



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 29 March 2017

Mercredi 29 mars 2017

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Greffier
Todd Decker

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



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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 29 March 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 29 mars 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I believe before I call the order I'm supposed to do this first because it says "after prayers."

I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding bills on the topic of health in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a point of order. The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2017

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2017

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 28, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 / Projet de loi 111, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2017.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker, and good morning. I'm here to stand for 20 minutes to talk about the supply bill. It's going to be a bit tough because my entire commentary is on the fact that I don't think the government can be trusted with our money. That's the premise of the next 20 minutes that I'm going to be delivering.

Part of it is going to be about some of the wording that the government has been using over the last short while: If you don't agree with the government, no matter what it is that they're saying, somehow you're always wrong and they're always right. I want to talk about some very specific examples of why what they say—whether it's here in the Legislature or in the media—and what the facts are, are most generally quite opposite, and I'm going to cite some examples.

Now, look, you talk about, "Don't throw stones when you live in a glass house." I make mistakes. I may trans-

pose numbers. When you're talking off the top of your head or standing on your feet without notes, I make mistakes frequently. There's no question that that has happened. What I'm talking about is by design. When you've got, for instance, the former Minister of Natural Resources, when we were talking about the budget and supply and numbers last year alone—I'm going to read from Hansard.

The former Minister of Natural Resources said that he wants the leader of the official opposition, our leader Patrick Brown, to correct his record. He stood here and he said that this member—referring to our leader—"stood on his feet ... to tell people ... that recreational hunting and fishing licences are increasing; in fact, he's wrong." This is what the minister is saying. "Recreational hunting and fishing licences are not increasing." I'm reading from Hansard, Speaker. He says: "Unequivocally, that is not the case. I'm not sure why he said that, but perhaps he can go back and just find some capacity to check on the research there, because it's just not the case." He goes on to say, "It's wrong," and he carries on to say, "It's wrong."

I stood up shortly after that, Speaker—I actually read the budget, unlike the minister, obviously—and I referred to pages 190 and 191 of the minister's section of the budget. I said: "I will read ... from the budget, where it says, 'Starting in 2017-18, fees will be adjusted annually to keep up with inflation....' Examples of the fees include 'fees charged for driver and vehicle licensing, camping in Ontario parks, fishing and hunting licences, court applications, liquor licences and event permits.' The list of" new taxes that this government has brought goes on and on and on.

But this is the minister of this entire department and he used the word "unequivocally": "Unequivocally, that is not the case ... It's wrong." If he said that "hunting and fishing licences are increasing ... he's wrong." But in their own budget—it carries on.

Speaker, I would have hoped that somehow, somewhere, the minister himself may have had some inclination that his own department fees were going up. You would think that if you're going to make an accusation like that, here in the Legislature, you could be even marginally accurate. It might have been a help. It would be a shock for this government to be marginally accurate even once. That's why I'm saying, when I speak on the supply bill: How can we trust this government with our money?

When you've got the minister—obviously they didn't read the budget. There's nobody here that actually read the budget. For him to stand up and say, "Our fees in our

department are not going up,” yet in the very budget he’s debating, the fees are going up, then something is terribly, terribly wrong, which is why we have such a hard time here, on this side of the House, trusting anything this government says. Anything at all to do—as we’re discussing today’s supply, we’re talking about our money. We’re talking about the hard-earned tax dollars that people are asked to part with, to see what this government is doing.

So when you continue down this path of just talking about, why should we trust what they have to say—just yesterday, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change said that nobody raised hydro rates faster than the Tories. Okay, at the time this government took office, hydro rates were 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Today, 13 years later, rates are 18 cents. We’re talking about—if rates were one cent and quadrupled somehow to four cents, which would be horrific, that would be one thing. They’ve taken rates from four cents and made them 18 cents. It’s mathematically impossible for that statement—that he stood in this Legislature at 4:50 yesterday—I wrote it down; I sent it to our party and said, “At 4:50, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change said that nobody raised rates faster than the Tories, and that is mathematically wrong.” Never mind that it’s morally wrong to have suggested that, but it’s mathematically impossible.

In fact, not only are rates 18 cents, but where I live, in the town of Corbeil, it’s an area where we have medium density. My rates at peak are more than 22 cents a kilowatt hour. Down the street from me, my friend Phil Konig lives on Treadlightly lane. It’s a little cul-de-sac that comes off the street I live on. There are only 12 houses on that street, so it doesn’t qualify. He’s in low-density. He pays 26-point-something cents a kilowatt hour at his peak rate. So we’ve gone from four cents to over 26 cents. That’s a pretty big increase. Yet when the government took over, it was 4.3 cents, and that’s what the minister said yesterday.

0910

How can you trust the numbers that this government gives you when they stand in this Legislature day after day after day and give us numbers that have absolutely nothing to do with reality?

Look at the day before; this would have been March 27. At 1:53 p.m., I sent a note, and I said, “Oh, my gosh. The Minister of Agriculture stood and said”—he’s also the minister of small business. He’s the new minister; I’ll give him that. He stood—I’ve cut it out of Hansard. Honourable Jeff Leal: “Mr. Speaker, I’m proud to say that the small business tax rate in Ontario is among the lowest in North America.”

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, I hear it is, from this member over here. So let me just—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Continue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Let me just think about this. You can wonder why, Speaker, we don’t trust the government’s numbers when you hear—

Mr. Todd Smith: They believe the lines.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They believe their own talking points.

The small business corporate tax rate in Ontario is around 4.5%, the second-highest in Canada, tied with PEI. Quebec holds the highest rate at 8%. All of the rest are lower, and that’s just in Canada. There are six US states with zero.

So I don’t know how you can say that where we are in Ontario—North Carolina is 3%; North Dakota is 4.31%. I don’t know how we can take anything that these ministers are telling us. That is not something that you need—you can say our rates are—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Children and Youth Services, first warning.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, how can you take anything? I mean, they always have to stretch the reality, and that’s just not fair. I know that it bothers them to hear the truth and the facts. I understand that, because the truth hurts. I hear that; I understand that. But when you tell people one thing when the complete opposite is true—as I’ve said, there are six states that have zero. How can we be the lowest? I mean, zero is pretty low.

Then we go a little further. We’ve got the Minister of Economic Development and Growth. I know the name has changed, and I haven’t kept up on all the names. One day, he commented about how we’re leading the country in job creation.

In fact, I know the Minister of Agriculture would like this: I’m going to refer to the Focus on Finance issue, because I talk about fake news. That’s a word that the minister used in a press scrum that I was at across the street at the MaRS building. He was talking about what the Auditor General called a “high-risk” bailout. He was talking back then about the MaRS bailout that the government did in secret.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: In secret—it was done in secret, Speaker.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It’s a great success story.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You can hear what they’re heckling. They’re saying it’s a great success story. At the end of the day, of course, it’s a wonderful thing. This has nothing to do with the people of MaRS. This has absolutely nothing to do with the great work that the men and women are doing in research at the MaRS institute. It’s the secret real estate deal that the Liberals tried to hide under the rug; that’s what this is all about. They got caught by a whistle-blower in June 2014 who slipped the brown envelope under the door that showed what they’re trying to do. The auditor called it a “high-risk” bailout. They finally came clean. It was learned that they were bailing out a US real estate firm for \$308 million. They were putting taxpayer money at risk.

At the end of the day, they finally did what they should have done at the beginning: They came clean. They got investors to invest in the building, and that's acceptable. That's what they should have done. But they were keeping the fact of what they really did in secret, and they got caught.

The fact that it turned out good at the end—the minister said, “You see? Back then, it was fake news.” Well, it wasn't fake news. It was actually true and they got caught, so the minister should have stopped there. But, instead, he decided to dole out fake news of his own. In his speech, in the media scrum and in other letters to the editor that he wrote, he talked about Ontario's economic growth, he talked about our foreign direct investment and he talked about employment growth. He said that our economy is growing faster than the US. Well, that's not accurate, Speaker. Last year's numbers show Arkansas, Washington, Oregon—all had annualized growth that was better than Ontario, while Colorado matched Ontario. So how can you say that it's growing faster when it's not? They're wrong. They've given incorrect information to the Legislature.

He also said that Ontario is the top foreign direct investment destination. Well, Speaker, again, at one time, in the great days of Ontario, we might have been—and we were, in fact. But, sadly, that's not true anymore. We dropped from \$7 billion to \$4 billion. We fell from first place to fourth place. Speaker, we have fallen behind California, New York and Texas, so they're either delusional and not understanding the reality that they've created, whether it's our extreme business climate, our highest energy rates in North America—all of those other issues. It's either that, or they know that what they're saying is not accurate but they just hope to keep painting a picture.

Speaker, again, the fact is, we're here to discuss the supply bill. We're talking about what they're doing with our money. How can they be trusted to handle even a dime of our money when we can't get any straight answers from them whatsoever? Everything I've spoken to here and said has been either from the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer or, sadly, the OPP. Those are the three sources we have to get information in the province in Ontario. It's never from the government—never, ever, ever from the government. Certainly, from the ministers that I've listed so far, we can understand that everything they've said, it's the opposite of it that is true.

The minister carried on. He said our employment is “the best in Canada” and “we're leading the country in job creation.”

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again, Speaker, you hear them over there: “Yes!”—well, no is the answer, actually. When you look at the employment numbers at the time he said that, Ontario was 6.4%, and so was Saskatchewan, but Quebec was 6.2%, Manitoba was 6.1% and BC was 5.6%. These were the stats at the time he said that. Now, Speaker, how can you say one thing when the

statistics—in this case, these came from Stats Canada, the same source they used—say something completely different than what the government is saying?

I don't know how we're supposed to even think one thing—if they said something was red, you would have to look to see if it was green. It just has come to that in the province of Ontario where, unless it comes from the Auditor General, who we trust implicitly, from the Financial Accountability Officer, who is doing a marvellous job in the commentary that we get where we are drilling down into the numbers, or from the OPP, where we have got five OPP investigations—not one, not two, but five, Speaker. We've got trials coming up: September 7, the alleged bribery trial in Sudbury will start; September 11, here in Toronto, the gas plants scandal trial begins.

This is the Ontario that this government thinks is just business as usual. You don't like the numbers? Stand up and say something different. Who's going to challenge you? That's the reality that this government works in and, sadly, the reality is not real. We cannot take anything that this government says to the bank. That's just absolutely the way it is. You can look at all of the numbers that they've given us in the past and now have to actually question each and every number that they come up with. That's, I think, what's so critical here in the province of Ontario.

So when you've got a supply bill and you want to start talking about the monies that have been spent—well, I look at the eHealth scandal. I remember; I was mayor of the city of North Bay at the time and I was shocked that \$1 billion was wasted by this government. If you look—well, I guess it's only \$1 billion, because where we're at in the number today, I'm not sure people understand where we are. The Auditor General told us it's now \$8 billion that has been spent there—\$8 billion, with no end in sight and no conclusion. We're still funnelling money with no direction, no conclusion and no end in sight. That's how this government is handling our money.

0920

When you look at their new talking points—I'm sitting here with our energy critic. We've chatted about this, as I am a former energy critic, and we look at the new talking points from the government: “We inherited a system,” blah, blah, blah. That's all it is; it's talking points. It has nothing to do with reality.

The Auditor General told us that more than 60% of the reason for your hydro bills is because of the generation this government put on. That's making energy. It's not the system they inherited and all the other talking points and blather that we get from the government side. Those are talking points they bought and paid for. They hired a polling firm, hired a consulting firm: “What do we do to get out of this mess?” The polling firm said, “Look, people don't like this, but they do like the fact that this is done. If you say that you did this and that's where their money was, then they'll be happy.”

That's all that they did. It has nothing to do with the fact that when they told us they were spending \$1 billion on smart meters, they really spent \$2 billion. Oops. It

takes, again, an Auditor General to tell you, “They didn’t spend \$1 billion; they spent \$2 billion.” This is the government.

This is what we’re here to debate, the supply bill. Are you kidding? Does anybody want to support any of the numbers that this government has given us? We’re going to have a budget very soon, one of these days—as soon as it has been rewritten because they didn’t get what they wanted from the federal government. Their best friends on the federal government didn’t end up supplying them with the goodies they wanted, so they’re rewriting the budget, and they are going to come up with this artificial balance.

But we already know—the Financial Accountability Officer has already told us—we will have a structural deficit. That means we’re really in deficit. They’re going to take some assets like the OPG headquarters, the LCBO building and the sale of Hydro One—that’s all one-time money; that doesn’t repeat itself—and they’re going to put that in revenue, and all of a sudden we’re going to have a great year. But they’ve burned the furniture to heat the house. We have no more furniture to sell.

After the next election, we start to get into very serious financial concerns, according to the Financial Accountability Officer, one of the only three sources we can ever possibly trust for any numbers from this government.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I’m happy to rise and talk about the concurrence in estimates and the Supply Act. I just want to start by saying that the title may sound extremely vague and unclear in terms of what this really means. Just to put some plain language to it, what it really means is that this act is required and needs to go forward in order to pay the bills of government, if you will.

We have a very large public service. I think we’re the largest—if not, the second-largest—employer in Ontario, made up of many fine public servants who deliver programs and services for Ontario across many ministries, whether that’s transportation, health care, education, or my own ministry, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services, which is very much focused on consumer protection and making sure that Ontarians have good access to government programs.

They see and feel that most often in our ServiceOntario branches throughout Ontario. It has more and more become a one-stop shopping place to go to get your health card, your driver’s licence; we do land registry work. It’s really the face of government, ServiceOntario.

We also have Ontario Shared Services. They keep the lights on behind the scenes when it comes to payroll, human resources, many technology programs and services, and that’s a very important part of keeping government running. This act essentially ensures that all the services across government are supported and that the bills are paid so that we can deliver the best programs

and information services to Ontarians in an accountable, transparent and fair manner.

Of course, the act ensures that the initiatives of this government will go forward, whether that’s investing in a dynamic business climate or our commitment to an open, accountable and transparent government, and moving forward with what we call program review and transformation, which is focused on a smarter, more efficient government, a fiscally sound approach to managing the province’s finances to help grow the economy and create jobs and ensure the sustainability of programs and services.

The bargaining and compensation initiatives are also part of our priorities going forward. We’re very pleased that we’ve reached tentative labour agreements with teachers and education workers in Ontario through negotiations, including with OSSTF, the secondary school teachers’ federation, ETFO, the elementary teachers, the Ontario Council of Education Workers, the Ontario English Catholic teachers, CUPE, and a number of others.

These kinds of agreements, these kinds of programs and services I’m talking about, all have to be managed in the context of a budget and this bill will ensure that all our initiatives, whether it’s the ones I’ve mentioned or others related to transportation or our fair hydro plan, are adequately funded.

I think it’s just an opportunity, too, for me to say thank you to the public servants of Ontario, who do great service day in and day out. They’re the utmost of professionals.

This is an important bill and one that, as I said, isn’t really well understood, but it’s critical. It’s absolutely critical to make sure we have the agreement of this Legislature to ensure that the programs and services that this government is committed to are funded.

Speaker, with that, I’m going to end my comments. I know my colleague from Beaches–East York will be speaking at some point as well. I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call for further debate. The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure also to rise today to talk about debates on the concurrence in estimates and the Supply Act, 2017.

At the outset, I’d just like to take a moment. I’m delighted to be in the House speaking today, particularly because I’m joined by page captain Charlotte Morgan’s parents and grandmothers. We have Huw Morgan, father, and Michelle Lee, mother, in the audience today, in the east gallery, and Melinda Morgan, grandmother, and Janice Lee, grandmother. Charlotte, of course, is page captain. She’s exemplified the virtues of being a page here at Queen’s Park and we’re delighted to have her.

I want to address what I think is the most extraordinary accomplishment that you see coming out of our concurrence in estimates in this session. It’s taking us to a place that we promised we would be at four years ago.

When I ran in 2014, one of our principle promises to the people of Ontario was that we would bring in a balanced budget in the 2017-18 year. We're on track to do that, and we're on track to do that because we have been exemplary fiscal managers of the province of Ontario's taxes.

We have gone through a whole series of program renewal and transformation, which has allowed us to bring in a balanced budget. We were standing, if memory serves me, at close to \$12 billion in debt in 2014 when I ran, and running a debt-to-GDP ratio in excess of 40%. As a small business person who knows how to read a balance sheet and knows how to create wealth by offering products and services in a competitive and cost-advantageous way, I thought that wasn't appropriate. I was delighted to see that the platform we brought forward in 2014 said that we would get to balance, and we're on track to do that. I'm extremely proud of where we will be. We'll see what comes out in the next budget, but I think we're on track to do exactly what we said we would: promise made, promise kept.

0930

One of the ways that we've been able to go about balancing the budget is through what I think is one of the most dynamic programs that gets very little play in this House, because it's happening behind the scenes. It's happening behind the scenes with what I think is one of the greatest assets—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: One of the great assets—I don't want to put this particular member above all others, because we have so many great members on this side of House. But I'm thinking particularly of my friend the member for Etobicoke Centre, Yvan Baker by name. The member for Etobicoke Centre joined me in 2014 as part of the new, fresh crew of the Liberal Party of Ontario. Yvan Baker acts and serves as the PA to the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sorry, my apologies.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):—you know not to mention the name. Thank you. Continue.

Mr. Arthur Potts: My apologies, Speaker, of course. I'm so very proud of him, I sometimes forget.

The member for Etobicoke Centre acts as the PA to the Minister of Finance. What I want to highlight is that I think he's one of the extraordinary, great values we have on our side of the House because he comes out of the Boston Consulting Group, one of the most prestigious consulting agencies in Canada; it works around the world, in Ontario. He comes to us and he has taken on this role as the PA to the Minister of Finance, and he is doing work in a program that we call renewal, review and transformation. It has been his responsibility these last two and a half, almost three years to go, on a line-by-line basis, through every single budget, all the estimates, the budgets of every single ministry, and look for opportunities for efficiencies, to eliminate duplications, to review program spending—are we still getting value in these

various programs?—and he's been extraordinarily adept at doing just that.

Now, I say he's a great advantage. As people know, the base salary of an MPP is in the order of \$120,000 a year, and he, as a PA, gets a little bump up to that, to just a little under \$140,000. We have what would be a senior consultant from Boston Consulting Group working tireless hours. If we were to hire that consultancy to do this kind of work, it would be in the hundreds—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to remind the member that we're talking about supply. We're not talking about the grandeur of all other members of the party. Can we stick to the subject?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd be happy to. I was going to get to you next.

What I, in fact, will do is focus on the fact that he was able to find efficiencies, for instance, in programs that we deliver to youth in Ontario. Programs to youth, various programs, were something in the order of a dozen ministries or more, and he was able to identify these programs and bring them all together and make them more efficiently delivered through three agencies, so we avoided duplications and delivered the programs with efficiencies.

That's an example of the kind of program we're so proud of. We were able to hold the line on expenditures in the province of Ontario while continuing to invest record amounts of money into infrastructure—\$160 billion projected over 12 years into infrastructure—and deliver all the base operational services that we had promised to do without slashing jobs, as the members of the official opposition had proposed; to get to a balanced budget, they were going to chop 100,000 jobs in the first year. We haven't done that, Speaker.

We, with a fine-tooth comb, have gone through all the budgets of all the ministries, found efficiencies and continued to deliver the services, while investing in the economy. That has been the trajectory that we have towards a balanced budget. We've been able to find new revenues through GDP growth, which is increasing government revenues, at the same time as we're holding fairly flat our expenditures. The difference between that investment growth in GDP and holding the line is what allowed us to go from a \$12-billion deficit in 2014 down to what is projected—we're hoping to see in our next budget—that we're on track to be balanced.

Another area that the member from Etobicoke Centre has been working on—he's the PA to the minister of digital services. It's another area of incredible opportunity for our government, modernizing the province of Ontario in the digital era, modernizing by bringing in a whole bunch of incredible new technologies to assist people to access government services online through websites.

I want to just point out one, which is of such incredible use to students in the province of Ontario. It's our new OSAP calculator. This is an extraordinary Web-based service which allows people—if they go to www.ontario.ca/osap—to use a calculator where, seam-

lessly, you can put in: “I am a student in high school. My parents make X amount of money. I intend to go to university.” When you push a button, it will calculate how much money you can receive in order to get into university.

For those making less than \$85,000 in family income, tuition would be free, with an additional component for living expenses over and above that, as a grant. For instance, if a single mother with three kids wanted to go back to school and was making in the order of \$40,000, the calculator will show that she will get something in the order of \$24,000 a year to assist her in going back and upgrading her services in order to be a better provider for her family.

I’m very excited about those kinds of online services.

We are also using an incredible new technology from a group called Syngrafii. Syngrafii is a new digital technology which we are using at the upper echelons of government which allows us to get absolute, verified signatures on documents, be they around the world, between cities, so that we can validate people’s signatures and get government moving quicker.

I’m absolutely delighted that we are investing in these new opportunities, these new innovations. On that, I’m going to sit and allow another member to take a few moments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Minister of International Trade.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity. Ontario’s economy is really in very good standing, and we are growing very strongly. That’s good news for Ontario. That’s very, very good news for Ontarians.

Speaker, allow me to tell you that for the last eight years in a row—eight years in a row—Ontario is projected to beat the deficit. Of course, eight years ago, we had the target, and every year, and consecutively, we were able to beat that deficit target.

This year, we’re projecting a \$1.9-billion deficit in 2016-17, and that is a \$2.4-billion improvement, compared to the original 2016 budget.

