that because of the contentious issue, they wanted the government to be changed. It's too bad they weren't voting for something

they wanted, instead of strategically voting for something they didn't want. That's something we've got to change, too. Strategic voting has no place in democracy. People need to vote for things they actually believe in and want to see changed, as opposed to voting for things they don't want.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise to speak in reference to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act. I certainly compliment the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who spoke on election boundaries.

The major criteria here, of course, is Ontario's provincial boundaries in light of our population growth. There was some dynamic growth throughout the province, and we want to ensure that Ontarians are represented equally and fairly, respectively. That means adding 15 new ridings, as some of our members have mentioned. However, we definitely want to maintain the existing 11 provincial ridings in northern Ontario, where there's a distinct advantage provincially, so there is more representation for provincial seats here in the Legislature as compared to federally.

I know that sometimes when we're talking about items, we tend to wander off a little bit. Sometimes you might want to talk about a gas item or a plant. That occurs, and generally the Speaker—as you have done, sir—just brings them right back in line. I always believe if you address an issue, you should speak to both sides of it. I think when you talk about something like that, you should really remember that all three parties favour it and say that publicly. You should also acknowledge the fact that the municipalities in question spoke very positively about it, and they were the proponents of it.

When it comes to, increasingly, women's issues and the women's population, I agree with all those things that you were saying, and I congratulate you. But I do tell you that in Ajax, four of the seven members of city council are women, and I tell you, it's a great council. They do it quite well, and the women are at the forefront of council as to some of the changes you mentioned.

I think that because my time is running out and everyone is anxious for a breather, Mr. Speaker, I'll just sit down for a moment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for his final comments.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you to all the members who joined in the debate, and thank you for your questions and comments. I appreciate them all.

This is an important time just to sort of highlight that at the heart of this bill is the idea and principle around strengthening our democracy. Whatever we can do to ensure that we strengthen democracy is obviously absolutely important. The hallmark of our society is our ability to have a free and democratic society, and one of those most important components is around our elections and our voting.

Again, whatever we can do to ensure our population is accurately represented is fundamental for us as legislators. The increase in membership, based on the increased growth in population in our province, is absolutely important. We support the changes that are being suggested in this bill, and the boundaries that will reflect the federal, with the exception of the seats to the north.

I think it's also important to note that while we have faced certain difficulties in this province economically, our population growth is a great sign of hope that there is great potential in this province and that we can do a lot of phenomenal things. We need to tap into that population growth and make sure that each member is able to contribute in a meaningful way. We can do a lot to ensure that happens.

When it comes to our democracy, though, we need to make sure that our populations are represented, not only by making sure that there is accurate representation for a population but also in other demographics.

I thank all the members who have shared the concerns that I raised today. Other members, obviously, have raised this many times before. I look forward to working on not only electoral boundary reform but electoral reform, broadly speaking, so that we can encourage broader representation in all demographics.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members engaged in debate this morning.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since we are within our timelines, this House will stand recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to welcome the Co-op Housing Federation to Queen's Park. I know that others will be introducing more representatives, but I wanted to recognize that in the west members' gallery, we have Sophie Taylor from Peel-Halton Co-op Housing Federation; Judith Collins, Co-op Housing Federation of Toronto; Donna Stewart, Nelson Co-operative Homes; and Aaron Denhartog from the Co-op Housing Federation. I want to thank them for coming to Queen's Park, and I hope all members will attend their event tonight at 5 p.m. in room 228.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to introduce Lynette Sims and Karen Scott from the MS Society, as well as Paul Raymond and Suzanne Nurse from Epilepsy Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm delighted to welcome to Queen's Park today the page captain, Michael Douglas; his parent, Jayne Douglas; his grandparents, Carol and Bruce Douglas; and his grandmother, Elizabeth Stuart. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to recognize the MOM March that's here today: Mothers and Others March Against Eating Disorders. It's sponsored by the National

Institute of Eating Disorders. I'd like to introduce Lynne Koss, Sandy Provost and Arielle Mayer. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome some of the co-op housing representatives here today: Brian Eng, the director of CHF Canada; Simone Swail, program manager, government relations, CHF Canada, Ontario region; Denise McGahan, program manager, member services, CHF Canada, southwestern Ontario; and Emily de Keyser, manager for the Bridletowne Circle Housing Co-op. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to welcome Wendy and Len Preskow, Marlene Sachs and Alex Franceschini from the National Initiative for Eating Disorders. They do an amazing job raising awareness and in education. I hope everyone attends their event outside the Legislature after question period.

I'd also like to introduce two members of the Epilepsy Ontario association who are here from Durham region today. Please join me in welcoming executive director Dianne McKenzie, and Chelsea Kerstens. They're sitting in the east lobby.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Alice Funke from Pundits' Guide as my guest in the members' gallery today.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to welcome Epilepsy Ontario to Queen's Park this morning. Executive director Paul Raymond and representatives from community epilepsy agencies across Ontario are here for their annual Epilepsy Action Day and will be holding a reception later this evening. Please welcome them.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce David Hwang, who is a community leader in the Korean community. Welcome.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the MS Society of Canada, here today with us in the gallery. I invite all members of the House to room 230 for their reception right after question period.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to introduce my OLIP intern, Eric Zinn, who is sitting with us in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to introduce and welcome Roger Clowater from my riding and his police foundations class from the National Academy of Business and Health. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Today is Epilepsy Action Day. I would like to introduce Dianne McKenzie, executive director, and Chelsea Kerstens, Epilepsy Durham region. Welcome to Queen's Park today for Epilepsy Action Day.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm not sure if I heard this person being introduced yet in the House, but I did want to welcome Harvey Cooper, managing director at the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Welcome, Harvey.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order; thank you, Speaker. In yesterday's question period, there were some erroneous statements made, and I'd like to make sure that the Attorney General has an opportunity to correct her record today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is not a point of order. The member also knows only members themselves can correct their own record.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a good indicator of how we're going to start.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the associate minister.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear commemorative ribbons in recognition of epilepsy awareness day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is seeking unanimous consent to wear ribbons for epilepsy awareness day. Do we agree? Agreed.

I'm assured that all sides have appropriate ribbons in each of their galleries.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Acting Premier: A National Post columnist wrote about the Liberals' secret \$2.5-million payout to unions. He described it with a word that, he said, "infers a blatant disregard for honesty, ethics or principle." He went on to say that the Liberals "did ... their best to hide the transaction, suggesting that, at some level, they still sense it's offensive, wrong and abusive of the public trust."

Will the Acting Premier explain why her leader tried so hard to keep these payments secret? What was she trying to hide?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak to this issue. The member opposite is talking about a process that has been successful. Kids are in the classrooms; kids have stayed in the classrooms—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm willing to go down the same road I did yesterday. I would also encourage no members to use whistling as a way to make pronouncements.

Please finish.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The reality is that students have stayed in the classroom throughout this very difficult negotiation. The agreements that we have reached have been within the net-zero framework, which is an extraordinary accomplishment for our labour and our

public school boards, and our government. This has been a successful process. I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: There is a disturbing pattern emerging here. Liberals thought they were having a secret conversation with Andrew Olivier when they allegedly offered him a bribe, and then they got caught. When the private conversation became public, a top Liberal fundraiser was charged with corruption. The Liberals thought their payments to unions were secret; now that secret is out. This government must stop insulting the intelligence of Ontarians.

When will the Acting Premier admit that her government took classroom dollars and used them to buy union support?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will caution the member on the language. It's not there, but it's close, so I'll just caution him to refrain from making accusations.

Supplementary, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry—answer.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's important for the member opposite to understand that this was done without any cuts to the classroom. We have protected our success in our education system. This new process did require additional resources. We have fundamentally changed how negotiations between—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The new process did require additional resources. We did provide resources to our educational partners. The result is that we've been at the table and we've kept our kids in the classroom. This is all about making sure that kids are where they should be, and that is in the classroom. We've had success, Speaker. We look forward to more success, but having this relationship that has kept our kids in the class—

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

1040

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Acting Premier: That getting caught on this payment is a definition of success is bewildering. The government's latest scandal is laid out dollar for dollar in today's Globe and Mail. This government didn't need receipts because they weren't covering negotiating costs; they were covering advertising costs.

Now we know why, in 2013 and again this month, the Liberal government voted down the PC Party's bill to restrict third-party election advertising: because they wanted to make sure those millions of dollars that are being taken from the classroom are being used to benefit the Liberal Party.

Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, just for a moment, please. It's very difficult to ask one side to get quiet for the other side, when the other side is

engaging. If everyone were to just listen to the question and the answer, we would be better off.

Please continue.

Mr. Patrick Brown: To be very direct: When will this government apologize to parents and students for these secret payments that they know, that everyone in Ontario knows, are blatantly wrong?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the minister has said that—because we've had the new process in place now; we're through that transition phase—these payments will not continue in the future. They will not happen again.

What I can tell you is that it's pretty ironic that the party opposite is finally talking about education. Just remember, anyone who remembers back to the days when they were in office, where teachers were vilified, where kids were dropping out at alarming rates, where kids were not meeting international standards: Our children in our schools are doing so much better now than when you were in charge of the education system—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're proud of our record. Our graduation rates are—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Two comments: First of all, I'd like to hear. Second of all, to the Chair, please.

One wrap-up sentence.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our children are doing so much better now, so much that people come from around the world to—

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

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: I struggle to understand how taking money from the classroom for union payments benefits the classroom. When the gas plant scandal broke, the government said it was only \$40 million. When these secret documents became public, that number exploded to a billion dollars. When this latest scandal broke last week, a million dollars became \$2.5 million on Friday, and now it's grown to over \$7 million. That's \$7 million that the Liberal Party used from taxpayers that has been taken from classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Acting Premier tell Ontario that there is no money to keep schools open, when they've used \$7 million from classrooms to promote their own political agenda?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The cost of this successful negotiation with the unions was offset by savings within the net-zero contract, so for you to say that this is coming out of the classroom is simply wrong.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order. The member for Leeds–Grenville, come to order. And I heard somebody over here, but I'll zero in on you.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: If you want to compare their record to our record when it comes to education: When we were elected in 2003, only 68% of kids were graduating high school in five years. Today, it's 84%. We've gone from a 68% graduation rate to an 84% graduation rate. You can snicker about that if you want, but that is life-changing for those kids.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: When we were elected, Speaker, only 54% of kids were achieving the provincial standard in grades 3 and 6; now, it's 72%. Let's just think about that: From 54% to 72% of kids are meeting the standards—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's like making the 100-yard dash 50 yards. You lowered the standards. That's bull—

Interjection: I know you're full of it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm full of it? What did you say?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew: second time.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: No matter how you spin it, this money is being taken from the classroom. These union payments are from the classroom.

What is the most shocking is that ETFO said they had never even asked for the money. The unions weren't expecting this payment. But the Premier has said this is business as usual in Liberal Ontario.

What's not business as usual is for this government to get caught red-handed. What's not business as usual is for this government to have to explain to parents why they took money out of the classroom and used it for election advertising.

When will this government apologize to the people of Ontario for funnelling classroom dollars for their own political purposes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: That is an absolutely absurd accusation. Let's go back to the data. How are kids doing in Ontario now compared to how they were doing when you were in charge of our education system?

Let me repeat: The high school graduation rate has gone from 68% to 84%—an extraordinary accomplishment. On test scores, 72% of students now are meeting the provincial standard in grades 3 and 6 combined, up 18 percentage points from the 54% who were achieving that when you were in charge of the education system.

We have increased our expenditures. Kids across this province now have full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds. We've invested in kids—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Dufferin—Caledon: second time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —while you've been saying we're spending too much money. I'll tell you, there's no better investment we will ever make than investing in the success of our kids, and you should recognize that.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Acting Premier: It's getting pretty weak when you're stretching back into the past. You've run out of people to blame. You're stretching back into the past, when I was in high school. It's almost shameful.

The public is outraged that education dollars are being abused. Teachers are paying out of their own pockets for classroom supplies. Right now, parents are fundraising for school trips. They're being told the cupboard is bare. It's bare, but you know what's happening? It's bare, and you're taking money from the classroom—\$7 million.

My question for the Acting Premier is, how can this Ontario Liberal government think it's appropriate for even one second to take \$7 million out of the classroom to advance their own private political agenda?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Once again, these funds do not come out of the classroom.

I just want you to think about one thing. Now, I know you were not a candidate in the last provincial election, but ask any of your caucus mates about your promise to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm prepared to continue standing and taking your time from you if you decide to continue to shout people down.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Every single one of your caucus mates ran on the promise of firing 100,000 people. Just imagine what that would have done to the education system. Now, it's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, to the Chair. That's the specific reason why we do speak to the Chair.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I see the party opposite pretending they didn't make that promise, but they made that promise. In fact, the member from Barrie stood beside the then Leader of the Opposition when he made that promise to fire 100,000 people.

How would that have affected our education system? What would that have done to the educational assistants, the teachers, the students in our classrooms? It was an irresponsible promise to make, but everybody—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Premier has been using a lack of federal partner and federal money as one of the justifications for selling off Hydro One. The incoming federal government has promised billions of dollars for Ontario infrastructure, much more than the Premier could hope to make from selling Ontario's most important public asset, Speaker. The Premier will be meeting with the Prime Minister designate this afternoon. Will the sell-off of Hydro One be on the Premier's agenda?

1050

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We were very clear in our election campaign that we did run on a plan to invest in infrastructure, in badly needed infrastructure. We did have a federal government for the past decade that was not prepared to partner with us. We are delighted that we do have a new government in Ottawa and that that government is making investing in infrastructure a priority.

But we have no plans to press pause the way the leader of the third party would like us to do. We have a significant infrastructure deficit. We must make those investments for our prosperity and for our quality of life. We are committed to investing \$130 billion over the next 10 years in infrastructure because that's what the people of this province need, and we will do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's not just what I want the Liberals to do in this situation. It's what the people of Ontario want the Liberals to do in this situation. With the federal government promising billions and billions of dollars in new spending for infrastructure in Ontario, the Premier could actually do what many, many Ontarians have been asking her to do: Slow down the sell-off and ask the federal government for enough funds so that she doesn't have to sell off Hydro One at all. Now, will the Premier be raising with the Prime Minister designate the urgent need for Canada's largest province to receive enough infrastructure money so that she can actually do the right thing by the people of this province and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we remain absolutely committed to our mandate, which is to invest in the infrastructure in this province. It's the right thing to do for our economy and it's the right thing to do for the people who live in this province. I would say that the leader of the third party, who would be talking to the same municipal leaders we talk to, has heard loud and clear from municipalities that those investments in infrastructure are badly needed. So this is about creating jobs. It's about economic growth in the short run and in the long term.

But we did have a problem with the previous government and we made no secret of that problem we had. We are delighted to have a Prime Minister and a government that will make investments in infrastructure, but we are not going to slow down on our commitment to build the infrastructure in this province that people need.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, families, businesses and over 174 municipalities have all told the Premier to stand up and do the right thing for them. Ontarians have been unequivocal: Stop the sell-off of Hydro One. Federal infrastructure money could easily let the Premier off the hook for this bad and unnecessary sell-off. The Premier has a chance to actually rise above her stubbornness and do the right thing: stand up for Ontarians and not sell off Hydro One. This afternoon, will the Premier be actually thinking about the people of Ontario and what they want and ask the Prime Minister designate of this country to provide sufficient funds so that the sell-off of Hydro One does not have to happen here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said, we welcome the new federal government's commitment to building infrastructure. That is a very important issue that they dealt with in the last campaign. The people of this province and this country gave a new government a mandate to invest in infrastructure. We look forward to the partnership that we now will have as we make investment decisions on very important infrastructure across this province.

So we are going to carry on. We are not going to slow down. We will not press the pause button. I know the leader of the third party likes to think that there are cheap and easy solutions to every problem. We remain committed to making the investments necessary. It will create jobs now and in the future. It will get people home to their families more quickly. It will allow trucks to transport materials. This is the right thing to do. We have a lot of catching up to do. We're at 10 years of no investment from the federal government. We're moving forward.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier, Speaker. The sell-off of Hydro One has always been a bad deal for Ontarians. Media reports indicate that the sell-off of Hydro One may bring in \$2 billion less than the government had originally estimated. That means that the one-time sell-off could bring in significantly less than the \$400 million, on average per year over the next 10 years, that the Premier was counting on. That's not very much money when you consider that Hydro One is a money-making asset that raises significant revenues for this province annually.

Can the Acting Premier tell the people of Ontario how much revenue the Liberals stand to lose from the privatizing of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm sure the leader of the third party will be very happy to know that we are on track to generating the \$9 billion through the IPO. That's important because that money must be spent on the infrastructure that this province needs. So we do remain on track.

We're determined to get the best possible value for our assets so we can invest billions of dollars in infrastructure through the Trillium Trust. We are getting the best value. We're proceeding in a careful, staged manner with multiple tranches that will allow us to stay on track and achieve our target. This is the first step in a process. The final share price has not been established but we are, as I say, on track to receive the \$9 billion in proceeds.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The people of Ontario actually stand to lose as much as \$300 million in cash dividends from the sell-off of Hydro One, plus another \$50 million in lost tax revenue each and every year, from now to eternity. If the one-time sell-off comes up \$2 billion short, as it appears that it will, this Premier is giving away Ontario's most important asset for pretty much nothing.

The Premier could choose better options and additional revenues to fund infrastructure because she could be asking the Prime Minister designate to pitch in the way he has already said that he was going to do.

My question is, why exactly is it that the Liberal government is giving away a cherished, profitable asset instead of finding better ways to fund the necessary infrastructure for our province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are going to continue to own the company after we're done this.

I have to say, it's astonishing for me to hear the leader of the third party call \$9 billion almost nothing; \$9 billion builds a lot of infrastructure. We are committed to investing in infrastructure.

I also want to remind the leader of the third party that there is a cost, a very significant cost, to not investing in infrastructure. Anyone who travels around this province knows there is a real cost to not investing. We are on track. We're benefiting from a \$2.2-billion deferred tax asset, a special dividend of \$1 billion. We are on track and we're going to proceed with this plan. We know the leader of third party doesn't like this idea—

Mr. Paul Miller: We don't want to hear 407 out of you guys any more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: How this Deputy Premier can get up in her place and suggest to the people of Ontario that this government is getting \$9 billion to fund infrastructure is absolutely irresponsible. It is irresponsible.