Our unemployment rate is down to a very, very nice number, 6.2%, which is the lowest in 10 years’ time. Also, Ontario just experienced seven straight months of job growth, a number that Ontario has not matched in 14 years.

On top of that, since 2008-09, the global recession, which was a tremendous downturn globally in terms of the economy, Ontario has created 700,000 net new jobs since that time, and 95% of those jobs are full-time jobs. They are not part-time or temporary; they’re actually full-time jobs.

Speaker, as I said before, Ontario’s economy is thriving in many sectors. It can be agriculture or ICT. Those are very, very good for Ontario in terms of job creation and the economy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call for further debate. Last call for further debate.

Seeing none, pursuant to standing order 64, I am now required to put the question.

Mrs. Sandals has moved second reading of Bill 111, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

This will be deferred for the vote until after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I know the good folks of Peterborough are tuning in to channel 95, Cogeco, this morning and are going to see—

Interjection.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding bills on the topic of health in the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Leal.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 71(d)—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Excuse me. Clerk, please. There seems to be a problem here.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I hope I didn’t cause it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister Leal has put forward a motion without notice regarding bills on the topic of health in the Legislature and is seeking unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Minister Leal.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to you if there was any confusion.

I move that, notwithstanding standing order 71(d), the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may consider Bill 84, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to medical assistance in dying, while the House is debating Bill 110, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, on Thursday, March 27, 2017.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Leal has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 71(d), the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs may consider—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those in favour? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I move no further business at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Leal has moved that the House—you guys have really made a mess of this this morning.

Interjection: You’re in charge.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I know. I'm in charge.

Mr. Leal has moved no further business. This House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 0943 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks, Speaker. I want to introduce to you and, through you, to members of the Legislative Assembly the member of Parliament for Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes and the chief opposition whip, MP Gord Brown.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: We have several guests from the my riding of Barrie today: Karen Littlewood, a friend and a neighbour, and Jessica Burnie are here today with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation; Theresa Gray-Gunn and her husband, Mike Gunn, are here on behalf of the PKD Foundation of Canada; and Tracey Beaudry is here today with her children Michelle and Matthew, on behalf of the Asthma Society.

Welcome, everyone, to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I just want to take this opportunity to welcome all the hard-working doctors who are here today to inform us of the conditions of the health care system.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to welcome the OSSTF educational workers to the Legislature today and, specifically, ones from my riding: Lisa MacMaster, Veronica Faulkner, Steve Janik and Richard Cracknell. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's a great pleasure for me to recognize hard-working teachers from Peterborough, part of OSSTF. They're up in the gallery over there: Tracey Germa; Dave Warda; Gary Fenn Jr., whose father, Gary Fenn Sr., was one of Peterborough's outstanding curlers; and Jen Deck. We welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Dr. Sean Peterson from the riding of Sarnia–Lambton, here for consultations this morning.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd also like to welcome, from OSSTF, Lisa MacMaster, Veronica Faulkner, Steve Janik and Richard Cracknell. Three of the four of them are constituents of mine in London West.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome Andrea Loken and Simon Baron from the OSSTF, as well as Jesse Grewal, Celine Allen, Diana Soochan, Sylvia Hidvegi and Phil Berger from the OMA. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Jeff Byers and Janice Scott, here with OSSTF. They're from my riding of Perth–Wellington.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, would like to welcome all of the physicians who have come down for OMA day at Queen's Park. I know that you're welcomed by all of

my colleagues. We will be meeting this afternoon—and invite everybody to take part in the lunch.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It's a special day in the House today. I've got my son David. David is here today with his teacher, Mr. Fraga, and their grade 5 class. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Also part of the grade 5 class to welcome today is Glea Liversidge.

Glea, welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome four doctors up from my area today: Dr. Albert Schumacher, Nada Radulovic, Aslok Shah and Ramita Verma.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'd like to welcome teachers from my riding of Durham who are from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, OSSTF, as well as representatives from the Ontario Medical Association. Welcome.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Sara Krengel, who's here today from Thornhill as part of the PKD—polycystic kidney disease—Foundation lobby day.

I also want to welcome Professor Yossi Shain from Tel Aviv University. He's a professor of political science there and also a professor of comparative government and diaspora politics at Georgetown University, and the founding director of the Program for Jewish Civilization.

Welcome, everybody, to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I would like all members of the assembly to join me in welcoming two of my constituents, good friends from Dundas: Keith Green and Ian McCloud. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to welcome today Mr. Stephen Lynch and David Parkes from the OSSTF and from my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, who are here today with their colleagues.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to welcome four excellent educators from the region of Halton with OSSTF: Cindy Gage, Art Hilson, Tom Golightly and Colin Post. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today, from the OSSTF and from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Jeff Barber and Linda Schultz, who I'll be meeting with later today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to welcome a friend and neighbour, also here from OSSTF today: Lisa Black-Meddings. And a big welcome to all of the reps from Durham region and Scarborough East.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome, from the OSSTF and from the riding of Nipissing, Jared Hunt. Also here, from a little south of us, is Glen Hodgson.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: From the riding of Windsor–Tecumseh with the OSSTF today, we have Irene Taylor and Tracie Edward. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation members and executive are in the House today. We'd like to welcome them: president Paul Elliott, vice-president Harvey Bischof, vice-president Cindy Dubué, treasurer Earl Burt, executive officer Sue Doughty-Smith, executive officer Jo Dean and executive

officer Rob Gascho. I would like to just warmly welcome them to Queen's Park.

Also, Speaker, I remain standing because page Angelika Guanlao's parents are attending Queen's Park, as Angelika is the page captain today. Please welcome Julieta and Fernando Guanlao.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I wish to welcome Denise Bennett from Mississauga here today. She's a proud member of the PKD Foundation of Canada, leading the fight against polycystic kidney disease through research, education, awareness and support programs. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: From the OSSTF, I want to say welcome to Richard Cracknell and Lisa MacMaster from London. Welcome.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Welcome to everybody from the OSSTF, especially my friends from Upper Grand District School Board, district 18.

I also want to welcome to the gallery—I think they may be arriving now—the mother of my legislative assistant.

Welcome to teacher Concetta Prins, and welcome to her grade 5 class and the grade 4/5 class visiting today from Cardinal Newman Catholic School in Brampton.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to welcome the OSSTF members that I met with already this morning from Waterloo region: Vicki Buder, Carrie Osbourne and Nanci Henderson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: It gives me great pleasure to welcome some Hamilton folks from OSSTF. We have Samantha Wilson, Lisa Hiscox, Anthony Filice and Anthony Marco, who is also the president of our Hamilton and District Labour Council. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome Tom Golightly, Colin Post, Cindy Gage, and Art Hilson from the Halton OSSTF. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: The individuals I mentioned from the OMA are actually from the Queen's medical school, so welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome a number of folks from my riding here today: Mary Fagan, Lois Thompson, Rosalie Spargo, John Sheedy, Keith Smith, Nancy Smith and—he just got here and is catching his breath—Forrest Rowden. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'm proud to welcome to Queen's Park today, from the riding of Burlington, Art Hilson from the OSSTF, joining us at Queen's Park as part of their lobby day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to join in and welcome all of the members from OSSTF here today and, in particular, a teacher from my riding of Davenport, Michelle Teixeira. Welcome.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Je veux accueillir ici à Queen's Park M. Rancourt de OSSTF. Bienvenue.

1040

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd like to welcome the family of page captain Charlotte Morgan: her mother, Michelle Lee, her father, Huw Morgan, her grandmother, Janice

Lee, and her paternal grandmother, Melinda Morgan. Thanks for coming to Queen's Park.

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to welcome the grade 5 class from St. Agnes school in Willowdale, and their principal, Mr. Fraga.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd ask all members of the Legislature to help me in welcoming some very special guests who are here today. As all the members know, there's currently a war happening in eastern Ukraine, where Russia has invaded Ukraine. We have a number of heroes from that war with us here today.

I'd first like to introduce Vadym Svyrydenko and his wife, Viktoria Diakiv. Vadym is a quadruple-amputee veteran who lost both arms and legs in the war, recovered and went on to participate in the US Marine Corps Marathon. He was appointed by the President of Ukraine as head of the Office of Rehabilitation Services for Injured Ukrainian Veterans, and is currently training for the 2017 Invictus Games.

I'd also ask everyone to join me in welcoming Senior Lieutenant Oksana Mazur. She's a female officer who served in Crimea and was later deployed on the eastern front. She served as an army psychologist. She is trained as a sniper. She is a Guinness World Records nominee as the only mother of five in active service.

I'd also like to welcome Dr. Olena Burlaka. She's from the Institute of Women's Reproductive Medicine at the Ukrainian National Academy of Medical Sciences. She is chair of the women's military health initiative in Ukraine. Welcome.

I'd ask you to join me in welcoming the following three people: Lisa Shymko, the national president of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women, and chair of the Guardian Angels Ukraine project, assisting rehabilitation centres for injured Ukrainian military personnel; Yuri Shymko, a former MPP for High Park–Swansea, a former member of Parliament, and president of the International Council in Support of Ukraine; and Anton Sestritys, who is the executive director of the International Council in Support of Ukraine.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I will not repeat everything, but on behalf of the PC caucus, I have been asked to also welcome Vadym Svyrydenko, Viktoria Diakiv, Oksana Mazur, Olena Burlaka, Lisa Shymko, Yuri Shymko and Anton Sestritys. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I have one further introduction. In the gallery today, unbeknownst to me until they arrived here, are the father of my son-in-law Thomas Colucci, or Tommaso Colucci, namely Vincenzo Colucci, and his daughter, Alessia. They're here with the school today.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome Danial Saadat, who is here today. He's an intern in the NDP caucus research office. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to seek unanimous consent for all members to wear pins in recognition of polycystic kidney disease.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London is seeking permission and unanimous consent to wear the pins. Do we agree? Agreed.

As is the tradition of the Speaker, I would introduce Yuri Shymko, from High Park–Swansea, from the 33rd Parliament. Welcome.

To move things right along, we can make up any lost time without any heckling.

Interjections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Speaker's getting heckled now.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now I'm being heckled for asking for no heckling.

Anyway, we welcome all visitors to the House.

I do want to make a note about that. We have discussed this with the officers. We tried to make a system work so that when you introduce your guests, we want to have an opportunity to introduce most, if not all, of our guests. You must be brief. You must not do editorializing. If you just do the introductions, I still make the commitment—all Speakers make the commitment—that introductions will be done as quickly as possible. We should not be taking too much time from question period. I thank you for your co-operation and understanding on that point.

It is therefore now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. The Premier has forced the Auditor General to essentially become a rubber stamp to allow clearly partisan government advertising to be approved. This is not acceptable.

Will the Premier do the right thing and restore the Auditor General's oversight of government advertising?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would just say to the member opposite that Ontario was the first and remains the only jurisdiction in the entire country that has legislation to prevent partisan advertising. That is the reality.

While partisan advertising is now banned, it is still permissible and it will continue to be permissible—and important—for the government to inform the people of Ontario about initiatives that impact their lives.

Let me give some examples of the kinds of things that people need to know about: getting the flu shot; updates to the sex ed curriculum; consumer protection; sexual violence and harassment awareness; and organ donations. Letting families know about our fair hydro plan is important, too. There are aspects of the plan—the increases to the Ontario energy support program—that are application-based. It's important that they go to the website and that they understand what's available to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier says this government hasn't taken away the AG's oversight. Who do we believe: this Liberal government, under multiple OPP investigations, or the Auditor General, who has clearly said that the powers have been stripped, that there are partisan ads running on the air right now as we speak?

What fantasy world are they living in? They're running ads right now. They're abusing taxpayer dollars right now. They know it's wrong, but this is a government that's had a history of abusing taxpayer dollars.

Rather than pretend you have not stripped the Auditor General of that right to have oversight, will the Premier do the right thing and stop running these partisan Liberal ads at the expense of taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Government advertising plays an important role in informing Ontarians. I think we all know that sexual violence has a devastating impact on the lives of victims and their families, and it's far too prevalent in our society. If you look at the Who Will You Help campaign, launched in March 2015, it challenged existing attitudes, and what were the results?

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Oops.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You caught yourself on an "oops." I'm glad you did because the member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. There are a couple of others that are on the edge.

President?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The Who Will You Help campaign was viewed by over seven million. It generated more than 85 million views worldwide. The important thing is, there were results. Within six months, 55% strongly agreed that they had an obligation to intervene when witnessing sexual harassment—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: These are diversion tactics. They're mentioning ads that the Auditor General did not have problems with. What we're seeing right here is that the Auditor General has pointed out that the government took away oversight and has now taken advantage of that by running ads that are clearly partisan, that should be paid for by the Liberal Party but, instead, they're charging to taxpayers.

I don't want diversion tactics. I don't want talking points. They've stripped the powers from the Auditor General to abuse taxpayer dollars for self-interest vanity ads. I'm asking the government to do the right thing.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Rather than talking points, yes or no: Will you restore the powers of oversight that you took away from the Auditor General?

Interjections.

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

President.

1050

Hon. Liz Sandals: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition can explain why they did not do the right thing in 2004 when they voted against the bill that introduced the most stringent limitations on partisan advertising in our province. Why did the member from Simcoe–Grey, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from York–Simcoe, the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, the member from Oxford, the member from—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time. The Minister of Labour and the member from Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: All these members that I just named still serve in this Legislature. Why did they not—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you want to do that, I will too. The member from Dufferin–Caledon, second time. As soon as I sit down, don't start up.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Why did these PC members not do the right thing in 2004 and vote for a bill that put an end to Mike Harris-style partisan advertising? We all remember that advertisement from Mike Harris where he flicked the lights off on Ontario, and closed hospitals and closed schools—

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

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. We have many great, phenomenal physicians here today with the Ontario Medical Association. I'm sure members across the aisle have been hearing from these physicians in communities across Ontario. I know I heard about the Canadian Institute for Health Information's annual report. The report revealed that patients are waiting longer for cataract surgery. Last year, only 70% of patients had their surgery within medically accepted time frames. This was down from 86% in 2012. The facts speak for themselves. Patient care is being diminished. Cataract wait times are getting worse, not better.

How much longer is this government going to fail patients?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to speak to this as well. I just want to welcome the OMA and the members to Queen's Park today. Obviously, doctors are an essential part of the health care system. They're essential to the delivery of a strong and sustainable health care system.

We're working to deliver on our mandate in health care: to improve access, reduce wait times and improve the overall patient experience, and we want to do that in partnership with all of our health care providers. We want to do that in partnership with doctors. We are going

to work to continue to improve that partnership. I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with some of the membership today, and I know that members across the House will be having those meetings. Thank you very much to the OMA for being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It's a bit rich hearing this from the government here today in the House when they vilify and disparage our physicians across the province. It's not right. Physicians are passionately devoted and dedicated in their work life to caring for patients. The reality is, we have 29,000 doctors who go to work and put patients first. This government is not putting patients first.

I didn't get an answer about cataracts; maybe I will in the second response. But what I want to know is, what is this government going to do about the chronic underfunding of health care? Everywhere I go in Ontario, I hear about hospitals that are struggling to make ends meet. I hear about physicians—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You are really not helping yourself.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Whether it's hospitals that are underfunded, whether it's nursing cuts or whether it's physicians who have seen the biggest diminishment of morale because of this government's cuts, it's not right.

What I'm asking of the government is, can I get an answer on cataract times? Can I get an answer on the underfunding? Is there even one physician in this province who actually supports this government? Their record on health care is embarrassing.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am going to take this opportunity to do a shout-out to my dad. He's 91 years old. He started practising medicine in Richmond Hill in 1952. He practised with three other doctors. He was on call every other weekend when York Central Hospital was built, which wasn't until I was in my teens. Until then, he had his rounds at what is now Southlake but was York County. We'd go up with him while he did his rounds, and we'd wait out on the lawn. Many Thanksgiving dinners and many Christmas dinners were interrupted by kids being born that he would go and deliver because, of course, he was practising during the baby boom.

I know exactly how hard doctors work. I know exactly how committed they are to the system. I will do everything in my power to make sure that we work in partnership with the doctors in this province.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Unfortunately, those words are hollow when you have a Minister of Health who disparages and vilifies physicians across the province. Those words ring hollow when you introduce health legislation routinely in the House and don't consult—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This government introduces health legislation and doesn't include doctors. They're not at the table; they have no voice. It's not right. For three years they've been working without a contract. It's not a big secret that we have a pretty ugly relationship right now between the province's physicians and the government. We have 29,000 hard-working doctors, and they deserve some respect. They deserve a voice.

What I'm asking the Premier to actually answer—if you're not going to answer my question on cataracts, can the Premier at least tell us when physicians will actually be at the table again?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I too want to welcome Ontario's doctors, including medical students, who are here today for many meetings. I encourage all of my colleagues on all sides of the House to take those meetings and listen to what the doctors have to say.

The Premier, a number of weeks ago, indicated that we were committed to binding interest arbitration and that we were committed to making that the first item to be discussed when we sit down with our doctors. I'm pleased to say that last night those negotiations did begin, with the first order of business to negotiate a process and an agreement for binding interest arbitration with Ontario's doctors so we can move forward to other aspects of, hopefully, an agreement with our physicians in the weeks and months ahead.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The cost of electricity has gone up over 300% under the Liberal government, including 50% just since this Premier took office. Families, businesses, municipalities and public institutions like schools and hospitals are suffering under the crushing weight of their hydro bills.

Yesterday, it was revealed that the new CEO of Hydro One took home \$4.5 million in 2016. Does the Premier think there's anything at all wrong with this picture?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very concerned and have been for some time—starting in 2013, we were working to take costs out of the electricity system in order to reduce people's electricity bills. We recognize that more needs to be done. That's why our fair hydro plan is going to take 25% off people's bills come summer, and, for people who live in remote and rural communities, they're going to see a 40% to 50% reduction. We're going to hold those increases for at least four years.

We understand that the improvements that have been made to the system had a cost associated with them. That's why the fair hydro plan is in place. That's why people will see reductions come summer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$4.5 million for the new CEO of the privatized Hydro One—which is 10

times more than the average of other hydro CEOs in Canada. If the Premier plans to poll Ontarians to see what they think of this \$4.5-million CEO salary, she should save her money, because I can tell her straight up that people are outraged and insulted by this salary.

When will this Premier stop the privatization of Hydro One and put an end to this outrageous situation?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to rise and talk about this subject, Mr. Speaker, because I do know that the salaries are high, and much higher than those of the vast majority of Ontarians. I know many Ontarians are struggling to pay their electricity bill, and that's why we brought forward the 25% reduction for small businesses, farms and families.

But when it comes to Hydro One, they've transitioned into a very good company, a publicly traded company and not a government agency. Let's look at what they have done over the last little bit. They've made \$60 million in productivity savings. They've improved their health and safety performance to the best on record. They've advanced multiple initiatives for customers aimed at reducing their electricity rates, and they took the initiative, as well, of reconnecting all of their disconnected customers back in December.

I know the majority of the executive compensation is contingent on meeting—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You are finished, but I was standing to get attention. Thank you.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's unfortunate that all of the benefits are going to the top executives and shareholders of the corporation instead of the people of Ontario.

At the same time the Premier is defending this \$4.5-million CEO salary, her Minister of Energy seems completely comfortable with the idea that mandatory time-of-use pricing is no big deal. Talk about being out of touch.

Some \$4.5 million for a CEO, while this Premier is punishing parents for cooking their dinner at dinnertime and seniors for staying home during the day: Does the Premier think this is the right thing for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Of course, we're pleased to act and help those families, with a plan that's actually going to reduce their bills by 25%, not a plan that is pie-in-the-sky; not a plan that's going to wait decades and decades before they'll even think about talking about helping low-income individuals.

We have acted. We have acted, because we've listened to the people of Ontario, and brought forward a plan that will reduce their bills by 25%. That's significant. When it comes to time of use, again it shows that they have no idea about the system. We are making significant savings: a 5% savings on conservation which then takes more costs out of the system because we don't have to build more generation.

It just shows that they're pie-in-the-sky when it comes to electricity.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, but talk about pie-in-the-sky—they didn't come anywhere near reaching the targets they set in terms of taking energy off of peak use and conservation. Let's not pretend what the facts are around here.

Look, the Premier told Ontarians repeatedly that the government would be able to maintain control over Hydro One, even when the sell-off was complete. If that's the case, and the Premier does have control over Hydro One, why hasn't she done anything about the outrageous salary that the CEO is currently collecting?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We are a shareholder in Hydro One, and that is something that is very clear.

When it comes to the importance of recognizing that, yes, these salaries are high—and yes, we recognize that they are much higher than those of the vast majority of Ontarians. We also know that many Ontarians are struggling to pay their electricity bills.

That's why we brought forward our plan. The fair hydro plan is the single largest electricity bill reduction in our province's history. We're making sure that low-income individuals will actually have their bills reduced by 25%, plus the Ontario Electricity Support Program, which will help them even more.

Low-income individuals were not even mentioned in the NDP idea. We're making sure we're helping every family in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Somehow, people are supposed to be happy that the Liberals have increased their bills by 275%, Speaker. I don't think they're happy about that.

If the Premier is unable to rein in the CEO's salary, even when she says that the government maintains control at Hydro One, can she explain to Ontarians why she has spent years trying to sell the clearly false idea that even when the Hydro One sell-off is complete, the government will maintain control of it?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Once again, we've often talked about the sale of Hydro One and the benefits that we're going to be having in investments and in infrastructure. The one thing that the third party doesn't talk about is our government acting to eliminate coal. We now do not have coal as part of our electricity system.

This morning, we heard from kids. We heard from children who live in our province who now can actually go outside and play, because we no longer have smog days. Because of the investments that we've made as a government, we're benefiting families right across the province. We recognize that costs more; \$50 billion is what we invested to make sure that people can go outside and breathe.

While they wouldn't do that, we did. Now we're making that as affordable as possible for people right across the province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier is defending a ludicrous \$4.5-million CEO salary. She refuses to stop her wrong-headed sell-off of Hydro One, even though it's now very, very clear that the government will have no control whatsoever of this new corporation. She and her minister clearly do not understand the struggles that families are facing with time-of-use pricing.

When will this Premier show Ontarians that she is actually serious about more than buying support for the next election in the face of sinking poll numbers, do what's right for the people of Ontario, not her political party, and stop the disastrous sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It's under the leadership of this Premier that we are investing in infrastructure right across the province. It's under the leadership of this Premier that we are reducing bills by 25% on average.

Interjections.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As we continue to talk about the investments we made, we spent \$50 billion investing in a system that was left in tatters by both opposition parties by freezing rates, cancelling ideas, not moving forward at all. They kept kicking the electricity system to the curb. We didn't do that; we invested. We built a clean system, a reliable system and, now, an affordable system.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. The Liberal government has waged an ongoing battle with Ontario's doctors. Many times, they've created the illusion that doctors' billings equal their take-home pay. Instead of working with doctors, time and again the minister and this Premier have unilaterally cut patient services and attempted to blame the doctors for this government's own mismanagement.

With the OMA present here today, will the Premier stand up and apologize for her government's treatment of doctors in this province?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm encouraged—greatly encouraged—that a number of weeks ago, the OMA named a new negotiating team for themselves. Shortly thereafter, the government named its new negotiating team. The Premier and I expressed our commitment that the first order of business, as part of negotiations in that first episode of sitting down at the table together, that episode that took place last night for the first time—the first order of business would be to agree on a process for binding interest arbitration.

We're confident with this renewed spirit of collaboration, with the commitment that the Premier and I have made, with, quite frankly, the talented and committed

individuals at the table. I think both Ontarians and the membership of the OMA can be satisfied that we have the right people at the table, I believe, to truly work together on this challenging but attainable task.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier: Where was this talk three years ago, before they started the vilification of doctors? Why weren't they doing this three years ago?

Recently, it was revealed that the government created their negotiating strategy through polling and not what was in the best interests of patients. Everything they did through the media was calculated to sway the public's opinion against doctors. Instead of working with the OMA to find a solution to benefit patient care, this government spent money on polling and devised schemes to vilify the profession.

According to the Financial Accountability Officer, this government will need to cut an additional \$2.8 billion from the health care system. Is this Premier going to base her decisions on current polling numbers, or work with the front-line health care professionals and make the best decisions based on patient care?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

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Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, that question had so many parts to it. I think it's easiest—I'm going to go back to the initial question from the Leader of the Opposition, where he referenced wait times in this province. He referenced the CIHI report. I know he cherry-picked from it. There is more work to be done.

But hip replacements: 85% of Ontarians have their hip replacements completed within the medical benchmark, 6% higher than the national average. Knee replacements are 12% higher than the national average, and 99% of radiation therapy is within the medical benchmark.

The lowest wait times for MRIs and CT scans; the shortest wait types from GP to specialist and from specialist to treatment: On average, Ontarians are receiving care more than four weeks earlier than the national average. We have some, if not all, of the shortest wait times in this country. Wait times for general surgery have gone down by 13%, and for medical oncology, down by 39%.

We have done this because of our doctors, because of our nurses, because of all those health care practitioners who work so hard—

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

Interjections.

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

VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Today, OSSTF released findings from its study on violence in the workplace—findings that echo earlier and equally shocking results from ETFO. Some 41% of

OSSTF members reported an increase in violent incidents in their schools over the last five years. None said that violence is decreasing. Yet in this context of rising violence, four out of five OSSTF members were either unaware of or unable to access violence reporting forms, and more than half said that they are often pressured not to report a violent incident.

Speaker, after five years, the situation is worsening, not improving. What will it take for this government to show education workers that it is serious about protecting education worker health and safety?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite, who is the critic for education, for this very important question. Under no circumstances is violence acceptable in our schools. We want our schools to be safe and healthy places for students, for teachers and for education workers. That's something that we want to make very, very clear.

I've met with the membership of OSSTF, and I've been very, very clear with them that I recognize that we have to take this very seriously. The concerns around reporting that the member opposite asked about: I am concerned about that. We want to ensure we create a culture in our schools that promotes safety. That's what we're working towards and working together with OSSTF on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The numbers from OSSTF and ETFO are alarming and provide an urgent call to action that is needed across ministries, including education, labour, health, and children and youth services. OSSTF reports that in at least one classroom per board per day, a student is removed due to a violent outburst. The mental health needs of both students and education workers are being ignored, putting young people and education workers at risk. Yet 25 school boards are receiving \$8 million less funding in special education grants, and school staff with specialized mental health training, like psychologists and social workers, are being cut.

Speaker, how does the Premier plan to make schools safer when she won't even provide the basic supports that students need to succeed?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, we are working with all of our partners in education. We have a provincial health and safety working group that is strengthening the culture of training and access to information to staff on violence prevention. For example, we have designated one half of a PA day—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They need more supports, not less. Why are you cutting?

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

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: —for our elementary teachers this past year for health and safety training. We've also added new mandatory content on supporting students with special needs in the enhanced four-semester teacher education program.

Mr. Speaker, here's what we're investing in special education: We've increased our investments by 70% to

\$2.7 billion. We have increased the number of education assistants by 6,300. We know that there is more that we need to do on this issue, and that's why we're working together across all aspects of the sector, including with the Minister of Labour, to focus on this issue.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Our government realizes that students should be able to access—

Interjections.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Our government realizes that students should be able to access higher education based on their ability to learn, not their ability to pay. We know that making post-secondary education more affordable is part of our plan to grow the economy, create jobs and build an inclusive future for Ontario.

We have heard about exciting changes to OSAP this past year to make OSAP more generous for all students across the province, and I've had the opportunity to share this news with many of the students in Davenport. Could the minister give this House an update on how the OSAP changes are progressing?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for Davenport for this very important question. Just this morning, the Premier, the Minister of Education and I were at Bishop Marrocco/Thomas Merton Catholic Secondary School to launch the new OSAP application. Starting this September, over 210,000 students in this province will have free tuition. Their grants will be greater than the cost of their tuition. Speaker, that means one in three post-secondary students in Ontario will have free tuition, and many middle-income students will have more generous student assistance than they have ever had before. The changes we have made are truly transformational.

Here's our new deal with students: You work hard. You get the marks. You get accepted to post-secondary, and we're going to make sure that money does not prevent you from achieving your goals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development for her answer on the great news for all students across Ontario. Speaker, I've heard the Premier say many times that Ontario's advantage is our people. I know that this means ensuring that our people have the best possible opportunities to access education.

However, I know for many aspiring students, including those from my riding of Davenport, and especially folks who are returning to school as adults, the cost of going back to school can be daunting, not to mention confusing. With all these grant improvements to OSAP, what are we doing to make sure people know how much help they can get?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I confess that I have been showing the OSAP calculator on ontario.ca/osap to anybody who will let me show them that. Speaker, what it demonstrates is that there is tremendous support available for students. It means changes for everyone, but especially for mature students. They are eligible for more grants than ever before.

Let me give you an example. If you go to ontario.ca/osap and use the calculator, it will show that if you are a single parent, you've got three kids, you earn \$60,000 a year and you're going to college, you are eligible for grants totalling \$16,000—way more than tuition—and an additional \$8,700 in loans if you want them. So tuition is free. There is also support for your family.

For these changes to have the impact we need them to, everybody needs to be sharing the news, including the members opposite.

GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Minister of Energy. People across southwestern Ontario were shocked when the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy commented on greenhouses moving from Ontario to Ohio, saying, "Part of what caused them to move were the high levels of humidity." Greenhouse growers were actually astounded by his comment, because our area has always been high in humidity.

"Humidity, that's not a deal breaker—the cost of energy is a deal breaker," said Jim DiMenna, president and CEO of Red Sun Farms.

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Speaker, to the minister: Why is this Liberal government spewing hot air about the real cause of greenhouse relocations and lost investment?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the honourable member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for his question this morning. Last Thursday, I had the great opportunity to be in the wonderful riding of Durham with my colleague Mr. Anderson to announce a \$19-million support package for greenhouse energy in the province of Ontario. I am very pleased to share this information with my fine colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

"Ontario's greenhouse sector is a major contributor to the provincial economy. We appreciate the government of Ontario's support and recognition of the need to invest in our future as well as work with our members on challenges facing Ontario's greenhouse sector. This funding will support the continued growth of our sector and its capacity to create jobs, drive exports and provide a reliable supply of locally grown greenhouse products"—Jan VanderHout, chair of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister, I'm not sure which one: "Support package" is probably code for life support.

DiNiro Farms in Leamington used less natural gas this past February than they did over the same period in 2016. The result: The bill more than doubled. Of course, there is no line item on natural gas bills showing the new cap-and-trade costs. It kind of makes me wonder if the government lobbied the OEB to bury the cost in the delivery charges. Thankfully, Union Gas created an online tool which determined DiNiro Farms paid over \$15,000 in cap-and-trade costs, bringing their total monthly bill to just over \$30,000.

To the minister: How can DiNiro Farms and other greenhouses cope after this government more than doubled their natural gas bills?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the honourable member for his supplementary, because I have some more quotes. Here's one from George Gilvesy, who is a friend of the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex:

"We are extremely pleased with the announcement made by Minister Leal today. We are very optimistic with the prospects of continuing our work with the government of Ontario to determine how we ensure a vibrant and sustainable future for our province's greenhouse sector." It's better than that.

"Today's announcement confirms the government of Ontario's understanding of the greenhouse sector's contribution to the economic success of the province through our investment, innovation, job creation, productivity and world competitiveness. This funding, announced by" Minister "Leal, our Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, will help keep our quality 'grown in Ontario' products as first choice for North American consumers."

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Premier. Health care in Ontario is at a tipping point. Families and seniors need the Premier to cut wait times and to stop overcrowding in our hospitals. But instead of listening, this Premier has let us all down by doing tremendous damage to the relationship with the good doctors of Ontario. Many of them are with us today.

This morning we learned that the Premier actually spent money on—and get that, Speaker—not one, not two, but 10 polls to try to win her war with the doctors.

Why does this Premier think it is right to spend public money on polling and on PR when every dollar should be going to good health care for the people of Ontario?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. To be honest, I think the party opposite wants it kind of both ways. They constantly are asking us and reminding us to speak to Ontarians, to consult with them on the direction that our government is going and the policies that we should implement—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: When the Ministry of Health consults with Ontarians across the province—in-person, online, through letters, through polls; we do it in a variety of ways on a myriad of issues—to help inform us, the government, on the best ways we can put patients first in the province, they complain.

This method of reaching out to Ontarians is important, and I'll be happy to talk more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: People want shorter wait times. They want faster appointments with their doctors.

Instead of solving the overcrowding in our hospitals, the Premier froze funding for four straight years. Instead of working with the good doctors to improve care, the Premier made unilateral cuts to physician funding. Instead of cutting wait times, this Premier's watching the ER waits grow longer than they've been in a decade. Instead of putting every dollar into better front-line care, this Premier is spending money on polling, on PR, to help the Liberal Party.

Why does the Premier think her job is to put the Liberal Party first and the needs of patients at the back of the line?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We continue to make substantial progress on wait times, and I have to counter the myths that the opposition member is perpetrating. A recent Fraser Institute report concluded that Ontario has the shortest wait times in the country, with median wait times more than four weeks lower than the national average. With ERs, our wait times for the sickest patients have been cut by 29%, while volumes have, in fact, increased by 40%. ER waits for the least sick have been cut by 15%.

The Wait Time Alliance report card on wait times—straight As for Ontario, by the way—notes that Ontario continues to receive straight As for wait times in five key service areas: hip replacement, knee replacement, cataracts, cancer radiation and coronary artery bypass graft.

Ontario, by the way, was the first to measure wait times in many important areas. We were certainly the first when it comes to either the PC Party or the NDP, which didn't bother to measure wait times at all.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the minister responsible for early years and child care. In my riding of Barrie, we are lucky to have a great early childhood educator program at Georgian College. But I have heard from many students that they are finding it hard to be motivated to pursue their passion of becoming an ECE. They're concerned about the low wages in the field and worried that they may not be able to pay for their student loans or even for their own family's child care needs.

Average salaries for ECE graduates have increased over the past five years to \$31,000. However, they are still lower than the average salary of college graduates, which is \$35,000, making recruitment and retention of ECEs difficult for child care operators. As a student and graduate, this can be discouraging.

Can the minister responsible for early years and child care tell me and my constituents what is being done to ensure students pursue their educational passions?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Barrie for this very important question.

We recently held public consultations across the province on child care, and heard from many early childhood educators about the challenges that they face when it comes to low wages. That's why we're investing in these professionals.

Our government is supporting a wage enhancement for eligible providers working in licensed child care, and we're ensuring there's ongoing annual funding. For 2017, the ministry is allocating more than \$188 million to support the wage enhancement and the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant. That means eligible staff and home child care providers can receive a wage enhancement of up to \$2 an hour, plus 17.5% in benefits, and eligible home child care providers working with an agency could receive a grant of up to \$20 a day.

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Mr. Speaker, these investments are part of our plan. They're the right thing—

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. A wage enhancement is a step in the right direction. I'm glad to hear that our government is helping those who are ready to enter the workforce and who are passionate about their careers. It's important that we recognize the value of those who are shaping and caring for our youngest learners. It's equally important to make sure we retain the hard-working professionals who are already doing this crucial job. They are the front lines of our child's path through education.

Can the minister tell me more about what she is doing to help encourage early childhood educators to stay in this field?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to answer the member's question. Our government has committed to creating new licensed spaces for 100,000 more children over the next five years. Just think about that. This is not only an investment in our children's future; it's an investment in our economy and in Ontario families, because with the addition of 100,000 new spaces we will see an estimated 20,000 new ECE positions created in Ontario. That's 20,000 new jobs, Speaker.

Through the wage enhancement and this new job creation, we can help close the wage gap between registered early childhood educators working in kindergarten and child care professionals working in licensed child care settings. We will also stabilize licensed child care oper-

ators by helping them keep their ECEs and other child care program staff, and we will support more employment and income security.

Speaker, this is about laying a foundation that will put our children on a path to success.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is for the Premier. On March 7, the Minister of Agriculture spoke about Canadian Agriculture Literacy Month and the importance of educating young people about opportunities in the agri-food sector, but there was a glaring omission.

In 2015, I brought forward a motion on growing agri-food jobs which passed with support from all parties, Speaker. It recommended that the government add a component to the grade 9 and 10 careers and guidance curriculum on agri-food career opportunities. Sadly, Speaker, the minister failed to mention what progress has been made on implementing it when he gave his speech.

We all remember when the Premier issued the agri-food job challenge. But due to inaction, the Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council is now warning that there will be a significant labour shortage by 2025.

In light of Canadian Agricultural Literacy Month, will the Premier commit to seeing this important component of the curriculum implemented in time for the next school year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I appreciate the question from the honourable member this morning. I know her long-time commitment in improving agricultural literacy in secondary schools right across the province of Ontario.

With regard to the Agri-Food Challenge, the Premier gave us a challenge to create 120,000 new jobs in this sector by 2020. I can report to you, Mr. Speaker, and all members of the House today, that we're well on our way to meeting that goal. We've created 42,000 jobs to date. If you extrapolate from that, we will meet that target by 2020.

More importantly, every day, as I'm travelling across the province of Ontario, when I'm in community colleges to see their graduates, when I'm at the University of Guelph to see their graduates, everybody's looking forward to careers in agriculture in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, no one believes or trusts that minister.

Back to the Premier: When I met with the President of the Treasury Board—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: When I met with the President of the Treasury Board, she assured me my motion would be considered. Just last week, the Minister of Education proved that she can quickly jump to task when she announced the financial literacy pilot project. Speaker, why are the Premier, the Minister of Agricul-

ture, the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Education and the entire Liberal cabinet choosing to ignore the needs of Ontario's agri-food sector? There are two and a half days left in agriculture literacy month. Will the Premier, the former Minister of Agriculture, commit to adding agriculture to the guidance and career curriculum?

Hon. Jeff Leal: The history of the members on that side is really quite fascinating. When this government proposed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron—Bruce asked the question. I'm sure she wants to listen to the answer, because I do.

Hon. Jeff Leal: When this government proposed a number of years ago creating a \$100-million risk management program to support those farmers in the province of Ontario who were not covered by supply management, they voted against it. That is a fact.

Every time we bring new innovations to this House to continue to grow a sector in this province that generates \$36 billion to Ontario's GDP, they—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier. Skyrocketing hydro costs have made it more expensive to take the TTC. Last year, the TTC's hydro bill was up 13% from the previous year, even though it used about the same amount of electricity.

Since the current Premier assumed office four years ago, the TTC's hydro rates have gone up by over 40%. The Premier said she wants to fix this "mistake," but the TTC will not see the 25% in hydro bill reductions that she's promising in ads—ads, by the way, paid for with public dollars.

Why did the Premier exclude the TTC from her hydro plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I want to thank the honourable member for the question. When it relates to Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan, the first thing I think it's important for me to say about the TTC is that every rider on the TTC will be getting that 25% reduction. On top of that, every single individual in Ontario's 444 municipalities will benefit from Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan.

When it comes to the city of Toronto, which the TTC is part of, they're going to see a 2% to 4% reduction in their electricity bills. That's a modest reduction, I know, but there are also many other things that we do for municipalities.

We have many other programs that actually also help municipalities manage their energy costs. For example, the Ontario Municipal Energy Plan Program provides funding to municipalities to help them plan for more

efficient energy usage. We also helped with \$92 million from the Green Investment Fund to help with other—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again, back to the Premier: I repeat, the TTC's hydro rates have increased by more than 40% since the Premier assumed office four years ago. The Premier's hydro plan will make bankers rich, but it won't do anything to rein in the underlying costs of privatized hydro, which is making everything more expensive. The Premier's plan won't lower the TTC's hydro bills by 25% or even 17%.

Why is the Premier spending public dollars to promote a hydro scheme that makes bankers rich while allowing the TTC's hydro rates to keep rising out of control, driving up fares and making life more expensive for transit riders?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for her questions today. I can understand from the tail end of the second question that at the root of what she's asking about, it relates to making sure that transit in Toronto and transit right around the province of Ontario is not only there, but it's accessible and affordable.

That member knows—I've had the opportunity to say this repeatedly in this House and elsewhere—there is no government in Ontario history that has done more to support public transit in the city of Toronto and in the other 98 communities across Ontario that have transit than this government under the leadership of our Premier.

1140

That member knows that just a number of weeks ago, we announced that we'd be doubling the provincial gas tax program over the next four years, providing the city of Toronto alone with an estimated additional \$170 million, to a province-wide total of an additional \$335 million annually to all of the communities that have transit systems.

We'll keep building. We'll keep getting it right.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is to the Minister of Seniors Affairs. Minister, I want to again congratulate you on becoming minister of Ontario's first-ever Ministry of Seniors Affairs. This is an important step that affirms our commitment and leadership towards care for seniors. I know that you have been very busy in your new portfolio and that you have travelled all across the province, including visiting Christine McMillan and the Oasis group in my riding of Kingston and the Islands.

Yesterday, as part of Bill 87, the Seniors Active Living Centres Act was introduced in the House. If passed, this act will be stronger, more flexible legislation than the current Elderly Persons Centres Act. This is great news for the over 260 existing centres that provide services to over 100,000 seniors. These are important and timely changes, and I'm hoping that the minister can share more—

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

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for the important question.

Speaker, our proposed Seniors Active Living Centres Act was developed in recognition of the changing nature of our demographics in Ontario. Over the next 25 years, the seniors' population in Ontario is projected to double to four million people. It's important that people are able to age in our province in a way that allows them to be active, healthy, safe and socially engaged. Elderly persons centres play an important role in this. This act aims to modernize the framework for elderly persons centres so they reflect the realities of today's seniors better. One very symbolic change, Mr. Speaker, is that, by popular demand, we are renaming the elderly persons centres to seniors active living centres.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I want to thank the Minister of Seniors Affairs for her answer. This sounds like great legislation that I'm sure all members in this House will get behind.

I have no doubt that the Seniors Association Kingston Region in my riding will be pleased with the changes. With 675 dedicated volunteers, there's a spectacular number of dedicated community partners caring for our community's seniors in Kingston and the Islands, and I'd like to extend my warmest thanks for their continued effort and passion.

Minister, I have to ask: How did you determine what changes you would make to the current legislation? The EPCs serve people of different backgrounds, of different levels of health, skills and education, of differing interests, and speaking different languages. They also have a large range of program flexibility. Seeing how this program affects seniors across the province from Wawa to Windsor, large cities and rural communities, how did you strike a—

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

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Again I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for her great question. Her question was: How did we determine what changes to make to the Seniors Active Living Centres Act? The answer is very simple: We went to the seniors of Ontario. Through surveys, consultations and stakeholder input, we were able to hear from almost 80% of the elderly persons centres—soon to be renamed seniors active living centres—and got a full picture on how to move forward with improving the program and the enabling legislation.