We all know in this chamber that the Premier actually does have better options than selling off Hydro One. At every turn, this Liberal Premier has parroted Mike Harris's strategy of wrong-headed privatization, and Ontarians will once again pay the price. This strategy has already quadrupled electricity rates in Ontario for businesses and families.

The Premier will not even consider asking the most profitable corporations in Ontario to pay a little bit more for the infrastructure needs. The government could raise

corporate taxes. They could go to the actual Prime Minister designate and ask him to pitch in. Why is she choosing to take the Mike Harris approach?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Just to be clear, as I said earlier, we are still on track to receive \$9 billion in proceeds from our broadening the ownership of Hydro One. Five billion dollars will pay down the debt; \$4 billion will go into infrastructure. Our infrastructure plan is significant; it is important; it is valuable.

1100

I know, as I've said, that the member opposite doesn't want to proceed with this building of infrastructure, but we're going to proceed anyway. We have learned from Mike Harris what not to do. We carefully examined the 407 sale—talk about a fire sale; talk about giving away an asset for far less than it was worth. We analysed that deal, and we learned from those mistakes. We have a completely different structure.

The leader of the third party should understand that what we are doing is broadening the ownership, but we will still maintain—

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

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Treasury Board president, also the Acting Premier. She's also the minister of poverty reduction.

Since yesterday, the tally of union payouts has increased from \$2.5 million. It has tripled to \$7 million. This is all unreceipted. It flies in the face of everything she tells this assembly when she's wearing her Treasury Board hat. Yet, in Ontario schools, breakfast programs are being cancelled. This morning I learned that in my own constituency the Osgoode Emergency Food Cupboard, which serves rural students and families, is bare.

This is the consequence of your so-called net zero. Seven million dollars would have gone a long way for those needy children across the province.

If she's not prepared to rein in the education minister for ignoring Treasury Board targets to eliminate the deficit, and if she's not prepared to rein in the education minister in order to meet the accountability laws she has put in place, I would ask that the President of the Treasury Board stand in her place and tell the Minister of Education to get that money back into the education system, away from the unions.

Interjections.

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

Before I turn to the Deputy Premier, I'm going to remind all members that when you speak to the Chair, it helps. That's the convention. I'm going to insist we do that. Speak in the third person to the Chair, please.

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to sort out the facts here, Speaker. We agreed to a deal which is net zero with respect to compensation. We have always said that when

we concluded negotiations at all the tables, we would be quite willing to discuss the details of those agreements. In fact, the \$2.5 million that was transferred to the unions was part of three of those different net-zero agreements. We have always said that we would discuss those. There's no secret; it's part of those agreements which we were committed to doing.

The \$2.5 million which was transferred to the unions to support the cost of collective bargaining has always been part of the net-zero calculation. When negotiations are complete, we're quite happy to explain that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The squawking by the government has to stop. Okay?

We've got \$7 million in unreceipted payouts to unions who spent \$6.5 million in attack ads against the Progressive Conservative Party in the last election.

If that doesn't embarrass the government, and not meeting their deficit reduction targets doesn't embarrass the government, if not following their own accountability—

Interjections.

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

It goes for both sides.

Please finish.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A million dollars will get 4,000 needy students a breakfast program for one week. That is what the consequence is of your net zero. The union payouts are a misappropriation of tax dollars, plain and simple.

As Vice-Chair of the public accounts committee, I'm going to table a motion tomorrow asking for the Auditor General to investigate the \$7 million in misappropriated taxpayer dollars.

I'm going to ask the President of the Treasury Board too, not only to support that motion, but—

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

Interjections.

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

Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I can simply repeat that I'm not sure whether or not she has an understanding of "net zero." Net zero means that, in fact, the agreement didn't cost the government anything. The \$2.5 million in question is part of the net-zero calculation.

I have to dispense with this entire notion that anywhere in the collective agreements that we have negotiated—there are no cuts to the classrooms. The number of teachers that are being hired is the same based on class-size ratio; the number of teachers who were hired, based on additional teachers, are still in place and are still funded. There are no cuts to the classroom.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is for the Acting Premier. This government's record on education is

appalling. Not too long ago, the Acting Premier said there is no greater investment than the success of our kids. Well, Speaker, in the Acting Premier's own community of London, early childhood educators, maintenance staff, librarians and custodians have all received pink slips because of this government's proud record of cutting funding. To make matters worse, the Minister of Education is now uttering threats at education workers because she couldn't do her job.

Our kids are paying the price for this minister's failure. It's time for her to go. Will the Acting Premier admit that her Minister of Education has failed our kids and can't get the job done?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, we've increased spending in education by \$8.1 billion. You call that a cut; I call that an increase of 56%, and we're getting good value for that money. Our kids are doing so much better in school now than they were when we took office back in 2003.

We've got higher graduation rates, significantly. Tens of thousands of kids have graduated under our watch who would have dropped out under their watch. When it comes to test scores, 72% of kids are achieving the provincial standard, up 18 percentage points from 54%—just over half—before we took office.

We have invested heavily in education. We're proud to make those investments in education, because our kids are worth it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Again to the Acting Premier: Students and families are paying the price for this government's misplaced priorities. We are told there have been no cuts to the classroom. Maybe the minister should check whatever version of facts she's using today. Page 230 of the budget clearly lays out a \$250-million cut in-year; \$22.5 million in cuts to special education, impacting our most vulnerable kids; and in Toronto, 215 teachers fired and 100 ESL instructors fired, all because of cuts.

The minister has lost all credibility and has created chaos in our schools. The only person in this province who should be getting a pink slip is the Minister of Education. Will the Acting Premier issue the Minister of Education a pink slip for creating chaos in our schools?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: What I think we all understand—except perhaps the member opposite—is that school funding is based on the number of students. When you have the enrolment going down in-year, yes, we make in-year adjustments because there are fewer students. But despite the reduction in the number of students, the funding for special education has continued to rise.

What is creating a problem in our schools, Speaker—and you would understand this—is that we have a situation where in the English public schools, the teachers are on a partial strike and are refusing to produce report cards. They're refusing to do extracurricular activities. The CUPE workers are refusing to clean the

halls and some of the education workers are refusing to man the security system. None of those actions is acceptable.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Ma question porte sur le sujet du vaccin annuel contre la grippe.

Speaker, doctors will know that the annual flu season can actually be quite debilitating and of course has a range of effects, from absenteeism to fevered illness to hospitalization and, unfortunately, in the case of several hundred people annually, death.

1110

Avoidance measures like cough and sneeze etiquette and frequent handwashing, of course, are to be employed to avoid the spread through viral droplets. Patients will often ask, "Why does the injection change?" The injection changes annually because the viruses involved change annually.

So I ask the minister, when will this important offer from the government of Ontario—flu shot immunization—be available for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for this very timely question.

I'm pleased to say that yesterday morning I launched, at a pharmacy, in fact, this fall's flu immunization program. So starting this week, starting immediately, the free flu vaccine is available for all Ontarians at doctors' offices, nurse-led clinics, public health units, community clinics and of course our pharmacies.

For the first time, this year we're going to offer a new vaccine, a quadrivalent vaccine, against the flu that protects our children and youth from ages two to 17 years. It protects them against four different strains of flu instead of the usual three. So this quadrivalent vaccine is now available to that age group.

When you get vaccinated against the flu, you build up your immunity, making yourself stronger and more resistant. I encourage all Ontarians, including our health care workers, importantly, to get vaccinated against the flu, and do it early.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I particularly enjoyed the minister's response describing that very powerful vaccine as "Qadri-valent."

Having said that, Minister, as you will know, part of the principle of medicine is immunization, because prevention is always better than cure. We, as physicians, know that unfortunately flu-type illnesses can affect the extremes of age: our older populations as well as our younger populations—those under five.

Of course, it can be a bit of a negotiation when you're trying to inflict or offer or inject young children. But I understand now, Minister, that the government of Ontario is actually going to be envisioning and offering other injectable or other immunization options, which I think is a welcomed development in the practice of medicine in

Ontario, and I would respectfully invite the minister to inform this House about that.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thanks again to the member from Etobicoke North.

This year, for the first time in this province, the flu vaccine will be available to kids for free in the form of a nasal spray. This is incredibly important for those of us who are parents who understand the challenge that we sometimes face in vaccinating our kids, particularly on an annual basis, and them wanting to avoid every needle that they can.

So for children and youth between the ages of two and 17, the same “Qaadri-valent” vaccine is available, but in the form of a nasal spray. As mentioned earlier, there are more ways than ever to get vaccinated: through your local pharmacy, through your primary care provider, public health units and community and workplace clinics. There’s really not an excuse not to get vaccinated, and Ontarians should get vaccinated early.

TEACHERS’ COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, good morning. My question is for the Minister of Finance. The story concocted by the government to explain the millions paid out to the teachers’ unions for hotels and pizzas is starting to show cracks.

Last month’s public accounts detail Ministry of Education payments to hotel chains, so it’s clear they do business directly with the hotels. Here’s a sampling: Holiday Inn, \$54,778; Westin, \$56,826; Best Western, \$87,413; Marriott, \$254,665; and Sheraton, \$301,313.

To the Minister of Finance: If the government regularly pays for these hotels directly, why would they need to make payments to teachers’ unions?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You won’t know when I will strike.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Thank you. Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I was actually going to give them the answer and explain that, in fact, with the exception of one hotel, those hotels didn’t actually have collective bargaining going on at them. What they did have was professional development for principals. They had consultations going on about the GSN, in some cases. There were regional meetings for educators, and there were probably some training sessions at one of them for one of your own members’ private members’ bills. There was a variety of education events. Only one of those hotels has negotiations going on at it in one location, and that would be the government’s hotel rooms. Yes, we do have hotel rooms ourselves.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: If I wanted a non-answer to my question, I would have directed it to the Minister of Education.

The people of Ontario want answers regarding their finances, so again to the finance minister: We now know that \$750,000 worth of local hotels were booked by the Ministry of Education last year. Public accounts also details payments of nearly \$600,000 for catering. It’s clear the Ministry of Education paid for the hotels and food suppliers directly. Interestingly enough, none of them were for pizza chains.

The minister made payments to the teachers’ unions with no receipts, and then made payments for the hotels and food suppliers directly. Where did the money really go?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Where the money really went was to the hotel chain and the caterers for meetings that had absolutely nothing to do with collective bargaining in the vast majority of things which he mentioned.

That actually, however, does prove the point that those are for the most part one-off, one-day or two-day meetings, and if one-day or two-day meetings cost that much when you’re replicating them in regions all over the province, think how much it costs if you actually are doing collective bargaining and you’re at the hotel for a whole year.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Acting Premier. This week, the Premier will be visiting my beautiful riding of Niagara Falls for the entire Ontario Economic Summit. The people of Niagara and all our elected officials, including Al Caslin, the regional chair, all the mayors, as well as the regional and city councils will all tell her that they support daily, two-way GO rail service to Niagara. This project will create thousands of good-paying jobs in the region and bring nearly \$200 million in economic benefits to Niagara.

The last federal government committed to supporting GO service to Niagara Falls, and now Justin Trudeau has promised billions for the GO rail system. The Premier is meeting with him today. Will the Premier ask Mr. Trudeau for the funding so that she can come to Niagara and announce a plan for daily, two-way GO rail service all the way to beautiful Niagara Falls?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the question today. Of course, I’ve had the pleasure, as have many on this side of the House, including the Premier, as he mentioned, to meet with representatives from Niagara region over the last number of months. Of course, I believe that member would know that our member from St. Catharines is a champion for his region and for his community, and he has repeatedly talked about the need for us to move forward on this very important file.

Of course, I think this question goes to the very heart of why it’s so important that we have a Premier and a

government in place here in Ontario that believes in the importance of making the tough decisions to build the province up. It's interesting that that member and that caucus would be asking this kind of question on the exact same day when they stand up and question our decision to go forward with investing in crucial infrastructure.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, I'll answer the member's question: 170 municipalities have voted and said no to selling hydro; 85% of Ontarians have said no to selling hydro. There is a better way.

In the last general election, the Premier called increased GO train service to Niagara Falls a "very high priority." The Liberal member from St. Catharines, Mr. Bradley, your Liberal cabinet chair, said that he could see all-year GO rail service coming in 2015. But I haven't seen any action. The word "Niagara" appears nowhere in Metrolinx's most recent five-year plan.

Will the Premier keep her promise to the people of Niagara and immediately fund daily two-way GO rail service all the way to beautiful Niagara Falls?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his follow-up question. Of course the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx will continue to work with the region of Niagara as we sort through some of the technical information that they provided to us, and that we look forward to providing back to them in terms of that ongoing dialogue.

But of course, that member must surely know what a ridiculous contradiction it is for him to stand in this House mere minutes after his leader stands up and questions our motivation and our Premier's motivation with respect to making sure that tough decisions are made so we can invest in infrastructure. Mere minutes later, he stands up and says, "What my leader said is true for everybody except for my home region." That kind of unfortunate direction from that member is exactly why they're sitting where they are and exactly why their federal cousins are also sitting where they are.

Interjections.

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

CITIZENS' AWARDS

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Minister, I believe that we are the most diverse province in Canada, with people representing many different languages, cultures, interests and talents. I also believe, and I'm sure many would agree, that Ontarians are some of the kindest and most generous people in the world. I say that because every day I see people in my riding of Etobicoke Centre volunteering their time and participating in community projects to help make our community an even better place to live.

I think it's important that our government celebrate and show pride and gratitude to these people whenever possible for their contributions to our communities.

Could the minister please tell the House how the government recognizes these outstanding citizens?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from Etobicoke Centre. He's really a champion of our diversity in Ontario.

My ministry is the home of the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat, which works year round to recognize and thank Ontarians for a variety of wonderful things and reasons. Whether it be recognition of skills and talent, thanking dedicated Ontarians for lifelong service to the province or rewarding volunteers, we know how important it is to recognize outstanding citizens.

Ontario Honours and Awards delivers 17 recognition programs. Included in these programs are the Order of Ontario, the medal for good citizenship, the June Callwood award for volunteerism, the medal for young volunteers and more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you to the minister for his response. These sound like excellent opportunities for Ontarians to nominate people in their communities who have provided an outstanding contribution.

As the minister mentioned, we have people who dedicate so much of their time to helping their communities and making the world a better place. There are so many areas in which Ontarians do that; there are so many areas in which Ontarians excel. For example, I think one of the areas is in academia, in post-secondary education, with multiple post-secondary institutions ranked in the top 100 in the world. We have a new Nobel prize and more. We have much to be proud of here in Ontario.

In addition, we have many creative leaders who call Ontario home. These creative minds are sure to have been encouraged and nurtured from a young age. It's one of the reasons I think it's so important to get youth involved in the creative process at a young age.

Would the minister please inform the House of any programs that help recognize achievement in the creative arts specifically?

Hon. Michael Chan: I'm more than happy to do that. Our government offers a number of recognition programs for the creative arts. Just yesterday, I was pleased to join the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell and the Honourable James Bartleman to present six young talented aboriginal women with the James Bartleman Aboriginal Youth Creative Writing Award. The award celebrates aboriginal youth for their creative writing efforts and provides them with an opportunity to showcase their work to a broader audience.

Congratulations to Leera, Emily, Darienne, Rachel, Catherine and Justice on being selected as young writers. I hope this recognition will inspire them to keep writing and expressing themselves through their words.

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today, we learned in the Toronto Sun that the government is going to amend the Municipal Act to allow all municipalities to charge their own municipal

land transfer tax. There's only one taxpayer, Speaker, and they are already stretched to the limit.

Affordable home ownership is becoming a growing challenge for many Ontario families. At a time when we should be encouraging home ownership, the government is prepared to hit homeowners with \$10,000 in taxes on the average-priced Ontario home.

Will the Acting Premier, before it is too late, stop the imposition of any new municipal land transfer taxes?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's be clear: No decision has been made. We're currently consulting with our municipal partners, something that the opposition, when they were in power, did not do. All they did was download and impose stress on those municipalities.

We recognize that we have to have a strong working relationship with them. Working together, we can ensure that services to their communities are maintained and are predictive. We're currently reviewing the Municipal Act, and we're consulting, and that's all we're doing at this point.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's not up to municipalities. It's up to this Premier and her cabinet to make that power and give that power to municipalities.

The spread of a municipal land transfer tax would make Ontario the most uncompetitive tax jurisdiction in North America when it comes to buying a home.

The article in the Toronto Sun also noted that during the 2014 election campaign, this government said it had no plans to extend municipal land transfer tax powers to other municipalities beyond Toronto.

From hydro rates to land transfer taxes, the government is pricing people out of owning a home. There is still time to stop this flawed policy. Again, I'm going to ask the question: Will you commit today to not giving any more municipalities the ability to charge a municipal land transfer tax?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The opposition member is asking us not to review the Municipal Act. The member opposite is saying that. What we're doing is receiving input from municipalities, and absolutely no decisions have been made at this time.

As part of the review of the Municipal Act, we've been meeting with municipalities to discuss a variety of issues—issues that include sufficient accountability and transparency; whether municipalities have the powers and tools to deliver those services effectively; and what barriers municipalities face in achieving their financial sustainability. We would encourage municipalities and

the public to engage with their councils, as we welcome their input as part of our review.

They want to put their heads in the sand. We recognize that we have to have open consultations. That's exactly what we're doing. We'll allow the people to speak their minds and let them be heard.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The Jobs for Youth Program provides disadvantaged youth on Manitoulin Island who are aged 15 to 18 with the equivalent of eight weeks of full-time paid work with local employers.

In August, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board received word from your ministry that funding would be drastically cut. What, if anything, is your ministry doing to help unemployed and disadvantaged youth find work on Manitoulin Island and in northern communities?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member opposite for that question. My ministry and our government have been investing in the people of Ontario. We believe that the people of Ontario are the greatest assets of this country, of this nation. That's why we have been investing quite heavily in training and education—as well as in research and innovation, actually, for that matter.

1130

The youth employment strategy of Ontario: We have invested \$300 million in the youth jobs strategy, and we will continue to invest in the training and education of our youth as we move forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the minister: Manitoulin Island. The allocation for La Cloche is for seven youth, a reduction from 58, or an 88% cut.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board and its 18 member municipalities sent a letter to the Premier, stating they “need to understand how the ministry can reduce the number of youth placements from 111 ... to 19.... This represents an 83% reduction in the number of high-risk youth obtaining summer jobs.”