Some of the proposed changes include empowering local communities, opening the program to potential future partnerships and reducing the administrative burden.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Speaker, today Queen's Park has again been visited by disease sufferers who continue to wait for provincial approval of a life-altering treatment that has already been given the go-ahead by Health Canada. Sufferers of polycystic kidney disease, PKD, deal with the painful effects of tumours that can swell impacted kidneys up to the size of a football. Last year, Health Canada approved the first-ever PKD treatment, and yet Ontario has refused to cover this treatment under the public drug plan.

Members of the PKD Foundation are meeting with the minister's office today, and some are here, of course, in the gallery. Will the minister tell these patients why he's not covering the treatment that they so desperately deserve?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I welcome those who are here today to speak about polycystic kidney disease, which is indeed, unfortunately, an all-too-prevalent but also very challenging condition for anyone to have.

The member opposite should know by now that there is a process in place where the Health Canada approval for a drug, generally, for a specific indication is the first and only one step in a multi-step process. At that time, once it's approved by Health Canada, there is a requirement that it be examined for evidence of its effectiveness, its efficacy. Historically, that used to be done separately by each province and territory. Now we've created a process—in fact, it was done nationally one time—and that's the process that we're applying here to review the evidence after Health Canada's approval, to establish its efficacy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: We understand that this treatment is not for every patient. However, PKD sufferers are here today with doctors who have outlined exactly those who would benefit and yet continue to wait for this important treatment.

We've seen this story before. Rare disease sufferers continue to wait for action from the minister's so-called working group that he used to shoot down our call for a rare disease select committee. While our committee would have completed its work by now, we still await word of the actual work from the minister's working group, even though we hear that the report is in fact sitting on your desk.

Rare disease patients are tired of waiting, and PKD patients need answers. Speaker, will the minister commit today to approving treatment for those PKD patients who will benefit from this important treatment, and table the report his working group has completed?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I assume it's Jinarc that the member opposite is referring to. He's nodding his head.

It was reviewed by that national process, the Common Drug Review. In fact, the Common Drug Review recommended that Jinarc not be listed for the treatment of polycystic kidney disease because it was not shown to definitively improve relevant outcomes in patients with that disease.

Additionally, the Common Drug Review noted a number of safety concerns associated with the drug, including

liver injury, low sodium, increases in uric acid and gout, polyuria, thirst and skin cancers.

It's important, first of all, that we take the politics out of this and we leave it to the clinical experts, the front-line doctors, the scientists and the academics to review the evidence. They have invited the manufacturer to come forward if they have additional evidence. But in the spirit of collaboration and transparency, I have identified specifically why that negative recommendation has been made to date.

DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPLY ACT, 2017

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2017

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

Bill 111, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 / Projet de loi 111, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2017.

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

The division bells rang from 1148 to 1153

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members please take their seats. On March 28, 2017, Ms. Sandals moved second reading of Bill 111. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Naqvi, Yasir
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Oosterhoff, Sam
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Hillier, Randy	Singh, Jagmeet
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Vanthof, John

Fife, Catherine
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France

McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras

Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 51; the nays are 42.

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

Second reading agreed to.

SUPPLY ACT, 2017

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2017

Mrs. Sandals moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017 / Projet de loi 111, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2017.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

Opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 51; the nays are 42.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

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 1158 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I know that this group from my riding of Davenport are making their way here to the galleries today. I want to welcome Rodrigo Briones, who is the coordinator of Senior Community Connections at Family Service Toronto. He is here today with a number of seniors from the Hispanic community.

Remarks in Spanish.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: *Remarks in Arabic.*

It's my pleasure to introduce a large delegation of individuals from the country of Saudi Arabia: Mr. Emad Althukair, chairman of the Canada Saudi Business Council; Mr. Shazaad Mohammed, director of government affairs; and, as well, accompanied by Mr. Mohammed Alkhalil, Mr. Mejdal Al-Qahtani, Mr. Mashari Al Rashed, Usama Abdulwahab, Khalid

Aljarallah, Mutaz Aldughaythir, Hussein Bagalb, Saad Abdulrahman, AbdulMonim AlDossari, Khaled Aldawood, Dr. Farad Altimini, Sultan Nasser Almayaly and, of course, accompanied by the honourable Georgina Bencsik. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome to our visitors from so far away. Enjoy, and have a safe trip back home.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADIAN HEARING SOCIETY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I rise today to bring attention to a situation affecting people from all over Ontario, including my home riding of Nipissing. Members of Local 2073 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees are just one of the 24 Canadian Hearing Society offices that have been on strike since March 6.

Across Ontario, nearly 36,000 people use the important services provided by the Canadian Hearing Society. I visited the members and had the opportunity to speak to someone who has been directly impacted by the strike. I first met him when I was in the mayor's office. On this particular visit to the line, he explained to me, through his sign-language interpreter, the potential uncertainty he is faced with each day that the strike continues.

Imagine if this gentleman—who, I might add, is completely deaf—is rushed to the hospital and unable to communicate with his doctor in an emergency. The absence of the interpreter and his inability to communicate in this case could prove potentially fatal. It's a situation that can be easily avoided and should be avoided.

I'm urging the government to reach out and provide any assistance they can to bring an end to this strike.

LEN DUPUIS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I want to send out best wishes today to a friend of mine who has been in a serious car accident. Everyone in Tecumseh and every legionnaire in Windsor and Essex county knows Len Dupuis Sr. He has led the colour party parade from Legion Branch 261 in Tecumseh for more than 30 years.

Len is 91. Earlier this month, he was on his way to visit his wife in a nursing home and was in a bad car accident. He went through a stop sign and collided with another vehicle. Fortunately, the young lady driving the other car wasn't seriously injured. Len ended up with a broken neck, broken ribs, clavicle, sternum and some internal bleeding. He was in guarded condition at the ICU for a while, but he has surprised his doctors. He's up and walking around, although with a cervical collar. Len thinks he's well enough to go home, but he's still facing six to eight weeks of rehab before he can be released.

Len was in the army for a short while until they found out just how young he was. But he got even with the

army: He joined the air force, and he served between 1942 and 1946.

We all know him for his big handlebar moustache. Let me correct that, Speaker. Because of that cervical collar, someone in the hospital shaved off that moustache.

We're all hoping we'll see Len on parade again leading the Tecumseh Highlanders colour party. Best wishes for that, and best wishes for the young lady who was treated and released after that accident as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We'll still make him a member of the moustache caucus—just to make sure that you're aware of that. That's a hairy situation.

CENTRE DES ENFANTS INUITS D'OTTAWA

OTTAWA INUIT CHILDREN'S CENTRE

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Il me fait plaisir de me lever pour saluer aujourd'hui le travail exceptionnel du Centre des enfants inuits d'Ottawa, qui est établi évidemment dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Vanier. Une centaine d'enfants et de jeunes s'y rendent chaque jour. Le centre offre des services de garde, mais il dessert aussi les besoins des adultes qui veulent retourner à l'école.

People do not always know that Ottawa is home to the largest Inuit community outside of Nunavut. A large group of them live in Ottawa-Vanier, and we are blessed with having their contribution to our community.

The Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre offers a variety of services that are really helpful to the community: child care, after-school programs, homework support and also, most importantly, cultural education initiatives—among others, the study of Inuktitut.

The child care program is very popular, and we now know that they need additional space to really serve the population better.

The centre supports family with a holistic approach tailored to them and allows them to fully participate in our society.

Congratulations—félicitations—to the Inuit children's centre in Ottawa-Vanier.

AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today to discuss ALS awareness and the Adaptive Canuck ALS Foundation.

Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis disease, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, is a rare affliction that gradually paralyzes people when the brain is no longer able to communicate with the muscles in the body. Over time, these muscles break down, leaving patients unable to walk, talk, eat, swallow or breathe on their own.

Sadly, there are no effective treatments for ALS and no cure. Approximately 80% of people with ALS die within two to five years of being diagnosed.

ALS patients can find hope in the Adaptive Canuck ALS Foundation. The foundation's mission is to fund-

raise in an effort to advance stem cell research that will hopefully unlock a cure for ALS.

Adaptive Canuck was founded by Jeff Perreault, who also suffers from ALS, and is run by ALS patients. One hundred per cent of the funds they raise go directly to research—no overhead.

Adaptive Canuck ALS has a plan to accelerate the approval of stem cell clinical trials in ALS patients, and they hope to begin early this year.

This group is championing the federal legislation, the Right to Try Act. This act, if enacted, would allow ALS patients or any other patients with a terminal illness the right to try unapproved, potentially life-saving treatments in an attempt to improve their condition or extend their time left with loved ones.

Speaker, I'd like to tell you about a constituent of mine, Kim Lewis. Kim was diagnosed with ALS a few years ago and is a director of the foundation. She is currently working hard in Elgin raising awareness and funds for research to improve the quality life for ALS patients.

Just last week, I attended the Aylmer Strikes Out ALS fundraiser in central Elgin organized by Kim and her husband, Spencer. I was incredibly moved by the stories shared that night.

I want to thank Kim, Jeff Perreault and the Adaptive Canuck ALS Foundation for their continued hard work in increasing awareness around ALS and working towards a cure.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, recent reports indicate this government was aware a year ago that the vast majority of Ontarians were opposed to the sale of the public electricity system here in Ontario. The problem is that this privatization discussion isn't limited to the province.

More and more, we're hearing discussions around privatization at all levels of government, whether they're discussions with respect to the sale of Toronto Hydro, here in this municipality; or federally, we're now hearing discussions around the privatization of airports and the infrastructure bank, which is essentially a veiled attempt at ensuring that all future infrastructure builds are privatized in the future.

The issue is that the profit motive, while not a problem in a vast number of sectors, is an issue when it comes to public services and public infrastructure. The reason is, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to these services, if you increase costs, if you increase prices, it might mean better profits, but it might reduce access. Profit should never be the motive for public services and infrastructure, where the motive should be access, quality, accessibility and affordability.

1510

When it comes to our health care and our education system, when it comes to public transit, we need to ensure that everyone has access to these services and that they have access to quality services. That's why it's so

important, so fundamentally important, that we ensure that all of our public services and infrastructure remain public.

SIKH HERITAGE

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's a great honour to rise in the House today to speak about the very auspicious occasion of Vaisakhi and Sikh Heritage Month.

April is a month of great significance to the Sikh community. During this month, Sikhs all across the world celebrate Vaisakhi, which marks the creation of Khalsa and the Sikh faith. In Ontario, April is also Sikh Heritage Month. We will be celebrating Sikh Heritage Month here at Queen's Park. The Sikh community will be celebrating Sikh Heritage Month all across Ontario in many different ways.

Speaker, 2017 is also the year of the 350th anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He was a spiritual master, warrior, poet and philosopher. He introduced the five articles of faith that Sikhs wear and adhere to at all times.

The principle of equality in Sikhism, regardless of one's caste or gender or colour, was institutionalized by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. His message to the world is very relevant today.

Canada is home to over 500,000 Sikhs, half of whom live in Ontario. Sikhs across Ontario have made important contributions to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric. I invite all members of this House to learn more about the Sikh faith and to join the Sikh community in celebrating Vaisakhi and Sikh Heritage Month.

MULTI-EMPLOYER BENEFIT PLAN COUNCIL OF CANADA

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to welcome the Multi-Employer Benefit Plan Council of Canada to Queen's Park today. They are a non-profit organization that represents the interests of multi-employer plans and they're here today to raise awareness about what that means.

For workers employed in industries typified by small companies or a mobile workforce, such as construction, hospitality or transportation, to name a few, it can be difficult to maintain consistent benefits or to plan effectively for retirement. By bringing together large numbers of small employers, multi-employer plans support workers and their families with a private sector solution.

As our economy and the nature of employment continue to evolve, and as we consider legislative changes related to labour and employment, it's important that we're aware of the diverse circumstances of workers as well as the private sector initiatives that are emerging or that already exist in our province.

I'm pleased the Multi-Employer Benefit Plan Council is here to raise awareness about the unique interests of the workers they cover and to give us some insight into

multi-employer plans. The table of stakeholders can be crowded when it comes to labour issues, but it's important that a strong diversity of voices is heard.

They will be holding a reception in the dining room tonight, and I encourage all members to attend and to learn more about their important work.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Today, Ontario is leading by example to deliver the next generation of clean technology solutions to help the world fight and adapt to climate change. As our good mayor, Fred Eisenberger, of the city of Hamilton shared with us earlier this week as we toured our local LEED-build Harry Howell Arena, "Communities are implementing a number of programs for both homeowners and organizations to address climate change adaptation. In fact, our region continues to meet targets for reducing energy usage."

Speaker, we all have a role to play in the fight against climate change. Leadership shown by the city of Hamilton, as well as their partner organizations, both private and public, is helping to lead that fight.

Municipalities such as Hamilton and Burlington are important partners in the fight against climate change. Our government's Climate Change Action Plan provides funding, in addition to the already announced \$92 million through the Green Investment Fund, to improve energy efficiency in social housing apartments and energy retrofits.

The climate change action plan and cap-and-trade program are the backbone of Ontario's strategy to cut greenhouse gas pollution to 15% below 1990 levels.

We're at it. We're going to stick with it. It's a very important task—one we cannot fail at.

MATTHEW WAKEM

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Matthew Wakem grew up in St. Marys and is deeply involved with the St. John Ambulance and Leo and Lions clubs. In fact, at 23 years old, Matthew has volunteered over 15,000 hours with these organizations. Earlier this month, he was awarded the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers by Governor General David Johnston. It was well deserved.

But Matthew is not doing it for an award or recognition; he's doing it for the right reasons. His comments to the Stratford Beacon Herald reveal his humble attitude: "It's nice to get recognized but definitely not necessary.... You're going out there for a purpose, not just to collect hours."

I think we can all learn something about the spirit of service and helping our neighbour from this remarkable young man. It speaks well of him and it speaks well of the spirit of service that is alive and well in Perth-Wellington.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the member from Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I see now that the group that I introduced earlier has made it here into the gallery, so I wanted to, once again, welcome Rodrigo Briones, the coordinator of Senior Community Connections, Family Service Toronto, and the group of Hispanic seniors who are visiting here today. Bienvenidos. Gracias.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bills, without amendment:

Bill Pr59, An Act to revive 564539 Ontario Limited.

Bill Pr60, An Act to revive 1476283 Ontario Limited.

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

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FAMILY LAW AMENDMENT ACT (SUPPORT FOR ADULT CHILDREN), 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE DROIT DE LA FAMILLE (SOUTIEN ALIMENTAIRE DES ENFANTS ADULTES)

Ms. Sattler moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act to amend the Family Law Act in respect of support for adult children / Projet de loi 113, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le droit de la famille en ce qui concerne le soutien alimentaire des enfants adultes.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Currently, parents of adult children with disabilities are only able to access child support orders if they were married. This bill allows all parents to apply for support, regardless of marital status, and addresses the discrimination against unmarried parents in the current Family Law Act.

It amends the Family Law Act so that parents must provide support for their adult child if the child has an

illness, disability or other issue that makes them unable to support themselves.

ANTI-RACISM ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LE RACISME

Mr. Coteau moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures / Projet de loi 114, Loi prévoyant des mesures contre le racisme.

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.

Hon. Michael Coteau: This proposed act will direct a whole-of-government effort towards identifying and redressing systemic racism in our society. It is a key component of A Better Way Forward, the Anti-Racism Directorate's first strategic plan. Through legislation, the government is committed to strengthening its response to systemic racism and racial inequities.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 84, the Medical Assistance in Dying Statute Law Amendment Act.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the motion passed earlier today regarding Bill 84 be revised to substitute "March 30" for "March 27."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the motion passed earlier today regarding Bill 84 be revised to substitute "March 30" for "March 27." Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government needs to strengthen primary care as the foundation of the health care system to achieve health system transformation goals of Patients First; and

"Whereas research shows that interprofessional primary health care delivers better outcomes for people and better value for money; and

"Whereas an investment in primary care will help address recruitment and retention challenges, build strong interprofessional primary care teams and ensure high-quality people-centred primary health care delivery in Ontario; and

"Whereas over 7,500 staff in over 400 community health centres, family health teams, aboriginal health access centres and nurse practitioner-led clinics are being paid below rates recommended in 2012 and as a result are facing challenges recruiting and retaining health providers, including nurse practitioners, dietitians, registered nurses, health promoters and managers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in interprofessional primary health care teams with a commitment of \$130 million annualized, with an implementation plan over two years, to ensure interprofessional primary health care teams can effectively retain and recruit staff."

I sign my name and give it to page Angel.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the Ontario Alliance Against School Closures for this petition and the many Ontarians across the province who signed it. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), one in eight Ontario schools is at risk of closure; and

"Whereas the value of a school to the local economy and community has been removed from the PARG; and

"Whereas the PARG outlines consultation requirements that are insufficient to allow for meaningful community involvement, including the establishment of community hubs; and

"Whereas school closures have a significant negative impact on families and their children, resulting in inequitable access to extracurricular activities and other essential school involvement, and after-school work opportunities; and

"Whereas school closures have devastating impacts on the growth and overall viability of communities across Ontario, in particular self-sustaining agricultural communities;

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

"To place an immediate moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG has been subject to a substantive review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the health of our communities and children."

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

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Ted McMeekin: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

“Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

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

“Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge.”

I agree and will sign this petition and send it up with Nicholas.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

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

“Whereas in 2015 Ontario had, at 43.8%, the highest rate in Canada of charges withdrawn, stayed or otherwise removed prior to a trial; and

“Whereas this situation causes significant costs to be incurred by the legal system, corrections, the individuals facing the charges and the general public whose access to prompt justice is impaired; and

“Whereas facing a criminal charge imposes significant material and mental costs on individuals, as well as limiting their liberty and ability to work and live in their community; and

“Whereas there is no remedy for compensating innocent Ontarians whose lives and livelihoods have been injured through being wrongfully accused;

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

“To develop and fund a program to assist Ontarians who have been wrongfully accused; and

“To study Ontario’s unacceptably high rate of stayed and withdrawn charges, and to enact reforms to rectify the situation.”

I agree with this and will pass it on to page Max.

CHILD CARE

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

“Whereas the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 commits Ontario to ‘a system of responsive, safe, high-quality and accessible child care and early years programs and services that will support parents and families, and will contribute to the healthy development of children’;

“Whereas recent community opposition to Ontario’s child care regulation proposals indicates that a new direction for child care is necessary to address issues of access, quality, funding, system building, planning and workforce development;

“Whereas Ontario’s Gender Wage Gap Strategy consultation found ‘child care was the number one issue everywhere’ and ‘participants called for public funding and support that provides both adequate wages and affordable fees’;

“Whereas the federal government’s commitment to a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework provides an excellent opportunity for Ontario to take leadership and work collaboratively to move forward on developing a universal, high-quality, comprehensive child care system in Ontario;

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

“To undertake a transparent policy process with the clear goal of developing a universal early childhood education and child care system where all families can access quality child care programs; and

“To publicly declare their commitment to take leadership in developing a national child care plan with the federal government that adopts the principles of universality, high quality and comprehensiveness.”

I’d like to thank CUPE Ontario for this petition. I fully support it and will affix my signature and give it to page Ethan.

DENTAL CARE

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

“Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer’s disease; and

“Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

“Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

“—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

“—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low-income adults and seniors; and

“—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my name and leave it with page Max to bring to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

1530

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I approve of this, and I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Franny.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition entitled “Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.” I’d like to thank Jennifer Lee from my riding for bringing this petition forward.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I fully support it and will sign it and send it to the table with page Max.

HOME INSPECTION INDUSTRY

Mr. Granville Anderson: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas home inspections are an integral part of the real estate transaction; and

“Whereas there are no current rules and education system to qualify who is and who is not a home inspector; and

“Whereas the public interest is best served by protecting consumers against receiving a bad home inspection;

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

“Ensure the speedy passage of Bill 59, Putting Consumers First Act, 2016, and mandate the government of Ontario to bring in a strong qualifications regime for home inspectors.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it and give it to page Naomi.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Mr. Todd Smith: This was presented to me by workers at the nurse practitioner clinic in downtown Belleville.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government needs to strengthen primary care as the foundation of the health care system to achieve health system transformation goals of Patients First; and

“Whereas research shows that interprofessional primary health care delivers better outcomes for people and better value for money; and

“Whereas an investment in primary care will help address recruitment and retention challenges, build strong interprofessional primary care teams and ensure high-quality people-centred primary health care delivery in Ontario; and

“Whereas over 7,500 staff in over 400 community health centres, family health teams, aboriginal health access centres and nurse practitioner-led clinics are being paid below rates recommended in 2012 and as a result are facing challenges recruiting and retaining health providers, including chiropodists, nurse practitioners, dietitians, registered nurses, registered practical nurses,

health promoters, occupational therapists, psychologists, pharmacists, respiratory therapists, chiropractors, physiotherapists, mental health and social workers, physician assistants, managers and administration;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in interprofessional primary health care teams with a commitment of \$130 million annualized, with an implementation plan over two years, to ensure interprofessional primary health care teams can effectively retain and recruit staff.”

I agree with this and will present it to the table with page Laura.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This is a petition entitled “Widen Highway 3 Now,” which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

“Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

“Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

“Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

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

“To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in Essex county.”

I couldn’t agree more. It’s about time that we get this done.

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer’s disease; and

“Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

“Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

“—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

“—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low-income adults and seniors; and

“—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario.”

I approve of this petition, will sign it and give it to page Nicholas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The time for petitions is over.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D’ÉCOLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 20, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d’autres questions.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I rise today to add my comments to Bill 65. The purpose of this bill, as we understand it, is to provide municipalities with new tolls to set and enforce speed limits.

I think it’s clear to all members in this House that the NDP has called for the use of safety cameras to reduce speeds and keep people safe, especially children and seniors in our communities.

In my riding of London–Fanshawe, there is something that I hear about all the time, and that’s speed limits in the city and in school zones. I’m sure every member of this House has stories in their communities about speeding. One story that comes to mind in particular is a serious accident a few years ago where a young man was walking in the neighbourhood on the sidewalk, and a vehicle actually came up on the sidewalk. It truly was a tragic situation. The child was injured with very serious, lifelong injuries. In that case, the person—of course, there were combining factors. They were impaired, and they were driving without a licence, along with that speeding.

What happens is, this serves as a tragic reminder that we must support any efforts that will protect our children in our schools. We believe that the best people to take on that responsibility are the municipalities that our children

live in. They know their communities best and are better able to determine appropriate speed limits in order to improve safety, especially in residential areas.

Some of the specifics of the bill include amending the Highway Traffic Act, section 128, to allow municipalities to set default speed limits throughout a designated area in the municipality instead of being obliged to use the province's default 50 kilometres-per-hour speed limit.

I know this issue is also a great concern for London's city council, which has already begun to discuss this important issue and has called for public meetings on speed limits in school zones after a report cited that a lower speed limit means fewer fatalities.

Right now, they are reaching out to the London community to seek broad consultations and hear from as many Londoners as possible.

1540

In fact, according to a recent article in the London Free Press, one city councillor noted that when it comes to school safety zones, speeding is just a start, because when it comes to the safety of our children, we must be prepared to talk about safety in our schools, but also the safety necessary to get to and from school. Lowering a speed limit in front of a school doesn't take into account the adjacent and neighbouring streets that our children use on their way home. We know that not all children are on school buses, which, for me, means we need to be thoughtful about how we approach safety in school zones.

In fact, back in 2013, the city of London's traffic control manager made the case to city council's civic works committee about not just reducing the speed limit in school zones to 40 kilometres per hour from the present 50 kilometres per hour, but also expanding school zones to cover a larger geographic area with lower speed limits, which would improve safety for students and encourage more children to walk to school. The report they used offered compelling evidence showing the risk of a fatality to a pedestrian relative to speed. For a vehicle moving at 40 kilometres per hour, the risk is 28%. For a vehicle moving at 50 kilometres per hour, the risk soars to 70%. Further, that report also acknowledged that simply changing the speed limit near a school is unlikely to make drivers slow down.

So, while we are supportive of this legislation, it's clear that there is a broader conversation that is needed when we're talking about school zones and safety. In fact, I believe it was a member from the Conservative caucus that mentioned the suggestion of placing cameras directly on school buses, which is another opportunity that could be included in the broader conversation about school zone safety. Mind you, I believe the member was offering that idea as an initiative to discount the purpose of this bill, but I see very little difference between using cameras on school buses to enforce the Highway Traffic Act and using them to monitor school zones when kids are present.

The next step this bill takes is to completely rewrite the Highway Traffic Act photo radar legislation, enabling

municipalities to use photo radar to enforce speed limits in schools or community safety zones that are designated under the bylaw of that specific municipality. My NDP colleagues have already expressed their reservations about the fact that this bill repeals a specific section of HTA, the "photo-radar system evidence," and replaces it with a new "automated speed enforcement."

Concerns about this are rooted in the fact that the bill empowers municipalities without setting forth any limits as to where, when and how such things could be done. We know photo radar will only be allowed in these specific areas, but the province will no longer be able to use photo radar on highways, something that hasn't been done since 1995. In essence, this bill would give municipalities authority to enact powers that the province has banished itself from, which makes little sense.

Photo radar enforcement use in trial procedures is effectively repealed, leaving the province in the position of having to introduce new regulations where they have already existed. That causes great concern for those of us who are concerned about transparency and accountability. I know the people of London-Fanshawe would prefer to have legislation that is open to public debate and scrutiny, rather than regulations that are proposed with little to no input.

Another part of the bill: The province will longer need to make a regulation designating an area where red-light-camera evidence may be used. This is to see who, basically, speeds through the red light.

We know that it will be both cumbersome and expensive to lower overall speed limits in a municipality, since it requires costly new signage. In the same report that the London city council cited when considering expanding school zones, they estimated the cost of changing school zones and the speed limit at about \$100,000 for 480 signs. Further, for flashing solar-powered beacons, which were also set to be installed at some of the problem locations, they had a cost of \$5,000 each. Of course, this bill doesn't speak to the costs associated with signage, but, by offloading the responsibility to municipalities, we must consider the impact this will have on their budgets.

We must also recognize that in many cases our children are attending schools on major arterial roads and in other areas directly off the highways. Yet, as this bill reads in its current form, photo radar can no longer be authorized on highways, and the Lieutenant Governor in Council, or cabinet, may no longer prescribe other areas where photo radar can be used to enforce speed limits, as is allowed under the current legislation.

Further, under the act, school zones must be within 150 metres of a school, but a community safety zone need only be in the area where public safety is of special concern. The question becomes: Does a school on a highway or a major arterial road become designated as a community safety zone and, if so, what is the greater community impact in those cases?

We have yet to get a clear indication from the government what a community zone will be and how that could be open to a disparity in interpretation across municipal-

ities. The piece of legislation requires greater detail, important details that will determine if we are empowering municipalities with appropriate scopes of action in their determinations.

Employing such vague language without proffering clear intent in my mind opens the door for municipalities to take action that may not be intended by the legislation we have before us, but may occur nonetheless. Frankly, the discussion in this chamber has already highlighted how the differences in interpretation can be found in this bill. Even a simple issue of titling, whereby the government has to be pressed by opposition parties to even call the ASE by its real name—photo radar—has met with challenge until the deputy minister finally stood up and called it as such.

We've also seen how the Conservative members are only able to reconcile the concept of photo radar as little more than a cash grab, but I don't hear them expressing concerns for the financial outlay of the municipalities. While we should all be concerned about any level of government reaching into the pockets of taxpayers who are already cash-strapped from hydro bills, gas prices and daily life, we should also be concerned about the cost to municipalities that are already cash-strapped along with their communities.

I already mentioned the cost of signage alone. With the added cost of purchasing and maintaining those cameras, that should give us cause for concern. We know we need to be working closely with our municipal partners and public alike and, most of all, we need to take action to protect our children and keep our streets safe. This means that the government should be open to amendments necessary to clarify and strengthen this bill in committee.

Another key area that others have noted as well is the concern with unreadable licence plates. The bill speaks to the registrar potentially requiring the return of licence plates that have become so damaged or worn that they cannot be photographed by a tolling system, red light camera system or photo radar. Is there any member that hasn't heard about this problem with the Ontario licence plates? I know that people have come into my office talking about the peeling of the licence plates. The Auditor General has reported on this, and so have the media outlets across the province.

I want to read to you from an article from CityNews last September 2016: "Thousands of Ontario licence plates have a new destination: the trash.

"A CityNews investigation reveals that 132,000 plates have been returned and replaced free of charge to ServiceOntario centres since January 2014. That's a 65,000 jump in returned plates since April of this year. The problem? Peeling, bubbling lamination, which makes the plates' numbers and letters unreadable.

"Service Ontario is aware that some individuals have experienced an issue with the reflective lamination bubbling or peeling off of their licence plates,' Ministry of Government and Consumer Services spokesperson Anne-Marie Flanagan tells CityNews. 'A small percentage of plates have been returned due to this issue.'"

I have to interject here, Speaker, to note that 132,000 licence plates is not a small number, nor is it a small inconvenience for the people who have had to once again take time out of their busy schedules to have them replaced. The cost of replacement is \$40, or risk driving with an ineligible licence plate, which is subject to a \$125 ticket under the Highway Traffic Act.

I'll continue from this article: "And only those that are five years old or newer are replaced at no cost to the driver....

"The plates have been manufactured by Trilcor staff—inmates serving sentences at Central East Correctional Centre (CECC) in Lindsay, Ontario, since 2006. Although defective licence plates have been reported for years, a third-party analysis of the manufacturing process wasn't commissioned until 2015."

So there was a change in provider there, Speaker, and some of the quality obviously is an issue.

"To improve the quality of our plates, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has engaged the National Research Council to conduct an objective, third-party investigation of de-lamination with the expressed intent of isolating the root cause,' Flanagan explains. CityNews was only able to obtain a copy of the report through a freedom-of-information request."

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Again I have to interject to note that the deterioration of the plates was reported for years to the ministry, so this was on their radar—excuse the pun. The issue for some reason needed to be called out publicly before they took steps to address the problem. The Ombudsman also reported on this as well.

Secondly, I always find it disappointing that a government that has steadfastly claimed to be transparent and accountable doesn't like sharing its reports with the public. Why do so many reports that could easily be published on the ministry's website and shared as openly as possible continue to have to be FOIed?

"The report notes that 'poor sticking of the reflective sheeting onto the aluminum was observed for almost all of the samples except those of the motorcycle format.'"

These articles go on to touch upon several personal stories of folks who had been directly impacted by the fees or were putting themselves at risk because they couldn't afford the fees.

With this bill, we know that we have a registrar who will be entitled to require the return of plates that have become damaged or worn. It's interesting that the only cash grab that I am picking up on is from this government selling licence plates that are defective and then offering only a handful of free replacements, while other Ontarians will need to cough up the funds to replace their licence plates.

Most of all, Speaker, I have concerns about how light the bill is on enforcement language. As well, there are no clear assurances that actual drivers will be held accountable for speeding, let alone doing so in a vehicle that belongs to another person who we know would receive a ticket under the photo radar environment. I think that

there should be a discussion about that mechanism; the driver who is using the vehicle should also be responsible for their actions.

The bill certainly needs work, and again, I hope that this government will be prepared to hear suggestions in committee to strengthen, clarify and ensure that we aren't simply deferring our responsibilities onto municipalities without fully considering the risks that they will have to inherit along the way.

Speaker, I do think this bill is important. It's an important discussion. There have been far too many incidents where in school zones there have been reports of people speeding and recklessly driving. We know who is going to be at risk: It's our students; it's our children.

Discussions on this bill, of course, are welcome. I look forward to it going to committee, where we can get some clarity around some of the enforcement pieces and the language. I appreciate the opportunity to talk to this bill today.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member opposite for her comments. I will have very soon an opportunity to speak on this important bill, but I'll say that this is a very important piece of legislation that is wholeheartedly supported by my community of Ottawa Centre.

I think what I heard from the member from London—Fanshawe is that she is supportive of this important bill as well. Of course, this bill will go to committee and there will be an opportunity to hear from other community members and stakeholders to see how the bill could be strengthened.

I can say, Speaker, with personal experience from the work that I have done in my community of Ottawa Centre—I will speak to it a little in detail—that the desire to reduce default speed limits to something less than 50 kilometres an hour, and giving municipalities the opportunity to do so, is something very much supported in my community of Ottawa Centre. Along with other measures like making it easy to use red light cameras, or the introduction of photo radar in school zones and community safety zones, they are concrete measures that are going to result in more protection for our children, for our seniors and for all pedestrians and bicyclists that use the road. This is a very progressive move, a move that we have seen replicated in other jurisdictions like New York City and Paris, where they have reduced speed limits. For us to do this as a province, I think, speaks volumes of the direction we are going in as we continue to invest in our public infrastructure and active transportation.

I want to thank and congratulate the Minister of Transportation for his hard work in putting this bill together and making sure that we really make Ontario one of the safest jurisdictions when it comes to road safety, and that we treat everybody equally, be it our seniors, our children, our bicyclists, our rollerbladers—you name it—through the passage of this bill.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to begin by saying that the PC Party always has and will continue to support initiatives that help to make our school zones safer. But I have to say that we regret the fact that this minister took the opportunity to use the enhancement of safety for children to open the door to photo radar on expressways, parkways and highways across Ontario.

By allowing the use of photo radar in a "community safety zone" without indicating any definition of what a community safety zone is, the bill allows carte blanche for photo radar and its associated fines to be implemented virtually anywhere—or virtually everywhere—within a municipality's jurisdiction. Instead of working to create "safer school zones," the minister has introduced legislation that will mean a reduced police presence in our school areas, and photo radar on expressways, parkways and highways right across the province. The very fact that municipal offices are already lining up to propose cameras in areas well outside of school zones—and we saw the Hamilton Spectator article recently. This highlights the importance of getting this right and avoiding the concerns of this simply being a cash grab.

The reality is that municipalities are desperately looking for new revenue mechanisms as a result of this Liberal government's continued underfunding. We are always open to discussions on how to make school zones safer. However, we're not prepared to sign off on legislation that gives such sweeping powers of photo fines anywhere the municipality sees fit.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener—Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to thank the member from London—Fanshawe for raising some of our key concerns that we have as they relate to Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act.

As a former trustee, safety around schools was always a consistent issue that I heard at school board meetings. Several times, I went out to schools in fast-growing subdivisions where the concept of slowing down hadn't fully been a part of the culture of the community in that neighbourhood. I saw some pretty shocking, risky driving on the parts of drivers in and around schools. So the bill is needed, and New Democrats have been very clear about that.

Of course, hopefully, giving municipalities discretion over changing speed limits in their community will lead to safer roads in the province of Ontario. We're ultimately talking about a culture shift here.

It is worth noting that there are no clear assurances that actual drivers will be held accountable for speeding attributed to a car owned by another person who will receive the ticket. If you're looking to shift the culture of entitlement, if you will, of drivers, then you need to make sure that you can actually hold those people to account. The member from London—Fanshawe raised that quite nicely. She also said, though, since the enforcement and trial procedures are now left almost entirely up to regulations—which is a trend that this government seems to have embraced wholeheartedly—and then those

regulations that would supersede the Provincial Offences Act, it is unclear what enforcement under Bill 65 will actually look like, and whether it will be fair. However, enforcement is limited only to school and community safety zones, and no civil liberties organizations have expressed any concerns so far. But, as always, when you leave so much to the regs and not to the legislation, we, obviously, voice our concerns consistently on that point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to join the conversation this afternoon on Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act. We've heard members of the third party state today and on previous days that they're in favour of Bill 65 and will be voting in favour of it, which is very encouraging to hear.

In her address this afternoon, the member for London–Fanshawe stated that she supports lower speeds in community safety zones. Speaker, the current default limit is 50 kilometres per hour in these zones. Currently, municipalities may, through bylaws and signing, implement posted speeds other than the default on any roadway under their jurisdiction. This legislation is going to allow municipalities to establish reduced default speed limits in urban areas within municipal boundaries if that's what they wish to do.

1600

The member also said that she's unsure of what constitutes a community safety zone. Well, the intention of Bill 65 will leave that up to our municipal partners, which we believe are mature levels of government, elected by people in their communities.

The member also commented on red light cameras. The red light camera program allows municipalities to use photo technology to lay charges against motorists who run red lights at local intersections. Now, while the red light camera program is a local initiative, the province provides the legislative and regulatory framework for the program through our Highway Traffic Act.

Currently, municipalities can enter the red light camera program only after they receive provincial approval, and this allows them to enroll in a red light camera program on an opt-in basis through a streamlined approval process. We currently have this in Waterloo region, in my home community, and it's working very well.

You've heard us say that Bill 65 is going to give municipalities the tools that they need to ensure safer streets. That's going to crack down on speeders, and it will save lives.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate the comments from the members in the House. There are other ways, too—of course, speeding is at the core of safety; I think that's something we all agree on. But as I was doing some research on this, there are other ways that we can environmentally help to reduce speeding. Some of those things are using traffic calming.

That's a wide range of road and environmental designs that help actually make it difficult for people to speed.

There is also vertical deflection. Those are not speed bumps; they're speed humps. Speed humps are wider and about two or three inches bigger, so they're not like speed bumps, where they actually damage vehicles.

There are other things like horizontal deflection; that means maybe a curve around the road. That's why I say, definitely speeding is the main thing—making sure that people slow down—but we can build future neighbourhoods to actually promote people to slow down unconsciously in their own environment, just by the way the design is.

Also, I think we can talk about education. We need to make sure that we conduct sessions when people are taking their driving tests and talk about conducting anti-speed public awareness campaigns.

As we're rolling out this bill, we need to talk to parents and the neighbourhood and have these community meetings and make people aware of the new changes, so that everyone has a buy-in in making sure that we keep our kids safe.

There were just some suggestions I noted that were a little bit further reaching than just the speeding. I think it's important, as we build infrastructure, that maybe we should look at those designs to make it a more community-friendly place and walkable—and also encourage people to use other forms of transportation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The government House leader and Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much for recognizing me to speak on Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters, also known as the Safer School Zones Act.

I stand here today as a very proud member of provincial Parliament for Ottawa Centre. My pride comes on behalf of my community and their incredible advocacy in making this legislation happen here at Queen's Park.

For some time, as the MPP for a downtown community, Ottawa Centre, I have heard again and again from my constituents how important it is that we make our neighbourhood streets safe. I have heard from moms, I have heard from dads, I have heard from teachers and I have heard from our seniors that our neighbourhood streets are getting unsafe because of speeding.

One of the issues that was raised to me by many community champions in my riding of Ottawa Centre was a mechanism for municipalities to reduce the default speed limit from 50 kilometres an hour to something less, be it 40 kilometres an hour or 30 kilometres an hour. As a result of those conversations, issues that I heard door-to-door as I visited my constituents every weekend from the advocacy of people like Donna Chiarelli and Catherine James-McGuinty, who are representative of many people behind them because of their engagement in the community—in the last election, in 2014, I committed to the

community that if I was re-elected, I would work extremely hard to convince the government to bring forward legislation that would allow for the reduction of default speed limits on our residential streets. In fact, Speaker, if one goes to my Facebook page, Yasir Naqvi MPP, you will see the video that I created back in the 2014 campaign just outside St. George School in my riding, in Champlain Park, making that commitment.

I stand here, quite happy and proud that my community and I were able to work together to engage our government, to engage our Minister of Transportation—I want to personally thank him for listening; I think I was a bit of a pest to him for a while, in terms of raising this issue on behalf of my community—and to be able to see fairly comprehensive legislation that's going to make a marked difference in making sure that our streets in our communities across the province, whether it's urban or suburban or rural, north or south, are going to be safer for our children, our seniors and everybody who engages in active transportation.

Speaker, I do want to take this opportunity also to talk about an incredible community champion who spoke about safety in our community on every occasion he had, whom we recently lost in my community. I'm talking about a gentleman by the name of Vance Fandrey. Vance unfortunately passed away on March 14 of this year. Vance was much loved by our community, especially in Hintonburg, because he, along with his wife, Cheryl Parrott, was a force to be reckoned with.

I remember that when I decided to run for office for the first time in 2007, Cheryl and Vance were the first ones to call me and say, "You come to our community. We want to give you a tour of Hintonburg, to tell you what some of the issues are so that we can work together." This was as I was just a candidate; I was not even elected at that time. They have been friends and they have been advocates and champions, people I listened to as mentors ever since then.

It was very heartbreaking to lose Vance, for the entire community. We had a great celebration for Vance at the Carleton Tavern not long after his passing away, and this is how he was described, Speaker: "gentle, kind, caring, soft-spoken, Mr. Fix-It, the tool guy, mad scientist, inventive, safety first." That's such an apt description of Vance.

To Cheryl: We think of Vance every day. We thank you and Vance for your incredible advocacy in making our community safe. This bill very much, in my view, is in honour of Vance Fandrey and the work he has done in our community to make our neighbourhoods safe, especially the community of Hintonburg, where he lived for many, many years.

As a result of that advocacy, back in May 2015, I actually hosted a town hall in my community where we brought in the community to discuss speed limits and road safety. We put together, Speaker, as the MPP, a group of expert speakers who came and spoke to the community. It was an event that was very well attended, held at St. Anthony's Banquet Hall in Little Italy in my riding.

We had people like community advocate Donna Chiarelli, who I mentioned earlier, who is a resident of Wellington Village in my community. She presented her experience in the community and how she started a slow-down campaign with the city of Ottawa, so that you can make people recognize that there are children playing street hockey, or families who live in these streets, so people can slow down.

We had Dr. Barry Wellar, who is a former professor at the University of Ottawa, who specializes in urban design, to talk about how we could use engineering and design to reduce speed limits.

We had Constable Brad Tierney, who joined us from the Ottawa Police Service district traffic team to talk about how one can enforce speed limits, and the kinds of things that the Ottawa Police Service is doing to make our streets safe.

We also had Dr. Isra Levy, who is the city of Ottawa's medical officer of health, to talk about how reducing speed limits could save lives.

It was a very thoughtful discussion that we had. We were able to gather many views from the community that I submitted to the minister, actually, later on.

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If I could summarize what we learned in that discussion, I said to the Minister of Transportation, the member from Vaughan, that there's a strong desire in Ottawa Centre to reduce the default speed limit in Ontario to at least 40 kilometres an hour and to give municipalities the authority to set their own limits. We also heard that the province should lead the way in shifting the current road culture, promoting active transportation and increasing the safety of all members of our community.