Minister, the district services board asked at AMO for a meeting. They were denied. They're asking again. Don't leave these youth behind. When will you agree to meet with them?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to meet with everyone, with every youth group, student group and so on and so forth. We are open for discussion. We are open to learn from our youth.

Mr. Speaker, we have introduced the Youth Job Connection program, which is a continuation of the youth jobs strategy. Since we came to office, we have invested quite heavily in the training and education of youth, and we will continue to invest.

Youth Job Connection served almost 25,000 students to find job placements in the past. We will continue to invest in youth education.

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I was pleased that Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act, made its way through the House, committee and now passing third reading on October 7. This is the third time a Great Lakes protection act had been brought forward to this Legislature. I want to thank all those who participated and brought their ideas and concerns for the Great Lakes to these conversations.

As a member whose riding is on Lake Ontario, I understand perhaps more particularly how passionate Ontarians are and how much they care about their Great Lakes. My question, Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, is this: What would this bill mean for the health and protection of our Great Lakes, and how will it benefit all Ontarians?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member from Burlington for her very thoughtful question.

I think her own community is an example of it. As many of us know, we've had to replace the operating rooms in the hospital there twice, after construction, within 24 months. Mayor Goldring will tell us that the stormwater sewer systems in Burlington are being overwhelmed by regular events that exceed the hundred-year flood level.

Burlington is a relatively new community. We're talking about a lot of new infrastructure. That affects water quality, and that affects the entire economy of communities like Burlington on the lakes.

The Great Lakes Protection Act is an extraordinarily powerful piece of legislation, because it creates valuable networks and supports in communities for local action on water quality, water protection and bringing all the players together locally.

In my supplementary, I'll elaborate on some examples of how this is working so well already.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you, Minister, for your answer. I'm thrilled to hear that the strengthened bill emphasizes restoring the Great Lakes' good health and ensuring that they are drinkable, swimmable and fishable for generations to come.

It is important, however, that we create opportunities for the public to become involved in their protection and restoration. I understand that an important feature of this legislation is the creation of the Great Lakes council.

Speaker, can the minister please share with this House who the council will bring together and what its mandate will be?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member from Burlington and to my colleagues: It really is the connective tissue that brings all kinds of community efforts together.

Yesterday evening, I had the great pleasure of spending a good part of the evening with our source-water protection committees. All of the members in the House from the southern three quarters of the province have

them. They were very aware of the act. They said to me that we have 20 of the 22 plans approved now, and we have the other two coming in the next few weeks. Next year will be our first year with source-water protection plans for all Ontarians.

They said we've got to work with indigenous people. We have to get alignment of municipal plans. We have to work with our conservation authorities, our mayors, our local businesses. We've got challenges on the Great Lakes, with low water levels causing damage to marine infrastructure and, in other years, it being destroyed by ice. All of this involves that. The guardians' council, which is not an imposed regulatory body—it's a volunteer body—allows for these connections to happen and for local plans to be implemented and for local collaboration, which is what we think is so important.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Attorney General. Last week, Scott Tod, deputy commissioner of the OPP, and representatives from the RCMP as well as the FBI, spoke on a cross-border investigation that led to over 190 arrests for human-trafficking-related offences in the United States and Canada. Scott Tod emphasized the importance of information-sharing, collaboration and sharing of resources between regional jurisdictions in order to combat human trafficking.

In my motion that I tabled earlier this year, which was unanimously supported by the House, I called for the creation of a task force to coordinate a team of officers and crown attorneys and establish consistent, specialized services for victims.

When will the government take the necessary action to combat human trafficking more effectively and create this provincial task force?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, this is an excellent question. I am going to check, but I believe that there is already this group working together.

I know that when I was the Minister of Public Safety, human trafficking was a very, very important point. I know that the police officers and every police group in Ontario were working together along with the RCMP. I know that my ministry has the crown working together. Our government has a consolidated approach to combat human trafficking and raise awareness on this issue, including initiatives focused on prevention, enforcement and supporting victims. Our ministry funds a broad range of support and services for victims of human trafficking.

I'll continue in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I know the group has done excellent work, but they need help. The insidious nature of human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery. It is hidden. It's not isolated to a single jurisdiction. The government needs to create the task force that will allow local law enforcement agencies to collaborate and open lines of communication. It needs a concerted effort to stop human trafficking across Canada, and especially in

Ontario, where there are the largest domestic human trafficking rings that we know of.

In the press conference last week, Operation Northern Spotlight emphasized that victims are not always socially or economically disadvantaged and that they rarely identify themselves to authorities during investigations.

In creating a specialized task force, which would give more resources to probably the largest-growing crime in Ontario, how are you going to help the victims feel safe that they can come forward and bring offenders to justice?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, Mr. Speaker, my ministry, the Ministry of the Attorney General, has provided specialized training to prosecutors, police and victim services staff. Prosecutors, police and victim services staff consult with each other and with other justice partners to share knowledge and best practices. As I said, we have quite a few programs that are available to help victims. We have Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario. We have the Victim Quick Response Program. We have the sexual assault centres. We have the Victim/Witness Assistance Program. We have the Victim Support Line, where someone can call and get the service. We offer this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and in 150 languages. We have also the Victim Services Directory and many other services that—

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Algoma–Manitoulin has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities concerning the Manitoulin–Sudbury District Services Board. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRENGTHENING CONSUMER
PROTECTION AND ELECTRICITY
SYSTEM OVERSIGHT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR RENFORCER
LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS
ET LA SURVEILLANCE
DU RÉSEAU D'ÉLECTRICITÉ

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

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

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

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats.

On September 24, 2015, Mr. Chiarelli moved second reading of Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010, and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Naqvi, Yasir
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	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brown, Patrick	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Damerla, Dipika	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Del Duca, Steven	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Mantha, Michael	Thibeault, Glenn
Dong, Han	Martins, Cristina	Thompson, Lisa M.
Duguid, Brad	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Fife, Catherine	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Forster, Cindy	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fraser, John	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakabuski, John
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Gates, Wayne	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 96; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 22, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 42, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 113.

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

On Monday, October 26, 2015, Mr. Naqvi moved government notice of motion number 42. All those in favour of the motion please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Orazietti, David
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 52; the nays are 44.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1153 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**MOTHERS AND OTHERS MARCH**

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise to commend participants in today's MOM, or Mothers and Others March, at Queen's Park in support of eating disorder sufferers, their families and their friends.

Let me first begin by acknowledging members of the National Initiative for Eating Disorders who are with us today, including their founder and president, Wendy Preskow.

It was an honour to speak at their march and to host their press conference earlier this afternoon. This was an emotional day, and I want to thank you for the tremendous strength and courage that all of the members have

shown today. Know this: Your efforts are shining a light on eating disorders and providing a beacon of hope for those suffering in the shadows.

Today's Mothers and Others March at Queen's Park is one of six in Canada, in conjunction with one on Capitol Hill in Washington. These marches are sending a message that our health care system must do better in treating, diagnosing and raising public awareness about eating disorders. The need to act couldn't be more urgent. We know eating disorders are 12 times more likely to lead to death than any other mental illness.

But there is hope for treatment, and that's why I wrote to Minister Hoskins in May. I asked him to be a champion for this devastating mental illness and for Ontario to lead the way in developing a national strategy on eating disorders. The lack of action is disappointing. But on behalf of those who have an eating disorder and the hundreds of thousands of family members suffering with them, I want to repeat that call: We need to do better, and we start today.

IAN BOS

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight an outstanding man I met over the summer months named Ian Bos.

On January 16, 2015, his father, Ted Bos, passed away after a brave fight with cancer. On May 21, 2015, Ian departed from the east coast on a cross-country walk in memory of his father and in honour of the excellent care his father, Ted, received. Ian's goal was to raise \$25,000 for the Aberdeen Palliative Care Society and to raise funds and awareness for palliative care societies across Canada, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association and the provincial palliative care associations.

Yesterday, Ian arrived in Victoria, toured the Legislative Assembly, and completed his final two kilometres, before dipping his feet in the west coast waters, bringing closure to an amazing feat.

Congratulations, Ian, for completing this incredible journey which lasted 159 days and covered over 6,000 kilometres.

Every community that Ian stopped into, every person he met, everyone who walked alongside Ian has learned a great deal from Ian's experience.

Thank you for your inspiration, Ian, and for challenging many Canadians, raising awareness of palliative care and the importance of hospice homes and workers across the country. End-of-life care matters. It really does. It was a joy and honour to share part of this walk with you. I hope our paths cross again.

ATLANTIC PACKAGING PRODUCTS LTD.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I rise today on the occasion of Manufacturing Month and to recognize a hallmark company in Scarborough, Atlantic Packaging Products Ltd., which is celebrating its 70th anniversary.

Started as a family-owned paper bag company in 1945, Atlantic Packaging currently employs approximately 1,400 people and has 21 manufacturing plants and warehouses providing good manufacturing jobs right here in Ontario.

The Ontario government played a part in this growth, too, as their Whitby paper mill was able to add jobs last year thanks to the help of Ontario's Industrial Electricity Incentive Program. Through this mill and other sites, Atlantic continues to lead in clean energy. This project creates steam from paper mill residual biosolids to reduce natural gas consumption.

Early on, Atlantic pioneered the use of 100%-recycled containerboard in North America, and currently this process results in saving over 15 million trees per year.

At the heart of this company lies a true entrepreneurial spirit, headed by Mr. Irving Granovsky, the chairman. Atlantic Packaging is a shining example of how employing innovation, management techniques and technology can lead to growth that is sustainable and environmentally friendly.

I would like to mark their 70th anniversary on the occasion of Manufacturing Month and commend them for bringing good jobs to Ontario and making our province grow.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Today, I'd like to bring a statement with regard to MS, multiple sclerosis. Canada has the highest rate of multiple sclerosis in the world. Not only do 100,000 Canadians live with the disease, but their families, friends and communities do as well. In Ontario, over 37,000 people are living with this disease.

The unpredictability and invisible nature of the disease creates a challenge for Canadians living with MS and their caregivers, as it affects their employment and financial security. Ontarians with MS need our support to ensure continued employment while respecting the daily challenges they face.

It is our job as parliamentarians to ensure that policies are in place so that MS patients have access to quality, coordinated care. We need to streamline the drug approval process to ensure that new medications and treatments are available for MS patients. We need to ensure that ADP process paperwork is minimized to ensure patients have access to the aids they will need.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I carry around a carnation to show my solidarity with the MS community in the fight against MS. I urge each of us to join the fight to end MS in our lifetime and effect positive change in the lives of those impacted by the disease today.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: US Steel bought Stelco in 2007, based on 31 promises around employment, production, capital investment, pension funding and community support. It has broken those promises again and again, enabled by Harper's federal government.

In September, it transferred many of its Canadian contracts to its US plants. Now it says that the very loss of those contracts—which it caused, Speaker—means it can't afford to meet its obligations.

US Steel Canada has stopped paying property taxes in municipalities like the city of Hamilton and it has suspended health, medical and dental benefits and life insurance for 20,000 families and retirees. This is both an insult and an injury to people who suffered enormous health difficulties because of their work. My office has heard from countless pensioners who cannot afford essential medicines. They fear for their lives, Speaker.

I would like to acknowledge the provincial government and the Minister of Finance for providing \$3 million in emergency transitional assistance. The fund will, over the next six months, help retirees with critical health needs and facilitate their transition to any available support schemes, such as the Trillium Drug Program or the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. But this fund will not and could never be enough, and it won't last long, Speaker.

There will be mounting health care bills from US Steel's actions, which will be borne by retirees themselves, their families, their communities and, ultimately, the province as well. Broken promises lead to broken budgets and broken lives.

MANUFACTURING MONTH

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: October is Manufacturing Month in Ontario. I am proud to celebrate with Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters in Ontario. In my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South and all over Ontario, manufacturing is an essential part of the economy. Despite changes in the manufacturing base and fierce global competition, the sector grows stronger each day, due, in part, to the spirit of innovation which drives modern manufacturing.

Our government is working closely with the industry to foster innovation by leveraging investments, like Pratt and Whitney in Mississauga, to help it seize new opportunities and create great jobs.

1510

Bison Transport's new facility in my riding is also a sign of manufacturing strength. Bison just opened a \$25-million, state-of-the-art, 19,000 square-foot terminal that makes it a transport leader throughout the region.

I'm so very proud of the many companies in my riding for their hard work, for their leadership and for the thousands of great jobs they provide to my constituents. I'm also proud to be part of a government that supports our manufacturers in the province of Ontario.

SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The Saugeen Memorial Hospital in Southampton has become a true testimony to the difference that dedicated citizens can make. I am pleased that the community will finally achieve their goal

of a new emergency room and laboratory in their local hospital.

The project will expand the emergency and lab departments, a change that has been needed for quite some time. Just imagine, to get into the waiting hall, if you will, of a hospital, you would have to walk through a triage. Essentially, that's the reality they've been living with for too long. And the waiting room in the ER is not air-conditioned. They could only find a way to prop a small fan above the doorway to the hallway where people lined up in chairs waiting for their turn to see a doctor.

This improvement has been needed for years. Now, with the ministerial approval granted to tender the project, it is expected that the project will be completed, finally, by the fall of 2018.

While the province provides the bulk of the funding, the role of the community has been vital to the project's success. Volunteers and supportive community members came through and worked tirelessly towards the \$2.9-million goal. To quote the fundraising chair, Tony Sheard, they are "this close," Speaker.

I'm pleased to say that as of this past summer, the campaign is a mere \$150,000 away from its fundraising goal, and they're going to achieve it. Congratulations.

And all I have to say to wrap up is, do not forget about the Kincardine hospital.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'm very proud to have been a part of the fight against multiple sclerosis. For many years in my community of Cambridge and indeed in Waterloo region, I've cared for individuals and their families dealing with multiple sclerosis as a community nurse, a critical care nurse and as a care coordinator for the community care access centre.

These families have complex needs: trying to raise children, work and plan for their futures. With Canada having the highest rate of MS in the world, it's our job as public servants to support citizens of this great country when they're faced with such an unpredictable disease.

As my colleague across the way said earlier, in Ontario, over 37,000 people are living with this disease. Those Ontarians face a host of physical, mental and economic effects brought on by the disease itself and the challenges it creates for these people and those who are caring for them.

I encourage my fellow members to advocate for income and employment support systems which will ensure that those that are affected by MS will get the help that they need as soon as they need it. Quality and coordinated health care is also integral to ensure that those living with MS and their loved ones can continue to live healthy, independent and fulfilling lives.

Today I am standing in my place in my fight against MS, and I encourage all of you in the House to do so, as well as the constituents in my riding. We need to show solidarity against MS.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further member statements?

The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

EVAN LEVERSAGE

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Speaker. I rise today on your behalf to honour a community in your riding that has come together to show support for Evan Leversage, who has been battling brain cancer for five of his seven years.

This past weekend, the entire community in the small town of St. George, in the riding of Brant, brought Christmas to Evan. On Saturday, a parade with more than two dozen floats, including Santa Claus himself, passed by Evan's house in St. George. When Evan's family learned that their son's brain tumour had spread, they decided to celebrate Christmas early this year, at the suggestion of their doctors.

With only two days of organizing, the community showed an outpouring of support for the request of Evan's family: 7,000 joined Saturday's celebration, more than double the population of this small town in Brant. They lined Evan's street, cheering as he passed by the festive lit houses, sitting next to Santa in his sleigh.

During the ceremonies, Brant county police and firefighters presented Evan with uniforms and made him their honorary member. Children handed him cards. Evan's neighbours decked out their homes with lights and decorations. Snow machines blew for hours, blanketing parts of Evan's street in a gentle snowfall. His family says that they are still overwhelmed by the response from their town and from the presents and messages that they've received from their incredibly caring community in St. George and throughout Brant, Ontario, Canada and beyond.

Today, through you Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the great people of St. George, your constituents, for the way they supported this boy and his family at this very difficult time. May we all respond with the same compassion and generosity to the people in need in all our communities.

Merry Christmas, Evan.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I did give him some extra time. Thank you.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated October 27, 2015, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to

standing order 108(f)9, the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTRY OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (PAROLE), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE DES SERVICES CORRECTIONNELS (LIBÉRATIONS CONDITIONNELLES)

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 130, An Act to amend the Ministry of Correctional Services Act in respect of parole / Projet de loi 130, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels en ce qui concerne les libérations conditionnelles.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: The bill provides that an inmate granted parole has to sign their certificate of parole or they will not be released. Currently, the Ontario Parole Board is allowed to release an inmate even if the inmate does not sign their certificate of parole if, in the opinion of the board, compelling or exceptional circumstances exist.

The bill also provides that if an inmate who committed sexual or domestic violence is released on parole, their location must be electronically monitored unless they do not pose a safety risk to their victim.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHARING ECONOMY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES POSSIBILITÉS OFFERTES PAR L'ÉCONOMIE DE PARTAGE

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to enact two new Acts and to amend other Acts to regulate transportation network vehicles, to provide freedom for individual residential property owners to share their property for consideration with others and to deal with the expenses of public sector employees and contractors in that connection / Projet de loi 131, Loi visant à édicter deux nouvelles lois et à modifier d'autres lois pour réglementer les véhicules de réseau numérique de transport, pour donner aux particuliers propriétaires de biens résidentiels la liberté de partager leur bien avec d'autres moyennant contrepartie

et pour traiter des dépenses des employés et entrepreneurs du secteur public en lien avec ces questions.

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

First reading agreed to.

1520

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, as you can tell, the explanatory notes for the bill are a little long, so I'll summarize. Basically, the bill creates a modern, streamlined, province-wide framework to allow the municipal licensing of transportation network vehicles, home sharing and parking sharing to help relieve the regulatory burden and get needed information to consumers about public safety and consumer protection measures.

Schedule 1 ensures that there's a balance between folks who use a sharing economy and those who do not when it comes to expenses and procurement in government.

Schedule 2 deals with amendments related to home and parking sharing, which allow residents to share their home up to 120 days per year without a licence and their parking spot up to 365 days a year without a licence.

Schedule 3 is governing legislation with respect to transportation network vehicles and their obligations for consumer protection and public safety.

The act is the first of its kind in Canada, Speaker. I look forward to second reading debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I remind all members that, as the member just did, you can shorten the explanatory notes, but your statement is always taken from the explanatory notes. I thank the member for doing so, because I knew the explanatory notes were quite long.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Ms. MacCharles moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

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 minister for a short statement.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: This is a very important day. We've just introduced legislation that, if passed, will amend six government acts. If passed, the legislation will improve support for survivors in the justice system while protecting students and workers, as well, from the threat of sexual violence and harassment. All Ontarians would benefit from living without the threat and experience of sexual violence and harassment.