Speaker, again, I sound very excited that all those recommendations that were put forward by my community of Ottawa Centre, that were sent to the minister in a report that we developed, along with the presentations that were given, have been adopted and are part of Bill 65.

We also did a quick, little survey while in that session, giving people some options as to what they would like to see. If I could just summarize that survey very quickly: The first option was to do nothing, to keep the status quo. Nobody voted for that option. The second option was that the province should reduce the default speed limit from 50 kilometres to 40 kilometres an hour under the Highway Traffic Act; 33% of the attendees preferred that choice. The third option was that municipalities be permitted to set a default speed limit of 50 kilometres to 40 kilometres an hour. Only 22% of the people chose that option. The final option was to give municipalities the power to reduce the speed limit to 40 or 30 or whatever they choose; 45% of attendees responded in support of that option. I'm happy to report that Bill 65 does exactly that: It gives the opportunity for municipalities to be able to reduce speed limits to lower than 50 kilometres an hour. It does not prescribe what that lower speed limit should be. That is up to the community and the municipalities to do so through bylaw.

Again, I think it's a testimony that communities have the best sense of what the pulse of the community is, and we have to do a better job always to listen to communities. I'm happy to say that we have a great example here through Bill 65.

The other question I wanted to talk about is, why is this bill important? Why is it important that we make our streets safe? Of course, the common sense answer is that we want to make sure that everybody lives in a safe environment, that our streets are safe for everyone. But I think there's a fair bit of research that has gone on as well behind that for us to instruct by evidence why it is important that we revisit the idea of 50 kilometres as a default speed limit.

My research shows that 50 kilometres an hour as a default speed limit came out around 1950. A lot has changed since that time. If you look back to what kind of cars we were driving in 1950, they were bigger, they were more clunky cars. We were also a smaller province. Now what we see is that we've got more density, more intensification—which is a good thing, especially in urban communities. We see that cars are getting faster. It's easier to go from zero to 60 kilometres or 100 kilometres in a few seconds; we see those advertisements all the time—not to mention quality of life. We are far more health conscious. We are encouraged to engage in active transportation, to be more outdoors. These are all good reasons that we revisit 50 kilometres as a default speed limit, not to mention the scientific evidence.

The Chief Coroner for Ontario did a pedestrian death review, looking at all pedestrian deaths that took place from January 1, 2010, to December 31, 2010. One of the areas the coroner looked at was the impact of speed. It's very interesting—it's actually quite telling—how much a difference it could make in terms of the safety of an individual and the chances of survival in case of a collision if a car is driving at 50 kilometres an hour or something less. According to the coroner, a pedestrian struck by a vehicle travelling in zones where the posted speed was less than 50 kilometres an hour accounted for 5% of the total of pedestrian deaths. The evidence from this study demonstrated that when struck in zones where posted limits were 50 kilometres per hour or greater, death became a far more common outcome, with 67% of deaths occurring on roads where posted speed limits were beyond 50 kilometres an hour. So you're talking about a 67% versus 5% death rate if you're struck by a car that's driving at 50 kilometres an hour. To me, it seems like a no-brainer as to what we're doing in this legislation by reducing speed limits, because we are creating that much better an opportunity for people to be able to survive in the case of a collision.

Again, when you start to think about the likelihood of a child who may be playing on street, on a bicycle or in a school zone when leaving school, or a senior who is just doing their regular chores and getting struck by a car that may be driving 50 kilometres an hour or more, this bill just absolutely makes sense, that we create opportunities for our municipalities to be able to reduce speed limits to less than 50 kilometres an hour.

I had the opportunity also to work very closely with city of Ottawa and other municipalities like the city of Toronto to get support for it. I want to give a thank you to our mayor, Jim Watson, in the city of Ottawa for his support for this measure. I also want to thank councillor Keith Egli, who is the chair of the transportation committee. He and I worked very closely in our city, bringing a motion asking the province to take these steps, and that's reflected.

In addition, councillors like Jeff Leiper, Catherine McKenney, David Chernushenko and Riley Brockington have been also very supportive of me in this advocacy. I want to thank them for the work they're doing in the community and for supporting our community and this legislation as well.

I also want to say that the other measures that are outlined in this bill around the introduction of red light cameras in school zones and community safety zones is a very important tool. It will allow us to send a very strong message: that for those who speed in areas where we may have people who we consider vulnerable, like our children in school zones, there are consequences, that if you speed, you will be fined. Now, I've heard from people sometimes saying, "Well, speed cameras, that's not fair. It's a money grab." My response is: It's not a money grab. You can avoid paying that fine by just following the law.

Interjection: It's only the Tories who say that.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Right? You don't have to speed and get caught.

The same thing goes for red light cameras. In the city of Ottawa, our municipality uses red light cameras quite extensively. Again, there's a very easy way of avoiding a fine that you may get through a red light camera: Don't break the law. Do not drive through a red light. If you don't, you won't get a ticket.

Similarly, in this instance, I think photo radar will be a strong deterrent for speeders who have no regard for the children in our neighbourhoods who are going to school. We are doing so much in encouraging our young people to walk or bike to school, and in order for us to do that, we need to make sure that they are also safe.

We have a great walking bus program run by a friend of mine, Wallace Beaton, who is a great champion of green communities and safe communities. Those kids, if we're going to encourage them to walk to school, we need make sure that our streets are safe as well. Introducing tools like photo radar in our school and community safety zones is a great deterrent. So anybody who thinks this is a cash grab, I have only one simple thing to say to them: Follow the law, follow the speed limit, and you'll never get a ticket. It's as simple as that.

The third aspect of this bill, which is around making it easier for municipalities to use red light cameras, I think is also a very positive step. We've seen the success of red light cameras in Ottawa in making our intersections safe. I had the great privilege of working on a private member's bill before, which the government also adopted, that allowed for red light cameras and tickets to be given to

drivers that are out-of-province. You can imagine that that's a bit of an issue in Ottawa because we are a border town, so that we, again, make sure that the laws apply equally. That private member's bill of mine was adopted by the government and made into law.

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Speaker, I feel quite encouraged, on behalf of my community, that we are taking all reasonable steps to make our streets safer, not to mention that if you couple all this with the investments that we're making in our public transit—in the case of Ottawa, we're seeing billions of dollars being invested in building the LRT. Phase 1 of the LRT is on time and on budget, and by next year it should be up and running. The province has contributed \$600 million to that, and we have also already committed over a billion dollars for phase 2 of the LRT, which is going to ensure that pretty much our entire city will be covered by LRT. Then we're already working on our environmental assessments for phase 3 so that we can go further down in the west, in Kanata.

All of those things allow my constituents in Ottawa Centre and all residents of Ottawa to have an opportunity to not drive cars, but actually be able to take public transit, an affordable way of getting there.

We're also investing in active transportation, with more bicycling lanes being built around my community of Ottawa Centre, with segregated bike lanes on Laurier Avenue and recently on O'Connor, allowing people who use bicycles as a mode of transportation to do so in a safe way.

One of the other projects that I'm working on is the building of an active transportation bridge on the historic Rideau Canal in my riding that will connect the Glebe to old Ottawa East. That bridge, once built, with the support of all three levels of government, will be a game-changer in really connecting two densely populated communities—to be able to cross the historic Rideau Canal not by driving from one end to the other, but by just walking or rollerblading or biking to the other part.

All of those things result in building a vibrant community—a community that is healthy and sustainable, a community that is active. That is what we all have been working towards in my community of Ottawa Centre. I have been very fortunate to be a partner in that with the community.

Speaker, again, I want to thank the members of my community for their active advocacy, for working in a proactive manner—people in organizations like the Civic Hospital Neighbourhood Association, the Westboro Community Association, the Wellington Village Community Association, the Glebe Community Association, the Ottawa East Community Association and Old Ottawa South Community Association; I could go on and on. We all know that these are volunteers. They get involved in these community associations just to make our neighbourhoods better. To be able to listen to them, to be able to work with them, and then to be able to bring government legislation that exactly addresses the issues they raised to make our neighbourhoods safe is a great

moment of pride for me. I want to thank them for giving me the opportunity to serve them in this great chamber.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to respond to the remarks just given by the Attorney General on Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters.

Of course, this bill brings up a number of issues, but perhaps the most important one is highway safety in front of schools. All members of the Legislature are very concerned about the safety of students as they're coming to and from school. We want to do whatever we can to ensure that their transportation is safe.

I would say to the Attorney General that there's an important issue in Wellington–Halton Hills with respect to school safety, and it is the need for traffic signals at the intersection of Highway 7 and MacLennan Street and Dunbar Street in Rockwood. Since September 2014, I've been working with the mayor of the township of Guelph/Eramosa, Chris White. We've been raising this issue with the Minister of Transportation, your seatmate. I know the minister is carefully monitoring this debate because it's his bill, but I would again remind him that we need to have traffic signals installed at this intersection to ensure the safety of students attending École Harris Mill Public School. The school opened in September 2014, and we've been raising this for more than two years. The mayor in particular is very, very concerned about the safety of the children crossing Highway 7 at this intersection, and I agree with him that traffic signals are the solution.

I've raised it many times in conversations with the minister. I have written him many times. I have tried to work with him. I've had, I think, the interest and support of the President of the Treasury Board, who is another of his seatmates. I hope that we can work together and resolve this.

It's also true, I understand, that the Ministry of Transportation has indicated that the traffic signals are warranted. We're coming to the end of the fiscal year. I urge the Minister of Transportation to announce approval for funding for traffic signals at this intersection to ensure that those students are safe.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I was happy to listen to the Attorney General. He raised some pretty valid points. I have a question for him that I hope he is able to answer in his rebuttal. I'll get to that question.

I do like the idea of the “walking bus” scenario. I'd like to know a little bit more about that as well.

All in all, New Democrats are supportive of this bill. In fact, I actually introduced a bill that had similar implications—Bill 99, the Safer Roads and Safer Communities Act—although it had an extra component that allowed municipalities to implement safety cameras or photo radar in construction zones. These are areas of our

highways that are highly sensitive and are areas where there are commonly some major accidents. That's because people don't obey the posted limits and don't take into consideration the nature of construction zones on our highways. I would urge the government to take a look at adding that component, to allow construction workers and construction zones to be brought into the fold of this.

I do take some umbrage with the position of the Progressive Conservatives here. I don't know why they're so reluctant to add this tool to our Highway Traffic Act arsenal, so to speak—it's as if they don't understand the technology of a video camera—especially given that the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has brought forward a bill that implements safety cameras on buses. I would imagine that the evidence used in that scenario would be used to eventually lay highway traffic charges.

We're not talking about a huge stretch here. We have safety cameras. Police wear safety cameras. They have cameras in their cars. We have cameras in our own cars. This is technology that we should embrace and utilize as a tool to make our roads and our communities safer.

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm pleased to rise again this afternoon to speak on Bill 65 and to do so in my capacity as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation.

I know that we, as parliamentarians, have been rising and speaking to this bill, but I'd like to give voice to people around the province for whom this bill matters, who are very much concerned about safety in our streets. Let me just share some comments with you.

From the mayor of Kingston: This is Mayor Bryan Paterson, and he has said, "So being able to have a camera there is something that can help keep the streets safe, but at the same time, be a much lower-cost option." Many municipal leaders have shared that opinion with us.

Here's a comment from the mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson: "This gives us a tool to deal with a serious problem. I've talked to other mayors who very much want this, and they don't see it as a cash grab; they see it as a way to control speeding."

I know that we've heard that comment from the Progressive Conservatives, their accusation that this is going to be a cash grab, but we're hearing from municipal leaders across the province who have a different point of view.

From the chief of police in the city of Ottawa: He says, "This is about saving lives. This is about reducing injuries. This is about reducing collisions. This is about changing driver behaviour."

Here's a comment from Sergeant Mark Gatien. He says, "We can't be everywhere, but when we can set up these instruments at various locations from time to time, it will help a lot and it will remind people to slow down."

Here's a comment from the mayor of Durham: "This technology will allow our officers more time to utilize their expertise towards other policing issues, and provide

safer access for children and pedestrians on roadways while travelling to school facilities."

A final comment I want to leave you with is from the chief of police in Waterloo region in my home community: "People recognize that our most valuable resource is our children. I'm hoping that people will see the value of this. It is for the good of public policy." I agree, Speaker.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I guess I'll be speaking a little later on for a few minutes.

Nobody here is arguing about the need to make our school zones safer, but unfortunately, we see legislation that has opened the door to photo radar in areas that are not even close to a school.

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I know that they have lots of mayors and politicians—I came from that field before. We're talking about people that are desperate for some type of revenue. They've lost funding over the years from this government—\$100 million just a few years ago to the OMPF. So how do you replace that? People are getting fed up with the increased taxes, but the answer is proper funding and proper enforcement at the same time.

Photo radar is something we've heard this government say over and over again that they're against, but now they're putting it in place. Technology has a place in the right spot, but not carte blanche over any expressway or roadway that municipal council looks at. It gets to be: "You know, I think if we put it here we could make more money." It's the wrong reason. It was tried, and the public spoke out, not that many years ago, on why they didn't think it was fair and why they didn't think it was right.

There's a whole host of issues that photo radar does not pick up in school zones. It does not replace officers on the ground. Texting and all the issues that we hear today that are really the leading cause of accidents are not dressed by this.

It's feel-good: "Look, we're coming with more money." That's really the message this government is giving. I think, really, if they were serious, they would define a school zone—just what it is—instead of just basically opening up the door.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Attorney General and government House leader has two minutes.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills, Essex, Kitchener Centre and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for their remarks.

I will be more than happy to share with the member from Essex the coordinates for Wallace Beaton, who is part of Green Communities Canada, around the Walking School Bus program. It's a fantastic program. We're trying to grow it in Ottawa and across communities as well. It's a great partnership between, of course, the local school boards to create opportunities.

When the Premier actually announced our intention to bring Bill 65 forward, in Ottawa at Elmdale Public

School, she got to meet the Walking School Bus because they were just arriving for school. It's a great way—and, again, it speaks to the value of what we all, as parents, as uncles and aunts, tell our children: to be healthy. And part of being healthy is physical activity and physical exercise, and part of that is creating these opportunities to be able to walk to school. But we need to make sure that parents feel that their kids will be safe by making our streets safe, by reducing speed limits from 50 kilometres an hour to 40 or 30, and by introducing photo radar in school zones.

I do not agree with the concerns that the Conservatives are raising. I think they're just stuck behind in time, with all due respect to them. We need to make sure that we use technology to our benefit. It won't be a cash grab if you follow the law. It's a simple prescription. We should not be giving permission or licence to people to speed in community safety zones or our school zones, endangering the most vulnerable in our community.

I just want to, again, thank my community. I wanted to mention Michael Powell, the president of the Dalhousie Community Association, who has done incredible work on photo radar. I hope all members will support this bill.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm proud to rise today to talk to Bill 65, better known as the Safer School Zones Act.

We see some of the benefits of government polling, knowing that if they were to title this bill "photo radar," what it really is, it wouldn't be very popular. So going to a school or naming it—it's just a way of getting around a promise that this government made.

We got rid of, not too long ago, a system that the public of Ontario overwhelmingly said that they didn't believe was right, something put in by the third party here, by their former Premier—their only chance in here. But their policies—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Bob Rae.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Bob Rae. But their policies quickly showed that they didn't connect with people. The government at the time, their Premier—or I guess their leader at the time, before he was Premier—commented that they needed to get rid of photo radar. It wasn't a system that the people supported. It wasn't right.

We've had many people over the years—Greg Sorbara, somebody who has been in the news just recently for other things, talked about it. The former Dalton McGuinty finance minister called photo radar perhaps "the most arbitrary, objectionable, obnoxious ... one of the most repulsive pieces of legislation" that the government had ever brought in, because it "completely abrogates our very long-standing tradition in this province of being innocent until you're proven guilty in a court of law." We've seen, many times, the government realizing that they couldn't bring it in as a photo radar bill, and the current government promised many times that they would not. So they have used a back-door way of making it sound like we're going to make our school zones safer. We agree with that. We're not disagreeing

with the use in those cases, but then put a definition on it. Allow it to be used solely in those locations.

If you are not prepared to define a community safety zone, then you are opening it up, and you're substituting cameras for officers. The officers pick up things like texting. They pick up things like drunk driving, erratic driving. Photo radar does not do that. If we look at the real causes for accidents today, it's those reasons, not so much speeding anymore.

We support it in school zones. When you look at what this opens up, we're talking about Allen Road, Black Creek Drive, Burlington Street in Hamilton, the Gardiner Expressway. There are all kinds of areas this opens up that have nothing to do with a school zone. It's really just a way of silencing some of their partners that are stuck for revenue. We see a government that constantly re-announces infrastructure money, but we're not seeing that money get out to the field, like I say, to the municipalities.

In Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry last year—we talk about the infrastructure funding—not one of the townships out of the six qualified. I can't say there wasn't any need. This is a way to supposedly make them happy. We can see a lot of country roads now having photo radar. But I think in the country we see things a little bit differently, and it's a matter of need.

Despite being turned down, we have many projects. In south Dundas, just over the last few months, they've had three bridges, township bridges, collapse. Traffic has to go around. Last year, they applied for money; they didn't get it. South Glengarry's Kraft Bridge has to be replaced. They're spending about \$2 million on that—applied three or four times, never qualified. We see North Glengarry, the water project, led along for quite a few years. They even gave \$5 million for engineering. Now it looks like they are not going to get the project, so there's \$5 million. Instead of just telling them before the last election that they weren't going to get it, they gave them \$5 million. Now, \$5 million would have paid for most of the requests that I've talked about in SD&G, because the engineering that was done there is a waste, thrown away because they're not doing that project. They have to resort to something else.

Rural Ontario over the last, I guess, a little over six months has been attacked by this government in the school closures. Same thing with windmills, solar farms being forced upon us—money being taken out of the riding, but no funding. Now the carrot is out here that we can have photo radar. "If you support this plan, you can put the photo radar in on the streets. But if I were you"—I guess they're not saying this publicly—"I'd put it in the most efficient places where you might get the most revenue back." After talking for more than a decade now about not putting this in, it snuck in a back way. If it really is that important, put it out at face value and debate the bill. Don't sneak it through in a way that you hope people don't notice, because people will start to notice.

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It's always in the name of safety. When I was the mayor of the township, I had a citizen come in who

wanted to make the speed limit on all the township roads 50 kilometres an hour. Sometimes it's hard to say no at council, and it looked like maybe a majority of council was going to approve it. I suggested that maybe we talk to the community; maybe we just see what the wishes are here. I said, "I don't want to go around and change a lot of signs on 1,000 miles of road and be forced to go back and change them."

The councillors came back—of course, the paper covered that. One of them came back the next meeting, and he said, "I heard loud and clear that this is not an answer that we want to proceed with."

Yes, the argument was about safety, school buses, and how it would be much safer if everybody travelled at 50 kilometres an hour. But it's not reasonable when you're looking at moving traffic, at expressways. We have residential areas where, yes, we need some help—photo radar has a place there—school zones and areas where you're dealing with seniors. But let's define that. Let's define what those areas are. Be specific.

That would follow on a commitment that this government made not that long ago. I know it was a Conservative government that actually cancelled the program, but it was a matter of—if I had listened to the election promises of that era, both parties would have done it. Now, we've seen a party that has not necessarily followed through on its election promises, but they were certainly suggesting that they would do that.

Funding for our municipalities is extremely short. If we look at the transit funding that they talk about, only a small fraction of the municipalities in this province actually qualify for it. Numbers are announced and re-announced, and if you look at last year's infrastructure spending, very little money was given out last year. Essentially, it was a null year when it came to infrastructure spending because that promise of funding just was there and municipalities spent money on engineering, spent money on projects that they submitted, but the money just didn't flow in time to get it built. It ends up being a detractor from employment. I think that's something we've seen this government pull before, saying they're waiting for the feds. But municipalities need to plan their infrastructure, plan how they're going to put it into place, where they're going to put it into place, and they can't, if it's only granted through one-time grants. If you win the lottery, you get the money.

I think it's time that we do some funding based on a per capita basis. Even in the city of Cornwall, which has a transit system, they only qualify if they buy a new bus or spend the money on something that maybe they don't need. Often I've heard municipalities say that they would rather spend the money on a bridge, a traffic signal or something else, but, of course, then they don't qualify for the money. Then you have over 300 municipalities that don't qualify at all.

Some lines for the rural areas—we look at them as providing our food, we look at providing our power, our electricity, because that's where all the plants are. We don't give them a break when they transmit the power to

the cities. They get billed for that at the same rate as the cities do. Then, in the end, they pay a higher distribution cost. So they pay a penalty for actually providing that power to the system.

Then they turn around and they don't qualify for transit, and transit is not the right answer because we're trying to protect agricultural land. We don't want lots of transportation facilities in this area. We want to keep the population somewhat restricted. It's very hard to build any new houses in a small village or town.

We see what's going on in the last few years. We see these communities losing their corner stores. We see them losing their schools. They're under attack all the time, and there's nothing from this government to address their needs. The Premier was very quick to be in Chrysler just a few years ago and talked about the need to see growth in the agri-food industry, because it is the number one industry in Canada. Arguably, it's probably the largest one in Ontario, the highest job creator, and yet every time you turn around, you're handcuffing it. You're restricting its ability to grow.

Within a couple of days of that huge announcement and asking for the help of the agricultural world to move the economy of Ontario ahead, she closed one of the two agricultural colleges in the province and the only English-language one in eastern Ontario, making it much harder for agricultural students in eastern Ontario to get that agriculture education that's so needed if we're going to advance. There have been a lot of advances in rural Ontario in the agricultural field, but it needs help.

When you look at this bill—the member from Kitchener Centre said the other day that she was so happy that the NDP are supporting photo radar. So, a slip of the tongue, a Freudian slip, but it clearly shows what this is all about. It's spending millions of dollars on polling that tells them—"Okay, we're going to announce this"—how best to announce this bill. Of course, knowing that photo radar is grossly unpopular in this province, let's call it "school safety zones" and open the door and the back alleyway. That's what this bill does. If they were truly serious, they would define that definition so that it would restrict just where it's going. If we want to have a debate on photo radar, let's have that. Let's be up front with people. I think it's time that this government be up front with people.

We see years of projects and reviewing. One of the larger projects that came up in my former life as mayor came up in the city of Cornwall and the county council members on Highway 138 north of Cornwall, between Cornwall and Highway 417. There was a big discussion about the need for it. In 2006, there was a big study to show what was required, the results published—no money. So 10 years later, identification is still a problem, another study done, and so far, no more money.

We identify needs. We've done a number of construction jobs on that highway without the improvements. Now, economically if you want to be efficient, you have to wait out the 20-year cycle and the pavement needs to be replaced again. It's not a very efficient way

of spending money. You identify a problem, you're pretending that you're listening, then let's do a study and let it go away. We're even doing a study on top of a study. It's time to take action. It's time to put money where people need it.

It's looking now like maybe their infrastructure funding, that was originally a 10-year project promised by this government, became 12 years. The money must be in jeopardy because they're looking at alternatives to kind of make the municipalities go away. I think that if we're really going to help the municipalities of Ontario, which are crying desperately for more adequate funding, we see this province not that long ago pointing the finger at the federal government. Because it didn't line up with their beliefs, it was a bad government. Well, we see a new Liberal government there and further cuts. I don't hear the complaints today, but actually they're in worse shape today than they were under the Stephen Harper government. He actually promised, in health care—which we heard so much about—that he was going to continue to 2018 without the cuts. Well, this government cut sooner. Of course, when they did get their 6% increase, it just allowed the government in Ontario to cut back and use some of that money for something else. When we look at what they're using it for, self-promotion advertising—there are lots of issues that really aren't helping people and are making people in this province very upset.

I know they don't like some of these leaks where we find out some of this information. They certainly handcuffed the financial officer and the Auditor General so that there is no longer any oversight in those areas, but it's not the way democracy should run. It's not the way people expect Ontario to run. We expect forthright, open, transparent government. I'd never heard the word "transparent" so often than when I got here and I heard the other side talk about it all the time. But the only thing I ever see is more and more opportunities where transparency is removed by this government. They brag about bringing in the toughest rules, but they forget to say, "Yeah, but we cancelled them at the same time." It's not forthright, and a lot of people might say that it's misleading.

1650

We've just gone through, in my riding, a terrible six months. We've had community against community; I've been receiving letter after letter talking about our schools, our community hubs, that are closing. Certainly, we were luckier than most. For my neighbour in Leeds–Grenville, a quarter of their public schools, elementary schools, are closing. Those are important in rural Ontario. They provide the halls, they provide the meeting places, and they supply the little extra business that allows our corner stores and our grocery stores to remain open.

I know in Ingleside, with R-O, the grocery store that put millions in renovations just a few short years ago is now in jeopardy. Their option will be to drive a number of miles into Cornwall. This government has talked about help. We've heard about maybe expanding the LCBO in these stores, but they've only helped the largest stores in

the largest centres. They haven't helped the small, rural area.

I think it's time that we look at providing the proper funding, not this backdoor way of opening up photo radar and hoping that somehow there will be enough money to run the place. Let's look at the efficiency, how we're running this province. Let's look at where we can actually reduce, or increase efficiency so that we save money and are able to spend money on the priorities, because our priorities are failing. Education is being cut; health care is being cut.

A local surgeon in my area told me that he won't even take a knee surgery on, because he says it's embarrassing to tell people they have to wait two years. It's not because he can't take on more surgeries. He's spending two days a week in Massena because he can't get the operating room hours in Cornwall. He's talking about just under a two-year wait for hip surgeries.

This is not a shortage of doctors; the doctors are there. It's a shortage of funding. I have no problem, if that's the problem and you want to talk about it, but they don't want to talk about it. They want to give the idea that they're increasing funding for all of these hospitals. After four years of hearing that they had received no increase, last year they gave an increase, supposedly, to the hospitals. In one of my hospitals, that 1% increase actually is a \$1-million loss in funding. In one little pocket, they got \$90,000, which is that 1%, but when you look at the overall funding, they've been cut \$1 million. It's not right.

People should know. If you've got to level with people, tell them what you're actually doing. Don't go out there—and then if I talk to another one of my hospitals, she says, "Yeah, we're sworn to secrecy. If we go out to the public and actually complain, then the message is that next year will be worse." That's why, if you talk to any of the not-for-profits, that's an issue.

So we're looking at—

Mr. Grant Crack: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. Grant Crack: With all due respect to my good friend and colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, school closures and hospitals, Speaker, I don't believe are a part of this bill. I would just ask whether or not he could come back towards—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would ask the member to not drift too far, but school safe zones and schools are very close. But try to keep it within the guidelines. Thank you.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'll pull it back in, but the school zones—I guess they've done some things here by reducing the number of school zones by closing them. That will save some money, but really, it's all about funding. Let's be honest with the people of Ontario. Let's come out and really attack the problem, and that's proper funding. Don't sneak in the photo radar.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm so happy to stand up in this House in my place and bring the concerns of the people from Kitchener–Waterloo to this exhilarating debate today.

The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry actually did reference school closures, and I believe the reference was in relation to the fact that because 277 schools have closed in the last five years under the leadership of this Liberal government, that does leave people driving more than they would before because these small, rural schools are farther apart. Kids are in transit for longer periods of time. But that does lend itself to getting this piece of legislation right. Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act, is a needed piece of legislation.

I do understand where he was going with the school closure piece. It is interesting, because he does bring a certain rural aspect to it. It does warrant attention, because the divide between access to education between urban and suburban and rural communities and small towns is not only affected by geography but also access to—

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. Point of order, Minister?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I've been listening closely, but I don't see where the member is going. To stick to the bill, we are dealing with Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I respect the minister's comment, but it's a two-minute hit and that has a tendency of a bit more flexibility. She's not actually doing her 10-minute or 20-minute presentation, so I will allow her to do that.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, and I'm actually doing the hit on what the member said, and that's the whole idea of the debate in this place.

Interjection: Questions and comments.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's called questions and comments, and I'm commenting on the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

His points around school closures obviously resonated with us. It may not resonate with the Liberal government side of the House; however, it's a valid point. In fact, the People for Education's annual report recommended that children's access to education should not be affected by the place in which they live, and that our system of education should be equitably accessible to all Ontarians. And obviously, we have a shared responsibility to keep all students safe in school community safety zones.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I'm happy to stand on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries township to add a few comments to Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act. I intend to stick to this legislation when I'm discussing this important piece of legislation.

We're here to talk today about life-saving measures and how we can do our part to prevent avoidable

fatalities and injuries in our communities, and that's the basis of this bill. As a nurse and a mom who lives in a rural township and sends my children to school every day on the buses to the urban municipality to go to school, this is something that I've been very, very keen to see passed.

I'm concerned that the PCs say that they can support ASE in school zones but not in community safety zones, and I'm not quite sure why that would be, because our government—and, I think, all members of this House—should appreciate that the PCs recognize the importance of having automated speed enforcement as a tool to protect our children on the way to and from school. The safety of our children remains a top priority, and it deserves all-party support.

We know that there are still accidents that happen there from drivers that speed; for instance, a 4-year-old boy was killed a few years ago in Mississauga near an elementary school. He was walking with his mother, and area residents said that they had complained about drivers using that school zone to avoid traffic on the main routes. The person that was witnessing this incident said that they had had people yelling and screaming at cars every day to say, “Slow down, there are children walking.” But some of them race through, and a lot of them don't even stop.”

That, Speaker, is precisely why we need to pass this legislation: to protect our children in our school zones.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to stand and address Bill 65. One of the things that we on the PC side really believe in is, of course, safety. As a former critic for community safety and correctional services, I'm a strong proponent and advocate for safety in our areas, in our towns and cities. So we will always—and I say this—continue to support initiatives that help make our school zones safer.

However, we do regret the fact that the minister took an opportunity to enhance safety for children to open the door to photo radar on expressways, on parkways and across Ontario highways. We have some serious concerns about that. It's kind of like the camel theory, where the camel has a cold nose and wants to get inside the tent. Next thing you know, the entire camel is in the tent, and the owner of the camel is outside—the point being, where is it going to stop with this photo radar?

1700

One of the other concerns that we have is that photo radar doesn't, in fact, do anything to catch other dangerous driving behaviour, such as distracted driving, driving drunk, driving without a licence or insurance, weaving or tailgating. It doesn't address any of that. Of course, you have photo radar there, as opposed to a police officer who would be there and actually apprehend. I think that's something that needs to be considered.

The other thing is this: There's no indication in this bill as to whether or not photo radar would be limited to the hours of just when school is in or is going to be a 24/7 situation.

Again, I want to stress very emphatically that I am a strong supporter of community safety, but I think we need to be wary of what's in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Essex, questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I listened intently to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and his riveting dissection of this bill. It was incredible. He threw a couple of shots at us. That's okay, though. He's passive-aggressive, but he's more passive than he is aggressive, so that's all right. We don't mind it. We can take it. We've got thick skin here.

There are various forms of this type of technology in jurisdictions all around the world, one of which you could look at being our neighbouring province of Quebec. Quebec, in one form or another, has piloted or implemented photo radar. I don't know what you would call it in French. « Photo-radar »? Quelque chose comme ça? Je ne sais pas.

I'll give you a little bit of statistics. From 2005 to 2007, they did some pilot projects, and from 2010 to 2012 as well. Bodily injuries and property damage decreased by 59% in those areas that had photo radar. The overall incidence of accidents went down 23%.

There are measurable benefits to these types of deterrents and implementing these types of technologies on our roads. That can't be disputed. When people know they're entering a zone that could be monitored by photo radar, they slow down and they tend to pay more attention. In this day and age, we certainly need people to pay attention while they're behind the wheel, given all the distractions.

Again, I don't understand why we wouldn't, as a legislative body, take a look at best practices, take a look at evolving technologies, and ensure that legislation protects people's rights and protects due process of the law. However, this is a tool that can make our roadways safer, and it is our obligation to review it and to implement it if it indeed does that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Two-minute response from the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I thank the Minister of Natural Resources and the members from Kitchener–Waterloo, Chatham–Kent and Essex.

It's interesting to hear the number of schools that have closed from the member from Kitchener—277 schools in the last five years. That does not count the next round. We see another round coming through that has been estimated to be 600 schools.

Access to driving farther—that's what we are talking about: driving. We look at photo radar, and we challenge the government: If it really is about safe school zones, let's put a definition in and put an amendment in, and we can support that. We've said we will. But if you're only going to do this as a backdoor way of putting in photo radar across the province, then let's have that debate. Let's not stand behind here—I know that the polling that they've spent so much money on shows that the people

of Ontario do not want it. It was an experiment that we tried a number of years ago—a resounding thumbs-down. It is our job to do what the general public would like to see done in this province. Photo radar is something that they have said no to.

In school zones and with safety for seniors, people agree that there's a use for technology, and we certainly support that. But let's have the proper debate. Let's challenge them to bring that debate, that amendment through, and we'll support this bill for what they're trying to make it out to be: something that enhances safety in school zones and in other areas that are deemed by the public to be areas where we have to enhance safety. That's all we're asking. But don't leave the door open to roll this out across the province.

Thank you, Speaker. I think that that's very clear. Let's have a clearer definition of a safety zone.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader or a minister says otherwise.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, we wish debate to continue.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I'd like to make a point of order: In my debate earlier, I said the word “tolls.” I meant to say the word “tools.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member is allowed to correct her own record.

Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 65, the Safer School Zones Act, 2016. There's been a lot of discussion. I'm sure the people at home have been glued to their television sets, except for those who have jumped from one job to another in order to afford to pay their hydro bill or who can't have a TV on at all. But I want to talk about what's in the bill, for those people who may have just tuned in.

This bill would amend section 128 of the Highway Traffic Act to allow municipalities to set default speed limits through a designated area in the municipality instead of being obliged to use the province's default of 50 kilometres an hour for a speed limit. The default speed limit applies when no speed limit sign is posted on that street. There are people out there who may not realize that if there is no sign, that means that the speed limit is 50 kilometres an hour. The designated area still must have signs posted, as per regulation.

Automated speed enforcement, or ASE for short, can be authorized in a community safety zone designated by municipal bylaw under section 214.1(1) of the act, or a

school zone designated under section 128(5)(a). Under the act, school zones must be within 150 metres of a school, but a community safety zone need only be in an area where public safety is of special concern. These are the only areas where ASE, or automated speed enforcement, may be used. Photo radar can no longer be authorized on highways, for example.

That brings us to an important piece that my colleague from Essex referenced earlier, during what we refer to as a two-minute hit, which is a private member's bill, Bill 99, the Safer Roads and Safer Communities Act. Although I don't think it's any secret to anybody in this House or out there in TV land that Gretzkys are quite fond of the number 99, I can honestly say that I support my colleague from Essex's bill, the Safer Roads and Safer Communities Act, not just because it's Bill 99, but because of the content within that bill.

Within that bill, which Bill 65 doesn't include—it's missing—is that there would be cameras and enforcement within construction zones. When you see crews out on a roadway or on a highway doing work, people often speed through that. Speaker, I know, because you're from my neighbouring area, from the Chatham-Kent area, that you know that, especially in your riding, people tend to speed, and I can tell you that they're really foolish. If you're ever cutting through Chatham-Kent-Essex from Windsor to London or vice versa, the last place—you shouldn't be speeding anywhere—but the last place you would want to speed through is Chatham-Kent-Essex. I can tell you that their police, the OPP in that area, are very good at controlling traffic and monitoring speeders, and the odds are pretty good that you are going to get caught. So you can count on that.

Unfortunately, the police have other things to do. They can't sit on the side of the 401 and wait for somebody to go speeding by. We recently had quite a bit of construction, road work, that was done on that particular stretch of the 401, and doing that drive myself, just about every week, to go to Toronto and back to come here to Queen's Park, I can tell you there were numerous times—you would think in a construction zone where you're going down to one lane on a highway that that would slow people down and you would find them doing the posted limit of 80 kilometres an hour, but that's not always the case. Often, you will get somebody who will actually race everyone else before it bottlenecks or merges into the construction zone. They will tear through that construction zone—especially on that strip of the 401—in some cases, doing 140 kilometres an hour. It's dangerous on a good day to be doing 140 kilometres an hour, but when you have crews out there doing their work, you really are putting their safety at risk. Somebody could be critically injured, they could be killed, and now you are seeing families having to deal with not having their loved ones.

1710

I think Bill 99 is an important piece of legislation. It probably could have been rolled in under Bill 65 and addressed the issue of having controls and cameras in

construction zones. It's certainly supported throughout the industry. I think that's an opportunity that the government missed out on.

My colleague from Kitchener-Waterloo, during her short time to speak to this earlier, had mentioned that she was a school board trustee and that people were always coming forward with concerns around school zones and the safety of school zones. I can tell you, having been a trustee as well, that when you're talking about getting your children to school every day—and in some cases, parents can't walk their children to school themselves; they have to get to work, and so if there's an older child, they will take the younger sibling to school, but regardless of who's taking the child to school, there's always concern around road safety around school zones.

One school that I can think of in particular when I was a trustee—I represented it. I had three wards that I represented, and it fell in one of those wards; it still falls within my riding now, in south Windsor. There's a very busy stretch of a street, and although a few blocks away there is a traffic light, right around the school there are no traffic lights and there are no stop signs. What happens is, people drive through that school zone doing, in some cases, 60 or 70 kilometres an hour—and this is on a school day when we have children crossing the street. Unfortunately, although many parents and community members have petitioned or called on the municipality over many years to provide a crossing guard for students at that particular intersection, that has not happened. They have then asked for the municipality to try and control the situation another way. So under legislation like we have before us today, that would actually give the municipality—although I think they should still have a crossing guard—an opportunity to find a different way of trying to stop people from speeding through a school zone.

I'm sure everyone in this House, or most people in this House and many outside of this place, has driven past a school when either the kids are coming into school or when they're being dismissed. What you will often find—and I certainly am not saying this is something that I would promote, that I would recommend. When I was a parent, we had a kiss-and-ride area set up in front of our school so parents could pull off the road and let their children out safely onto the sidewalk with the assistance of an adult. They're not getting out on the other side of the street. They're not having to cross traffic, but many parents still do that. They will park on the side of the road that they're not supposed to park on and let their children out of the car. We've seen parents double-park, so someone will be parked up against the curb and a car will pull up on the other side of that car. Now they're blocking traffic in one direction. Many of us have seen where kids are hopping out of vehicles directly into traffic. These are all things that need to be addressed.

I know that schools, individually, try to do the best that they can to educate parents and caregivers so that these kinds of things don't happen, and there's a reduced risk of a child getting injured or possibly killed. But,

Speaker, when you have that happening and then you have someone who's speeding through the school zone, you've now put students and any of the education workers who might be outside supervising, any of the parents, grandparents, caregivers, whomever, at increased risk of serious harm as well.

The idea of putting something in place to hold people accountable for when they choose—and it is a choice—to speed through a school zone: The idea of something like that is certainly supportable.

Again, I referenced a school, specifically, in part of my riding. There are many other schools that face the same concerns where there are not crossing guards.

Although a crossing guard cannot stop all accidents from happening, they certainly help lessen the odds of them happening. If you add cameras to hold people accountable for their actions, for speeding through a school zone, it would certainly help decrease the risk of a student getting hurt even more.

It does raise concerns around the fact that there really is nothing in the bill that talks about real accountability. What if the person driving the car isn't the owner of the car? How are you actually reaching the person who's driving and sending them the message—that's the purpose of having the cameras: to catch those people who choose to speed through school zones, to try to deter them from doing it again—when there's nothing in place to address the person who is driving? If it's solely based on the licence plate, how are you reaching the driver and teaching them that they shouldn't be driving the way that they were, through a school zone? How are you actually educating them and stopping them from making that same decision later on?

During my colleague from London—Fanshawe's 20 minutes, she brought up the issue with licence plates—the fact that they often peel and are unreadable. That raises a question for me. First of all, it's unfair that these licence plates are being made the way they are and that people are either having to pay a fine because their licence plate is not readable or they're having to pay to replace their licence plate, through no fault of their own.

It raises another concern for me, because what we've seen—and, I'm sure, other members in the House; it's not just me—is where you receive a bill for the toll for using the 407. I've received a bill when I've been nowhere near the 407. I'm not the best at geography, but I'm pretty sure that Windsor isn't close enough to the 407 for them to think, mistakenly, that I was on the 407. So it raises concerns for me that if this can happen on the 407—and perhaps if the Conservatives hadn't privatized the 407, there would be better regulation on it and we wouldn't see these mistakes. If there are issues where someone like me, who can prove that I was nowhere near the 407 when I got the bill—yet I'm still being held responsible for paying it; I'm still getting charged interest and penalties and fees if I don't, even though I can prove, and it has happened, that I wasn't on the 407 at the time, that I was actually four or five hours away from the 407 at the time. If that can happen, how is the government

going to ensure that people who actually follow the law, do the speed limit or less, are extra cautious in a school zone—those who are actually taking student safety into account—are not going to receive tickets for an offence that they didn't commit? And if that happens—because mistakes can happen; we all make mistakes, but some of us don't like to admit it, like the government side in the sell-off of Hydro One—what is going to be put in place for somebody to appeal that fine, to be able to say, “That wasn't me. I have proof that it wasn't me”? I know we can go through the courts and that kind of thing, but perhaps even that in itself is an unfair practice when somebody can prove right from the get-go that they were not in that school zone and did not commit that offence. Maybe the way of fixing that is for the government to figure out how to fix licence plates so that they are readable and people aren't having to go and replace them at their own expense on a regular basis, or aren't getting fines because their licence plates aren't readable through no fault of their own.

The member from Ottawa Centre, the Attorney General—it's interesting because he talked about the walking school buses, and just before my time ended as a trustee and I landed here, there was a lot of discussion about the walking school buses and kids walking to school. There was actually a lot of interest from families. There was a lot of excitement. To think that a bunch of children getting together and walking together, but calling it a walking bus—to think that that would actually excite kids.

1720

I know, when I was a kid, the idea of walking to school was not a favourable one. Having grown up in London, in the wintertime, I could have snow taller than me. And London doesn't often call snow days. It has to be pretty bad for London to call it a snow day. So we would have to walk to school, and the last thing that I wanted to do was have to walk in that weather. No kid wants to walk in the rain or the cold weather. But to label it and promote it as a walking school bus, and to have kids and their parents and other community members buy into that and build excitement around the idea of walking to school, is an incredible initiative.