PRECISION PIPE MANUFACTURING INC. ACT, 2015

Mr. Thibeault moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr31, An Act to revive Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (PERMANENT PARTIAL DISABILITY SUPPLEMENTS), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (SUPPLÉMENT POUR INVALIDITÉ PARTIELLE À CARACTÈRE PERMANENT)

Mrs. Albanese moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 133, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 respecting permanent partial disability supplements / Projet de loi 133, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne le supplément pour invalidité partielle à caractère permanent.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: The bill amends section 110 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, so that any pension a worker is eligible for under the Old Age Security Act does not reduce the worker's permanent partial disability benefits for pre-1985 and pre-1989

injuries under the pre-1997 act. It's a technical bill, but of great symbolic significance.

CONSERVATION LAND FAIRNESS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE DE TERRES PROTÉGÉES

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act to amend the Assessment Act to exempt land that is subject to certain conservation easements or covenants from taxation / Projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation foncière afin d'exempter les biens-fonds visés par certaines servitudes ou certains engagements de l'imposition.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: This is a bill that has been championed by the escarpment missionary Bob Barnett. The purpose of this act is to encourage private land-owners to grant easements or covenants to conservation bodies to help achieve Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy of preserving 17% of Ontario's territory. It is basically giving a tax break to people who help preserve our precious conservation lands.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 79 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice of ballot item 79 be waived. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: "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.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Kyle to bring it down to the table—a fine young page from Algoma–Manitoulin.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled”—I could say now quadrupled—“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

1530

“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, sign my name to it, and send it down with page Faith.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m proud to introduce this petition that has been organized by Amy Grady, who is an MRI radiologic technologist in Windsor. For the sake of full disclosure, she is also my cousin, so I’m very proud of that fact. The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas wait times are rising to 80+ days for an MRI in southwestern Ontario;

“Whereas experienced and qualified technologists are available to fill positions in this field, but lack of funding to hospitals only allows limited hours of operation;

“Whereas by allowing independent health facilities the licence to have MRI as an added modality, it would drastically cut wait times and create much-needed jobs;

“Whereas as a new open MRI would accommodate more patients with claustrophobia and larger size and keep tax dollars in our community;

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

“Decrease MRI wait times and create jobs by increasing the funding for MRI services and implement a plan to allow MRI as a modality in independent health facilities in southwestern Ontario.”

Thank you very much, Speaker. I will send it to the Clerks’ table through Julia.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas fluoride ions in drinking water strengthen tooth enamel and prevent tooth decay in children and adults, just as adding chlorine kills bacteria in drinking water; and

“Whereas a large body of clear, conclusive and sound scientific evidence verifies that the practice of fluoridation of municipal drinking water by bringing the levels of naturally occurring fluoride up to a level of 0.8 to 1.0 milligram per litre of water has been shown to consistently reduce tooth decay and gum disease, and to reduce the need for expensive dental restoration; and

“Whereas after the common cold, preventable dental problems cause more absence from school than any other single cause; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to influence by misinformation and outright junk science;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend the applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water system processes across the province of Ontario.”

I will sign this and send it to the table with Cameron.

HUNTING

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

“Whereas, in the autumn of each year, Point Clark, Ontario, residents report hunters shooting towards the shoreline in the direction of private properties and people, hunters firing over adults’ and children’s heads while children played on the beach, hunting out of hours, wounded geese falling metres away from residents’ windows, geese and ducks dying on residents’ front lawns and the destruction of private property by irresponsible hunters;

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources allows hunting of geese, ducks, deer and turkey in residential areas and the crown lands adjacent to these residential areas on the lakefront at Point Clark. These hunting activities endanger the residents and their children of Point Clark, Ontario, in Huron-Kinloss township where these crown lands are 30 to 60 metres in width in front of private properties at Point Clark;

“Whereas Point Clark, Ontario, residents report irresponsible hunting to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), who only have two enforcement officers in Grey and Bruce county. Reports of hunting infractions are often not recorded, responded to in a timely manner or enforced by the MNR because of a lack of resources. The township of Huron-Kinloss cannot enforce its current noise bylaws because these adjacent crown lands are outside of township’s boundaries and therefore the township’s jurisdiction;

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

“(1) To ban hunting in residential areas in Ontario whether they are incorporated or unincorporated;

“(2) To ban hunting on adjacent crown lands within 200 metres of a private residence;

“(3) To make the pointing of a firearm used for the purpose of hunting towards a residence or a person within the range of that firearm an offence;

“(4) To increase the number of MNR enforcement officers so that hunting violations can be properly investigated, prosecuted and responded to in a timely matter; and

“(5) To safeguard our security and that of our children and grandchildren by implementing the above necessary measures.”

I’ll affix my signature to the petition and send it to the desk with Jade.

POLICE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the vast majority of police officers uphold and obey the law, however, when a police officer does break the law in a grievous manner, it reflects poorly on all police, the judicial system and the government; and

“Whereas when a police officer is suspended, no matter what the reason, the Police Services Act requires that they continue to receive full compensation, including benefits, the accumulation of sick days and even raises; and

“Whereas public confidence is negatively affected when such officers, after being found guilty and dismissed from service, continue to receive full compensation while appealing their convictions, leaving taxpayers with no recourse for cost recovery; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada where police officers must be suspended with pay, and does not give chiefs the discretion to suspend without pay an officer charged with an offence—or even convicted of an offence if the conviction is under appeal;

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

“To amend the Police Services Act to:

“(a) provide for the discontinuation of suspension with pay for police officers dismissed as a result of part V proceedings following serious criminal convictions, even during any subsequent appeal;

“(b) give police chiefs the ability to suspend officers without pay for serious criminal offences, or if officers charged are held in custody or subject to court-ordered conditions that would prevent them from carrying out their duties; and

“(c) give police chiefs the discretionary ability to suspend officers without pay for serious Police Services Act misconducts.”

Speaker, I will give this petition to Kyle and let him bring it up to the desk.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have a petition here about lung disease.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths ... lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this and will affix my signature.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

1540

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn’t necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

“To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it down with page Samuel.

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M. Michael Mantha: « Hydro One, pas à vendre!

« Pétition à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit un projet de privatisation qui entraînera une hausse des tarifs d’électricité, une baisse de la fiabilité et des centaines de millions de dollars en moins pour nos écoles, nos routes et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que le projet de privatisation sera particulièrement préjudiciable pour les communautés du Nord et des Premières Nations; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit ce projet de privatisation dans le secret, faisant que les Ontariens n’ont pas un mot à dire sur un changement qui affectera sérieusement leur vie; et

« Attendu qu’il n’est pas trop tard pour annuler le projet;

« Compte tenu de cela, nous, les soussignés, pétitionnons l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario comme suite :

« Que la province de l’Ontario annule immédiatement son projet de privatisation du réseau de distribution d’électricité de l’Ontario. »

Je suis complètement d’accord avec cette pétition, et je la présente au page John pour l’apporter à la table des greffiers.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I support this petition and I’ll sign it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

POLICE RECORD CHECKS REFORM ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA RÉFORME DES VÉRIFICATIONS DE DOSSIERS DE POLICE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 20, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act respecting police record checks /
Projet de loi 113, Loi concernant les vérifications de
dossiers de police.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 27, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 113, An Act respecting police record checks. 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 will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have, in fact, received a deferral notice from the chief government whip, asking that the vote be deferred. This vote will now take place tomorrow after question period during the regular time for deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day?

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION
DU DROIT À LA PARTICIPATION
AUX AFFAIRES PUBLIQUES

M^{me} Meilleur moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest / Projet de loi 52, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les tribunaux judiciaires, la Loi sur la diffamation et la Loi sur l'exercice des compétences légales afin de protéger l'expression sur les affaires d'intérêt public.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the Attorney General to lead off the debate.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rise today to begin third reading on the proposed Protection of Public Participation Act. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Scarborough Southwest, Lorenzo Berardinetti.

Over the past few weeks, we have had some very important conversations and debates on this bill. Je suis ravie de voir que le projet de loi progresse.

Free speech and public debate are essential for a robust democratic society. This is a principle that the legal community stands behind. C'est pourquoi des organismes comme l'Association du Barreau de l'Ontario, l'Association canadienne du droit de l'environnement et l'Association canadienne des libertés civiles ont endossé ce projet de loi.

Community leaders across Ontario have rallied in support of legislation combatting strategic lawsuits, including nearly 65 municipalities, PEN Canada, Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, the Ontario Confed-

eration of University Faculty Associations and over 150 environmental organizations, among many others.

Of course, this bill has not been without some opposition. I would like to take a moment to address some of the views that were expressed against this bill during previous debates and during public hearings before the standing committee. We have heard from representatives of the forestry industry as well as from northern municipalities, who expressed a number of concerns; chiefly, that the bill would create a licence for environmental groups to defame resource industries, causing serious harm to northern economies and municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the members that this bill will not have that effect. Le projet de loi ne donne à personne carte blanche simplement parce que le sujet est d'intérêt public. Any civil action that relates to a truly harmful defamatory attack against a person or an organization would still proceed under this bill. Des attaques publiques infondées sur nos industries vitales dans le nord de l'Ontario ne seront pas permises.

1550

This bill would provide a process for the courts to evaluate whether free expression on a matter of public interest should be subject to a lawsuit by having the courts make an evaluation in several steps. First, the views expressed by a citizen must be on a matter of public interest and not simply a private quarrel or personal allegations. Second, there must be grounds to believe that the case can succeed on its merits. Finally, there must be some likely harm to the party that starts the lawsuit. Ainsi, un citoyen ne peut pas être réduit au silence ou puni pour la simple raison que la personne qui est la cible de l'expression n'est pas contente. Le tribunal devra être convaincu que le mal causé pèse plus que la valeur de la liberté d'expression dans l'intérêt public.

I believe this bill will empower citizens and organizations to speak out against injustices. Mr. Speaker, this province prides itself on the protection and promotion of the democratic rights of all of its citizens, and this bill, if passed, would be another way to expand those rights. If you believe that everyone deserves to be treated fairly in our court system, if you believe that larger, wealthier organizations should not be allowed to bully smaller opponents who have fewer resources, si vous pensez que les citoyens devraient se sentir libres de participer aux affaires publiques au lieu d'être réduits à ne pas oser exprimer leurs préoccupations par crainte de représailles, then the path forward is clear.

It's time we did the right thing. It's time we showed the rest of Canada what we stand for. I urge all my colleagues to stand with me in supporting this bill. Thank you. Merci.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: I've listened to the Attorney General, as well as listening to the many people who came forward during committee to speak about this bill. I really would have preferred to wholeheartedly agree with

the Attorney General about this bill and about what it would do, because I surely believe that there is and has been, on a number of occasions, an abuse of process in our courts that has limited public participation. The courts, which are there to provide a remedy for people who are injured, have sometimes been used to abuse—there has been an abuse of process, and instead of preventing an injustice has actually been the cause of an injustice.

Unfortunately, this bill is not quite as perfect as the Attorney General has stated. That was heard often through the committee: that there were many people who did identify weaknesses. Once again, we saw during the committee that amendments were brought forward after hearing from the public—and the public was very limited in their ability to speak to this bill. Each deputant to the committee was only allotted five minutes to speak to this very important and substantive bill.

I want to first zero in on one comment that the Attorney General mentioned when she was referencing the concerns that we heard from our northern resource industries, that they felt that the way the bill was written may be used as a tool against our northern resource industries. The minister says that it has all been taken care of; it's not going to happen. Well, I want to draw the House's attention to some of the remarks that were made in committee on that specific reference, and it was my questions to Shane Moffatt from the organization Greenpeace. Just to provide some context, Greenpeace is embroiled in a lawsuit at the present time with Resolute industries. The evidence was clear. It was brought to the committee that Greenpeace Canada's volunteer program co-ordinator, Aspa Tzaras, sent out tens, if not hundreds of thousands of emails to individual members and supporters of Greenpeace and asked those people to do five different things—spread the word, sign the petition. But number four was the important one: Write a false product review on Best Buy's website. Now, Best Buy is the top customer for Resolute industries. "Write a false product review on Best Buy's website. Be creative and make sure to weave in the campaign issues," and "Change your Facebook profile...."

So here we have an environmental organization asking hundreds of thousands of people to engage in a falsehood, to engage in dishonest behaviour and hurt an outstanding corporate citizen, an employer in northern Ontario.

I questioned Shane Moffatt on this. He put it down to an error in translation. It was all a mistake. Somehow Greenpeace couldn't articulate in the English language correctly and they somehow got it wrong when it said, "Write a false product review." That was Mr. Moffatt's defence, that something got lost in the translation.

What my question to Mr. Moffatt was—and it was followed up by the member from Beaches–East York on the Liberal benches. I asked Greenpeace if this bill had retroactivity and if this bill had been in place prior to the suit, would it be of benefit to Greenpeace and would they be able to dismiss Resolute's lawsuit? Greenpeace didn't want to answer that.

But Murray Klippenstein of Klippenstein law, who also made a presentation at the committee, was also asked that question: Would this help Greenpeace in their campaign of falsehoods and dishonesty against Resolute? In direct response to Mr. Arthur Potts, the member for Beaches–East York—Mr. Potts said, "There was some evidence earlier about one environmental organization"—referring to Greenpeace—"who were counselling persons to write a false product review in order to ... tarnish the reputation of an organization so that they would stop using a certain product.

"Would the counselling of someone to write a false product review be a protected action, do you think, under a public interest" provision of this bill?

Mr. Murray Klippenstein's response was, "The answer is possibly yes," that this bill would protect people engaging in dishonest falsehoods and give them the protection of the law to engage in nefarious, dishonest activities.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Possibly.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Possibly. Possibly.

We heard from many people, Speaker, that there are weaknesses in this bill, that they could have been addressed. The bill is not quite as perfect as the Attorney General thinks.

We advocated that another component be included in the bill other than just an expression in the public interest, because that really is the crux of the matter with this bill. As long as someone expresses a statement in the interest of the public, that statement or those actions are safeguarded and protected.

1600

We advocated that there also be a good-faith component added to that public interest. If the statement was made in the public interest and in good faith, then they would be protected under Bill 52.

That thoughtful and reasonable approach was dismissed. It did not go forward, for whatever reason. I can't speak to the motivation. But I think anybody in any reasonable evaluation of this bill could hardly come to any other conclusion than that an expression made in good faith ought to be part of this bill.

I fear that we're going to have another bill in this House in a couple of years that is going to attempt to remedy the failings and the problems that this bill is going to create with the purpose of rectifying the problems that exist today. It all comes down to this government, actually, for once and occasionally listening to people, listening to not just experts, even though we need to listen to them. They also need to listen to people who are being affected by their legislation, and how and what consequences are going to result from the legislation that they put forward.

Here we have it. We have it on record that an environmental organization, Greenpeace, has purposely gone after and promoted falsehoods. Possibly, this bill is going to protect that sort of activity and action. I find that despicable. I find it atrocious that we're going to now potentially allow and permit the law to protect wrong-

doing. That's not in the best interests of society, it's not in the best interests of individuals, and it certainly goes against what our responsibilities are in this House.

We spoke to many people. Many people addressed the committee. There was another failing that was identified in the bill, and that was people who are already subjected to abuse of process and what might be considered a strategic lawsuit against their public participation. In the original manifestation of this bill, there were some provisions to assist and help those who are already facing an abuse of process. That provision was removed out of this bill. They are not offered any protection whatsoever.

It's unfortunate. I think this bill could have been done in a way that would have garnered unanimous support from all sides, from everyone, from every member, from every community, but it won't. I would like to have been able to say that I've encouraged the PC caucus to support this bill 100%, but I can't. The bill has failings, and the government was obstinate in their approach and prevented thoughtful, reasonable amendments from going forward and improving this bill.

It really is a disappointment, because the law is everyone's last refuge to seek and find remedy. The courts are everyone's last refuge and sanctuary against an injustice. This bill very purposely and very possibly will take away that refuge, take away that sanctuary for justice and actually permit and allow, encourage and facilitate an injustice happening.

Really, it boils down to—there are some other elements, but the key element is: Was the expression done in good faith? Who here would object to opinions and statements that are expressed in good faith? I was surprised that the Liberal members objected to ensuring that expressions of good faith were protected by the law. It needs more than just that the expression was done in the public interest.

The Attorney General mentioned that they're sharing their time. I'm not sure—I think maybe the parliamentary assistant will also be taking a portion of this debate. I would dearly wish to hear the parliamentary assistant's comments and response to these statements by Klippensteins and the statements made in committee. He was in committee as well. He heard the same things I heard: that these actions, these wrongdoings, may very well be protected by this legislation. I'd like to hear what they may have to say about those people who are presently facing injustice, facing a lawsuit and an abusive process, and who were hoping that this bill would provide them relief from that abusive process.

I'd like the parliamentary assistant to speak to those in this bill and encourage him to provide a convincing argument to myself and all members on this side of the House why we should support a bill that knowingly has failings in it, a bill that everyone knows could have been made better but the Liberal government chose not to. It was purposeful: They chose not to make the bill better.

I'll be listening. I hope they do address these concerns—and maybe hear something from the parliamentary assistant on what else they're going to do, now

that we're at third reading and there are no other options, there are no other vehicles to amend this bill now. It goes through the way it went through, as it was proposed at first reading, regardless of all the statements that were made, that enunciated and articulated where it was weak. I want to have the parliamentary assistant address that in his remarks. Because I am absolutely confident that we are going to hear of more abuses of process, that we are going to see more examples of wrongdoing, and that there will be further angst, hardship and injury by people who are seeking refuge and remedy in our courts but only finding further abuse in the courts.

I'm absolutely confident that a couple of years from now, there will be a few more stories in the Toronto Star—because we know that as soon as a story makes it into the Toronto Star, the Liberal government wakes up. It appears to be that the only publication that they read, or have a desire to read from, is the front page of the Toronto Star. When we see another Phil Demers, when we see another Esther Wrightman, when we see another Resolute on the front pages of the Toronto Star, then this same government is going to come forward with another bill to try to remedy the problems that they've created with this bill. That's what they're going to do; absolutely. I hope I'm here that day so I can maybe reread this speech when they bring in that next bill to fix what they're breaking today, what they're not fixing today.

1610

I look forward to listen and wait for the parliamentary assistant or whoever on the Liberal benches to explain why they're protecting somebody like Shane Moffatt at Greenpeace, who encourages people to write false product reviews. Why are they protecting that? Why didn't they act? I'm sure Greenpeace will be happy about this bill, but I'm sure there are many others who won't be. That's what we have seen from this government, day in and day out, since I was first elected: that they determine who will win in Ontario and who will lose. They determine and they pick winners and losers instead of bringing forth legislation that makes everyone a winner.

They believe they have god-like powers to pick winners and losers—to pick winners and create losers—in their approach to legislation. It's despicable. I hope one day that they wake up and say, "All people in Ontario are important, and we're going to bring forth legislation that helps and benefits everyone," not just their stakeholders or their supporters or their donors. Everyone in this province is important.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: As always, it's an honour to stand in this House and to debate Bill 52, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest.

I would like to take the time I'm allotted here to talk about this bill from two perspectives. From a personal perspective, it's anti-SLAPP legislation. I'd like to

explain in common terms how it impacts people personally. I have lived through this experience. I would also like to talk about the threats that many northerners feel are proposed by this bill. I'm in favour of this bill. I think I'd like to put a different take on it as far as how it impacts northern Ontario.

Firstly, this bill is designed—and it has its flaws, as does any piece of legislation. This bill is designed to protect people who stand in the public interest. It's usually against private interests who hope to make money. I'm not against people trying to make money—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Or government.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or government. In my case, I was for many years a dairy farmer. At one point, I was president of the Temiskaming Federation of Agriculture. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is widely respected across the province. It's a big organization. I was president of the Temiskaming chapter.

In Timiskaming, at that point, agriculture represented \$40 million at the farm gate, in my part of the world. It's a big driver. It continues to be. I was appointed to be on the public liaison committee of the Adams mine landfill proposal. There was a time when the city of Toronto proposed to take all their waste and dump it into an iron ore mine north of our farms. It was my job, on that committee, to protect the farmers' interests. We weren't against the proposal; we were just out to protect our interests.

This proposal went on for a good 10 years—15 years, actually. It was fully licensed by the Ministry of the Environment. But, at one point, we realized that some of the science that it was based upon, in our opinion, wasn't sound. We voiced that opinion—actually came here to Queen's Park at the media gallery here. One of the reasons I became an NDP member is because the only person who would actually book the media gallery for me was the member for Timmins–James Bay. We voiced our opinion that the information that the government had based their approval of this project on wasn't sound. We put out a press release. I wrote a letter at that time to Premier Eves stating that we were going to ask for the licence to be repealed.

We were promptly sued by the company, Rail Haul North—and rightly so, because we were hampering their business. Here we were, a fairly influential group, coming out and saying, “Whoa, we think that you're harming—that this licence is given under false pretenses.” At that point, under this legislation, we wouldn't pass the test. If the company said, “Wait a second. We are going to sue you,” and we said, “Okay, but under public participation, we should be protected,” we wouldn't be protected under this legislation, because we didn't provide any proof. At that point, we hired one of the most respected hydrogeologists in the world, Ken Howard—he's now at the University of Toronto—not to see if what we were saying was correct, but to critique the ministry's approval. Dr. Howard came out with a scathing critique of that.

As a result of that critique, a law was passed in this Legislature, the Adams Mine Lake Act, that prohibited

that pit from ever being drained to become a landfill. It was passed in this Legislature, but what didn't happen was the lawsuit against the Federation of Agriculture and myself wasn't dropped. One of the reasons I ran in 2007—not that I was overly interested in politics—but the law was passed, and the MPP before me was taking full credit for helping to pass the law—I didn't have a problem with that—but he didn't do anything to help me with my lawsuit.

The reason why strategic lawsuits are such a lethal tool for people is because when you get sued—I had a small business; I had a dairy farm. I was sued for \$10 million. I was young and foolish. If they had sued me for \$100,000, I would have been more worried at the time because maybe I could have begged and borrowed \$100,000, but \$10 million was so beyond my realm that it didn't really faze me until the bank wouldn't lend me any more money, and I couldn't get an operating loan to put my crops in. If it wasn't for my friends and neighbours who helped me, I would've lost my farm or I would have had to do what the company said and recant my statement. So I had a choice to make. I don't know if I'd make that choice again because it was a scary time, and that's what this bill is trying to alleviate.

Even when this Legislature had passed a law saying that Adams Mine was not suitable for a landfill, the lawsuit against me continued. This legislation would have given the Federation of Agriculture and my family a way to contest that and, hopefully, stop that lawsuit before it took as long as it did.

On the next issue: My riding depends heavily on forestry. There is an issue with Greenpeace. It has made, I would say, false statements by urging—basically someone from Greenpeace urged people to write a false product review on Best Buy's website against Resolute, and Resolute launched legal action.

1620

In the hearings it was asked, “Would Greenpeace be protected by this legislation?” One of the presenters said, “Well, possibly.” That's the only answer you can give, because with this legislation, before it was mired in courts for years, it would have to have a pretest. Basically, within 60 days, Greenpeace and Resolute would go before a judge, and if Resolute could demonstrate that this was an attempt to hurt their business it would go to another court. It would proceed. It's not protecting Greenpeace; it's making the process quicker and more efficient.

So I would disagree that this is giving environmental organizations or others free reign to attack job creators. What this false argument is doing, though, is it's taking away from the reputation of what we are doing with forestry, with agriculture and even with mining in this province. We have developed some of the best forestry practices in the world; there's no reason why we should hide behind them. Resolute, Tembec and the other companies are miles ahead. We have the best sustainable forestry practices in the world, and this argument—and it's more a political argument than it is a factual argument—runs the risk of tarnishing that reputation.

The government should do everything in their power to make sure that the forestry sector is accredited for what they're doing. There are ads all over the province saying, "Good Things Grow in Ontario." We are very proud of our agriculture sector. And you know what? The government of Ontario should also help with an advertising campaign, because one of the good things that grows in Ontario is trees. They're renewable and restorable, and young, growing trees are actually great carbon sinks.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Plant another 150 million of them.

Mr. John Vanthof: We should plant a lot more. But we are planting a lot now. That's being lost in this debate.

The forestry sector in Ontario is very sustainable, it's very progressive and it can proudly stand against false accusations. This legislation would not make it any easier to make those false accusations because they still have to bear up to the witness of the law.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today in support of Minister Meilleur's proposed Protection of Public Participation Act. Bill 52 is a bill that is very close to my heart because it's a bill that, from the beginning, has been about fighting for justice and equality.

We all know that strategic lawsuits against public participation have long been used as a tactic by companies or individuals to tie the hands of weaker opponents—typically those who cannot afford the cost of a lengthy legal battle. What we have is an unfair way to win an argument, and this needs to come to an end.

If passed, Bill 52 would give the courts the tools and resources they need to quickly identify strategic lawsuits. The bill's proposed fast-track review process would impose tighter time frames and require that a court hear a motion to decide the nature of the case within 60 days.

While this seems like a simple change, the effects of this process are far-reaching because this would stop organizations or individuals from trying to silence critics by using a strategic lawsuit and, ultimately, reduce the ability for our court system to be misused.

It's common knowledge that many strategic lawsuits have little or no merit and are often dropped before proceeding to trial. Bill 52 would help us weed out those lawsuits, while still allowing legitimate complaints to proceed in a timely manner. This legislation would also reduce the risk of citizens being threatened with legal action for voicing legitimate viewpoints by protecting individuals from being liable for defamation when their concerns are reported to the public through a third party, such as a blogger or a reporter; and also, making the adjudication tribunal process less time-consuming and costly by allowing parties to make written submissions about legal costs, instead of having to argue about these costs in person.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that this bill will help bring fairness to our justice system.

As a proud Ontarian, one of the values I treasure the most is my right to speak up when I see wrongdoing in my community, so that I may bring about positive change for the benefit of all. Currently, this is not a right that everyone enjoys, as some organizations and individuals are being unfairly silenced through strategic lawsuits. With this bill, it is our hope that this practice will be brought to an end.

I would like read a quote from Professor Normand Landry, who has written a book on anti-SLAPP legislation: "[Bill 52] is a balanced, reasonable and effective way to proceed and protect freedom of expression from SLAPP suits in Ontario. It avoids the pitfalls associated with the determination of the plaintiff's intentions, which, unfortunately, is too often a key element of anti-SLAPP mechanisms."

The study of the provisions of Bill 52 allows us to conclude that, if passed as is, it would establish a legislative mechanism that would become an international model for countries around the world with a common-law legal tradition. We have heard from legal experts, community leaders and citizens from across Ontario. Each of them has sent a consistent message: Ontario needs Bill 52.

It's time we stand up for justice, fairness and equality, hallmarks of our great nation. It's time we make Ontario a leading example by enacting the Protection of Public Participation Act. I ask my colleagues in the Legislature today to join me in giving their firm support to this legislation.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act, or the so-called anti-SLAPP bill.

We agree with taking steps to ensure that people and communities can voice their concerns without fear of strategic lawsuits against public participation, or SLAPPs. I know from my own experience how significant the impact of these lawsuits can be. I think it was \$2.5 million that I was being sued for. The only reason that I didn't worry much was, being a person of modest means, I knew they were never going to get it.

During the committee hearings on this bill, the justice committee had the opportunity to hear from more people who have had such experience. They heard about how it silenced not only the person being sued but others who were scared that they would be next. The committee heard about the impact that those lawsuits can have on families, as people worry about whether they will lose their house. They heard about the large amounts that community groups were paying for liability insurance because of the fear of being hit with a significant lawsuit.

It's clear that there is support for this bill, but it's also clear, Mr. Speaker, that there are still ways it could be improved. I've had the opportunity to speak to this bill before and I talked about a group of my constituents who are fighting a landfill proposal in my riding. They are concerned, as I am, that the landfill could put our drink-

ing water at risk. They are volunteers, seniors, homeowners, people who work in the area and even children. They're doing a great job of raising awareness, but many of them would not have the resources to handle it if the company proposing the landfill were to hit them with a lawsuit.

1630

I was pleased that a member from that group actually had the opportunity to come to Queen's Park and speak to this bill during the committee hearings. He was one of the few that got the opportunity because this bill that the government has also time-allocated—I just wanted to point out the irony of the government limiting debate on public input into the Protection of Public Participation Act.

Since the bill was introduced last December, the government has chosen to call it only three times, once in December and twice in March. The government simply didn't make it a priority to bring this bill forward for debate. Then they suddenly introduced a time allocation motion to speed it through. The government limited committee hearings to just two days here at Queen's Park. They didn't allow the committee to travel to hear from people who were impacted. They didn't allow the committee flexibility to sit late or to add more days to ensure that everyone who wanted to speak to this bill could be heard. They didn't allow the committee the flexibility to work together at committee to modify amendments to create something that would work for everyone and make this bill better.

I think it would be difficult to find anyone that would say that this is a good example of public participation. Presentations from the public were limited to just five minutes, so once again the members of the committee gave up their time for questions to members of the public who didn't have time to finish their presentations. I was happy to give up my time because during the hearings, I think it was more important to hear from the presenters than to hear ourselves speak.

The groups that came to speak to the bill all suggested ways that it could be improved. They pointed out unintended consequences. One mayor said, "Thanks for giving me the opportunity to meet with you today to provide input on Bill 52, which, if passed in its present form, will have a devastating effect on not only Atikokan, the community I come from, but also on many similar communities right across northern Ontario."

Another mayor said, "We seriously have an issue here with the bill as it is crafted, and there are amendments that we are proposing that we hope the committee will seriously consider to ensure that the premise and the original intention for the bill is met without creating another backdoor opportunity for large, well-funded organizations to drive their agendas, which unfortunately, in our view, is coming at the expense of northern Ontarians."

Another presenter said, "CRAND, as well as our friends from the Oxford Environmental Action Committee—who have attached a sheet I passed around for

you guys—both agree that there are four amendments that could really strengthen Bill 52...."

All of these people took the time to come to the committee to share their concerns and their suggestions for making this legislation better, but the government not only didn't put forward a single amendment to address those concerns, they blocked every amendment that our caucus put forward. It appeared that they didn't really want to listen to how this bill would impact groups, that they weren't prepared to work with either the opposition parties or the people and organizations that appeared at the committee. They don't appear interested in having a conversation that they once promised the people of Ontario.

But the members from this side of the House were listening. We heard about the impact of the forestry industry that already has lost close to 65 northern mills. We heard from numerous northern municipalities that were concerned that this bill, as written, would not accomplish its goal. In fact, they were worried that large organizations with vast resources could attack the forestry industry and would be shielded by this bill.

The forestry industry is a significant job creator in Ontario, and it's an important part of the northern economy. I think all three parties would agree that Ontario's forestry industry meets high standards. But when the industry association appeared at the committee to express their concerns, the government member informed them that this bill was created by an expert panel and showed no interest in working with the forest industry.

We put forward six amendments to this bill, including the one that the forest industry asked for. We listened to the people who took time to come to the committee and put forward amendments to make the bill work better.

This bill is the second bill that we've debated recently that will impact northern Ontario and the forestry industry. Last week, we had a time-allocated third reading debate on the Invasive Species Act. In both cases, the government refused to travel to northern Ontario or other regions to hear from people who would be impacted by the legislation. The people of northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker, deserve better. The people across Ontario that will be impacted by these bills deserve better. Protecting public participation shouldn't just be the title of a bill; it should be the job of this government, and right now it's a job that they aren't doing very well.

Yesterday at social policy committee we debated a subcommittee report that would have seen presentations on Bill 73, a bill which amends the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act, limited to just four minutes per presenter—four minutes for anyone to come in and talk about a bill that's going to completely rewrite and change the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act. Bill 73 is complex. The people who are coming forward to present can't even list their titles and qualifications in four minutes, Mr. Speaker, and that's all the time they would have had for their presentation.

I'm happy that we were able to make changes and extend the length to 15 minutes and add an additional

day. But I think we need to be worried about the trend towards shorter and shorter presentations. We need to really listen to people who want to provide information to make legislation better. That means giving them enough time to speak. It means being open to making changes, and sometimes it means that we need to bring the legislation and the committee to them. That's the only way we are actually going to have the conversation that this government promised and that's the only way that we are actually going to protect public participation, Mr. Speaker. I thank you very much for giving me these few minutes to put some comments on the record on this Bill 52.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'll just take a couple of minutes because I know that the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is chomping at the bit to get in on this. I want to say how important this bill is to people down in my area, that it's all about the Save Ojibway land. Mr. Speaker, you know a lot about it because I've presented—myself and the member from Windsor West, with the full co-operation from the member from Essex—12,873 petitions on Save Ojibway, and also handed in well over 300 postcards to the minister.

There's a lady down our way, Nancy Pancheshan, who has been fighting a big-box proposal for lands behind the former Windsor Raceway and next to the Ojibway prairie nature reserve. The developer of that property, because it has gone to the OMB, is suing her personally for \$170,000, saying that her fight against the big-box proposal is vexatious—well, anything but. Nancy has gone out and hired, on her own, legal assistance; brought in environmental experts to the OMB; and just last week she put out over \$1,700 to rent a school bus to come up here with about 30 other people who wanted to be here for when the final petitions were presented—not the final petition, Speaker, because they're still coming into my office. The member for Windsor West and myself presented 8,743 last week.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that Nancy has a vision for a larger nature preserve, other than the big-box proposal that she has been fighting at the OMB, and it would be international in scope because Humbug Marsh is on the other side of the Detroit River, and that's the last mile of natural shoreline along the Detroit River. It's an international wildlife refuge, but when you come over to this side of the river you get into Ojibway Shores, Black Oak, Prairie, Tom Joy Woods and the Ojibway nature preserve. So there's a vision for a larger provincial park or federal nature preserve.

Nancy has been fighting for that, trying to say—and I was a member of city council when we did it—that we should never have approved the big-box proposal on the lands in question. She is not being vexatious at all. This is a true fight for the environmental community. There is no reason on earth to go after her for \$170,000 in legal fees from the developer, Speaker.

This bill should be passed and should be made retroactive, and we should be standing up and protecting the

environmental community and people like Nancy Pancheshan and making sure that they never have to face a lawsuit like this again, because she's doing it in the best interest of the community.

1640

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure, actually, to rise today to debate the Protection of Public Participation Act. I think it's an important piece of legislation that we not only did introduce in this assembly and, ultimately, pass—I think there is great merit to having a thoughtful discussion on how to best protect the freedom of speech in Canada, but also ensure that there are protections for people who may be libeled.

I'm in full support of this piece of legislation. When I look at, for example, the folks at Marineland, or a case that I'm much more familiar with, Esther Wrightman, who fought a wind turbine development in her constituency and is now being sued by a multi-million dollar conglomerate to take almost everything she has from her, both financially and emotionally, I think it's important that this assembly takes a stand and tells NextEra that that's unacceptable. It's inappropriate, and that level of bullying against a good Canadian, Ontario citizen is unacceptable. If the people from NextEra are listening to this today, I will call them “NextTerror”—which is why she's being sued. She's being sued because she called a wind turbine development company “NextTerror.”

This woman has literally nothing left. It was her story, when I went to visit my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Monte McNaughton—when I met with his constituent Esther Wrightman, my blood boiled. I had never seen a case quite like this, where an individual, a mother, somebody fighting for her community, could be slapped down and slapped with a SLAPP case.

If there's one thing I can do in this Legislature today, it is to stand up for Esther Wrightman and the people like her in Ontario who deserve protection by legislation.

Now, the only thing I am concerned about, because I know Esther has already dealt with this SLAPP legislation, as have the folks at Marineland, is that there is no retroactivity clause here. I've mentioned that a few times in the Legislature, even posing questions to the government—because I will say this: the former Attorney General, a friend to many of us in this assembly, the former member from Kingston, John Gerretsen, had suggested that it was important in this particular case to have a retroactivity clause. Now there hasn't been, in my opinion, a good enough explanation for this. Some people will say you shouldn't have a retroactivity clause in a bill, but I think there are two very high-profile cases that I've just mentioned where I think it would help.

I understand and I appreciate the fact that there are members of this assembly who have some other concerns, because there are individuals who do abuse their abilities in the community to go after some companies that maybe are good job creators, that are working hard for their communities and have allowed for a good public

process, and who have legitimately been either slandered or libeled. I do understand that and I do appreciate it. I know that there are some divisions among this assembly on that particular issue. That said, it has not swayed me. My view has been from the beginning that this is a piece of legislation that should pass.

We in Ontario should not be looking at a young mother like Esther Wrightman as somebody who can be bullied by a major corporation because she's standing up for what she believes in.

The wonderful thing about this assembly—and why I decided to run for office, is I think it is incredible that the people of this province can actually do something. It was Margaret Mead who once said, in essence—I don't have the direct quote in front of me—never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed, those are the only people who ever have.

When I look across this great province, I look at the great city of Ottawa that I come from and the wonderful riding that I represent and the people who have stood up and have made change. Regardless of whether or not you agree with them when they make change, they've made it.

To be under constant threat for speaking your mind in the province of Ontario I think runs counter to the democracy that we practise, the freedom of press that we expect and the exchange of ideas that we cherish. When I look at, for example, this piece of legislation, I think it does require an impassioned plea.

I want to just read a little bit from Esther Wrightman. I'm going to start at the bottom of her letter. She sent a note to me and a couple of my colleagues, including the member from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. She said, "I'm sorry to say I'm entirely cynical about politics right now. I truly resent that politicians have the power to say whether I can have access to basic justice, on whim. Again, I realize the power is" there "but some support or recognition for those ... affected would have at least made the wound less painful for myself and ... others." I put that on the record to understand how important that retroactivity clause would be.

I'll go to the top here, because she's somebody that I've been quite taken with. She really believes—and she says that it's been "the end of line for me." She talks about some of the particular issues with Bill 52. She mentions, again, John Gerretsen.

I believe one of my colleagues, our critic Randy Hillier, also from eastern Ontario—his riding is very long, so you'll forgive me, Speaker, if I don't say the whole riding name—talked about Greenpeace. And Esther says this: "Many of us thought that at the very least a motion to reinstate the retroactivity would be brought forward. But nobody did.... We were left out in the cold. 'We' being myself, Marineland activists and maybe another one or two local opposition groups that are facing SLAPPs. I'm thinking it's doubtful the Greenpeace lawsuit would be considered a SLAPP, or at least not all of it."

She's just expressing her frustration. If there's one thing that we can count on as we move forward, it's

protection for people like Esther. But we can't protect Esther now as a result of the elimination of the retroactivity clause. That, to me, is very disappointing, and I say to Esther that I do apologize. I wish that we could have been her voice a bit stronger here, although we will be her voice as we move forward, which I suspect is a little consolation for her.

There have been many members who have been involved in this piece of legislation for quite some time, and I remember previous bills have been introduced. I believe the member from Scarborough Southwest—and I know the member from Ottawa Centre, who is now a minister, brought this forward. We've gone through a few critics over the years. I have now been elected, in March, 10 years, so I've seen this bill move forward on a number of occasions under different names and different ministers. So to those folks with their persistence, I want to congratulate them for that, because I think at the end of the day, while it isn't perfect for Esther, you're moving forward.

As my colleague from Oxford mentioned, he once was part of a SLAPP. I had some experience in discussing this publicly myself, because I don't believe that politicians or the public should be muzzled for their personal opinions if it is in a matter of the public interest. These are relatively rare instances but they can, in fact, be quite malicious and ruin people's lives. I don't think that it's appropriate that people that live in the province of Ontario should live in fear for discussing issues that are important to them and their neighbourhoods, particularly when it pertains to their children.

I think that, by definition, these SLAPP cases are unfounded, with little chance of success in a court of law. They end up going all the way down the line so people will continue to spend their money, so that they will be quiet, and then at the end they are thrown out, or after years and years of wrangling in the court system or with lawyers, it ends up getting thrown out.

From that perspective, I must say, I resent the fact that it needlessly bogs down our court system in this province when we actually have real offenders that we should be dealing with.

1650

I would say, as a Progressive Conservative, that this bill, which doesn't include a retroactivity clause, is a good start for protection of our citizenry and it's something that I will support. It's something I supported in the last reading, and I'm looking forward to this bill becoming royal assent so that SLAPP suits are not thrown around in the province of Ontario to shut down public discussion on matters of public interest.

At the end of the day, each of us stands in this assembly, and we stand in this assembly knowing we can say what we want in order to encourage a better society. We do so by going through elections every four years, or, if we have a minority government, even earlier than that. We do so because people fought for those freedoms, because our forefathers understood what a Constitution would be in order to protect those things. I think what we

need to do, and what we are doing, is extending that protection to Ontario citizens.

With that, I want to say thank you for the opportunity to participate in today's debate. I congratulate all of those who were for or against this bill for having a respectful dialogue along the way.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This bill is something absolutely important. It's something that New Democrats support. In fact, I want to draw attention to the fact that our leader raised this issue and introduced a bill to prevent SLAPP suits, an anti-SLAPP private member's bill, four years ago. Our leader showed leadership with respect to this issue, and we're very encouraged that the government has finally followed up, over four years later.

It's absolutely important that we protect the fundamental right of a democracy, which is the right to dissent. The ability to get up in a Parliament, to be able to stand on the streets, to be able to say loudly and clearly that you disagree with something, that you oppose something or that you have a different opinion is so fundamentally important to a democracy that it is something that we should protect at every opportunity.

This bill essentially, at its core, provides the courts with a quick dismissal mechanism. What that is is, if there is a lawsuit that has been initiated against an individual, if that lawsuit is initiated and it can be determined that that lawsuit is simply brought to silence that individual, if it can be shown that that lawsuit is frivolous or vexatious and has simply been brought for no other purpose but to discourage that individual from raising their voice, then that lawsuit can be dismissed and costs will be awarded to discourage those types of lawsuits in the future.

The courts have had to deal with these types of lawsuits. The courts have made a number of rulings, when there were these types of lawsuits, that were very clearly laid out. The judges were able to determine very quickly, once they actually heard the case in front of them, that there were simply no grounds to proceed with that lawsuit. The courts determined in a number of cases that these lawsuits were seemingly brought on purpose to silence the participation of particular individuals.

The government is moving on something that we've asked the government to move on, and we're encouraged by that. We're happy about that.

But it's important to make note that if someone does something that's either in writing, which is libel, or is in an oral capacity, speaking out loud, something that's defamatory, there is still a remedy for that. This law doesn't get rid of defamation, broadly speaking; it doesn't get rid of libel. Those two aspects of the law continue to exist. So if someone does have a legitimate claim that is not frivolous, not vexatious, not brought simply for the purpose of silencing someone, you can still bring that type of lawsuit. But in the myriad of examples that we've heard, and many people have shared their stories today, where someone in a community is

opposed to a particular development project which would undermine the fabric of that community or would not be in the best interests of that community, they can get up and say, "We oppose this project. We think this project will not be beneficial to our community. As residents of this community, we don't want this project to move forward." They can do that. If the developer, in that case, or if the municipality doesn't like what that person has to say and they initiate a lawsuit, this law will protect them. That's something we want to see happen. We want to see that protection.

As legislators, we need to protect the right of our citizens to participate. We talked earlier today about electoral boundary reforms and the idea that we need to encourage more voting and increase voter turnout. Similarly, we need to increase civic engagement in our communities. A vibrant community is made up of people who are engaged and are participating in that community. One of the most effective ways, one of the most important ways that people can be engaged is when it comes to public participation around issues that impact the community.

We've seen in the case of municipalities where community organizers have banded together to raise concerns and they've been hit with a lawsuit to stop them. What happens is, just receiving a letter that says that there will be a lawsuit in and of itself discourages people. It has a chilling effect. That makes people feel that they cannot raise their concerns because there is a certain fear of reprisal. The costs associated with legal action would deter people from participating. That's the exact opposite of what we'd like to see happen in society.

However, just as a note, while this bill does a great job of implementing the recommendations of the task force that was struck to address SLAPPs, the strategic lawsuits against public participation, and while it implements many of those recommendations, the letter scenario that I talked about—when you receive a letter from a lawyer saying that you will be sued or there will be a lawsuit initiated because of comments you've made—that letter itself, which is not actually a lawsuit, is not covered by this legislation. That's an area we need to look at as well. It's an area that was raised in debate in second reading, but the government did not move on this issue.

But it is important to note that, when the lawsuit is actually initiated, there are some very clear grounds to protect people and to protect public participation. We know there is at least one other jurisdiction in Canada, in Quebec, where this type of protection exists, and we've seen that it has certainly protected individuals and provided them with a recourse when there are vexatious lawsuits applied.

Let's focus on this point for a second: While the law does have an impact on the existing jurisprudence around defamation and libel, because the law does some significant things to change the way that defamation and libel lawsuits proceed, it doesn't preclude someone from bringing forward a genuine lawsuit. So in any situation—whether it's a private citizen, whether it's a company,

whether it's a municipality, whatever the body may be— if there is a genuine case of defamation, if there's a genuine case of libel, if someone blatantly says something or writes something that is completely false, that attacks the character of a particular organization or a person and does so in a public manner, and if it meets the definition of libel or defamation, you can still bring a lawsuit. It doesn't end that right.

Any company or any individual can still bring forward a lawsuit; however, it changes the existing law, the existing jurisprudence, and makes it, frankly, harder to bring a vexatious lawsuit. It makes it harder to bring a frivolous lawsuit. It makes it harder to bring a lawsuit that has no value. If a lawsuit has no value, shouldn't it be dismissed anyway? Doesn't that seem to just make sense? That's exactly what this law does. Again, it doesn't stop someone from bringing a lawsuit; it stops someone from bringing a frivolous lawsuit. If the criteria that are laid out in this legislation are satisfied to say that this lawsuit is vexatious, then it will be stopped.

1700

Now, there were a number of deputations in committee and many people came forward raising some very valid concerns. I want to take note that the government did not address any of those concerns through any amendments on the government side, so it's important to note that.

We've heard from a number of examples, and some of these examples were very troubling. One of the examples that came up in committee, which I think is important to share with the assembly here, is that in a city council, two councillors had the courage to raise concerns around the development of their city. The city was being developed in a manner that was too spread out, that was not building on the principles of intensification in order to build a livable city, and it was creating a sprawling city. So the two city councillors, duly elected representatives representing the concerns of their community, took a stance and said, "We don't want to see our city sprawled. We, instead, would like to see our city intensify in its development to ensure that we can create a city that's actually livable, so people can walk to their community centre or walk to their friend's house or walk to the local grocery store." They wanted to develop a community where you could ride your bicycle instead of having to drive your car—very valid concerns that they were elected to represent, concerns that they were elected to bring forward in council.

Simply for bringing forward these concerns around opposing a decision that would increase sprawl in their communities, these city councillors were sued. They were SLAPped. They faced a lawsuit just because they said that they didn't want their city to sprawl out; instead, they wanted their city to intensify. These are city councillors. They're elected to do this. That's their job. Their job is to get up in their city council and to say, "Our constituents, the residents of this city, don't want to see our community sprawl. Instead, they want to see it intensify." And simply for doing their job, they were sued and they were effectively silenced.

But what was worse is, the other city councillors had made it clear that they were supportive of these two city councillors. They were going to support their initiative and thought that what they were saying made sense. When these two city councillors were SLAPped, when they were hit with the lawsuit, it was on the eve of the vote on this issue of whether or not to approve a decision to sprawl the city or not. The vote that initially seemed to be going in the favour of these two city councillors that were in favour of intensification—the result of it was that they supported the sprawl instead of opposing it. What could be inferred from that is that the lawsuit not only silenced these two city councillors, but it may have actually impacted the other councillors as well.

I can't say forcefully enough how horrible a travesty that is. If a lawsuit cannot only impact two city councillors but also potentially change an entire vote and the direction that a city is headed in, that is absolutely unacceptable. Maybe if this protection was available to the city councillors, that type of lawsuit could have been easily dismissed and then perhaps might not have impacted the vote of the council. Anyway, that's an example of how important it is to protect public participation.

As stated before, in approximately 2010, our leader brought forward anti-SLAPP legislation. Recognizing that it's in the interest of the public to protect debate, to protect participation, she brought forward that bill and nothing happened with it. It was not supported and the bill did not go forward. At the time, there was a Liberal government and the bill did not see the light of day, nor did the government introduce a similar bill at that time. But again, it's very encouraging that the government is moving on this now.

Some of my colleagues have brought this issue up. It is worth mentioning that there is a certain irony to the government bringing a time allocation motion to a bill which talks about encouraging public participation and not allowing for strategic lawsuits against that. So it is somewhat ironic that the government did time-allocate a bill which is supposed to encourage debate; they discouraged debate. That is rather ironic and certainly worth mentioning.

I think it's important to focus on some of the criteria. The bill requires a lawsuit to establish a number of things. The lawsuit has to establish that there is merit, and the lawsuit has to be able to satisfy a number of criteria. One of those criteria is that there are actually grounds for the lawsuit, and that makes absolute sense. The grounds, as laid out by years and years of jurisprudence: There need to be grounds that the statement to meet the definition of defamation has to be publicly made, it has to be patently false, it has to be a statement that is not true, and it has to be a statement that can actually have a negative impact on the individual's character.

This bill also requires demonstrating that there is a loss associated with it. Not only do we want to see that there is impact to an individual's character, which was the law before, but there is a certain element that needs to

be satisfied with respect to the loss suffered. I think it's important, because a comment that's made in the interests of public participation that doesn't result in a loss to the individual should certainly be allowed. There should be a broad deference given to the idea of allowing public debate.

We also have a charter-defined or charter-protected right for freedom of expression. While there are limitations to the idea of freedom of expression—there is certain hate speech that we do not condone, nor should we condone, that can inflame animosity towards, perhaps, marginalized groups—in general, we need to support the principle of freedom of speech. It's something that's defined by our charter; it's a right that's protected by our charter. Similarly, in relation to that, if we have a right that's protected by the charter but there is no subsequent right to protect participation, that right rings quite hollow.

The idea of protecting public participation flows very naturally from the idea of a society that protects freedom of expression—should also protect that expression if it does touch on a sensitive topic, if it does touch on something that is in the public interest. There may be people who don't like that expression. There might be people who have a vested interest in not allowing that type of expression. It is incumbent on the Legislature, on the assembly, to protect that expression.

I am reminded of a number of circumstances where people have raised concerns. We know that there are municipal examples. There are also animal rights advocates who talked about the welfare of animals. They faced a strategic lawsuit simply for raising concerns around the well-being of an animal. Again, raising concerns around the well-being of an animal is something that they should be able to do. They should be entitled to do so. As long as the concerns are made in the interests of public participation and they are concerns that are truthful, they should be supported and they should be protected. When they're not protected, that's inappropriate.

Again, we don't condone false comments being made, comments that are made simply to forward an interest. Those things can still be covered by the existing law. The law would allow for a defamation or a libel suit to be brought if it's proven to be or shown to be that the comments are not truthful. So people have protection. This is a balanced bill. It balances in favour of encouraging more public participation, and in doing so it does the right thing.

Just to touch on—I've said this before in the House and I think I should focus on it again: why it's so important to protect the right to dissent. In our democracy, we talk about a number of rights that we have. One of the rights we have is the right to vote. While voting is absolutely important—it's one of our ways of exercising our rights in a democracy—it's really in the dissent that we find the true hallmarks of a democracy. If we compare and contrast societies which are free, there may be societies where there are elections, and those elections

are held under conditions which are not something that we would determine to be free. The key difference between a free and democratic society is that ability to stand up and oppose the existing government, to be able to say, "I disagree with the government's policies," or "I disagree with issues that are going on in my community." That ability to get up and say "I disagree" is what actually signifies a truly free society.

1710

Where you can't get up and disagree—where disagreeing with the state puts you in jail, where disagreeing with the state causes you to face significant financial repercussions—that's not truly a free society. That's why the ability to disagree, to have dissent, to have an opinion voiced—an opinion voiced that may be controversial, an opinion that may not be welcomed by certain individuals—is so important to protect, because it's really the bedrock of our democracy, that ability to disagree. That's essentially what this bill does.

There were a number of experts who were on the expert panel that discussed the importance of this bill. When looking at the various cases that had been determined to be frivolous, one of the most important elements that the panel came up with was being able to dismiss the action quickly. Why that's so important is, we've seen that cases in the legal system can be drawn out. One of the problems with our legal system is that it is quite slow. Often cases take years and years and years to complete, and that's when you actually want your case to complete.

Now, in the case of a strategic lawsuit designed to deter public participation, the initiator of that lawsuit has a vested interest in ensuring that the lawsuit takes as long as possible to get to a resolution. In fact, they don't want the lawsuit to get to a resolution. It's the sword of Damocles, it's the threat of that lawsuit, which is actually the deterrent. So judges saw that cases that were finally determined to be frivolous were taking years and years to process through the court system, and it was years and years of legal costs that deterred individuals from speaking again. It was years and years of the case hanging over one's head that discouraged future participation and had a chilling effect on other individuals who saw their colleagues being faced with a multi-million dollar lawsuit and decided not to then engage in public participation.

It's the length of time, essentially, that acted as the major deterrent, so the early dismissal mechanism proposed by this bill is really the key element in ensuring that we have public participation. When you can quickly determine that a case meets the criteria of early dismissal, that case can be brought before a judge, and when the conditions are met, the judge can make an efficient ruling and immediately dismiss the case.

Now, while there aren't a whole host of these types of frivolous lawsuits in the court system already, one of the benefits of this law is that it will reduce some of the burden in our already burdened court system. Allowing courts to quickly address cases that can be assessed early on as being vexatious will free up court time for other

cases, and we know that's certainly an issue in our justice system. Whether it's criminal justice or Family Court, we know that cases are taking too long to proceed or to eventually be resolved, and far too often cases are being resolved based on a violation of section 11 rights, which is the right to be tried within a reasonable time, rather than on the merits of the case itself.

While obviously we support the right to have your trial within a reasonable time, there is a public interest in ensuring that cases are heard on their merits, heard on their grounds, and decided one way or the other based on the actual law as applied to the facts of the case. When we have delays in the court system resulting in section 11 applications, we know that there is clearly a problem with the existing system. So one of the corollary benefits of this law will be that it will provide a mechanism to dismiss cases and that it might be able to free up some of the burden and some of the caseload in our court system.

We have, in general, heard from a number of members in this House who have all spoken to how important public participation is and have all spoken to personal experiences in their communities where people were faced with strategic lawsuits. One of our colleagues himself was faced with a SLAPP suit. That's something that's a real concern. That's why I think it's a great initiative that we have a law that will ensure that those types of lawsuits don't happen again.

This law has been introduced a number of times by this government. I want to just point out, while we're at third reading now, that this is a great sign that we're going to have this law in Ontario. We'll be one of the early adopters in the country in having a law of this type that actually protects public participation.

This law could have been brought to fruition or brought to this stage a lot earlier if the government had prioritized this bill. Bills of this nature, which don't cost government anything but are the right thing to do, should receive appropriate priority. It's been far too long for this bill to actually get to this point. In the future, with respect to other bills that are as significant, as important, that don't cost our system and, in fact, would free up costs out of the system, I encourage the government to prioritize them appropriately. It has taken far too long for this bill to get to where it is right now.

Again, New Democrats support the anti-SLAPP legislation. Our leader brought forward this type of legislation years ago. We will proudly support the bill as it stands.

In closing, it is important to note that there were a number of issues that did arise in committee and people did bring forth some great amendments. Those amendments were not brought out by the government, so I want to make note of that as well. But this is certainly a win for democracy. This is certainly a win for the right to dissent, and I'll be proud to vote in favour of this when the bill comes up for the final vote very shortly.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House, dated Tuesday, June 2, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 52, An Act to amend the Courts of Justice Act, the Libel and Slander Act and the Statutory Powers Procedure Act in order to protect expression on matters of public interest. 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 will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for a deferral of this vote under standing order 28(h), that the vote be deferred until tomorrow during the time of deferred votes.

Third reading vote deferred.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 8, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member from Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to thank you for doing double duty this afternoon. You have House duty for our caucus and you're also filling in in the chair. You're doing a great job.

Interjection: A talented man.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, we're often asked to multi-task in this place, as we know, and you're doing that, too, today, and I appreciate that.

Certainly when this bill was last debated, I believe on October 8, as the official opposition critic to the Minister of Labour, I had the floor. Of course, the standing orders of the House provide for an hour-long leadoff speech by the opposition critics, and so I've had, I think, about 35 minutes to debate and respond to the minister's presentation on Bill 109, this important government legislation, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act.

1720

I would remind the House that this was first introduced in the House on May 28, 2015. Really, there hasn't been a great deal of media coverage or a great deal of debate yet in this House about this bill, but certainly, as it moves forward, we're learning more and more about what the government intends to do with this particular

piece of legislation. We know that this bill, in schedule 1, would seek to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997; in schedule 2 of the bill, the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997—that, again, would be amended by this bill, if passed; and schedule 3 of the bill is an amendment to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

I would reiterate, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus, that we, indeed, support fair labour laws in the province of Ontario; we always have. We believe that there needs to be a balance which respects the rights of workers as well as the needs of employers, and we need to grow the economy and work together to create new, good-paying jobs. That, I believe, is an important obligation of all of us in this Legislature and, obviously, the provincial government as well. The government doesn't necessarily create jobs, but it can, in fact, create the conditions and the economic climate whereby private sector companies will want to create new jobs. That is something we continue to advocate in this Legislature as the official opposition.

We see, day to day, many examples where the government is not taking the appropriate steps to encourage private sector job creation, such that our unemployment rate in the province of Ontario continues to be unacceptably high, hovering around 7%. The youth unemployment rate is probably double that: on average, it's probably 14% to 15%—a whole generation of young people who are looking for that first career-track job, coming out of college, high school or university, and, unfortunately, not getting the breadth of job opportunities that many of us had in previous generations. Obviously, that's something that should concern all of us. It concerns me, and I think it should concern all of us in this House. I know that our opposition is very concerned about it.

We would say that we need to strengthen Ontario's competitiveness so that we can win in the global economy. We've seen recently, at least, the signing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the trade agreement that was negotiated by a number of Pacific countries. Recently, the initial phase was concluded. Countries have signed on to it, but, at the same time, we look to see what the new federal government under Justin Trudeau is going to do to respond to it. We certainly know that we have to ensure that Ontario has a competitive economy so that we can compete and win in the new global economy.

I'll also say that, with respect to Bill 109, our party values highly the work that is done by our firefighters. They are highly trained, highly skilled professionals, and their courage is on display day to day. They are prepared to risk their lives to keep the rest of us safe. Again, I don't think we say thank you often enough to our professional firefighters, as well as our part-time firefighters in rural Ontario, which we used to call volunteer firefighters. In many cases, I would acknowledge that they are being paid either an hourly rate or an honorarium, but most of them have other full-time jobs or part-time jobs. A lot of their spare time is spent devoted to improving public safety in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, you know, as a former volunteer firefighter yourself for many years, the work that goes into preparing for the emergencies and the training that's required. Any of us who are privileged to represent small-town ridings could go into our fire halls on any Saturday and find them a very busy beehive of activity, where there's a lot of people there working on ensuring that the equipment is clean and ready and whatever has to be done to prepare. Certainly, the training component is significantly time-consuming, and so there's a huge commitment on the part of our part-time volunteer fire service, as well as the full-time service.

I would say that the changes to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act—we acknowledge and we were told—have been developed in consultation with the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, and I think those changes, from what I've seen and what I've heard to date, seem reasonable.

The changes to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, we believe, Mr. Speaker, require more public discussion. We would ask and suggest that the bill, if indeed it passes second reading in this Legislature, be referred to a standing committee of the House and that we should have reasonable public hearings.

I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that I don't think giving deputants four minutes to make a presentation is a reasonable opportunity for public hearings. Surely the government wants to be seen to be engaging in public hearings on some of these pieces of legislation. They want to be able to have the minister stand up in the House and in public statements outside this place to claim and state that they are having public hearings, but in fact it's not a serious effort to listen to the public if they are prepared to only allow four minutes for deputants. If they're only prepared to allow deputants six minutes, it's not acceptable. If they are only prepared to allow deputants eight minutes, clearly that is unacceptable to our side of the House. I know you share that view, Mr. Speaker, in the work that you have done on the issues that are under your responsibility.

Obviously, if we're going to listen to people, we have to give them a reasonable opportunity to present their views in a public process at a standing committee of the Legislature. When I was first elected, that meant half an hour for organized groups that had credibility and spoke for large numbers of people. That's the way it should be done. There should be a reasonable period of time. You can't expect organizations—especially when you're just having the hearings in Toronto and limiting the hearings outside of Toronto—to send their representatives here for four to six minutes or eight minutes. It's just ridiculous. It's preposterous on the surface of it. So again, I would suggest that there has to be a better opportunity for groups and individuals that are interested in this bill than just to have their views cut off, if we're going to engage in hearings that are actually and truly meaningful.

Once again, schedule 1 is the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. It is, we're told, incorporating significant

portions of the Labour Relations Act into the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, including provisions against unfair labour practices, membership in associations, and expedited rights arbitration.

We're told that the bill will permit associations to require the inclusion of closed-shop language in a collective agreement with features such as mandatory association dues, deductions, and provisions requiring membership in the association or giving preference of employment to members of an association.

We're told that these powers are balanced by rights for firefighters as well. For example, expelled or suspended members or those who have been denied membership in an association will be protected on certain grounds, such as in a case of reasonable dissent. This will allow, we're told—and we believe—two-hatters, or double-hatter firefighters, to continue their volunteer work without fear of reprisal.

I'll have a little bit more to say about that in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker. I know that you recall that issue probably as vividly as I do, going back to the discussions that we had in this House with respect to a private member's bill that I introduced in the year 2002, some 13 years ago, and the ongoing discussion on Bill 30 that took place at that time. I know that some of the New Democrats who are here right now perhaps weren't in the House in 2002, but some of the New Democrats were and would remember it as well. Again, if there's time, certainly I'll continue that explanation of what happened in those days.

Bill 109 will allow labour disputes under this act to be heard by the Ontario Labour Relations Board, as opposed to an Ontario court. Assuming that the Ontario Labour Relations Board has the resources and has the—they do have the expertise, obviously, Mr. Speaker, and I think the specialized experience, but assuming they have the resources, hopefully that will free up our court system and ensure that disputes can be heard and discussed and resolved in a fair manner, in a more timely way, and again freeing up court resources for other issues that need to be resolved through our court system, because I know there's obviously a resource issue there.

Under Bill 109, firefighters would be able to opt out of union membership or even opt out of paying union dues if being a member conflicts with their religious beliefs. That's something that I think needs to be acknowledged.

We're told that the changes found in schedule 1 will apply retroactively in some cases.

Now, in schedule 2 of the bill, different issues are being raised with the amendments to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997. In this case, Bill 109 is seeking to address problems arising from public sector workplaces where the employees are represented by two or more unions. These issues typically arise in cases of restructuring of organizations. For example, if there is an amalgamation of two, say, public sector employers and both of those workplaces had previously been unionized, there has to be some sort of a resolution as to which union is going to be organizing and representing those employees going forward.

1730

Currently, there are situations and cases where a workplace is represented by two or more unions, as I said, and there must be a vote to determine which union will represent all employees going forward. But Bill 109 would change that to create a threshold by which the union will be automatically chosen in cases such as the ones I've just described. Bill 109 most likely would establish that threshold at 60%, from what I've been told, but I think that may require a regulation as well to further define that actual threshold. For example, again, in a case where one union represents 65% of the members in an organization that has come together and a second union represents the other 35% of them, currently the employees would have to have an opportunity to vote in the case of restructuring. However, under Bill 109, the first union that I described would automatically be named the bargaining agent.

I know that that is somewhat controversial, even within the labour unions themselves. I think those unions should have an opportunity to speak at a standing committee to discuss their concerns, to explain to it members so that we better understand (a) what's happening out there and (b) what the respective unions think should happen. Then, we have to apply a test of judgment to determine fairness in that. But again, I think they should be given an opportunity—and I would say again, they should be given more opportunities to speak to this bill than, say, four minutes or six minutes or even eight minutes. Obviously, we have to show respect for the deputants in that regard. They should be given a greater opportunity to present their views so that members can truly understand what they're saying.

I would also add that I think it's important to recognize that the time allocated at standing committees for deputants should be considered their time. For us to be imposing on them specific minutes when the parties can ask questions and, in fact, again, having the effect of restricting the time available that the deputants have to make their presentations—surely that's not fair. We should be willing to respect the fact that it is their time, not our time, if they're coming in and making the effort and making a presentation. Many of the issues and the discussion could take place amongst the members of the committee at the clause-by-clause stage when we get to that.

Also, as we know, Mr. Speaker, from your long experience in the Legislature, what often happens in the case of public hearings after a deputant makes a presentation is, quite often, there's an exodus of members who will leave the room for a moment and go out and chat with them afterwards. Business cards are exchanged, discussion takes place and further follow-up takes place after the committee hearings. We really need to respect the opportunity that our deputants have, give them the chance to make their presentations and not arbitrarily restrict the time that they have available to make their presentations.

Again, schedule 3 of this bill, amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997: First and

foremost, schedule 3 of Bill 109 prevents employers from prohibiting or discouraging their employees to file with the WSIB or from influencing or inducing workers to withdraw previously submitted claims. What I think the government is trying to say here is that employers should not be trying to coerce or even counsel their employees not to make a claim with respect to WSIB if indeed they've been injured on the job. The government, I think, is saying in some cases that has happened. They may have some evidence. I'd like to hear more about that. I don't think we had very much in the way of evidence from the minister or his parliamentary assistant when they led off the debate. If, indeed, that is happening—it's possibly happening, I'm not saying it's not, but I'd like to see more empirical evidence that it is happening and to what extent it's happening, before we just automatically assume that employers are doing this in a systematic or a repeated way.

The bill would ensure that there is a new monetary penalty, the amount to be determined later on by regulation, which would apply on top of any fine applicable by an Ontario court. The penalty applicable to a person who is not an individual is increased by this bill. Again, the penalty for someone who counsels or tries to coerce an employee who has been hurt on the job from not reporting it to the WSIB, under Bill 109, would increase from \$100,000 to \$500,000—so, obviously, a substantial increase in the penalty to send a message; a quintupling of the current penalty level.

Under Bill 109, WSIB death benefits would no longer be calculated based on a statutory minimum per year. Instead, it would be based on the average earnings of a worker engaged in the same trade, job or profession at the time of their death. I understand this schedule would apply retroactively to any cases since January 1, 1998.

Finally, this bill would create the role of a so-called fair practices commissioner to be appointed by the board to serve as an ombudsman for the WSIB. We look to the government to explain more so what the responsibilities of that particular new officer will be. An ombudsman for the WSIB is certainly—over the years that I've been privileged to serve in the Legislature, we have received countless complaints about the WSIB and its predecessor, the Workers' Compensation Board. In fact, it used to be probably the number one complaint in my office during the years 1990 to 1995, when the New Democrats were in power and I was first serving in the Legislature in opposition.

I recall that when the new government took office in 1995, new staff were hired to lead the WSIB and a new board was put in place. I recall Glen Wright being the chair of the board. In fact, I think they made significant improvements in terms of customer service to both employers and employees, because, actually, I think the complaints to my office went down considerably. Through the years, complaints have gone up and down. Obviously, as an MPP, and my staff, we who work hard to go to bat for our constituents on every issue that's brought to our attention, including the WSIB—we've not

interfered in the appeals process and the appeals tribunal, but until a decision is made, certainly we're trying to ensure that the WSIB staff, and the claims adjudicators, have all the information that the worker has. Sometimes, quite frankly, there have been instances where it appears that injured workers who have contacted our office had fallen through the cracks, and so we're trying to help them in any way we can, in an appropriate way.

I would also say that the appointment of Elizabeth Witmer as the new chair of the WSIB back in April 2012, and some of the new board appointments, I think have given the board a very strong new leadership team. David Marshall, who has been the CEO for some time, and his senior staff—I think they've had a mandate to improve the WSIB's administration and, also, I believe, to work to reduce the unfunded liability of the WSIB. I think the most recent number I've seen, it has been reduced—

Interjection: Unfunded.

Mr. Ted Arnott:—the unfunded liability—I believe it's down to \$8.9 billion, which is a significant improvement.

I think we should all be concerned about the WSIB's unfunded liability and we should all support efforts to have a plan, a workable plan, to reduce it to zero, actually. Injured workers have an interest in ensuring that the unfunded liability is reduced, because, obviously, the unfunded liability represents the WSIB's inability to pay its long-term commitments relative to the income stream that comes from premiums from employers.

Obviously, employers want to see the unfunded liability reduced as well, because if it's not—if the WSIB is not being managed properly and if, indeed, the unfunded liability is increasing—employers see that as a possible increase in their premiums over time. We know that WSIB premiums is a substantial payroll cost for employers. Payroll costs are already very high in the province of Ontario, and as payroll costs increase, job creation is reduced, because companies look for other ways to get things done. In some cases, higher payroll costs, and even the threat or the belief that higher payroll costs are coming, inhibit job creation in the province. In fact, when I've had discussions with small business people about the pending Ontario Retirement Pension Plan that the government has talked about, many small businesses are very, very concerned about that and they're saying to me, "I'd like to hire new people, but I'm afraid to hire new people because I know that this is coming and it's going to increase my payroll costs dramatically." Of course, employees should be concerned about that too, because it represents, once it comes into effect, an immediate, substantial reduction in their take-home pay.

1740

We know that many of the people who are probably most concerned about not having saved enough for their retirement, and perhaps on the surface would be most excited about a new provincial pension plan, are people perhaps in their fifties and sixties who are close to retirement age and feel either they haven't made ad-

equate provision for their retirement or really haven't saved enough. In some cases, they've saved a lot, but they really don't believe they have enough to retire. Those people, I would acknowledge, are anxious about whether or not they have enough money to retire, concerned about what they're going to do when they have to retire, hoping that a new provincial Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is going to help. We know that those people who are close to retirement—who are only going to be working for a couple of more years, let's say—are not going to benefit very much at all from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. It is only those who have paid into it over, say, a 30-year working life who will receive a substantial benefit.

Quite frankly, the government, I think, is going to be quite surprised, if indeed they go ahead with this, at the disappointment that they're going to hear from people when people were led to believe that this is going to be a great benefit to them, when in fact, if they only work for a few years leading up to retirement, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is going to give them a pittance. Of course, they're going to be pretty disappointed about the expectations that have been created by the government. I put that on the record somewhat as an aside, but it deals with payroll issues, and WSIB issues are payroll issues, too, Mr. Speaker.

I am aware, and I've been advised, that the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association is in favour of this bill in its entirety. In fact, they believe they have been consulted adequately and have helped to craft the bill, so I would acknowledge that.

But I also think it's important to point out that OPSEU, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, is against provisions of Bill 109, and they have said so. They are particularly opposed to section 2. If indeed OPSEU is opposed to this bill, then as far as I'm concerned, they should be given an opportunity to speak at public hearings, to explain why they're concerned, to suggest possible amendments and improvements, to engage the members in this discussion and debate, and to allow the MPPs who are on that committee to hear their concerns, make a decision as to whether or not they're valid and take the concerns forward into the third reading debate, if need be. OPSEU argues that the proposed amendments will water down an employee's democratic right to choose their bargaining agent.

We have also heard from respected experts on WSIB issues who have expressed concerns on the WSIB changes in Bill 109, suggesting that the bill is seeking a resolution to a problem that does not even exist. Independent research, I'm told, shows that the malicious employer that the government would have us believe is out there is actually non-existent in Ontario. The WSIB's internal research, I'm told, also shows that there is no evidence of abuse by employers. That's something that I think, again, we need to discuss at committee. I alluded to that earlier: If there is empirical evidence that suggests there are employers out there who are either counselling or coercing employees not to report an injury that has

taken place to the WSIB, I'd like to hear more about that. The government would have us believe that it's a big problem. Let's hear more empirical evidence—as well as any anecdotal evidence the government would like to put forward; I would be interested in hearing that, too.

Again, I wanted to go back to the issue that I mentioned earlier, the two-hatter issue. I had a chance to speak previously, as I said, on October 8, and I read some testimony—I'm running out of time unfortunately—from the committee hearings that took place in October 2002 when we had committee hearings on my Bill 30.

I read extensively, in my previous opportunity in this speech, from the testimony at the Standing Committee on Justice and Social Policy on October 21, 2002, from the fire marshal of Ontario, but I want to add that there was also support for my bill from a number of other very credible organizations in the fire service, including the Ontario fire chiefs' association, representing chiefs from all over the province, and including city fire departments—full-time, professional fire services, as well as the part-time or volunteer services. They were very supportive of my bill and supportive of legislated protection for two-hatter firefighters, so that their expulsion from the union and the threat of that couldn't be held over them, forcing them to quit as part-time firefighters.

I wanted to read comments from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. They were very supportive of the bill. We also had support from the Fire Fighters' Association of Ontario, representing the volunteer fire service.

I said previously that if indeed this protects two-hatters, this Bill 109, it is good news in terms of public safety for rural Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: The member from Wellington-Halton Hills did a good job on explaining this bill. It's an interesting bill in that, in some ways, it is a housekeeping bill, and some of those housekeeping types of issues would bring the firefighters in this province in line with other workers in the province with respect to the Ontario Labour Relations Act.

But in other ways, it's a very regressive bill that actually, I think, wouldn't withstand a charter challenge at the end of the day with respect to the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, where it's going to actually take away the rights of workers who are unionized when two hospitals come together or two municipalities come together—that stuff that arose under Mike Harris.

In the case where workers had less than 40% of the members—so say it was a competition between OPSEU and CUPE, for example, if 39.9% of the workers only belong to CUPE, those CUPE members would have no right to choose which union they would belong to, which really flies in the face of the legislation to begin with. But people in a non-union setting competing with a union on the other side would still be going to a vote, whether they had 40% or less or more. So it seems to me that this isn't a very progressive move. Certainly the people that I've

talked to in my labour portfolio are not supportive of this legislation.

I'll have an hour tomorrow to talk more about that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions or comments?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: It's always my pleasure to be able to rise in this House and make some comments in relation to the member for Wellington–Halton Hills's presentation to the House and, of course, talk a little bit about the importance of Bill 109.

I know the member from Wellington–Halton Hills talked quite a bit about the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. This Bill 109 is actually going to amend three separate acts that are affecting workers to increase fairness and efficiency. Changes under this bill, if it becomes law, provide increased fairness to all workers across Ontario. I think the first thing I'd like to mention—I think my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills talked about this a bit as well—is that we're helping to provide fair, just and efficient workers' compensation systems.

The second thing that this bill really does is it ensures that broader public sector transitions go as smoothly as possible through greater efficiency and stability.

I think another important thing to mention is that it provides more tools to resolve disputes in the fire sector. I know I can think of SPFFA local 527 in Sudbury. The association president, Rob Hyndman, and Captain Chad Whitmore are great people within our community who do so much.

I think it's great for us to ensure that we're giving all of our local police services right across our great province the protection that they need, because, Mr. Speaker, as you're well aware, day in and day out, the men and women in uniform do a great job of keeping us safe. For us to be able to bring forward legislation that continues to help protect them, those who protect us, is an important thing.

I'd just like to thank my honourable colleagues for their presentations and being part of this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for filling in today to give the member from Wellington–Halton Hills the opportunity to finish speaking on Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act.

1750

We know that the member from Wellington–Halton Hills is always doing a great job on behalf of his constituents. He's kind of a legend for part of this bill, the section on the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. Even before I got to Legislature in 2002, the member—a different riding name back then—introduced a private member's bill, Bill 30. That was to allow full-time firefighters—in my case, in the city of Kawartha Lakes, I had Tim Lee. He was a full-time firefighter in another municipality, but he wanted to volunteer and help out his community in Kawartha Lakes, which was the right thing to be doing. The unions were very much against it and

were pressuring him; he was threatened that he was going to lose his job.

When the member from Wellington–Halton Hills introduced his private member's legislation, the double-hatters legislation, to protect the full-time firefighters who were in a different jurisdiction but wanted to volunteer back in their home communities, it was interesting that the Liberals defeated his private member's bill at that time.

We come full circle, as the member from Wellington–Halton Hills—have you been here long enough? You've come full circle. The Liberals are actually introducing a piece of legislation that does allow for volunteer firefighting if you're a full-time firefighter in some other jurisdiction. I just wanted to commend Tim Lee, who had the courage to stand up to his union and say, "Hey, but what about my community?" So to commend all those volunteer firefighters back home that were full-time somewhere else but wanted to contribute to their community—hopefully, we're getting it right now, and that will make it better for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further comments? The Chair recognizes the member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm nimble this late in the afternoon. It's a pleasure to join the debate on any occasion, particularly one that deals with labour statutes and amendments to labour law. My colleague the member from Welland, who is now our party's critic for labour, articulated quite well some of the pitfalls of this bill, certainly around disenfranchising those who are seeking to organize their operations, workers who are ready to organize—if there is a consolidation of two entities that come together and the rights that are integral or rights that are given to those bargaining units—something that, quite clearly, may not withstand a charter challenge.

It would be our counsel to the government and to opposition to really put some focus on at least eliminating the parts of the bill that certainly would not withstand that. You put a lot of work into these bills. There's a lot of time that goes into debating the bills. Let's make sure that the bill is in order, in the first place, so that we're not wasting anyone's time. That can be done quite easily and should be done quite easily. It sort of begs the question: Is this bill intended to actually address some of the issues in our labour law or to play politics, knowing full well that it will never have the chance to see the light of day?

We certainly support debating reforms to employment standards and labour standards. There are so many other facets out there. My first bill dealt with some facets of labour law that would have made it easier for workers to certify, giving them more rights in their workplaces. That did, unfortunately, die. I'm hopeful to see it resurrected at some point in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills now has two minutes to wrap up.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I should say, again, thank you for filling in in the chair

this afternoon so that I could finish off my remarks on Bill 109. I want to express my appreciation to the members who responded to my remarks. They all raised, I think, pertinent points that need to be considered in the context of this debate as it continues.

The member for Kawartha Lakes-Brock reminded the House that actually, to a large degree, the two-hatters issue emerged as an issue in her area. It was a professional firefighter named Tim Lee who wanted to volunteer as a part-time or volunteer firefighter in his home community, using his skills and expertise that he had learned over the course of his career and putting that to good use on his days off in his home community so that he could protect his own family, as well as his neighbours—again, on his free time or time off. It was he who was challenged by the union at that time and told that if, indeed, he continued to serve as a part-time firefighter in his home community, he might be expelled from the union, and if he was expelled from the union, he might lose his full-time job with the professional fire service that he was also with, and really calling into question his livelihood.

That example was one of the ones that we talked about during the debates on Bill 30. Tim had the courage of his convictions to take a public stand. Again, I salute him for his willingness to stand up, because at the time, the professional fire service was trying to bury this issue, and, in many cases, they pretended it wasn't even happening, and would suggest that. We knew it was happening, so we continued to work on it.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, the bill came to a final vote in the House in December 2002, and the Liberal opposition, with a couple of exceptions—but the vast majority of them voted against it. Two thirds of our caucus, on a free vote, voted for it. But because of the combined opposition of the Liberals and the New Democrats and some of, quite frankly, the Conservative members, it was defeated. But here we are today, discussing the issue again, and again I would say this is a good day for public safety in rural Ontario if, indeed, the government is committed to protecting two-hatter firefighters with a legislated solution.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The member for Algoma-Manitoulin has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given today on the youth jobs program by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today in question period, I asked the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to address the issue of drastic cuts made to the Jobs for Youth Program that provides at-risk youth employment opportunities in the Manitoulin and La Cloche areas. Unfortunately, I received a less than satisfactory response.

In August, the district services board received word from the ministry that funding would be drastically cut. I wanted to hear from the minister and the ministry what he was doing to help unemployed and disadvantaged youth find work in northern communities. I didn't hear that. Basically, what I heard was rhetoric. I didn't hear anything about the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board. I didn't hear anything to the faintest of the subject of my question.

Funding to the Jobs for Youth Program has been cut by 83% since its inception. The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board and its 18-member municipality sent a letter to the Premier stating the "need to understand how the ministry can reduce the number of youth placements from 111 ... to 19...." The program provided youth aged 15 to 18 with the equivalent of eight weeks of full-time work with local employers before funding was cut. The allocation for Manitoulin and La Cloche is now for seven youths, a reduction from 58, or an 88% cut in placements.

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board received a letter on August 14, 2015, confirming the funding allocation and site targets for the Youth Job Connection program. In this same letter, their organization was asked to accept the funding to deliver both components of the program: Youth Job Connection from October 2015 to March 2017 and Youth Job Connection: Summer program from April 2016 to March 2017. The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board has been overseeing the Jobs for Youth Program, formerly known as the Summer Jobs for Youth, since 2008, funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

This program allocated the funding for Jobs for Youth since its inception to the district services board for Manitoulin Island only. Since the inception of this program, the district services board continued to lobby the ministry for the allocation for the remainder of the district.

1800

The Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board has the resources available to ensure that the Jobs for Youth Program is well delivered in each part of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board jurisdiction. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board has always reinvested any central administration dollars back into the program to ensure that as many at-risk youth as possible have the opportunity for a summer job.

The Jobs for Youth Program is an initiative of the youth opportunities strategy, which was established to address the factors that place youth at increased risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and/or violence. The

eight-week program is intended to give disadvantaged youth, any youth who resides in identified at-risk communities, an opportunity to develop employment skills and obtain safe and positive employment experience through paid summer employment and thereby participating in and contributing to the betterment of their families and communities.

That means there will be 92 high-risk youth who will not get an opportunity for a summer job in 2016 because of the change in the province's programming for high-risk youth.

The district services board has requested a delegation at AMO to discuss the issue with Minister Moridi. They didn't receive a response. They didn't receive a return call. They didn't receive anything. It's imperative to set up a meeting with the district services board, and not with the youth organizations as the minister responded to this morning in the question, to discuss the drastic reductions in services in an area that was identified by the province as high-risk.

My question once again to the minister is: When can they expect to receive a call that you will agree to meet with them to justify the cuts you have made to this program?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I am pleased to recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, the member for Trinity-Spadina. He has five minutes to reply.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for his question, and I'm pleased to answer, or try to answer his question, on behalf of the minister.

Ensuring that our young people have opportunities to contribute to our economy is a top priority for our government. Building on past success with youth employment programming, our government is investing an additional \$250 million over two years in Ontario's renewed youth jobs strategy. As part of our 2015 budget, this renewed strategy will be driven by two new, innovative youth programs.

Youth Job Connection will provide intensive support to youth facing multiple barriers to employment, including at-risk youth, aboriginal youth, newcomers and youth with disabilities.

Youth Job Link, which will be launched in spring 2016, will assist students and youth to access labour market information and job search resources, including summer employment placements.

This new investment will serve over 150,000 young Ontarians and Canadians and focus on skills development, labour market connections, entrepreneurship and innovation.

Our government is moving forward with our renewed youth jobs strategy to help young people gain the right skills and experience to achieve their full potential.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to supporting Ontario's most vulnerable youth access the necessary services and tools to find jobs in today's market economy.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is consistently evaluating employment and training programs to avoid duplication and to ensure that all services are built on best practices.

Through a series of consultations, the ministry heard from many stakeholders that youth programming should be more targeted and cover a wider spectrum of young people. That is why we are introducing a new, more comprehensive and targeted suite of employment programs and services to help youth with a broad spectrum of needs.

I want to reassure the member that youth on Manitoulin Island and across the province will continue to have access to a variety of employment supports, including summer job opportunities, through a suite of new programs that build on the best practices of programs like Jobs for Youth, previously offered by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. These include Youth Job Connection, which is providing more than \$160 million over two years to help youth facing multiple barriers to employment. Youth Job Link will be launching in spring 2016 and will help youth who face fewer barriers to employment.

Through Ontario's Youth Job Connection, youth will have access to paid pre-employment training, job matching, mentorship services and education and work transition supports. The program will be delivered through Employment Ontario and consist of two components, the first being a year-round component which helps youth aged 15 to 29, and a summer job component that will provide high school students aged 15 to 18 with summer job opportunities and part-time work during the school year. Youth Job Connection is a targeted program to help youth who need the most help to find jobs. That is available at more than 130 Employment Ontario locations across the province.

In selecting service providers, the ministry uses targeted, evidence-based analysis that ensures adequate service coverage across the province. The selection process includes an analysis of geography, labour market information, demographic characteristics and the service provider capacity. Three times as many service providers have been invited to deliver Youth Job Connection, including those currently offering Jobs for Youth.

This program will continue to provide a similar service at all former Jobs for Youth sites, so there will be no gaps in services for youths on Manitoulin Island, in the surrounding area and across Ontario. We have also invested an additional \$25 million to enhance our youth employment service, which helps more than 70,000 young people each year.

Our government will continue to invest in innovative programs to help to connect our young people to the job opportunities they need to succeed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1808.

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McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka 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
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	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) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe 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) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton 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) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	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) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt 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) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
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
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**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
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**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
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
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, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Continued from back cover

Time allocation

Motion agreed to 6009

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Mothers and Others March

Mr. Steve Clark 6009

Ian Bos

Mr. Michael Mantha 6009

Atlantic Packaging Products Ltd.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon 6009

Multiple sclerosis

Mr. Jeff Yurek 6010

Steel industry

Mr. Paul Miller 6010

Manufacturing Month

Mrs. Amrit Mangat 6010

Southampton Hospital

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson 6010

Multiple sclerosis

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry 6011

Evan Leversage

Mr. Chris Ballard 6011

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) 6012

Report deemed adopted 6012

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Ministry of Correctional Services Amendment Act (Parole), 2015, Bill 130, Mr. Yakabuski / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels (libérations conditionnelles), projet de loi 130, M. Yakabuski

First reading agreed to 6012

Mr. John Yakabuski 6012

Opportunity in the Sharing Economy Act, 2015, Bill 131, Mr. Hudak / Loi de 2015 sur les possibilités offertes par l'économie de partage, projet de loi 131, M. Hudak

First reading agreed to 6012

Mr. Tim Hudak 6012

Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2015, Bill 132,

Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2015 sur le Plan d'action contre la violence et le harcèlement sexuels (en soutien aux survivants et en opposition à la violence et au harcèlement sexuels), projet de loi 132, Mme MacCharles

First reading agreed to 6013

Hon. Tracy MacCharles 6013

Precision Pipe Manufacturing Inc. Act, 2015, Bill Pr31, Mr. Thibeault

First reading agreed to 6013

Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Permanent Partial Disability Supplements), 2015, Bill 133, Mrs. Albanese / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail (supplément pour invalidité partielle à caractère permanent), projet de loi 133, Mme Albanese

First reading agreed to 6013

Mrs. Laura Albanese 6013

Conservation Land Fairness Act, 2015, Bill 134, Mr. Colle / Loi de 2015 sur l'équité en matière de terres protégées, projet de loi 134, M. Colle

First reading agreed to 6013

Mr. Mike Colle 6013

MOTIONS

Private members' public business

Hon. James J. Bradley 6013

Motion agreed to 6013

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Lyme disease

Mr. Michael Mantha 6013

Hydro rates

Mr. John Yakabuski 6014

Diagnostic services

Mr. Taras Natyshak 6014

Water fluoridation

Mr. Lou Rinaldi 6014

Hunting

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson 6015

Police

Mr. Percy Hatfield 6015

Lung health

Mr. Chris Ballard 6015

Taxation

Mr. John Yakabuski 6016

Privatisation des biens publics

M. Michael Mantha 6016

Lung health

Mr. Han Dong..... 6016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

**Police Record Checks Reform Act, 2015, Bill 113,
Mr. Naqvi / Loi de 2015 sur la réforme des
vérifications de dossiers de police, projet de loi 113,
M. Naqvi**

Second reading vote deferred 6017

**Protection of Public Participation Act, 2015, Bill 52,
Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur la protection du
droit à la participation aux affaires publiques,
projet de loi 52, Mme Meilleur**

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur..... 6017

Mr. Randy Hillier 6017

Mr. John Vanthof..... 6019

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti 6021

Mr. Ernie Hardeman 6021

Mr. Percy Hatfield 6023

Ms. Lisa MacLeod..... 6023

Mr. Jagmeet Singh..... 6025

Third reading vote deferred 6028

**Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment
Act, 2015, Bill 109, Mr. Flynn / Loi de 2015
modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les
relations de travail, projet de loi 109, M. Flynn**

Mr. Ted Arnott..... 6028

Ms. Cindy Forster 6032

Mr. Glenn Thibeault 6033

Ms. Laurie Scott 6033

Mr. Taras Natyshak 6033

Mr. Ted Arnott..... 6033

Second reading debate deemed adjourned..... 6034

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR
LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT**

Youth employment

Mr. Michael Mantha..... 6034

Mr. Han Dong..... 6035

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 27 October 2015 / Mardi 27 octobre 2015

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015, Bill 115, Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur les limites des circonscriptions électorales, projet de loi 115, Mme Meilleur	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5987
Mrs. Amrit Mangat	5995
Mr. John Yakabuski	5995
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5996
Mr. Joe Dickson	5996
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	5996
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	5997

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman	5997
Mme France Gélinas	5997
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	5997
Mr. Steve Clark	5997
Mr. Percy Hatfield	5997
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	5997
Ms. Catherine Fife	5997
Hon. Dipika Damerla	5997
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	5997
Hon. Eric Hoskins	5997
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	5997
Mr. Chris Ballard	5997
Mr. Granville Anderson	5997
Mrs. Cristina Martins	5997

Wearing of ribbons

Hon. Dipika Damerla	5998
---------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Teachers' collective bargaining	
Mr. Patrick Brown	5998
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5998
Teachers' collective bargaining	
Mr. Patrick Brown	5999
Hon. Deborah Matthews	5999
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	6000
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6000

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath	6001
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6001

Teachers' collective bargaining

Ms. Lisa MacLeod	6002
Hon. Liz Sandals	6002

Education funding

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	6002
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6003
Hon. Liz Sandals	6003

Flu immunization

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri	6003
Hon. Eric Hoskins	6003

Teachers' collective bargaining

Mr. Victor Fedeli	6004
Hon. Liz Sandals	6004

GO Transit

Mr. Wayne Gates	6004
Hon. Steven Del Duca	6004

Citizens' awards

Mr. Yvan Baker	6005
Hon. Michael Chan	6005

Taxation

Mr. Steve Clark	6005
Hon. Charles Sousa	6006

Youth employment

Mr. Michael Mantha	6006
Hon. Reza Moridi	6006

Great Lakes protection

Ms. Eleanor McMahon	6007
Hon. Glen R. Murray	6007

Human trafficking

Ms. Laurie Scott	6007
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	6007

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	6008
-------------------------------------	------

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Strengthening Consumer Protection and Electricity System Oversight Act, 2015, Bill 112, Mr. Chiarelli / Loi de 2015 pour renforcer la protection des consommateurs et la surveillance du réseau d'électricité, projet de loi 112, M. Chiarelli	
Second reading agreed to	6008

Continued on inside back cover