Unfortunately, what we're seeing is that, as more and more schools close across the province—more specifically, in rural Ontario, but also in urban centres—the opportunity for kids to walk to school is becoming less and less. While we talk about promoting health and physical education—we want our kids to get out and we want them to be active, and we all know the benefits, or at least some of us in this House do, of kids being active and healthy, and what that means for when they actually get to school and sit down in a classroom: that it helps them prepare to learn. But we're finding more and more schools across this province are closing and taking that opportunity away from children, and so we need to look also at the bill that was brought forward around school bus cameras, so getting those kids to school on the buses to keep them safe.

Then we need to look at, once they get to school—because we're talking a lot about kids walking, and it's becoming, unfortunately, more and more of a reality that kids are on buses, some for an hour each way. We need to make sure there's something in place so that when they get to their destination, when they get to school, they can actually get off the bus safely and not worry about someone who might be speeding through the school zone and could possibly, at the last minute, notice another vehicle or notice a pedestrian crossing the street and swerve or take some sort of measure to try and miss them, and ultimately put the children that are getting off the school bus in danger. So as they're off-loading from the school bus, that driver could lose control, hit the bus, go up on the sidewalk and hit the kids.

I think it's important that there is something in place to hold people like that accountable and to make sure that they understand that our school zones and our community safety zones are labelled those things for a reason, that safety is of the utmost importance, and that they need to stop the practice, the behaviour, of speeding through those zones.

The member from Cambridge, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, mentioned that she is from a rural riding and that her kids get on a bus and bus into a school in an urban community. I'm putting that out there just to make sure it's clear that I'm tying it to the debate, because it was the member from Cambridge who put that out there: that she lives in a rural community, her child gets on a bus and is bused into an urban community to go to school.

I think it's unfortunate that we're seeing more and more of that happening in rural Ontario. It's happening in urban Ontario as well, but more and more in rural Ontario, where you find—like my colleague from Essex, who had a school that closed and those kids are now bused into an entirely different community. They spend a great deal of time on the bus rather than engaging in physical activity, rather than taking part in extracurricular activities at school, and rather than getting home at a decent hour so that they can sit down and concentrate, do their homework, have some time to be with their family, and then maybe have some time to just be a kid and do what kids do, like playing video games or the sort. So I think that when the government is talking about a bill like the Safer School Zones Act and they're talking about kids' safety in getting to school, they need to really look at how those kids are getting to school and how much time it is taking them to get to school.

Another piece that I wanted to bring up, because we're talking about the Safer School Zones Act: There is no bigger school zone than a school itself, and what happens not only outside its walls but inside its walls. I think it's important to put out to the government side that although this is a good step forward as far as protecting students going to and from school, in the school zone and then out in our community safety zones, the government really needs to act, not just think about it, not just talk about it, not just listen—although sometimes they're accused of

not listening, and rightfully so. What they need to do is talk to the students, talk to the parents and talk to the education workers who are in those big community school safety zones, which is the building itself, the school and the school grounds, and give the education workers the tools they need to do the job that they want to do, to keep those kids safe inside the school and to make sure there's enough staff in order to support every student, regardless of what their ability or their needs are. Rather than thinking it's okay and it's the norm to outfit teachers and education workers in head-to-toe Kevlar, maybe they should actually be funding the system so that they could have the supports inside the classrooms for those students, in order to mitigate those circumstances and to stop things like that from happening.

When we're talking about safe schools and the Safer School Zones Act, we have to look at the school as a whole, and the surrounding area as a whole piece, rather than just throwing one thing out there and not addressing the bigger picture of safety inside the schools as well.

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in response to the remarks made by the member from Windsor West. I know her experience with schools and these issues, so I very much appreciated her remarks, although she diverged a little bit from Bill 65 at the end.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you my experience as a city councillor. One of the most vexing issues that would come to me was that people wanted cars to slow down near schools and other key areas in the community. We were always very limited in what we could do. Of course, you can ask the police to sit out there with a cruiser. That doesn't always happen, especially on some of the side streets where schools are located. The police simply didn't want to go there, because they didn't think that there was enough speeding activity to support the deployment of a police officer.

You would lower the speed limits, but of course, by definition, the speeders don't care what the speed limit is. So the final thing we started doing was speed humps on streets—a very long process, controversial in the community. It's very effective, but there are costs to it.

We always thought that in my community of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, if we had access to this kind of technology, we could put it up by a school and get each and every one that wants to speed by our school and by our kids and make them pay for it, and pay for it dearly. That would work, because we know that does work. So I'm in full support of this.

I find it interesting that my friends from the official opposition have a private member's bill that they're supporting about photo devices on school buses, to have photo evidence after the fact to catch people who go by school buses.

I support that bill, and they should support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions? The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm always proud to rise in this chamber.

Of course, this bill—there was a lot said this afternoon about it. I think we've been clear that we support things that make school buses safer, but we're not supporting photo radar. We're saying to just put the amendment in that clarifies what a school zone is, or a safety zone, and we can support this bill. But don't go through a back-door way just because you know it's not popular.

I think that people have already spoken on that. People in Ontario don't want photo radar, and for some of the reasons the members here spoke about. There are protections that need to be put in place, while we endorse fully the support in the school zones.

Speaker, I just wanted to take an opportunity as well to introduce some friends of mine. They're here all the way from Newfoundland: Beth and Earl Ferguson and their daughter Allison. Earl is a long-time Toronto Maple Leafs fan, and he wanted to see a game last night because he wanted to show that they are real.

I see somebody dropped an article on my desk here of the demise of the 25-year streak of the Detroit Red Wings, a team that, of course, caused a lot of havoc for a lot of other teams in the league, including Toronto, over the years. But they're going for the draft pick this year.

Anyway, I just want to welcome Earl and Beth here. They're here in Toronto for a few days and wanted to come in and see the House and what goes on here in this province. Earl is originally from my hometown, or close to it, in Avonmore. I can tell you, in Newfoundland they do things differently down there, as I think everybody knows. I know just St. Patrick's Day alone takes about a week to get over, from what I hear. Anyway, I'm proud to be able to have a chance to rise and introduce them.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We welcome our guests. I'm glad you're a Leafs fan. Unfortunately, your friend is a Detroit fan.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm always pleased to rise.

I thank my colleague the member from Windsor West for her 20-minute discussion on this. I think she raised some really important, valid and common-sense issues that this government should contemplate when we see this bill move through the process. She talked about safety in schools in general. This doesn't mean simply the exterior of the school; this means the entirety of our school system and how it works to educate and to protect our children.

I would argue that our education system's paramount concern should be to protect our kids and to ensure their safety on their way to school, on their way back from school and while they are in school. That also means protecting those who operate and run those schools, from the bus drivers to the crossing guards to the teachers and the administrators as well. We should be able to broaden this debate to make sure that we're doing everything we can and identify those areas of concern and gaps that may exist.

But specifically to this bill, Speaker, as I've said before, there are other jurisdictions—comme j'ai dit ailleurs dans mon dernier discours, on a d'autres

juridictions qui ont déjà implémenté ce qui est appelé au Québec « photo radar », la même chose—

M. Gilles Bisson: Le photo radar.

M. Taras Natyshak: Le photo radar. Ils ont des évidences que ça marche. Ça marche pour réduire le nombre d'accidents et de blessures associés avec les accidents d'automobile. Donc, on voit que, dans les autres provinces, ils font la chose qui a du sens. Mais ici en Ontario, on a seulement un parti qui ne comprend pas que c'est quelque chose qu'on devrait appuyer et qu'on devrait implémenter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Merci beaucoup. The member from Kingston and the Islands.

M^{me} Sophie Kiwala: Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. C'est un grand plaisir, comme toujours, de parler de ce « bill » 65—

M^{me} Cristina Martins: Projet de loi.

M^{me} Sophie Kiwala: Projet de loi. Je voudrais dire quelques choses à propos des mots dits par la députée de Windsor West.

I just want to say a couple of things about the comments that came from the member for Windsor West. I do want to thank her for her comments, but, just with respect to the accountability aspect of it, if it's based on the plate and not the driver, there's some concern about road safety. I do want to say that road safety is something that is absolutely multifaceted. We don't rely on just one thing. This is one tool that we do have to work with.

Bill 65 encompasses three major, key pieces of road safety. As we know, photo radar is one of them, changing the default speed limits is one, and the red light camera is also another one, for going through stoplights.

I think it's important to acknowledge that many of our municipalities have asked for this legislation, including the mayor of Kingston and the Islands, who said, as stated, that it's just one tool. Being able to have a camera is something that can help keep the streets safe, but at the same time it's a much lower-cost item. So I think that if we can do things to improve the safety in our communities, it's important to do so, and I think we need to acknowledge that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Windsor West has two minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to thank everyone who got up and spoke to my 20 minutes of debate. I would just like to say that, as a Gretzky, I tend to be a bit of a hockey fan. I may lose my re-election bid by saying this, being from a town that borders Detroit, but I will say, "Go, Leafs, go."

Speaker, we need to make sure that, whether it's at school or getting to school, students are safe. We need to do everything that we possibly can to ensure that students are kept safe. Although this bill is definitely a step in the right direction, there was an opportunity to build on it a bit and make it a better piece of legislation.

But I do agree that municipalities—I specifically referenced a school in my riding, where a city councillor came to me and the community came to me and said—it's interesting, because he's a city councillor and he was asking for help to get the municipality to put a crossing

guard at this particular intersection right by the school. The community at large was saying, “We need something done in order to keep the children and the families of these children safe.”

Giving the municipalities the opportunity to put a camera in to catch those who speed through a school zone, giving them the opportunity to choose if they want to lower speed limits—and as the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore pointed out, lowering the speed limits is probably not going to stop the speeder. It just means that, when they get caught, the ticket is going to be bigger, because the margin that they’ve sped is that much larger.

But this is a good step forward to give municipalities some of the tools that they need to address safety in school zones.

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

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I’m very pleased to rise in the House today and speak to the Safer School Zones Act, Bill 65. I will be sharing my time on this.

Needless to say, safety is a top priority around school areas. The Safer School Zones Act is very much focused on providing municipalities with the tools that they need and, frankly, that they have been asking for to ensure that they keep safety-mindedness at the forefront.

I know that every year, at the start of the school year, the Toronto Police Service actually conducts an annual back-to-school road safety campaign. They do that because it reminds drivers to be watchful and to look out for children as they are making their way back to school.

This is an excellent reminder and gives them these very significant tools that enforce that every day of the year, not just at the beginning of the school year. Enforcing speed zones around schools is absolutely critical. Giving municipalities the choice of using the safe school zone technology, using photo imaging, is obviously more efficient.

I very much support the bill. I want to just recognize the Minister of Transportation and also the member from Barrie, because I know that I heard about this initiative once they had launched and announced this and they were talking about this. I want to say that I very much fully support this.

Mr. Speaker, my father was a truck driver, so I grew up seeing him drive his 18-wheeler and many different types of trucks. He drove a dump truck and different transport trucks. I remember him telling me once that truck drivers are really well trained. They understand that they’re bigger than other vehicles when they are on the road.

I think about that. When I drive along on a highway and I see a truck, I remember my dad. I remember how he told me how careful you have to be when you’re driving a very big vehicle. But the need to be careful on the road around a school zone is even more vital.

1740

I want to remind the members of the House why this piece of legislation is so important: because, in some situations, it’s a matter of life and death. That’s what we are talking about here.

I remember this when it occurred—a very tragic incident occurred in Toronto with a student from C. W. Jefferys. It was a 14-year-old girl who was killed. She was killed by a dump truck. Her name was Violet Liang. She was a brilliant student. She was in an enrichment program at C. W. Jefferys, in a grades 9 and 10 enrichment program. Her average was over 90%. So here we have this student who was just and in around her school area. She had her backpack on, and unfortunately, a horrific and terrible accident occurred that took her life.

We don’t want to see any child, any student, impacted like this. We want to ensure that when drivers of any size are in a school zone, whether they’re driving a vehicle, a motorcycle or a dump truck, they understand that they are in a safe school zone for students and that they have to slow down and be more watchful in those areas.

I want to say that this is also the same for seniors. I know in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood that my seniors come to me and ask, and in an area in my riding at Markham and Lawrence—I have many seniors from the Muslim community and other communities who live there who ask for drivers to slow down. I have parents who come to me and say, “Our children, our students, are crossing in these areas. Our seniors are trying to get across. They need people to slow down.”

The Safer School Zones Act is one that will address many of these concerns and enshrine them in legislation so that we keep safety at the forefront for all of our students, our seniors and people who need that safety in their communities.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. You’re sharing your time with whom?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I just want to add a couple of things. Look, this is about kids. It’s about safety. Being a proud parent of four kids and a grandparent to nine grandkids, I can’t think of anything else better to talk about when it comes to the safety of those—well, it’s the safety of our future, if one stops to think about it.

Like my colleague next to me here who talked about the importance for municipalities and being on municipal council for a number of years, and so was I—this is allowing those municipalities some flexibility in the tools they can use to protect those kids. It’s not difficult. It’s not difficult to explain; it’s pretty simple. These are tools to help deal with speeders.

Let me talk about how easily we forget when we’re doing going down the road and we’ve got our pedal to the metal. Back in my municipal days, in rural Ontario we used a lot of gravel roads. There was a sizable number of homes on this particular road, so we paved it. About a week after we paved it, I had a rush of residents coming to the municipality, saying, “You’ve got to do something. Now that the road is paved,”—which they’d been asking for, for a number of years—“people are speeding. Can you put in speed bumps?” We didn’t put in speed bumps, but let me tell you what we did. We asked our local enforcement, the OPP, to maybe pay it a bit

more closer attention, because all of a sudden it was becoming a drag strip. Lo and behold, for a few days in a row, the OPP set up the radar, and 90% of the people who they were able to exercise their duty on were local residents, the same people who phoned me, as mayor, saying, "Can we do something to slow down traffic?"

Having police there on a permanent basis is not feasible. That's not what the police are for. An instrument like we're talking about—and I'm sure back in the day, if I was still mayor and we still had the same circumstances, I would certainly recommend to the council that worked with me, "Maybe this is a more appropriate way to control that traffic."

The other thing just happened about a year ago. The municipality of Trent Hills in my riding wanted to lower the base speed within their municipality. It was a real big deal to do that—the process. When I look at the municipality having the opportunity to reduce default speed limits through the urban part of their municipality, this would make that process—because frankly, the local people know best. This will give them that opportunity—and, like I say, it only happened a year, maybe a year and a half ago, when they went through this exercise. That would make it a lot easier.

Now, I will admit that the red light camera program—I come from a rural area with not a lot of urban centres. I'm not sure that it would create a lot—I see my time is running out, Speaker. I respect your allowing me the opportunity to speak.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to add a couple of comments. As the member was just mentioning, the difference between the rural and the urban application of the major part of this bill, which has to do with the school safety initiative, was one that was begun many years ago in the 1990s, when we were in government. It reflected the concern that at that time, there was no really well-defined method of establishing a school zone. That was the concept that drivers should be made aware before they got there that they were approaching a school safety zone, and those who chose to ignore it should have double the fine for going through at the speed of a regular road.

I had it brought to me in real life not too long after it became law. A few years ago, when Avenue Road was under construction for what seemed like forever, I was making my way through the construction up to Eglinton—it ended at Eglinton—and there was a car behind me that was practically in my trunk. When your rear-view mirror has nothing but the car behind you in it, you know he's pretty close.

I couldn't see anything but the grill of the car behind me, but obviously, it was someone who was extremely frustrated at the speed that we safely had to use to negotiate the construction on Avenue Road. This is the big point at which you can then resume the regular road surface and move along.

Just as the light turned green for me—

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: Uh, oh.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I actually gave you bonus time.

The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It sounded like a good story. Maybe I should yield my time to the member so that she can finish it.

I've got a couple of thoughts here myself, Speaker. One of which that I've alluded to previously is that there's a glaring omission here in terms of areas of our roadways that would be commonly known as being vulnerable or unsafe, and those are our active construction zones that happen on every type of roadway across the province in every quadrant of the province.

1750

The bill that I put forward would have added construction zones to a designated area where safety cameras, or photo radar or whatever you want to call it, could be implemented. It's a provision that has been supported by the Ontario Road Builders' Association, and I can tell you it's something that would be supported by the workers who are on those roadways, as I was one of them previous to being elected.

I can recall being on the 401, doing roadwork, having all of the traffic control mechanisms set up, having protective barriers, crash barriers, crash trucks and everything set up, and yet still being vulnerable to rogue drivers, drivers who were distracted, and people who simply didn't care about the rules. I can recall, vividly, having my hard hat blown off my head by the speed of transport trucks ripping through our construction zones.

Now, this isn't the norm, and it would certainly be something that you didn't see every day, but those folks should be penalized. We're on that roadway trying to make that roadway safer in its construction. Workers aren't out there to put their lives on the line; they're out there to make the roadways safer. They deserve as much protection as we can afford them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very glad to have the opportunity to offer some concluding remarks this afternoon on Bill 65 and to follow our education minister and the member for Northumberland—Quinte West, my seatmate.

Speaker, before we sign off this afternoon, I think it's really important that we stress a few important points on the Safer School Zones Act.

We've heard members of the Conservative Party this afternoon going on about how this is going to be a cash grab. Perhaps they want to see a police officer on every street in every town and city across Ontario. But I would say to the PC members that when you face your local mayors, councillors and chiefs of police who have advocated in favour of automated speed enforcement—what words are they going to offer to their local partners? How are you going to explain your negative vote? This should be very disconcerting to them.

We have heard from chiefs of police in Waterloo region and Niagara region, the Chatham-Kent Police

Service, the Ottawa police chief and many more, who say that they want to see this go through.

I am reminded of a conversation I had with the mayor of Zorra township. Her name is Marg Lupton. This was at ROMA in January. She took me aside after our chat and she said, “Daiene, we are frustrated beyond belief with the cars that go speeding through town.”

They put in speed bumps. But she was at a Tim Hortons, and a man who drove up in a black truck recognized her, got out and said to his mayor—and laughed at her—“I can still take those speed bumps at about 110 kilometres per hour.” Clearly, the speed bumps are not working. She is looking for this. She is hoping that we are able to pass Bill 65 and she can enforce automated speed enforcement.

Speaker, we are looking for support. We know that the members of the third party are going to support us, and we hope we have members from across the floor who support us as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: I know that there have been members of the current government who have spoken in the past about the dangers of going down this road. So if the member from Kitchener Centre wants to talk about a cash grab, there are a number of members of her government who have said the exact same thing—that this has been a cash grab, and that’s why they wanted to get rid of it in the first place.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: We don’t get any of the cash. We don’t keep the money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Todd Smith: However, I want to continue to tell the story that my good friend from York–Simcoe was telling.

You’ll recall, Speaker, that she was edging her way through the intersection. There were sirens. She very carefully proceeds through the intersection, and there was some crazy road-rage maniac behind her—it wasn’t me, I guarantee you—who was honking his horn and trying to force her through that intersection. When Lady Munro made her way through the intersection, this wing nut went flying by her at 100 miles an hour and was going directly into the safety zone.

I think what she was going to say is that the safety zones, which were a creation of Minister Flaherty, I believe, when he was here, back in the day, are a very, very good invention. We want to make sure that we have these community safety zones, but we want those community safety zones to be described and clearly defined.

Anyway, the moral of the story is, the guy is flying through the zone really, really quickly, and guess who was there to greet him? It was an officer with a radar gun. I know that Ms. Munro thought that justice was served that day, because that crazy high-flyer was nailed by the officer.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West talked about it too: Added enforcement with officers is a good thing, and the best way to make sure, because we’ve seen photo radar fail in the past. We’ve seen it fail. We want to ensure that our school zones are safe, we absolutely do, and the best way to do that is with policing in our communities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Oh, really? That quick? Speaker, I want to thank the members from York Centre, Essex and Kitchener Centre, and of course my good friend from Prince Edward–Hastings.

A couple of things: to the member from Essex about construction issues with speeders, I would offer that some years back this government imposed doubling the fines at construction sites, where it’s clearly marked that if somebody is speeding, the fines will double.

To the member from Prince Edward–Hastings: Yes, I did say that the police did a good job, but we cannot have a police officer on every kilometre or every hundred metres of road to watch every speeder. It’s just physically impossible.

To the fact about the cash grab: My God, we’re protecting our kids.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Who’s getting the money?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: If there is any money after they put up the cameras or whatever they have to do, it goes to municipalities.

Speaker, I think we’re focusing here on such extreme issues, outside the realm of what this bill is supposed to do, that we’re forgetting the real intent, as I said in my previous remarks.

I would say to all the members that I think, in general, everybody supports this.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: They don’t.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: In general. I’m not quite sure where the official opposition is, but I would hope that they will come to their senses, support this bill and send it to committee if it’s got to be tweaked.

I would really urge not to delay this. Let’s not prolong it. We’ve all had an opportune time here to debate it at some length. Let’s send it to committee.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It saves money. They’re all about saving money.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I don’t even want to talk about the money part of it. I’m talking about saving lives, because there’s no value on the life of a child, an adult or a senior.

I see the Speaker’s looking at me; it’s almost the end of my time. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being three minutes to 6, this House stands adjourned until 9 o’clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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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, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
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, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général 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
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Sault Ste. Marie	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Michael Mantha
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Peter Z. Milczyn, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Granville Anderson
Granville Anderson, Yvan Baker
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Julia Munro
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
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Wayne Gates, Amrit Mangat
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Monique Taylor, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch.

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
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Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, Soo Wong
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
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John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch