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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 2 November 2017 / Jeudi 2 novembre 2017

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017, Bill 174, Mr. Yasir Naqvi / Loi de 2017 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le cannabis, l'Ontario sans fumée et la sécurité routière, projet de loi 174, M. Yasir Naqvi	
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	6141
Hon. Charles Sousa	6145
Mrs. Gila Martow	6149
Mme France Gélinas	6149
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	6149
Mr. Robert Bailey	6150
Hon. Charles Sousa	6150
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	6150

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Gilles Bisson	6150
Mr. John Fraser	6150
Mr. Jeff Yurek	6151
Ms. Andrea Horwath	6151
Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn	6151
Mr. Lorne Coe	6151
Mr. Taras Natyshak	6151
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	6151
Mr. Todd Smith	6151
Ms. Jennifer K. French	6151
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6151
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	6151
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6151
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	6151
Mr. Gilles Bisson	6151
Hon. Jeff Leal	6151
Mr. Percy Hatfield	6151
Hon. Brad Duguid	6151
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	6151
Hon. Charles Sousa	6151
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	6152
Hon. Michael Coteau	6152
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	6152

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Casinos	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	6152
Hon. Charles Sousa	6152
Casinos	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	6153
Hon. Charles Sousa	6153
Hospital services	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	6153
Hon. Eric Hoskins	6154
Social assistance	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	6155
Hon. Michael Coteau	6155
Steel industry	
Mr. Ross Romano	6156
Hon. Charles Sousa	6156
Highway safety	
Mr. Wayne Gates	6156
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	6157
Student mental health services	
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers	6157
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6157
Public transit	
Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho	6158
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	6158
Hon. Brad Duguid	6158
Hospital services	
Mr. John Vanthof	6159
Hon. Eric Hoskins	6159
Research	
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	6159
Hon. Reza Moridi	6159
Student mental health services	
Mr. Lorne Coe	6160
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6160
Student mental health services	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6160
Hon. Deborah Matthews	6161
Housing policy	
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri	6161
Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn	6161
Member's birthday	
Ms. Soo Wong	6162
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	6162

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6162
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde	6162
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6162
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	6162

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Diabetes	
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	6162
Veterans	
Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	6163
Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurpurab	
Ms. Harinder Malhi.....	6163
Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley	
Mr. John Yakabuski	6163
Autism services	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6164
Somali community	
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	6164
Battle of Passchendaele	
Mr. Michael Harris.....	6164
Flu immunization	
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	6164
Trent University Durham	
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	6165
Visitor	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	6165

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

Safer Ontario Act, 2017, Bill 175, Mme Lalonde / Loi de 2017 pour plus de sécurité en Ontario, projet de loi 175, Mme Lalonde	
First reading agreed to.....	6165
Hon. Marie-France Lalonde	6165

MOTIONS

Committee sittings	
Hon. Laura Albanese.....	6165
Motion agreed to	6166
Committee sittings	
Hon. Laura Albanese.....	6166
Motion agreed to	6166
Consideration of Bill 29	
Mr. John Vanthof.....	6166
Motion agreed to	6166

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

Remembrance Week

Hon. Laura Albanese.....	6166
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	6167
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	6167

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Dental care

Mrs. Gila Martow	6168
------------------------	------

Long-term care

Ms. Peggy Sattler	6168
-------------------------	------

Public transit

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	6169
------------------------	------

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas	6169
--------------------------	------

Animal protection

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	6169
-------------------------------	------

Long-term care

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	6170
-----------------------	------

Pharmacare

Miss Monique Taylor	6170
---------------------------	------

Public transit

Mr. Han Dong	6170
--------------------	------

Long-term care

Mr. Lorne Coe.....	6170
--------------------	------

Shingles vaccine

Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	6170
-------------------------	------

Public transit

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	6171
------------------------	------

Hydro rates

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	6171
-----------------------	------

Winter highway maintenance

Mme France Gélinas	6171
--------------------------	------

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Fairness in Minimum Wage Act, 2017, Bill 172, Ms. Forster / Loi de 2017 sur l'équité en matière de salaire minimum, projet de loi 172, Mme Forster	
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	6171
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	6173
Mr. John Yakabuski	6174
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	6174
Mr. Toby Barrett	6175
Miss Monique Taylor	6175
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	6175
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6176
Ms. Cindy Forster.....	6176

WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act, 2017, Bill 145, Mr. Fraser / Loi de 2017 sur la protection à accorder aux travailleurs dans les établissements de soins en résidence et les foyers de groupe par la Commission de la sécurité professionnelle et de l'assurance contre les accidents du travail, projet de loi 145, M. Fraser

Mr. John Fraser	6177
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	6178
Miss Monique Taylor.....	6179
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	6180
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	6181
Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	6182
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	6182
Mrs. Cristina Martins	6183
Mr. John Fraser	6183

Time to Care Act (Long-Term Care Homes Amendment, Minimum Standard of Daily Care), 2017, Bill 33, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2017 sur le temps alloué aux soins (modifiant la Loi sur les foyers de soins de longue durée et prévoyant une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens), projet de loi 33, Mme Gélinas

Mme France Gélinas	6184
Mr. John Fraser	6185
Mrs. Cristina Martins	6186
Mr. Bill Walker.....	6186
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	6187
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	6188
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	6188
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	6189
Ms. Sylvia Jones	6190
Ms. Peggy Sattler	6190
Mme France Gélinas	6190

Fairness in Minimum Wage Act, 2017, Bill 172, Ms. Forster / Loi de 2017 sur l'équité en matière de salaire minimum, projet de loi 172, Mme Forster
The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong)6191

WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act, 2017, Bill 145, Mr. Fraser / Loi de 2017 sur la protection à accorder aux travailleurs dans les établissements de soins en résidence et les foyers de groupe par la Commission de la sécurité professionnelle et de l'assurance contre les accidents du travail, projet de loi 145, M. Fraser
Second reading agreed to6191

Time to Care Act (Long-Term Care Homes Amendment, Minimum Standard of Daily Care), 2017, Bill 33, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2017 sur le temps alloué aux soins (modifiant la Loi sur les foyers de soins de longue durée et prévoyant une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens), projet de loi 33, Mme Gélinas
The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong)6191

Fairness in Minimum Wage Act, 2017, Bill 172, Ms. Forster / Loi de 2017 sur l'équité en matière de salaire minimum, projet de loi 172, Mme Forster
Second reading negated.....6192

Time to Care Act (Long-Term Care Homes Amendment, Minimum Standard of Daily Care), 2017, Bill 33, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2017 sur le temps alloué aux soins (modifiant la Loi sur les foyers de soins de longue durée et prévoyant une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens), projet de loi 33, Mme Gélinas
Second reading agreed to6192

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 2 November 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 novembre 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CANNABIS, SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO
AND ROAD SAFETY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CANNABIS,
L'ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE
ET LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to enact the Cannabis Act, 2017, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act, 2017 and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, to repeal two Acts and to make amendments to the Highway Traffic Act respecting alcohol, drugs and other matters / Projet de loi 174, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le cannabis, la Loi de 2017 sur la Société ontarienne de vente du cannabis et la Loi de 2017 favorisant un Ontario sans fumée, abrogeant deux lois et modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne l'alcool, les drogues et d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I rise in the House today to open debate on a bill that, if passed, would move Ontario forward with a safe and sensible transition to the federal legalization of cannabis. Before I start, Speaker, I would like to let you know that I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Finance.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the minister along with all the many ministries across the Ontario government who have fed into this legislation. It truly was a cross-government bill. Many different aspects and viewpoints helped to create this comprehensive legislation that we have before us today.

As the members know, the federal government has committed to legalize and regulate recreational cannabis in Canada by July 2018. This past April, they introduced the federal Cannabis Act, which outlined how they plan to do it. The proposed federal legislation would make it legal for adults in Canada aged 18 or older to publicly possess or share up to 30 grams of dried cannabis or equivalent in another form, such as oils.

The legislation also stated that you could also buy cannabis from a provincially regulated retailer and grow

up to four cannabis plants in your homes. The federal bill will also create a regulatory system for licensed cannabis producers to produce recreational cannabis, with restrictions on advertising, packaging and the types of products that can be sold. Finally, it would create a new regime of offences under the federal Cannabis Act for illegal cannabis activities, particularly those involving youth.

Under its proposed legislation, though, the federal government would continue to administer the system for medical cannabis users, in that medical cannabis can only be purchased online or over the phone directly from a federally licensed producer and delivered by secure mail. Medical users can also register with Health Canada to produce a limited amount of cannabis for their own medical purposes, or they can designate someone else to produce it for them. Meanwhile, a range of other policy areas would be left to the provinces and territories to regulate for themselves, with the option to further strengthen some of the federal rules as well. This left our government, like every other provincial and territorial government across the country, with some very important decisions to make.

Speaker, if passed, the federal bill will set into motion a once-in-a-generation change for our society: the end of a prohibition. For many Ontario families, this raises a lot of questions and also a lot of concerns. As we look ahead to legalization, we have to consider its impacts on our communities, our roads and our children's health. Our government takes these issues very seriously.

Through every step of this process of legalization, we have done our best to approach these changes as thoughtfully and responsibly as possible. We have developed an approach that we believe answers the questions we have heard from people across the province about how to navigate the new reality of legal cannabis use. Right from the start, our aim has been to protect youth, promote public health and safety, focus on prevention and harm reduction, and eliminate the illegal market. The bill before you today can help our province accomplish all of these goals. As the members have heard me say before, the timeline for federal legalization is fairly ambitious. The amount of work and preparation our government has to do over the next few months is daunting, to be sure. But I am confident that our government has put in motion a plan that will allow us to meet the deadline of July 2018.

Even though the federal legislation was only introduced a few months ago, our government has been working on this issue for over a year now. The legislation we are proposing, and the approach it supports, was developed through months of research and policy develop-

ment across over a dozen ministries led by our dedicated Ontario Legalization of Cannabis Secretariat, which is located in the Ministry of the Attorney General. This secretariat has done an incredible amount of consultation and work, and I want to thank them for all they have done in a fairly short period of time. I was very happy that they were able to join us for the introduction of this bill yesterday.

For many months, our government has been working closely with our partners at the federal and provincial levels to manage this complex transition. We have also been engaged with states from the United States, such as Colorado, that have already legalized recreational cannabis at the state level, to benefit from their lessons learned and best practices when they went through legalization.

Over the summer, Speaker, we held consultations with stakeholders from across industries and launched an online survey for people across the province to make sure that we were developing an approach that would work for the people of Ontario. By bringing these different perspectives together, we have developed a plan to ensure a safe and sensible transition for July. This legislation is a major step towards implementing that approach.

I would now like to take the members through some of our key proposals outlined in Bill 174. From day one, keeping youth and young adults safe has been our top priority. This is an area where our current cannabis laws have simply not been effective. Medical studies have shown that cannabis use can be harmful to the developing brain up to the age of 25. The rate of cannabis use among young people in Canada is among the highest in the world. That is why our bill, if passed, would introduce new measures to keep cannabis out of the hands of youth. For starters, we would raise the minimum age to purchase, possess, cultivate or use recreational cannabis in Ontario to 19 years old, a year older than the federal minimum. Through consultation with public health and law enforcement experts, we found that raising the minimum age too high would lead young people to continue to rely on the illicit market. A minimum age of 19 would also align with Ontario's minimum age for alcohol and tobacco, which people already know and understand.

0910

The province's approach to protecting youth would focus on prevention, harm reduction and diversion—not punishment. Our goal, Speaker, is to avoid unnecessarily bringing youth into contact with the justice system for possessing small amounts of cannabis. For example, to help enforce the minimum age, this bill would allow police to confiscate any amount of cannabis from youth under 19. These young people would receive a ticket under the Provincial Offences Act, similar to the kind of ticket one would receive for a minor traffic offence or youth possession of alcohol. We believe that this approach to restricting youth possession of cannabis would strike the correct balance for Ontario and keep our youth safe.

We are also mindful of the health impacts that cannabis can have on all youth and young adults, even those between 19 and 25 who would be able to legally purchase and use recreational cannabis under our proposed approach. To help protect all young Ontarians and give them the tools they need to make responsible choices, it will be important to encourage honest conversations about cannabis.

We are committed to developing a comprehensive prevention and harm reduction approach that promotes awareness of cannabis-related health harms and helps people make informed decisions about its use. This approach will help education, health, youth and social service providers who work to prevent and reduce the harms of substance use in youth and young adults.

We will have more to say about this approach as work continues, but one step that our government is already taking is endorsing the Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines. The guidelines were developed to respond to the reality that even in an environment of prohibition, many Canadians do make the choice to use cannabis. They provide people with recommendations grounded in science that enable them to make decisions to help reduce the health risks associated with cannabis use. In doing so, we will also work with health care partners to share that information and promote using these guidelines.

We are also committed to exploring training and other supports needed to increase capacity among education, health care, youth justice and social service providers to improve prevention and harm reduction efforts. Finally, we will be developing resources to guide employers, labour groups and others as they manage workplace safety issues related to impairment at work, through education and awareness initiatives.

As we have in the past with cigarette smoke, we also need to take steps to limit the health impacts of second-hand cannabis smoke. That is why we are proposing strict limits on where cannabis can be consumed. Under our proposed legislation, it would only be legal to use recreational cannabis in private residences. People would not be able to use any form of recreational cannabis in public spaces, workplaces or inside a motor vehicle.

In developing these proposed rules, we have consulted with key public health stakeholders and drawn on lessons from the existing laws for consuming alcohol and the province's Smoke-Free Ontario Act. This is a precautionary approach that we believe will keep our public spaces safe and enjoyable, while also protecting the health and well-being of all Ontarians, especially children, youth and other vulnerable populations.

Our proposed legislation would provide clarity on where medical cannabis can be used, which will help ensure that medical users have the access they need without compromising our public health objectives. These measures and more are addressed by the new proposed Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, which is included in the bill before the members today, Bill 174. This is an overhaul of the existing Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which as part of the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy has greatly

reduced tobacco use and lowered health risks to non-smokers in Ontario. The new act, if passed, would build on that success by also addressing vaping and the use of e-cigarettes to better protect the people of Ontario from second-hand smoke.

Now, Speaker, I know that some people may be disappointed to see that our proposed approach does not include designated licensed establishments where recreational cannabis could be consumed. Throughout our consultations with stakeholders and other jurisdictions, we heard a consistent piece of advice across the board: Go slow. That is good advice. Our approach to cannabis legalization is to start out with more restrictive policies at first and then, once we have a better understanding of what works and what does not, consider relaxing them. As such, while we are not including these establishments as part of our initial proposal for legalization, we are not ruling them out for the future either. As we move forward, our government plans to consult with a number of partners, communities and organizations, from municipalities to First Nations to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, to explore the feasibility and implications of this sort of change.

Likewise, our approach to retail, finding answers to the questions of how and where Ontarians can buy recreational cannabis, is also something that our government has been working on for a long time. Under our proposed approach, there would be only one legal retailer for recreational cannabis in Ontario, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. Let me be clear: This will not be the name of the actual stores, rather the corporate name of the overarching organization. The LCBO will be going through a process to develop a brand for these stores.

After careful research and consultation with partners, we found that the best way to ensure a carefully controlled, socially responsible distribution of cannabis is through a government-controlled model overseen by the LCBO. The new agency would have a clear mandate to responsibly serve Ontarians across the province, building on the LCBO's proven track record for excellent customer service and safety. Like the LCBO, the cannabis retailer would offer both an online ordering service and bricks-and-mortar locations. The stores will be staffed with knowledgeable employees who are also well trained in social responsibility. The online service, meanwhile, would make legal recreational cannabis available across Ontario, offering secure mail delivery across the province and using all of the same delivery safeguards that exist now for online alcohol sales.

In a few minutes, Speaker, I will be turning the floor over to my colleague the Minister of Finance to speak more to this plan and its implementation.

Hon. Liz Sandals: That could be difficult.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm sure he will be coming soon.

As we work to build up a safe, responsible channel for recreational cannabis, we are also committed to stopping the sale of illegal, unregulated and unsafe cannabis. Even though it is already illegal under federal law, we are currently dealing with an active and profitable under-

ground market that makes cannabis readily available to youth. I know in my community of Ottawa several times where constituents have come to me with concerns over the continued operation of these illegal dispensaries. Over the past several years, we have seen this underground market start to emerge at the street level, as storefronts illegally selling cannabis have opened up in cities and towns across Ontario.

I want to say now clearly, Speaker, that we are committed to eliminating the illegal market and taking down illegal cannabis storefronts. These storefronts are not legal now and will not be legal retailers under our proposed model. We know that establishing a safe and responsible cannabis retail environment means providing law enforcement officials with the tools they need to put a stop to the illegal sale of cannabis. If passed, our bill would create tough new penalties for illegal cannabis sales. These would include penalties for individuals and companies who engage in the illegal sale of cannabis, as well as landlords who knowingly permit their property to be used for this purpose. An interim closure authority is also being proposed which would allow for the immediate closure of premises that are being used for the illegal sale of cannabis. Penalties could include fines or imprisonment, and would escalate based on repeated or continued offences after an initial conviction.

0920

Over the past year, as I have spoken to friends and constituents, one of the concerns that has come most often is the impact that legalization will have on road safety. Every year for the past 16 years, Ontario has ranked first or second in road safety in North America. Our province has a road safety record that Ontarians should be proud of. But in recent months, I have heard many concerns that a greater availability of cannabis would lead to an increase in drug-impaired driving.

Looking at the evidence from other jurisdictions, like Colorado and Washington, that have already legalized cannabis, we know that these concerns should be taken seriously. We also need to confront a range of misconceptions about the impact of drug use on driving ability. We know that impaired driving, whether by drugs or alcohol, is illegal, dangerous and never okay. While the people of Ontario have a strong understanding of the risks of alcohol-impaired driving, there seems to be less clarity around cannabis and other drugs.

A 2014 roadside survey showed that the number of Ontario drivers who tested positive for drugs was more than double the number who tested positive for alcohol. These dangerous misconceptions are particularly prominent among young and new drivers. In that same survey, drivers aged 19 to 24 were more likely than any other age group to test positive for drugs and accounted for more than a third of all drug-positive drivers.

It is absolutely critical that our law enforcement partners have the right tools at their disposal and that the laws on the books reflect the seriousness of these offences. Thanks to changes that our government recently made, police in Ontario now have the ability to immedi-

ately remove from the road drivers they believe are impaired by drugs, and that includes cannabis.

With our proposed legislation we are working to make our impaired driving laws even tougher, by proposing increased consequences and costs for those who drive and use cannabis or other drugs. If passed, this bill would strengthen existing measures—which include licence suspensions and potential other penalties such as interventions, including mandatory education or treatment programs—by increasing the financial penalty for those who fail a roadside breath test, a standardized field sobriety test or an evaluation by a drug recognition expert. It will also create a zero-tolerance policy for young, novice and commercial drivers. This is a sensible approach, Speaker, that focuses on drivers who present a greater risk on the road, whether through the likelihood or potential severity of a collision. Ontario will be the first in Canada to adopt this approach. We believe it is the right thing to do, to preserve our place as a global leader in road safety.

Research shows that drivers aged 21 and under, as well as novice drivers with a G1, G2, M1 or M2 licence, have a higher risk of collision than more experienced drivers. Collisions involving commercial vehicles are far more likely to be severe in nature, as they account for approximately one in five fatalities on Ontario roads. A zero-tolerance approach means that these drivers should not get behind the wheel if they have any presence of drugs or alcohol in their system, as detected by federally approved screening devices. The bill will also introduce new penalties to enforce this policy. The new and increased penalties that we are proposing here would, of course, be in addition to the federal penalties for impaired driving convictions under the Criminal Code of Canada, which can result in a licence suspension, fines and jail time for offenders.

We developed these proposals in close partnership with our road safety partners and stakeholders who believe that Ontario's approach is the right approach. We believe that these new enforcement tools are a good step towards ensuring that the law enforcement community is prepared for legalization and will be a valuable resource in eliminating the illicit market and in supporting road safety.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of engaging in dialogue with our enforcement partners. That is why we recently held an enforcement summit which brought together law enforcement, fire safety and public health experts, First Nations policing representatives, municipal partners, and the federal government. The summit focused on identifying enforcement strategies that are currently in place, and discovering where gaps may exist. To help address those areas where there are gaps, we are also interested in identifying opportunities for collaboration between governments, the enforcement community and other partners, and ultimately determining what supports our government could provide in these areas.

In total, more than 100 individuals from across Ontario attended the summit and offered us valuable advice on how to work towards the effective enforcement

of new cannabis laws and regulations. The perspectives and feedback that we received will be critical in helping us to develop a coordinated, multidisciplinary enforcement strategy. This strategy will support our key objective of a safe and sensible approach to federal legalization and will be centred around community safety, with a focus on prevention and diversion.

In the meantime, Speaker, we will continue to engage with municipal and enforcement partners, stakeholders and community partners, including indigenous community and organizations, to make sure that we are giving law enforcement the tools they need to do the important work that they do every single day in our communities.

I believe that we have put forward a vision and a strategy for legalization that the members of this Legislature and their constituents can be confident in. This bill, if passed, would move us one step closer to implementing this vision.

At the same time, there are a number of decisions to be made and challenges to overcome. Some of these, such as pricing and taxation decisions for our retail framework, will be informed by decisions that the federal government has yet to make public. In addition, certain aspects of Ontario's approach to legalization will have to be set by regulation prior to legalization. It will be essential that we continue to work closely with our federal colleagues to better understand their plans and continue to advocate for the interests of Ontarians.

I have been encouraged over the past month to learn of the federal government's plans to invest in a responsible transition to cannabis legalization, and I look forward to our continued work together. At the same time, we still have some questions and issues that need to be addressed, including issues related to the available supply of cannabis, the adequacy of federal resources to support effective provincial implementation, and a fair and equitable taxation and revenue-sharing system. Other decisions will be determined through ongoing dialogue with Ontarians, stakeholders and partners at the municipal level, and many others.

In particular, Speaker, we recognize the need to meaningfully engage with First Nations, Métis and Inuit organizations and peoples about cannabis legalization. We also understand and recognize that some First Nations communities may wish to develop specific approaches to cannabis. With this understanding, our bill includes flexibility for the province to enter into agreements with First Nations communities to establish these approaches, reflective of our government-to-government relationships with First Nations. I look forward to continued consultation and conversation as we move closer to July 2018.

Speaker, as you have already heard, this bill is just one piece of our safe and sensible approach to cannabis legalization. It is an approach that will almost certainly shift and evolve over time as we adjust to the new realities of legalization and as we inevitably learn lessons from that experience. In the short term, however, we are tasked with meeting an extremely ambitious timeline that our federal counterparts have set.

I would like to thank everyone who has given us their input so far by participating in our online survey, participating in consultation sessions, or sending us an email. With this ongoing support, I'm confident that the legislation we have placed before the House reflects the best interests of all Ontarians: cannabis users and non-users, parents, children, neighbours, and entire communities. Now I look forward to working with my fellow members of this House and hearing their input on this bill. By working together, I know we can and will arrive at a safe and sensible approach, the right approach that works for Ontario.

The Minister of Finance will take over from now.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I turn it over to the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to my colleagues for their presentation. I'm pleased to speak about the proposed Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017, and how the act would enact our plan for a safe and sensible framework in response to the federal government's legalization of cannabis. I would like to recognize and thank, once again, Minister Naqvi for his invaluable leadership on this complex file; as well, my colleague ministers Hoskins and Del Duca for their work on the critical aspects of the legislation around public health and road safety.

The proposed bill would enable Ontario to transition to the legalization of cannabis while accomplishing our goals, our goals of protecting youth and vulnerable people, promoting public health and safety, and focussing on prevention and harm reduction as well as eliminating the illegal market.

The reality is that we need to be ready with a provincial retail system when the federal government makes cannabis legal in July 2018. Ontario will be ready. Our plans will meet the federal imposed deadline by next summer. If passed, the proposed bill would enact a new Ontario Cannabis Retail Corporation Act. The act would enable the creation of a new crown corporation, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., as a subsidiary of the LCBO.

In our proposed approach, this new crown agency would be the only legal retailer of cannabis in the province. The legislation sets out its objectives of governance and authorities. As the only retailer overseen by the LCBO to sell cannabis and related products through a network of dedicated storefronts and an online channel, it determines the types of cannabis products to sell, as well as at what price. Furthermore, it will promote social responsibility.

With this legislation, cannabis would remain a carefully controlled substance in Ontario, subject to strict rules, and one that ensures a controlled measure for distribution in the public's interests, a system that ensures public health and safety, protects youth and vulnerable people, and prioritizes prevention and harm reduction.

Our proposed model has also received measures of praise for its approach. For example, Addictions and

Mental Health Ontario's chief operating officer, Gail Czukar, said, "Ontario's approach to the federal legalization of cannabis is on the right track." With those principles of health and consumer protection in mind, we determined that a controlled model makes sense, and it achieves a high level of social responsibility standards that the people of Ontario expect and deserve, just like the LCBO.

For example, Ontario Public Health Association executive director Pegeen Walsh said, "The province's plan to regulate legalized cannabis reflects many of the recommendations we have been advocating for." We've chosen the LCBO due to its successful history for selling of controlled substances while maintaining our mandate of social responsibility.

Last year, the LCBO identified over 14.4 million people who appeared underage or intoxicated or were suspected of purchasing for a minor or an intoxicated person. That same year, almost 260,000 people were refused service, with age accounting for 82% of those refusals. The LCBO e-commerce, the online ordering and delivery system, also maintains its strong social responsibility standards. It includes secure home delivery and checks upon delivery for intoxication and age verification.

Just as the LCBO now works in partnership with social and public health groups, the cannabis online delivery system would also maintain similar standards to develop and provide information about responsible consumption, just as the LCBO does with alcohol. I'm confident that the new cannabis retail corporation will embrace the same commitment to social responsibility that we see from the LCBO today.

It's also important to note the experience of other jurisdictions, like in the US, which has shown that it would have had a better opportunity had it started with stronger controls, and then adjusted over time. Our approach would leverage the LCBO's experience and operational capabilities to set up separate and dedicated stand-alone cannabis stores, selling cannabis and cannabis accessories, and not alcohol. Stores would have trained and knowledgeable staff and they would sell products in a safe, responsible manner, including strict requirements for age verification, as well as meeting additional federal requirements.

Ontario would, for example, comply with the federal requirements that restrict advertising to not permit products to be visible to youth and require a behind-the-counter type of retail environment. All sales would be assisted via counter service with no self-service. There would also be mandatory training for retail staff. Staff will have knowledge of the different products and public health information about how to use cannabis responsibly. Product types and formats would need to meet the forthcoming federal regulations on packaging and labeling information.

As for online sales, delivery will be available right across the province, but it will include strict precautions to ensure that our social responsibility measures are

adhered to for home delivery, just as they are in our stores. For example, all of the same delivery standards and safeguards that exist now for online alcohol would apply, including checking for valid ID, requiring signatures upon delivery and no packages to be left unattended at the door. And as is the case with alcohol, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. would ensure this channel has all the necessary safeguards to prevent minors from accessing the product.

As part of our safe and sensible transition to the legal sale of cannabis, we're focused on halting the sale of illegal, unregulated and unsafe cannabis. The demand certainly exists. Many people are buying cannabis now, and they are purchasing it illegally. The dispensaries operating in our cities are illegal. They are illegal today, they were illegal yesterday, and they will continue to be illegal tomorrow. After the federal legislation approval date, the only legal way to purchase recreational cannabis in Ontario would be through the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., a crown corporation.

We are mindful that through this illegal market, youth are exposed to and, in many respects, targeted to access cannabis. In Toronto and in other cities and towns across Ontario, we see illegal storefronts popping up on our streets and in our communities. Walking down Kensington Market, where I was born, you can't help but pass by storefronts selling cannabis; you can't help but see children, as we walk along the streets, smelling cannabis. Along with the federal government, our goal is to eliminate this illegal market. This includes those illicit dispensaries representing themselves as legal retailers of medicinal cannabis. They are now and would continue to be illegal under the proposed new rules.

Right now, medicinal cannabis can only be purchased directly from a federally licensed producer. These purchases are made online or over the phone and they are delivered by secure mail. This federal program will still continue under the new model, but the current medicinal cannabis dispensaries will not.

In order to establish a safe and responsible cannabis retail environment, it requires providing law enforcement officials with the tools to put a stop to the illegal sale of cannabis. Ontario will work with and support law enforcement to shut these illegal operators.

0940

If passed, our bill would create tough new penalties. These would include individuals and companies who engage in the illegal sale of cannabis, as well as landlords who knowingly permit their property to be used for this purpose. Penalties could include fines or imprisonment and would escalate based on repeated or continued offences after an initial conviction.

Mr. Speaker, our proposal would ensure that we are ready for next summer's federal launch of legalized cannabis. But there is still work to do and more decisions to be made. Details such as pricing and taxation of cannabis will be discussed over the coming months. One of the outstanding questions is how much revenue this new system would bring to the province. There are still

key issues that need to be addressed, including the federal tax approach, product pricing and market conditions.

Having said that, we don't anticipate revenues to be that significant initially. It's price sensitive—and this price-sensitive product means our priority must be to shrink the illicit market. Further revenues would need to be reinvested into programs that address the impacts of federal legalization, such as public education, health and social programs, and law enforcement.

When we made our announcement back in September detailing our preparation for the federal government's plan to legalize cannabis, I spoke about how we would work with municipalities to identify possible store locations. Municipalities are essential partners in our efforts as we move forward, especially when it comes to siting stores. Tracey Cook, the city of Toronto's licensing executive director, said this: "A provincially operated (marijuana) retail model guided by public health objectives and social responsibility would help ensure that public health and safety is paramount, thereby reducing local impacts that would require extensive municipal oversight and enforcement."

I recognize that many municipalities have questions about the retail and distribution channels and how they would be involved in the future. Since our public announcement on September 8, staff from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and other partner ministries have engaged with municipalities. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, has provided invaluable input in informing us on the development of our approach, and we look forward to that ongoing discussion.

I thank the municipalities that have engaged with our governments to date and those municipalities participating on AMO's marijuana task force. These consultations have also informed our process for engaging individual municipalities moving forward.

Over the coming weeks, municipalities where there is an intention to locate initial stores by July 2018 would be identified in stages. Two primary considerations will be used to guide where those stores should be located: achieving a geographic distribution of stores across all regions of the province; and reducing the number of illegal stores, including illicit dispensaries. As municipalities are identified, the Ministry of Finance would reach out to them by phone and letter. Municipalities selected for initial stores would also be posted on a public website: www.lcbocannabisupdates.com. This website is live.

Following this outreach, officials from the Ministry of Finance and the LCBO would schedule meetings with municipal staff to discuss the siting process. From our consultations with AMO, the guidelines to identify specific store sites will ensure that youth are protected and the illegal market is addressed. This includes ensuring stores are not located close to schools. We know this is of critical concern to parents, to caregivers and to teachers alike. I have stated, time and time again, our goal is to protect youth and those most vulnerable in our communities.

MADD Canada has commended this approach by saying this: “It’s something that we support and that’s actually the sales model that we had recommended the government should take, similar to the LCBO, because of the controls on it, making sure it doesn’t get to people who are underage, making sure the quality is there.”

Once the LCBO identifies the prospective siting for a cannabis store, it would use a public notification process to let people know that a specific store location has been identified for their community. As part of the process, the LCBO would also provide information that outlines details on the store’s operations and on how local impacts would be addressed. This process would also give the public an opportunity to submit questions and concerns directly to the LCBO.

Municipalities are essential partners in our efforts to establish the safe, responsible sale of cannabis. In fact, I have already sent letters to the municipalities so that they are prepared for the next steps. These letters outline the process through which cannabis retail sites will be chosen. We’ll continue to engage with our municipal partners as well as with the public as these steps unfold. It’s critical, Madam Speaker, to work closely in association with all levels of government.

The federal government has outlined the provisions by which it’s going to be legalized by next summer. The federal government has made it clear that if the provinces are not prepared, it will step in and provide it online to those areas that are not accommodated, and those respective jurisdictions will lose control over the retail, distribution and protection measures in their communities. So Ontario has taken these steps and we have now led Canada in regard to the retailing, distribution and establishment of those conditions to accommodate and respond to the federal government.

But it is essential, as I said, to deal with all levels of government, and that’s why partnering with municipalities is critical. We must engage them at the start, enabling them to be aware of those provisions and also to initiate the proper siting of those locations so that we can meet the obligations that the federal government has imposed upon the provinces and municipalities.

Under the proposed framework, approximately 150 stand-alone stores would be open by the end of 2020, including 40 stores by July 2018, rising to 80 by July 2019. While not all municipalities would have a store in the initial rollout, online distribution would be available for July 2018 for all regions of the province, as I’ve already stated. We must be prepared to accommodate every region of the province on the date that it becomes legal, and we must also provide the measures to protect access and to protect the social and health issues that come from it. More importantly, we must undermine the organized, illicit activity that currently exists today.

Those measures mean that we will take a gradual approach to storefronts—that’s critical—as we begin to better understand the marketplace. Let us not be fooled that the demand is high but the appreciation of and attraction to a storefront is yet to be determined—so

we’ll take the gradual approach in order to respond to the marketplace, not to dictate to the marketplace. The Canadian Medical Association agrees with this phased-in approach towards cannabis.

0950

Our engagement doesn’t just include municipalities. We’ve also heard from indigenous peoples and communities. It’s critical, Madam Speaker, that we recognize the need for meaningful engagement with indigenous organizations. We recognize that some First Nations communities may wish to develop specific approaches to cannabis retailing. Our proposed legislation provides the flexibility for the province to enter into agreements with First Nations communities. I look forward to continued dialogue with indigenous communities and organizations as we move closer to July 2018. My colleagues and I have already been in contact with some of the First Nations communities, many of whom have indicated a desire to possibly be a licensed producer. Many of them are concerned about the degree of distribution that could affect their respective communities. We recognize that we must work closely with them to protect their interests and at the same time ensure that legalization does not go underground but is there to protect all of the communities across our province. So I appreciate their engagement as well.

Our government’s approach to retail and distribution, Madam Speaker, is working in order to ensure the safe, responsible sale of cannabis and that we continue to eliminate the illegal market. We also want to address, as I have stated and as my colleague has said time and time again, the health and safety concerns that come with a controlled substance.

Our government’s approach must address these health and safety concerns. It’s something that the LCBO is quite familiar with. This includes precautions for physical health. To that, we are also drawing on lessons learned from the existing laws for consuming alcohol and the province’s Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Our proposed legislation would also provide clarity on where medicinal cannabis could be used. We have developed a series of exceptions for medicinal cannabis users to help ensure they have the access they need without compromising our public health objectives. These measures, along with others, will be addressed by the new proposed Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017, which is included in the bill before the members today.

I have to commend my colleagues at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care who have already done tremendous work in this regard with their work on the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, which has greatly reduced tobacco use and lowered health risks to non-smokers in Ontario. The new act, if passed, would build on that success by also addressing vaping and the use of e-cigarettes to better protect Ontarians from second-hand smoke, as well as understand the degree of content of THC in the oils and in the use of vaping. We must be mindful of the degree of content—again, all the more reason we need knowledgeable and experienced staff

who are trained to deal with these matters over the counter in a respective store.

When it comes to online and the accessories that will be displayed, a lot of information and instructions will be made available to, again, adhere to the restrictions and also inform those who wish to use recreational cannabis to protect themselves and to be mindful of the consequences and the degree of content that will be available in some of those vials.

For example, Canadian Cancer Society said this: “We support the proposed measures around protection and prevention in the cannabis framework and specifically the prohibiting of smoking cannabis in all work and public places, regulations regarding where cannabis can be sold, and the need for a public education campaign.” Madam Speaker, in my community, in Port Credit, I have received countless calls already from concerned parents who go to their ice cream shop right in the strip. Right next door there is a tobacco establishment with individuals smoking right beside the children who have their ice cream cones; they’re smoking their stogies right beside them. Across the street is a weed shop, and they’re concerned about the use of the product in our public spaces. We must enact those respective laws to protect those interests.

We must also address impaired driving, whether it be drugs or alcohol. Together with our partners, the government has worked to raise awareness of alcohol-impaired driving. As my colleague the Attorney General has noted, there seems to be less clarity around cannabis and other drugs, and young and new drivers are more likely to have dangerous misconceptions. Keeping Ontario roads safe is a critical part of the province’s safe and sensible approach to the federal government’s legalization of cannabis. We are introducing new measures that would make drug-impaired driving laws even tougher.

In addition to creation of a new crown corporation, the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp., the proposed legislation would also provide for the appointment of a board of directors. As a subsidiary to the LCBO, the board of the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. would be accountable to and appointed by the board of the LCBO, subject to the approval of the Minister of Finance. The LCBO would remain accountable to the Minister of Finance for their liquor operations and would take on the added responsibility of providing oversight of the new cannabis retailer. In addition, the proposed legislation would amend the LCBO’s legislation, the Liquor Control Act. These proposed amendments would enable the LCBO to provide oversight, advice and services to the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp.

It’s critical to take advantage of a tried-and-true system that Ontario has benefited from and enable that system to now operate a controlled substance in a way that’s socially responsible. We’re taking advantage of our controlled system through the LCBO to do just that. We want to leverage the expertise and the back-office capabilities of the LCBO to set up an effective and efficient retail and distribution system.

The proposed legislation also provides for the appointment of a president and a chief operating officer. The proposed legislation provides for the accountability and transparency measures that Ontarians expect of a crown agency. It would require the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. to report publicly with an annual report on the affairs of the corporation. It would require financial statements to be audited by the Auditor General and reported publicly. And it would require a memorandum of understanding between the Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. and the LCBO.

It’s important for the House and the public who may be watching to appreciate that cannabis retail stores and the online distribution are separate from the LCBO. It’s a subsidiary to the LCBO. It’s taking advantage of the tried measures done by the LCBO. But it’s not cohabiting with the LCBO; it’s not located near LCBO locations; it’s a stand-alone cannabis retail distribution system. We want to make certain that the experienced individuals and salespeople who are managing and retailing the product do so behind the counter so that they inform the buyer and the public to the degree of products and accessories that are being delivered.

The Ontario Cannabis Retail Corp. will be subject to existing accountability and full transparency rules. For example, any salaries greater than \$100,000 would be made public, consistent with the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act; the corporation would be required to comply with the French Language Services Act; and, if the proposed legislation was passed, we would develop regulations to ensure that the cannabis retailer was subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Public Service of Ontario Act.

The measures around this crown corporation are subject to the same measures they are for others. The control mechanisms put in place will enable us—and, more importantly, the public—to have assurances that it’s safe and the content and the quality of the product is adhered to through only licensed producers. This is critically important to recognize: Any retailer across the country must adhere to and purchase only from licensed producers, licensed by the federal government. Ontario has taken this extraordinary step that would enable us to ensure that quality controls are in place, to only purchase from those licensed producers. This is to ensure our government’s mandate on openness and transparency is adhered to. The proposed legislation also complies with requirements set out in the proposed federal Cannabis Act. These requirements include that only cannabis purchased from federally licensed producers will be sold, that cannabis will not be sold to any individual under 19 years of age, that appropriate records must be kept by the corporation, and that the corporation takes adequate measures to reduce the risk of cannabis being diverted to the illicit market.

1000

We must ensure that we’re ready for retail and ready to distribute. The degree of source of supply will be reliant upon the federal government. That’s their respon-

sibility. Our worry may always and continues to be the measures that are suggested by other jurisdictions that go with the existence of dispensaries: the degree of access and quality of cannabis that can only be purchased by those licensed producers. We know that today, the illicit market has illicit producers, and that is an added concern to the users and the buyers. We must ensure that quality is not compromised, and that's all the more reason to have a controlled measure that is proposed here, to provide for those measures of safety.

Madam Speaker, as you know, it is the federal government that has set out the July 2018 timetable for provinces to establish their own systems for direct sales to their citizens. Ontario is working hard to be ready to meet this timeline. We continue to move forward with plans to support young people and vulnerable populations.

Through an integrated prevention and harm reduction strategy, we are also planning a public information campaign to help ensure public awareness of this transition and the new measures that would take effect. We want to make sure the people of Ontario know about the changes, what to expect, and what's legal and what is not.

Over the past year, we've worked with public health and safety experts and businesses from across the province. We've consulted with municipalities and indigenous communities. We have asked the people of Ontario directly for their thoughts and ideas, and we have listened. What we've heard has helped us develop our safe and sensible approach. Yes, there are many aspects of the retail and distribution framework that are still to be decided, but all the more reason we must act early and act now to get to where we must be. In fact, it's not that early; the time will pass quickly. But we are confident that we have taken the best approach. The government control board model works; it's proven. We feel strongly that it's the right way to go. Most importantly, it would give the people of Ontario confidence that we would meet their objectives, ensuring safe and controlled sales, protecting youth, shrinking the illicit market and shutting down the illegal stores in the communities that we call home. We will be ready for July 2018 with a system and a plan that's safe and sensible, a plan that will work.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: One good thing about this topic today is that I am hoping that it gets people in our communities engaged in what we actually do here. I guess it's an interesting topic to many people who normally don't follow what we're talking about here. Of course, we are talking about Bill 174, the Cannabis, Smoke-Free Ontario and Road Safety Statute Law Amendment Act.

One thing that we didn't hear in the past hour from the government side is how they're going to achieve a lot of these things. They say they're going to stop the illicit sale of cannabis. Well, we still have contraband cigarettes being sold. They didn't talk about consulting our first responders, our police, our schools, our university campuses. I didn't hear about that kind of consultation. I think there are a lot of people concerned in our communities.

I didn't hear specifically how we're going to address testing in terms of impairment. We saw there was a horrific accident yesterday on the 400 in the early morning. How are we going to be testing whether or not people are indeed taking cannabis—when they took it, how long it will be in their system and how it actually affects them?

We did hear the Attorney General say that it's dangerous to brain development up to the age of 25, and yet they are selling it to anyone over 19 years of age, just like we do with alcohol. We did hear about online sales, and I think that there's a lot of concern in the community about delivery of cannabis through mail order.

We didn't hear anything about consulting with other provinces or about consulting with the US. We all know that there's a lot of concern in our communities about whether people will have access to the US if they are on record using cannabis. I think that there's more to discuss and I thank you for the time, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would say that for me, this bill is more of a disappointment than anything else. Whenever you put forward something like 40 locations for a province that has 13 million people—I live in northern Ontario and I represent rural northern Ontario. Apparently, according to the latest statistics, close to 80% of the people in my riding are interested in trying cannabis, if they have not already done so, when it is legalized. Tell me exactly how 40 locations in all of Ontario are going to serve the people of Nickel Belt.

I know exactly how the people of Nickel Belt are going to be served. Although we pay \$1.70 for gasoline because it's hard to get to Nickel Belt, we can buy cannabis in Nickel Belt in any of my little communities and way cheaper than they get it through the medicinal program. This is going to do absolutely nothing for the people of Nickel Belt. I have no hope that the little villages that I support will be one of the 40 locations that have been brought forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Madam Speaker, good morning. I think the Attorney General and the Minister of Finance did an excellent presentation on a bill that is going to involve several ministries: not only the Attorney General's ministry and the finance ministry, but the health ministry, the transportation ministry and other ministries as well, because this is a far-reaching change in Ontario. We are doing this because the federal government told us, "You better have something in place before July of next year."

I just want to mention a few points here about enforcement. We're taking enforcement very seriously with this bill. For example, the police will have the tools. We're working on it still. I think the Attorney General made it clear that we're not finished yet. We're still consulting, and there are ways that the police will be able to enforce it. They already have some tools that they used before breathalyzers were invented—for example, walking a

line and touching your nose and so on—and they're looking at other ways to deal with that as well.

But what the Attorney General mentioned, basically, is pretty wide-sweeping. He also mentioned the fact that you can do mail-in orders. As long as it's by secure mail—not by regular mail, but by registered mail—people can receive up to a certain amount of cannabis through the mail. I think the idea of having it only located in the Ontario-run stores is the safest way to do it. It's going to disappoint some of the people who have opened stores already, because they'll be shut down and the only place to get it will be in stores located or set aside by the government.

I look forward to further debate on this bill as we go forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm glad to have the opportunity to rise today and be able to comment on this new legislation that's coming forward. I don't know where I'm going to land on this before I'm done, after all the debate, but I'm in a unique situation. My riding of Sarnia-Lambton, actually, is going to have a medical marijuana operation that's going to be started as early as January, so that municipality has some concerns.

I've spoken to the Minister of Finance about it and we're going to get together later. They want to know about taxation and how it will be treated through MPAC. So there are some of those issues that are still out there. As a host municipality, they want to work with the Minister of Finance and find out how MPAC is going to treat that.

Also, the mayor of Sarnia, Mayor Mike Bradley—well known here—has concerns. We know that there is going to be a store in London, probably, because of all the illegal operations, the storefronts, that are there. He's concerned that Sarnia could be a toking tourist opportunity location, where people will cross to buy marijuana they can't buy in Michigan and other states. That could be an issue for Sarnia.

Also, the policing: I heard from the chief of police and other chiefs of police. They say that they won't be ready for July. There's no way that they can implement all the rules that will have to go along with this.

I know this is being foisted upon the provincial government because of the federal government's decision. There are all kinds of issues about revenue-sharing. That, again, was raised by the mayors through AMO. Will there be revenue-sharing, because there will be increased costs for those municipalities, whether it's policing, zoning etc.?

I wait to hear some of those answers. I had a conversation with the Minister of Finance this morning, and he assured me that he'll meet and talk with my municipality back home and Mayor Kevin Marriott.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the Minister of Finance to wrap up.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the comments made by the members from Thornhill, Nickel Belt, Scarborough Southwest and Sarnia-Lambton.

To the member from Thornhill: We are actually having conversations and discussions with all of the jurisdictions across Canada. I'll be doing a federal-provincial-territorial meeting in the coming weeks. I've had discussions by phone and we had discussions last summer, all with the concern about being ready for the federal legislation to come forward. We actually have been taking lessons from the United States, which now worries about the extent and the explosive growth of recreational cannabis in an uncontrolled manner. They appreciate and have actually preferred now to have done what it is that Ontario is doing today.

The member from Nickel Belt talks about how this is not going to work. It's not working right now. There's illicit activity and there's organized crime around this very issue. Just like we had speakeasies and bootleggers when we had Prohibition, those are the conditions, and evolution will occur over time. Forty stores will be available immediately; it will grow as necessary, at least to 80 by the end of the year and up to 150 in years to come. It will have representation in the north. We're dealing with AMO and we're looking at regional representation definitely to be available to them. And of course, it's going to be available on day one online in every aspect of the province.

The member from Scarborough Southwest reaffirms how important it is to be managed and to provide enforcement, and the phasing-in approach is to do so.

To the member opposite, in regard to the cross-border activity: It's illegal in many of the states. They won't be able to pass through the border with medicinal or recreational marijuana. We'll have to evolve and see how that proceeds over time.

Thank you to all in the House for their engagement and debate. I look forward to their concurrence in and support of this bill as it moves forward.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing as it's almost 10:15, I will recess the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is not often that we get visitors all the way from the city of Timmins. I would really like to welcome somebody we all know—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Shania Twain?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not Shania Twain—she's somewhere else now.

I'd like to introduce people that you already know—Abigail Collings, the page from Timmins-James Bay and also page captain today. Her mum, Natalie, is here. Her sister Hailey is there, along with brothers Nicholas and Carter.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Fraser: I've got a few people to introduce today who are here for the debate on Bill 145. From SEIU, we have developmental service workers Jackie

Haynes and Sandee Green. And we have the following members of CLAC: Ruth Ann Ferguson, Josh Vanderlaan, Patricia Pot, Rhonda Gow, Marlene Ragbir, Kevin Gates, Cindy Gates, Yvonne Doorenspleet, Janette Deboer, Trish Douma, Susan Siemens, Gary Star, Kathy Myerscough, Hank Beekhuis, Joel Kamphof, Julie Garner, Tamsin Carter, Lisa Muzzin and Sonya Dean.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to welcome Jonathan Strauss, CEO of the Pedorthic Association of Canada, and Matt Quattrociochi of the Pedorthic Association of Canada. Also, sitting behind them are Martin Haalstra, an engineer with the Ministry of Transportation and a constituent of mine in Belmont, and George Collins, also an engineer with the Ministry of Transportation. Welcome.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to introduce today, in the west gallery, one of my long-time staff members who's back from parental leave. Welcome, please, everyone, Alex Callahan and Zillah Louise Callahan-Ebert, his walking 1-year-old daughter.

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to introduce a constituent of mine, John Capobianco. He's with the wrong party but still a great guy.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to welcome representatives from Colleges Ontario, the Council of Ontario Universities, the College Student Alliance and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance who are at Queen's Park today to talk about mental health on college and university campuses. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome, in the members' west gallery, my amazing wife, Jenny, and my son, Drake, who are not here to see me today, but who are here to see Airika perform her page duties on her last day here at Queen's Park.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Kendra Thomson from the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis. I had a great conversation with her and Louis Busch, the president of the Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis.

Mr. Todd Smith: I don't think we have any Belleville Senators here, but I just want to make note that it was a historic night last night in Belleville, as professional hockey made its debut. The Belleville Senators defeated the Syracuse Crunch, with Gabriel Gagne scoring the winning goal in a shootout. Congratulations to all involved. It was a great night in Belleville.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member should consider a career in radio.

The member from Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome Don Lovisa, president of Durham College, to Queen's Park. He was recently named Business Person of the Year by the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce. He's here today discussing students' mental health.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We're delighted to have a number of guests here today talking about campus mental health. I'd like to introduce Andrew Clubine, president of

the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance; Brenda Whiteside, associate vice-president of student affairs at the University of Guelph and chair of the Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health; Rick Ezekiel from Western; David Lindsay, Council of Ontario Universities; Joel Willett, president of the College Student Alliance; Fred Gibbons, the president of Northern College; and Linda Franklin, president of Colleges Ontario. Welcome, all. This is important work.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I also would like to take this opportunity to welcome all those who are here today from the various student organizations discussing campus mental health. It's obviously a very important subject for all of us. I also want to specifically welcome Andrew Clubine, the president of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and a friend of mine, as well as Landon Tulk, the vice-president of finance.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The post-secondary sector is well represented here today. I want to single out a couple of individuals for welcome. I'd like to acknowledge Nadia Bathish, who is here from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance; MaryLynn West-Moynes from Georgian College; Sean Van Koughnett from McMaster University; Dominika Flood from the Council of Ontario Universities; Éilis Karry from the Council of Ontario Universities; Matt Banninga from the Council of Ontario Universities; Aimee Calma from Conestoga College; and I have to acknowledge Landon Tulk from my home community, Western USC.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's a great honour for me to host my parents-in-law today at Queen's Park. Please welcome Ben and Elizabeth McMillan here today. Welcome.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It never rains but it pours from Timmins. We have Fred Gibbons, as was introduced earlier—the president of Northern College. Welcome, Fred. It's always good to see you.

Hon. Jeff Leal: There's a young lady who's in her first year at Laurier University. Today, mom and I want to wish Shanae Leal a very happy 18th birthday.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to welcome my friend Laura Casselman here today, from Brown and Cohen Communications. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Hon. Brad Duguid: On behalf of the MPP for Brampton West, I'd like to welcome the family of page captain Ryan Shahmohamadi: his mother, Rebecca; brother, Jamie; sister, Layla; and grandfather, John, who have all joined us today.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I, as well, would like to welcome all the representatives that came to talk to us today about campus mental health. I particularly had a meeting with four of those representatives: Landon Tulk of OUSA, Sean Van Koughnett of McMaster University, Ariana Chasse of the College Student Alliance, and Don Lovisa of Durham College. Thank you very much for coming here and bringing this very important issue to all our MPPs.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to welcome Mr. Totino's grade 10 civics class to question period and their tour of Queen's Park. I look forward to meeting them after question period. Welcome.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: On behalf of the Minister of Transportation, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to Iuliana Calin and Alex Bettencourt. The minister wishes Alex a very happy 40th birthday. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I feel well prepared for question period today. I got to meet the grade 10 students from North Toronto Christian School. They asked me the toughest questions I think I've had from any classroom at the Legislature. Welcome to the Legislature and thank you for being here.

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

I have guests in the Speaker's gallery. We have with us today His Excellency Dionisio Pérez Jácome, the ambassador of Mexico to Canada. He is also accompanied by Porfirio Thierry Muñoz Ledo, the consul general of Mexico. Welcome.

My language skills aren't as good as they should be. I apologize.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

CASINOS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to begin by offering our hope and prayers to the families affected by the tragedy on the 400 yesterday, especially to the Dunn family of North Bay, where nine children lost their father, Benjamin Dunn. We will pray for this shocked and traumatized family.

Speaker, my question this morning is for the finance minister. Every day this week, we have learned more and more disturbing news regarding Great Canadian Gaming's trouble in BC. Of concern here in Ontario is the fact that the OPP are "reaching out to investigators in BC about the money laundering investigation."

Is the minister doing anything further other than "watching closely?"

Hon. Charles Sousa: Our agencies, the AGCO and the OLG, have been in constant contact with the regulators in British Columbia. They have been recognizing the requirements to have proponents be approved by the AGCO in consultation with the BC authorities prior to even performing and making their submissions.

The process is apparent; it's open; it's transparent; and it precludes the minister from engaging with those proponents, even those who are friends of the Conservative Party. I will not associate myself with any of them until the decision is made openly, with a fairness monitor, and that is being done on an ongoing basis. The continuation of any review is appropriate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: While the minister is watching on the sidelines, others have been working. Yesterday, we learned of the latest twist regarding the company awarded the casino contract here

in Ontario. Media reports have now revealed questionable trading activity by one of Great Canadian's directors. Neil Baker earned almost \$140 million selling shares in late 2016. That happened three months after a report was submitted to the BC Attorney General implicating the casino in allegations of money laundering. That report wasn't made public until September 2017.

I would ask the minister if he was aware of the questionable trading activity before they awarded the casino deal here in Ontario.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Information that is provided to the AGCO and all its regulatory authorities was made and implications and any activity that engages with suspicious activity is being reported, and those decisions are cleared by the AGCO prior to a proponent being authorized. They were authorized, both by the BC authorities and the Ontario regulatory authorities.

The process is in place. If there is inappropriate activity by any director, by any individual in any institution in regard to any money laundering initiatives, be it in gaming, be it in banking or be it in any other institutions across this province, they have to adhere to those laws, and those things are being enforced.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: Here are the cold, hard facts. A director of Great Canadian Gaming sheds his shares between the time a report of money laundering allegations is submitted to BC's Attorney General and the time the report is made public. In the report are allegations that workers in a BC casino knowingly accepted millions of dollars in suspicious cash transactions, which could have been the proceeds of crime.

The integrity of Ontario's gaming industry is at stake here. We have learned the Ontario casino agreement allows for the termination in the event of something prejudicial to the reputation or integrity of OLG, casino gaming or the Ontario government.

Is the minister finally going to stand up for Ontario and halt this deal?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I have been standing up for Ontario. I've been standing up for Ontario to modernize the gaming operations for the benefit of Ontarians to provide more income for hospitals and schools and host communities.

The matter that's before us isn't one about the sensitivity of the commercial activity of a public company. The matter before us is that this member is talking about the individual activity of a person. If it is in fact suspicious, it should be reviewed and should be enforced. But Great Canadian, as a corporation, has abided, and I believe they are not under investigation, but the activities within that company should be reviewed. In fact, Ontario has led in many respects on socially responsible activities to protect individuals and protect communities. We will continue to abide and maintain the highest standards in this province for gaming in a socially responsible manner.

CASINOS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the finance minister. These allegations are exactly why this casino deal must be halted immediately. Let's take a few minutes to review what we've learned just in this week alone.

Internal government documents reveal a \$500-million money-laundering investigation in BC. We read about "suspicions of 'terrorist financing,'" possible organized crime connections, hockey bags full of cash—tens of millions of dollars in \$20 bills. The RCMP investigation goes back to 2015. They said there was about \$220 million laundered in BC in one year alone.

Speaker, to the finance minister: What did he know and when did he know it?

Hon. Charles Sousa: What I know is this: In this industry, a lot of proponents are jockeying to get into Ontario. A lot of them want to be the proponents of choice. A lot of them have been donors to the Conservative Party. A lot of them are now feeding the Conservative Party with allegations about Great Canadian.

I am not going to fall prey to this. I am going to assure that there's full transparency, that Great Canadian, as a public company, is operating in an effective manner. If there's any impropriety whatsoever, we will immediately act upon it, but I am not going to fall prey to allegations and any lynching that this this member is trying to again do to the good people of Canada.

Whatever happened in British Columbia happened. What's happening in Ontario—we're going to protect the interests of Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: Perhaps the minister's reluctance to act has something to do with what we learned next.

According to the Integrity Commissioner, high-ranking, well-connected Liberal insiders were hired to lobby the Premier and that minister. Is this why the Liberals rushed ahead with the deal? Is this why they won't halt this deal?

The bid process began back in 2013 after the government's decision to kill the horse racing industry. Between then and now, Liberal insiders were hired to pull the strings.

Speaker, to the minister: Is this the real reason he won't act on behalf of this deal?

Hon. Charles Sousa: That's totally offensive, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is now doing a drive-by smear of individuals who are registered lobbyists in our province.

It's astounding that the current lobbyist for Great Canadian is a former Conservative. They're the ones who have actually been acting upon it. In fact, their newest candidate is a former president of OLG, another Conservative who is acting on this very matter of modernization.

The member alleges on individuals who are not registered lobbyists for Great Canadian during this process. It's offensive and he should retract that comment.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the minister: All this—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, come to order. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: All this government needed to do was admit there are problems in BC and halt the deal until they get to the bottom of it. Instead, they deny any involvement, but senior Liberal insiders working on behalf of the casino operator show us a different story.

Once again, the Liberals put themselves and their insiders ahead of the people of Ontario. There are money-laundering allegations, questionable trading activities and well-placed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Municipal Affairs, come to order. We're now in warnings.

Carry on.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —well-placed Liberal insiders at the centre of it all. Like many other issues here, this one does not pass the smell test.

I ask the minister: What's the priority for this government, Liberal insiders or the integrity of Ontario's gaming industry?

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Wow, Mr. Speaker. I've already made clear that Great Canadian has come out and identified that there were no Liberal lobbyists involved. In fact, there are Conservative lobbyists that are involved. Furthermore, those who have identified have said they've removed themselves.

It's no surprise that the member opposite is looking for impropriety activities given that they engage in that almost every day in their nomination battles, Mr. Speaker.

We are not getting any political influence here. The member opposite is conflating the issues with criminalization; that is not happening on our side of this House.

I will protect the commercial interest of anybody who's approved as the appropriate winner of a contract.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my question is for the Acting Premier. Etobicoke General Hospital reached the alarmingly dangerous occupancy rate of 122% in its acute care beds this year so far. Toronto east Michael Garron Hospital hit 106%. Trillium Health Partners, which operates three Mississauga hospitals, reached 109%. And SickKids got as high as 107%, and their mental health beds registered a shocking 136% occupancy rate, at times, in 2017. None of these hospitals got to this point overnight.

As much as this Premier hopes they will, temporary beds are not going to solve this crisis. What is the Liberal government's plan to make sure that every person in

Ontario can get to a hospital and be confident that they are going to get the health care they need, not just before an upcoming election, but in the long run?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I have yet to hear from the leader of the third party whether she supports our investment of last week of 1,200 new acute in-patient beds across this province. Mr. Speaker, that's the equivalent number of beds as creating six new hospitals in this province. We made that decision in a single week, and we did it in a targeted fashion so that we actually provide those beds in the parts of the province that need them the most.

Particularly in some parts of the province where we have high growth and changing demographics, we are seeing the pressures that come with an increased population and an aging population. That's why we worked closely with the Ontario Hospital Association to make that investment of six new hospitals—that equivalent number of beds. We made that announcement last week and we are well on our way to implement that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this government has created a crisis in our hospital system that stretches through all of our major community hospitals. It's also hitting our tertiary hospitals. This crisis is hitting every hospital in this province, so six hospitals that this minister talks about doesn't fix the fact that they've ruined dozens and dozens and dozens of hospitals in communities across this province with their cuts over the last decade.

Hospitals across the north need a real plan to fix their overcrowding crisis, and hospitals in Toronto, the GTA, Hamilton, Peterborough, Barrie, Orillia, Tillsonburg, London and across the southwest.

The Premier needs to step up, Speaker, put aside her re-election bid and really focus on what the people of the province need. They need—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Barrie will withdraw.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now you are warned.

Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: They need her to stop with the partisan announcements and focus her time and energy on fixing the damage that the Liberal government has done to our hospitals. Will the Liberal government do that, Speaker?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite to suggest that dozens and dozens and dozens of hospitals in this province are in ruins—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's unbelievable.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It is unbelievable, Mr. Speaker.

Or like she did yesterday: to refer to the emergencies as stacking individuals like cords of wood. For her to use this kind of rhetoric and then suggest that we are making essential investments in our health care system—that that is somehow political, that she's got the nerve and the ability to actually use—I now understand what the NDP is doing and what the leader of the third party is doing. Her brand is crisis, Mr. Speaker. She has decided to dispense with anything even remotely close to the truth and create a narrative of rhetoric and fear—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain is warned.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: Wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're next.

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: For this party and that leader to use for explicit political purposes the narrative that she has created, which is so far from the truth—it is amazing to me.

In the context of where the leader of the third party is going, her brand is crisis.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I've got to say, destruction causes crisis, and their brand is destruction. Destruction of our hospital system: That's what their brand is.

Natalie Mehra, the executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition, says this of the Premier's temporary beds—and I say this in terms of what she said: We are in such dire crisis across the province that it is not enough to meet the overflow beds that are in use right now. The beds will do very little in the big scheme of things. They're not enough to deal with the people on stretchers in hallways and they're not enough for the people waiting in ambulances—

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: You're destroying your own brand. Yell a little bit louder.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Infrastructure is warned.

I hope you're getting my message.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier's announcement last week is at best a Band-Aid. It doesn't come close to covering the whole wound, the wound that this government created. When will the Premier and her Liberal government finally take this overcrowding and hallway medicine crisis seriously and actually make sure that every Ontario family has the health care they need when they need it and—

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Yesterday, I went through a long list coming from reliable, independent third-party experts that described, appropriately, our health care system as one of the best in the world. On every single indicator, we are at the top of this country or near the top of this country in performance. We have one of the best cancer

systems in the world in terms of survivals and outcomes. We have so much to be proud of: the 150-plus hospitals where we have tens of thousands of hard-working individuals who are providing that highest quality of care.

For that leader of a party to reduce those efforts and that characteristic of our health care system, to describe it in the way she does, to denigrate it, to suggest that it is not functioning to the best of its ability and asking us not to make any investments—

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

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Acting Premier—although I'd say the experts in the health care system are patients, front-line workers, nurses and doctors, who have all been sounding the alarm bells.

Last year, Toronto was named the child poverty capital of Canada. In the last 22 years, under both Conservative and Liberal governments, monthly social assistance in Ontario has gone up by just 8%, and that's before you factor in inflationary erosion of that figure.

An 8% increase over 22 years is just not enough for a family to pay rent, buy food, clothes, school supplies for the kids and try to scrape by. It's not enough, and the Premier and her Liberal government have done next to nothing to fix it.

Why, for 14 years, has this Liberal government allowed the depth of poverty to increase, creating such destitution for Ontario families living in poverty?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm very proud to answer this question from the leader of the third party. The leader knows that we've been working with different groups across Ontario to ensure that we can better position income security here in the province of Ontario.

1100

We've been working with a security reform working group, the First Nations Income Security Reform Working Group and the urban indigenous tables on income security reform to study Ontario's income security systems to make sure that we bring forward recommendations here in the province of Ontario to improve our system.

Over the years, our various social security programs have helped a great number of people and families, but we know that we have to do better. We're going to bring forward a new road map, a report that's being tabled, to bring forward change here in the province of Ontario. I'll be able to answer some of the additional pieces in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This morning, we learned, in fact, that the Premier's advisory panel, set up by the Liberal government last year to overhaul Ontario's troubled income security system, will release its report

today. The report will recommend an urgent 22% increase to social assistance funding over the next three years.

Does the Premier and her Liberal government, on the eve of an election, finally plan to follow her committee's advice and implement an urgent 22% increase immediately?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The road map is a thoughtful, thought-provoking document. I want to thank the members of the working group for their valuable contributions to social security reform here in the province.

Over the next two months, we'll be going across the province to get public feedback on the report, and we're going to use this road map as a guide to develop a multi-year plan for early 2018. This plan will be designed to phase in improvements in a way that is practical, realistic and recognizes our fiscal responsibilities as a government.

I'm very proud of this government's record when it comes to putting in place fairness in this province, and we'll continue to support the people of Ontario through mechanisms like this when it comes to income reform.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The report also recommends a 15% increase to the Ontario Disability Support Program, a housing benefit to be implemented by 2019, after the next election, and the expansions of all health benefits to low-income families.

Given this government's dismal track record on supporting low-income families, which includes—

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Listen up, folks—which includes cuts to homelessness prevention programs in 2012, a \$100-per-month cut to social assistance in 2014 and a severe cut to the Local Poverty Reduction Fund in 2015.

With an election around the corner, will the Premier reverse course, implement the recommendations of this report immediately and finally begin to support Ontario families who are really struggling, instead of trying to support your own re-election bid?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The leader of the third party talks about supporting families here in the province of Ontario. I would like to ask her and her party: Where were they when we were talking about increasing the minimum wage? Where were they when we talked about OSAP reform?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister.

Hon. Michael Coteau: When we started talking about increasing the minimum wage here in the province of Ontario, the NDP was silent on that issue. We've put forward plans here in the province of Ontario to put in, in January—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister will wrap up.

Hon. Michael Coteau: So we'll be taking this report—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can play this all day.

Carry on.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The NDP always position themselves as working for people in Ontario, but when we talk about the important things to help families, they're usually silent on these issues.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Ross Romano: To the Acting Premier: In late 2015, Essar Steel Algoma entered into CCAA creditor protection proceedings. In January of this year, during the Sault by-election, the Premier visited us and spoke with our local media. Quoting from our local Sault Star, "Wynne told reporters that she wants to see the steel industry thrive in Ontario, and in Sault Ste. Marie.

"The province has been working to facilitate the restructuring process without 'overstepping its bounds.'"

CCAA has been ongoing for three years now, and it needs to come to an end. The municipality is owed millions in back taxes and they may reduce services or increase taxes to cover that loss. Local businesses are owed millions, while the economy waits in limbo. Steelworkers and retirees are worried about the status of their pensions.

It has been almost a year since the Premier made her comments to our local media. My question for the Acting Premier is this: What is the government doing to help facilitate the restructuring process at Algoma, and what have they done to expedite that restructuring process?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Well, one of the things that would have helped is if the members opposite would have voted in support of some of the reforms that were taking place to protect pensioners. They voted against those measures in our budget.

As we move forward with our steel industry and how critical it is, we did something extraordinary in helping Stelco in their outcomes to protect the pensioners as well as retirees and the workers.

Algoma is now going through that process, and I appreciate the concern the member opposite has, because it affects his own community. We know how difficult it is for members of that community to go through this transition. They're having ongoing discussions now with their creditors, who are the ones engaged in this process. It's before the courts. The province of Ontario will be part of this, to the extent of protecting the pensioners and their pensions as we move forward. That's why we've taken many reforms to protect pensioners.

In regard to priorities, this I'll deal with in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Ross Romano: Again to the Acting Premier: So the answer to that question was obviously nothing.

Huron Central Railway is vital in delivering products to market in northern Ontario. This—

Hon. Brad Duguid: No it wasn't. Clean your ears out. Clean the wax out of your ears.

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

Mr. Ross Romano: The Huron Central line service is a major employer and economic driver in the Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma-Manitoulin ridings. Our steel plant depends on this rail line. I'm in frequent contact with Huron Central, discussing a fatal problem they face. If upgraded infrastructure funding is not approved immediately, they will be forced to close the service. To again quote the Premier's by-election trip to Sault Ste. Marie when discussing the future of the steel industry, "'A diversified economy is also part of that future success,' she said. 'And the transportation hub can play a role in that diversification.'"

The Premier met with Huron Central just last week and she refused to provide funding. Northern Ontario's economy depends on this train and our workers depend on these jobs; yet, at a time of great need, she turned her back on us. How can we take them seriously when whatever they say lacks the action to back it up?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Nothing is what that member and that party opposite did when we looked to support the steel industry. We have helped the steel industry and we provided for more integrity. We recognize the challenges it's facing globally. It's why we stepped in. It's why we're arm in arm with the workers and why we're continuing to do the same in Algoma. We have taken the steps that permit those pensioners to be protected.

The member opposite is citing the priority claims from CCAA that the federal government, under the Conservative regime, rejected to even discuss when the Senate provided for legislation in that regard.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with the industry. We recognize how important it is to Ontario's economy. It is a priority. We're actually having those discussions even in our NAFTA negotiations with the federal government. The member opposite has a right to issue concerns, but he also has a right to his community to work with us to provide for the changes that we're putting forward to protect his own constituents.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Acting Premier. This week we saw another tragic accident on Highway 400, involving 14 vehicles. At least three people died. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families. OPP Sergeant Kerry Schmidt referred to the accident scene as "absolute carnage and devastation."

Unfortunately, this is not the only fatality that's happened on this highway with trucks. In the last two years, there have been 1,400 collisions with commercial trucks and 155 people have died. Fewer truck inspection points, truck tires becoming airborne and poor winter highway maintenance have created a serious problem with highway safety in the province of Ontario, a problem the NDP has been raising for years.

1110

A co-host of Breakfast Television tweeted to Minister Del Duca and I regarding this crash, asking, “How many more truck-related crashes and fireballs do we need to have an inquest?” Does the Acting Premier have an answer for him and for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. Our thoughts, like the member from Nipissing’s, are with the families and friends of the victims in this horrific tragedy. On behalf of the Minister of Transportation, I would also like to thank our first responders who were on the scene. We know how hard they work when responding to tragedies like this.

As we do with all serious incidents on our highways, the Ministry of Transportation will review the results of the police investigation to determine if there are additional safety measures we need to consider.

The member will know that it’s the chief coroner in Ontario who has the discretion to call an inquest, and I would be very surprised if that is not under consideration, at least, at this particular point.

In my supplementary, I’ll talk to truck safety on our highways as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Acting Premier: I’m not the only one that has concerns about the safety of Ontario’s trucking industry. OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes asked the Ontario trucking industry to take a close look at the way they conduct business. The Ontario Safety League is asking the Liberal government to begin a coroner’s inquest into this horrible accident. And our first responders see first-hand the devastating impact that our unsafe highways are having on the people of the province of Ontario.

Commissioner Hawkes has gone on to say that the trucks on our roads “are in essence missiles travelling down the highway”—missiles—and that trend seems to be getting worse.

Will the Premier listen to Mr. Hawkes and the Ontario Safety League and immediately conduct a review of the Ontario truck driving industry and order a coroner’s inquest?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: One fatality is one fatality too many on our highways. Ontario is a leader in truck safety standards and enforcement, but we’re always looking for ways to make our roads even safer.

The number of deadly collisions on our roads involving large trucks has been declining—not as the member suggests—despite growing truck traffic. We are committed to making sure our roads stay safe when it comes to truck traffic. A critical part of that is making sure that truck drivers are properly trained. That is why we introduced, just this July, mandatory entry-level training for new commercial class A truck drivers, which recently came into effect and is helping to ensure our roads remain among the safest in North America.

We recognize that distracted driving is a serious issue on our roads with all drivers. That is why our government

has now introduced legislation that would, if passed, create tougher penalties to combat distracted driving, making Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to have a licence suspension for those convicted of distracted driving and the toughest penalties for repeat offenders.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour la ministre de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle.

As a government we’ve done great things to reduce the financial barriers for entry to post-secondary education through our transformation of OSAP. But, Minister, post-secondary life, often in a new town or a new city, presents unique challenges for students. As a former dean of a law school, I know how students can get stressed and how important it is for them to have access to mental health supports. We know that positive student outcomes depend on access to good mental health support.

Can the minister share with this House what her ministry has done and is continuing to do for mental health on post-secondary campuses across Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member is absolutely right: Mental health is a very important issue on campus. I have visited many campuses. The issue I hear about the most, whether it’s from students, from faculty, administration—everyone agrees we need to do a better job supporting students with mental health challenges on our post-secondary campuses.

I am delighted to welcome the advocates for campus mental health who are here today. They’ve issued a report called In It Together. It is a unique report in that it is from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance and the College Student Alliance. The college sector and the university sector worked together to create this report. It is excellent, and I thank them for that.

We’ve been working since 2011. The ministry has been a partner in the comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, where we’ve done some good things, including funding 34 innovation projects for mental health.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Merci, madame la Ministre, and thank you also for this incredible leadership on this issue. I know not only is it important for students, but it creates a toll on all employees in universities when students suffer from mental health stresses. Thank you very much for continuing to work on this issue.

I think reports have shown, as well, that the mental health requirements are increasing; that is, for students of all ages, access to mental health support is important. It’s not only the young people but also all the students who are on campuses.

I’d like to ask the minister if she could please inform this House what the ministry is continuing to do to meet the ongoing and growing need for mental health supports on campuses in Ontario.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was very happy this year to announce, with the Minister of Health and Long-Term

Care, a \$6-million increase to dedicated funding for mental health supports to enhance mental health services on campuses. This will bring our total funding to \$15 million a year for mental health, an increase of over 60% from last year. As part of this funding, we're investing almost \$4.5 million in the mental health worker grant program to hire mental health workers at all public post-secondary institutions.

This is not the only action our government has taken; our students are going to benefit greatly from OHIP+. It will provide free prescription medications for everyone under the age of 25 in Ontario.

Our government recognizes the serious importance of this issue. We will continue to work with all of our partners to improve accessibility and quality of mental health supports on campus.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: This question is for the Deputy Premier. During the Scarborough by-election, your government bragged about the Scarborough subway, but you have failed to deliver any transit north of Highway 401 in Scarborough.

I repeat: In my community—

Interjection: Are you sure? You voted against it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. If different acknowledgement is necessary, I'll accept. Seeing none—finish, please.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I repeat: In my community, there has been absolutely no transit expansion during the time this Liberal government has been in office.

Recently, the Premier appointed Shelley Carroll as her candidate in Don Valley North. Ms. Carroll is a loud opponent of the Scarborough subway project.

Deputy Premier, will your government continue to stall construction on the Scarborough subway to make Shelley Carroll happy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Strange things happen in this place. We seem to have a recollection—and I'm reminded by the member beside me from Scarborough that that member, when he was on Toronto city council, voted against the subway. He fails to recognize that it takes time to plan, to do the financing, to do the procurement. It's not going to happen tomorrow. We are on that file. We have said we are going to go forward with it. There's nothing else we can do other than co-operate with the city of Toronto and co-operate with Infrastructure Ontario to move forward to make this happen. I'm very, very pleased to hear that you now support it.

Interjections.

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

1120

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I could put my hand on the Bible: Every time the subway issue came up in council, I strongly supported it.

This is just more talk and no action by this failed government. Frankly, it's all hard to believe. During the election—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My resolve hasn't changed.

Please.

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

During the election, they promised great ideas. But after the election, they failed to deliver; not only that, they ignored them. This is why I'm here today in this Legislature. The only action that the Liberal Party has taken is appointing a candidate who is firmly against the Scarborough subway.

Deputy Premier, can your government and your candidate in Don Valley North come clean and admit that you simply do not support the Sheppard subway in Scarborough?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It's with great pleasure that I refer this to the member from Scarborough Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's to be done properly. Simply refer to the other minister, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Referred to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, Speaker.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think I should remind the member—and maybe his good friend Doug Ford would remember this very clearly, because it was on TV. It was taking place during the council agenda, when you were criticizing Doug Ford for building the Scarborough subway.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member was criticizing Doug Ford for building the Scarborough subway, so his recollection may be different than his brand new friend Doug Ford's recollection of that issue.

I want to say, on behalf of the members who are on this side of the House, that these members fought very hard to ensure, despite the challenges going on when that member was at the city, with the city continually changing their position on this—we stood strong for the Scarborough subway. This government stood strong for the Scarborough subway. Every single member from Scarborough here stood strong for the Scarborough subway. It's going to happen. It's being built. It's on time. It's on budget. It's going to be delivered despite the fact that members who didn't support it in the first place—despite what that member says.

Interjections.

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Health. Yesterday in the Timmins Daily Press, Dr. George Freundlich described some of the risks his patients are facing because of the lack of hospital funding in northeastern Ontario. A child at risk of attempting suicide waited for two weeks at Bingham Memorial Hospital in Matheson before there were any beds in the mental health unit in Timmins. Another patient in Matheson had a broken hip, but did not have any surgery for several days because, again, there were no beds at Timmins and District Hospital.

Minister, this government has been in power for 14 years. Why has it chosen to continue to underfund hospitals and put patients at risk?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As the member knows, we increased our hospitals' operating budget by \$500 million this year. When it comes to Timmins, as well, they importantly and specifically were included in the announcement that I made last week of the creation of the equivalent number of beds of six new hospitals across the province. Those 1,200 acute-care beds, of course, are in addition to approximately 600 other transitional beds that we're making available. But those 1,200 acute care beds include an allocation of beds for Timmins. Even more than that, there's an additional, as-yet-to-be-allocated complement of beds for the North East LHIN, which Timmins is of course under consideration for receiving, beyond what was announced last week.

These are important investments. I know that party does not want us to make any investments, apparently, between now and next June when we have an election. We will make the right investments at the right time, despite what they say.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the minister: Dr. Freundlich has been practising in Matheson since 1994. He is a respected pillar in the community. I would like to quote him: "In the past ... it was most unusual to have no beds. Now, it's most unusual when you get a bed." Referring to the new beds, "Those eight beds will fill in no time, and we will be again back to square one.... I cannot assure you 100% that nobody died" because of a lack of beds.

Minister, you have accused the NDP of fearmongering on hospital overcrowding. In your opinion, is Dr. Freundlich fearmongering as well?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we increased the budget of Timmins hospital this year by \$1.6 million. As well, I have before me the capacity figures for all hospitals across this province, monthly from April

through to and including September. For not a single month was Timmins hospital above capacity.

Notwithstanding that, we understand that there continue to be pressures across our hospitals—a number of them, for various reasons. Sometimes it's because of growth in the local population, sometimes it's because of the aging population and their complex needs. The allocation that I announced last week will go specifically to Timmins hospital, but in addition, there are 31 as-yet-unallocated beds, which have been funded and have been announced, that are available to Timmins and other hospitals as they require them.

Mr. Speaker, we will make those investments, as we have the 1,200 acute care in-patient beds that we announced last week, and we'll continue to make similar investments.

RESEARCH

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Honourable Minister of Research, Innovation and Science. Coming from a riding whose motto is, "Where history and innovation thrive," I am naturally gravitating toward all of the amazing articles about innovation in the province of Ontario. In fact, I'm surprised that people have not yet taken to calling you "Mr. Innovation." But I also know that innovation is one of three hats that you typically wear, and I would personally like to hear a little more about research in our province.

Medical research in the province is coordinated by the Ontario Research Fund, a two-stream program supporting research excellence and research infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, could the honourable minister please tell the members of this House about the work he's been doing to ensure Ontario is engaging in top-notch research in our province?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for that question. I also want to thank her for that nickname. It's a terrific nickname. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, since 2003, I have been hard at work making sure that Ontario scientists and the researchers are being supported through the Ontario Research Fund. That support has made them wildly competitive. The competition and collaboration have fostered discoveries which lead to innovative technologies, treatment for patients and advances in sciences, all the while supporting very high-quality jobs in our province of Ontario.

The Ontario Research Fund has been an incredible success. We will build on that success with the Ontario Research Fund review, the first meeting of which is scheduled for tomorrow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'm delighted and, in fact honoured, to have this question. I have seen that we can count on this government to build on past successes and look for new ways to run programs efficiently and maximize their value. I have also seen that this is what our ministers believe in: setting high expectations, delivering on those goals and raising the bar.

Support for research is absolutely critical to maintaining Ontario's reputation as a research-friendly province. That reputation attracts more researchers, research institutes, business and foreign direct investment, which results in more high-paying, high-quality jobs for Ontarians today and Ontarians tomorrow.

1130

That is particularly important in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, with three post-secondary institutions: Queen's University, St. Lawrence College and Royal Military College of Canada. Could the minister tell the members more about the Ontario Research Fund and the Ontario Research Fund review?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands not only for her question, but for her advocacy for those three internationally, very, very well-regarded institutions in her riding.

The Ontario Research Fund is an excellent program that to date has invested about \$1.8 billion toward research projects. These investments go toward projects like scalpel-free surgery projects that speeds up recovery times and reduce health care burdens; research into cancer-attacking viruses that have no means to defend themselves; and research into the effect of wind on structures in our urban areas that could optimize wind farms.

As I said earlier, we plan to build on these investments by starting a review of the Ontario Research Fund.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development. Several college and university groups are at Queen's Park today to emphasize the critical need for an integrated mental health strategy on student mental health.

A 2016 survey of 25,000 students conducted by the Ontario University and College Health Association found that 46% of students reported feeling so depressed, it was difficult to function, up from 40% in 2013; 65% of students reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety, up from 58% in 2013; most pressing is that 13% of students have seriously considered suicide in the previous year, up from 10% in 2013.

Speaker, will the Liberal government commit today to preparing an integrated mental health strategy to address student mental health on community college and university campuses?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think this is an issue that all three parties agree passionately on.

I do want to say thank you to the people who spoke at the breakfast meeting this morning, those students who have a lived experience of mental health challenges who spoke very eloquently of their journey.

We are absolutely committed to building a more responsive, more coordinated mental health system on our campuses with links to the community sector. I think it's a responsibility we have to our students to ensure that they can be the very best they can be. As our Minister of Health says frequently, there is no health without mental health.

We have made important investments—I'll speak to them more in the supplementary—but there is more to do. I know that I can count on the support of all parties as we work to address this challenge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Back to the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development: Money alone cannot remedy this crisis. Students, community colleges and universities want a mental health strategy developed to deal with the crisis that exists on campuses.

Colleges and universities support their students as best as they are able, but again, money alone cannot remedy this crisis. Will the Liberal government answer the call from students and Ontario's colleges and universities and help them to address student mental health by developing and implementing an integrated mental health strategy here in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I agree that money alone does not solve this problem, but money sure does help. That's why we increased funding by 60% last year alone, dedicated to campus mental health services.

Let me talk about some of the investments that we've made and the impact they've had. We established Good2Talk/Allo J'écoute, a 24/7 bilingual helpline service that offers direct counselling and referral services to young people. To date, more than 77,000 students have accessed that.

The Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health is a knowledge exchange hub. They have funded more than 30 unique and innovative mental-health-related projects that we are learning from.

The mental health workers grant is dedicated funding to increase the number of front-line services and accessibility of services.

We take this issue extremely carefully. As I have said, it's the number one issue everywhere I go. I look forward to the support of both opposition parties.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. Speaker, the actions that have been taken by this government to address campus mental health have clearly been ineffective in addressing student mental health needs. Over the last five years, the number of college and university students with identified mental health issues has more than doubled at Ontario campuses.

This has led to an unprecedented collaboration among four organizations, representing almost the entire post-secondary sector, who released a comprehensive report this morning with 26 recommendations to address this crisis in campus mental health. These partners—the College Student Alliance, the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, Colleges Ontario and the Council of Ontario Universities—are urging this government to act now to implement a “whole of community” approach to the mental health needs of students. Will this government commit today to doing the right thing and implementing these crucial recommendations immediately?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the member from London West has proven my point. We are all united on this issue. We all believe that campus mental health is important and that we need to do more when it comes to making sure students get the support they need.

As I've said, we are all in this together. We are in it as government, as colleges, as universities, student groups and community services. We are all in this together. The recommendations from this, as the member says, unprecedented collaboration are excellent recommendations. We will take them very, very seriously.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Acting Premier: Speaker, this morning a panel of young people shared their experiences with the lack of services for campus mental health. They talked about escalating rates of student suicide and a chronic shortage of counsellors. They talked about being referred to community mental health services and waiting eight months or more for an appointment.

Three specific priorities were highlighted by the panellists: the need to recognize post-secondary students as a distinct population cohort, the need for sustainable funding to support peer-to-peer programming with trained volunteers at every post-secondary campus, and the need to integrate resiliency in children and youth through mandatory K-to-12 mental health and wellness curriculum.

Speaker, lives are at stake and urgent action is needed now. When can Ontario students expect to see these changes made and all of the recommendations from this report put into place?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think we agree. We have strong agreement on this issue.

I do want to acknowledge the people from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, from the College Student Alliance, and from colleges and the university sector. Coming together to create one report is unprecedented. We have very good advice now, and we welcome that advice.

But this is not the beginning. We have made significant investments recently and in the past. Since 2012, we've invested \$30 million to improve mental health supports and services for our post-secondary students. Beginning in 2017-18, we plan to invest another \$45 million over the next three years in student mental health and well-being.

This is important work, Speaker. It is important that we all address this issue.

HOUSING POLICY

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Logement, the Honourable Peter Milczyn, who also happens to be a fellow Etobicoke MPP, from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Speaker, I'm very pleased to learn about more developments in the great riding of Etobicoke North, which

include a \$400-million expansion of Etobicoke General Hospital, a \$2-billion expansion of the Finch LRT, a brand spanking new student centre at Humber College, and so much more that's going on in the riding.

Speaker, in particular to the minister, the Premier joined Mayor Tory and the minister to announce the leveraging of surplus provincial lands at Kipling and Finch in my riding to create new affordable housing units. Of course, Speaker, as you will know, housing is a significance expense for people in their day-to-day lives. Helping people find suitable, affordable and appropriate housing is absolutely critical. Therefore, I am delighted to see how the government is moving to create affordable housing units in Thistletown, in the Panorama Court area.

Speaker, my question is: Can the minister please tell us more about how this welcome development—

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

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for his outstanding advocacy for the community of Etobicoke North.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the growing pressures that many Ontarians face in their desire to own a home or even to rent a home. That's why we announced our Fair Housing Plan back in April. It was a very comprehensive package of measures, which included taking surplus provincial lands and allowing them to be redeveloped for much-needed housing.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was pleased to be with Premier Wynne as she announced the release of the Thistletown lands for the creation of a new residential community, which will include 35% of all the new housing units there as affordable. Some will be affordable rentals, some will be affordable home ownership, and there will be large-size family units as well as part of that redevelopment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I'd like to thank my fellow MPP from Etobicoke, also the Minister of Housing, with reference to that answer.

First of all, Speaker, I'm not sure if I mentioned the extraordinary developments going on in Etobicoke North, which include the \$400-million expansion of Etobicoke General Hospital, the \$2-billion expansion of the Finch LRT, with eight stops—eight stops, count 'em—within my own riding, custom-designed for my residents.

Speaker, in particular to the minister as in the capacity as the Minister of Housing, I'm especially pleased to learn, as he's just detailed, the Thistletown site—which is, by the way, a 48-acre beautiful site within my own riding, which will include green space, a new community and a range of housing options.

Speaker, I understand that the multiple measures that the minister is undertaking as part of the Fair Housing Plan will not only benefit my own constituents in Etobicoke North but beyond.

My question is: Could the minister please elaborate on how the Fair Housing Plan is helping to create more fairness and opportunity in the province—

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

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North for both posing the question and almost giving the answer as well.

Mr. Speaker, our comprehensive Ontario Fair Housing Plan included a number of measures in addition to releasing lands to create thousands of new affordable units across the province. We expanded rent control to all Ontario tenants. We limited the above-guideline increases that landlords could charge. We're working on a standard lease that would protect both tenants and landlords across this province with common language and common conditions for residential lease. We also brought in measures to tamp down on rampant speculation that increases housing prices.

Mr. Speaker, the announcement yesterday is another example of fair housing being brought to Ontario.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough—Agincourt on a point of order?

Ms. Soo Wong: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I want all of us to wish the Minister of Community and Social Services a happy birthday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward—Hastings on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, a point of order: I had a really good question I wanted to ask this morning, but because of the length of the questions from the government—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, that's very insulting to the Speaker; and I take offence to that.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also have some sad news. I apologize to the members. This is the last day for our pages. We do want to thank them for their service to Ontario and appreciate very much the work that they've done.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to introduce Maureen and Donald Trask. They're former constituents of mine. They're here today because of the missing persons legislation which is contained in the Police Services Act.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I will ask for your indulgence. I would like to welcome the follow-

ing people to the Legislature today—for all their hard work and contributions on our government's transformation of policing: Bruce Chapman, Stephen Reid, Trevor Arnold, Keith Aubrey and Mark Baxter from the Police Association of Ontario; Rob Jamieson and Thomas Kaudelka from the Ontario Provincial Police Association; Joe Couto from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police; Matthew Wilson from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; Julian Falconer; Maureen and Donald Trask; Linda Lamoureux and Chris Popovich from SLASTO; Ali Arlani, Ryan Teschner and Melissa Ilardo from the Ministry of the Attorney General; Fred Kaustinen from the OAPSB; Beth Angelakos from the Toronto Police Association; Caitlyn Kasper from Aboriginal Legal Services; Hewitt Loague, Valarie Ashbourne-Steele, Selwyn Pieters and Kingsley Gilliam from the Black Action Defence Committee; David Moskowitz from the Ontario Special Constable Association; Joseph Szamuhel from the Canadian Mental Health Association; and Karyn Graham from Affected Families of Police Homicide.

A big thank you to all those in my ministry and the Ministry of the Attorney General who have been instrumental in making this a reality.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am delighted to welcome some constituents from London West: Jessica Ashton and her husband, Scott Miller; Lucy Ashton; Whitey MacDonald; as well as Karen Wilson and Amanda Aquino, who joined me this afternoon at a media conference.

I'd also like to welcome Bruce McIntosh of the OAC, and finally, my friend James Compton from London West, who is from the Canadian Association of University Teachers, and was at Queen's Park to support college faculty.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? I would like to make one myself.

Also joining us—already introduced—from the riding of Brant, is the president of the PAO at the local level. Mr. Mark Baxter is here to witness the bill.

Thank you very much for joining us, Mark.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DIABETES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The start of November marks the beginning of Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetes Awareness Month is an opportunity to learn more about the risk factors for this disease and the impact it has on patients and their families. There are many supports and resources available to families to help manage and prevent the disease.

Diabetes affects more than 10 million people across Canada. If left undiagnosed or untreated, diabetes can lead to many life-threatening complications. In Ontario alone, an estimated 30.1% of the population has either diabetes or prediabetes. If untreated, diabetes can cause serious health effects such as heart attacks, nerve

damage, strokes, kidney failure, blindness and infections that can lead to amputations.

Speaker, the onset of diabetes and its complications can be prevented or delayed by following a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a healthy body weight and avoiding the use of tobacco.

The Canadian Diabetes Association has been leading the charge in this important fight against diabetes. Through education and outreach, they've built awareness and informed Canadians of the risks of this disease. As a former certified diabetes educator, I relied on the CDA numerous times to help improve my patient care.

The PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, would like to thank all of the dedicated health care professionals who work, day in and day out, to help diagnose, treat and prevent chronic diseases like diabetes.

VETERANS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning

We will remember them.

Those are the four lines in the fourth stanza of the poem *For the Fallen*, written by Robert Laurence Binyon back in 1914. These four lines are repeated at Legion meetings and memorial services.

They are perhaps not as famous as those written in 1915 by Major John McCrae in his poem *In Flanders Fields*. His three-stanza poem ends with,

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch; be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields.

On Saturday morning, I'll be laying a provincial wreath at the cenotaph in Tecumseh. In the afternoon, I'll do the same in east Windsor at the cenotaph in Riverside. I hope to be out a couple of times next week with my poppy box.

I joined Branch 255 of the Royal Canadian Legion 30 years ago to honour my father and his buddies, the men and women who served their country in times of military conflict. To all of our veterans and military peacekeepers, I say thank you for your service. Indeed, we will remember.

GURU NANAK DEV JI GURPURAB

Ms. Harinder Malhi: This Saturday, my family and I, along with Sikhs across Ontario, Canada and the world, will celebrate Guru Nanak's Gurburab, also known as Guru Nanak's Prakash Utsav. It's a celebration of the

first Sikh guru's birthday, Guru Nanak Dev Ji. This is one of the most sacred celebrations in the Sikh religion.

The festivities in the Sikh religion revolve around the anniversaries of the 10 Sikh gurus. These gurus were responsible for shaping the beliefs of the Sikhs. Their birthdays, known as Gurburab, are occasions for celebration and prayer among members of the Sikh faith.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikhism, was born on November 4, 1469, in Talwandi in Pakistan, which is now known as Nankana Sahib. Two days before the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the first of the 10 Sikh gurus, an akhand path, or 48-hour non-stop reading of the holy book of the Sikhs, the Guru Granth Sahib, is carried out in gurdwaras across the world.

Gurburab begins early with the singing of the Asa-di-Var—morning hymns—and hymns from Sikh scriptures. Afterwards, langar, or a special community lunch, is prepared at the gurdwaras, and the langar, along with karah prasad, is offered to men and women of all communities. In the evening, the gurdwaras are illuminated and people visit them in large numbers.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji preached on the principle of equality. Something coming directly from one of his quotes is, "Before becoming a Muslim, a Sikh or a Christian, let's become a human first."

COMMUNITY LIVING UPPER OTTAWA VALLEY

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ontarians can be proud of the work that our Community Living associations do in inspiring possibilities with people who have intellectual disabilities. I have seen first-hand the results of the hard work of so many dedicated people.

Recently, Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley was recognized for their work by being given the international Award of Excellence by the Council on Quality and Leadership. The award was given to them for their work in building an inclusive community. They are helping to create more inclusive residential settings, moving away from segregated programming and engaging the community on how to include individuals with intellectual disabilities in workplaces, organizations and volunteer initiatives in the broader community.

It should also be noted that Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley was the first Canadian organization to ever receive this award. In conversation with executive director Chris Grayson, it was clear to me that they are not only thrilled to be receiving this award but are very proud of the cutting-edge, person-centred approach that they have at Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley.

As the president and CEO of the Council on Quality and Leadership, Mary Kay Rizzolo, said, "They completely deserve this international Award of Excellence for their innovative work that they are doing and the successes they are having with the people they support."

I have every confidence that Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley will continue to be relentless in doing the right things for the right reasons for the people

they support. I personally have interacted with their clients, and not only do I congratulate Community Living Upper Ottawa Valley for the work they have done and will continue to do, but also unequivocally state that this recognition was thoroughly deserved.

1310

AUTISM SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today as MPP for London West to recognize the amazing determination and advocacy of my constituent Jessica Ashton, who is with us in the Legislature today and has been fighting for services for her son Ashton.

By the time Ashton was a year and a half, it was clear to Jessica and her husband, Scott, that their son was different. Ashton was referred to a developmental pediatrician and they waited anxiously for more than a year to get an appointment. Finally, this June, they got a diagnosis: Ashton has severe autism. After registering for services, Jessica was devastated to learn that there were almost 1,000 children ahead of her son on the wait-list. It will be at least three years from the time Jessica first suspected autism to Ashton receiving service. This is for a child with severe needs.

Jessica drafted a petition and, in just two months, was able to collect almost 6,500 signatures from people in the London area. As Jessica's petition states, early intervention is absolutely critical for children with autism. Each day these children wait for services is a day they will never get back.

I am proud to stand with Jessica and all the Londoners who signed her petition to advocate on behalf of Ashton. For every 68 children in Ontario, one will be diagnosed with autism. I call on this government to ensure that these kids get timely access to the diagnostic and therapeutic services they so urgently need.

SOMALI COMMUNITY

Mr. Yvan Baker: Over the past number of years, I've had the privilege of getting to know and working with our Somali community in Etobicoke. We have worked together on issues such as education, after-school programming and to help ensure that young people can find jobs and achieve their potential. I have attended the annual Somali soccer tournament, and this past July 1, I celebrated Somalia's Independence Day in Etobicoke with many members of the community. I still remember the cohesion and the solidarity the community showed on that particular day.

I have also been proud to support the Somali community in their work to build a strong and democratic Somalia. I was proud to celebrate the elections for the Galmudug interim administration and the recent successful election and peaceful transition of power to the new Prime Minister of Somalia. Premier Wynne recently announced humanitarian aid to the victims of the famine that is taking place in Somalia, something we can all be

very proud of and something that a number of us on this side were advocates for.

Two weeks ago, tragedy struck Somalia after a horrendous car-bombing attack in Mogadishu where hundreds were killed and hundreds more were injured. Two weeks ago in the Legislature, we held a moment of silence to commemorate the victims. The Somali Canadian community in Etobicoke immediately showed its solidarity and resilience. They organized a fundraiser to support the victims of this bomb.

I rise in the Legislature today to share with members of our Somali Canadian community that we mourn with them, that I stand with them in this difficult time and that I look forward to working with them in the weeks and months to come to build a stronger community in Etobicoke and to build a stronger Somalia.

Remarks in Somali.

BATTLE OF PASSCHENDAELE

Mr. Michael Harris: As we look toward a week of remembrance, I ask all to take a few moments to remember those who battled 100 years ago this week in the fight for Passchendaele.

Only months after the birth of a nation at Vimy, our 100,000-strong Canadian Corps took on the entrenched Germans just east of Ypres and again succeeded where allied forces had repeatedly failed. Despite months of a British offensive in Flanders, Passchendaele Ridge remained in German hands when the Canadians were ordered to deliver victory in October 1917.

Initially, Canadian commander Sir Arthur Currie of Strathroy feared the battle couldn't be won without a terrible expenditure of life. He, of course, was right. Initially, the Canadians were met with a shell-shocked scene of rotting bodies, dead soldiers and horses. Over two weeks, Currie's troops removed the dead and built roads and tram lines while under a barrage of German gunfire.

On October 26, they were ready for the first assault. All four divisions of the Canadian Corps took turns in four separate attacks, with gains of only a few hundred metres each day, amidst heavy losses. As Private John Sudbury wrote, "The enemy and ourselves were in the selfsame muck, degradation and horror to such a point nobody cared any more about anything."

With their third attack on the ridge on November 6, the Canadians succeeded in capturing Passchendaele and its ruins. A fourth assault days later finished the job. By that time, more than 4,000 Canadians were killed, and another 12,000 wounded.

As we pause to remember the sacrifice and heroism of our men and women in service, I ask that we also reflect on the bravery of our Canadian troops who fought valiantly at Passchendaele 100 years ago this week.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: Now that our long Canada-150 summer has transitioned to the chilly sting of Ontario

autumn winds, we're closing the windows and all breathing the same air. That means it's time for every Ontarian to take the flu shot.

The influenza virus can be lethal. The flu shot protects you. You can get a head cold, but that's not the seasonal flu with its weeks-long aches and pain, sneezing and coughing and feeling like death warmed over week after week.

When the H1N1 virus scared people several years ago, they lined up to get the flu shot. Deaths and hospitalizations from flu-related causes fell sharply during the H1N1 scare—proof that the flu shot works. Once the H1N1 scare was over, too many people who should know better stopped getting vaccinated each and every year against the seasonal flu. Flu-related deaths and hospitalizations have shot right back up to their historical levels.

The flu shot is absolutely free and available from your doctor or at many pharmacies and flu shot clinics. The flu vaccine is made from eggs, and it's made in Canada. It's safe, and it sure beats having the flu. You need the flu shot every year. However and wherever you get it, take the annual flu shot. It matters.

TRENT UNIVERSITY DURHAM

Mr. Lorne Coe: I want to thank the city of Oshawa for donating a plot of land to Trent University, Durham campus, in my riding. The land will expand the campus and the programs offered at the university.

Trent University's Durham campus generates \$47 million in annual economic activity for the region. Plans for the expansion will provide students with new academic and residential buildings. Also, Trent University Durham welcomes an average of 1,000 new students each year and is expecting increases in ongoing enrolment. The expanded availability of academic programming and living spaces will allow students more choice in deciding which program suits them best. Coupled with new experiential learning opportunities, students will gain access to a post-secondary education that will put them on a path to success. This land donation from the city of Oshawa will keep Durham region on the path to creating a thriving knowledge-based economy, building off the success of students for years to come.

I'd like to commend Mayor John Henry and the members of council for the city of Oshawa for their leadership and ongoing commitment to academic success for students in the region of Durham.

VISITOR

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

Just before we move on, for a third time, I'd like to welcome Mark Baxter, the local president of the PAO and on the executive—I see him in the gallery—and to let him know he's been mentioned three times in Hansard. So you'll ever be here, and it's proof to your chief that you were here. So thank you very much for being here, to Mark.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SAFER ONTARIO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017

POUR PLUS DE SÉCURITÉ EN ONTARIO

Mme Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to implement measures with respect to policing, coroners and forensic laboratories and to enact, amend or repeal certain other statutes and revoke a regulation / Projet de loi 175, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures concernant les services policiers, les coroners et les laboratoires médico-légaux et édictant, modifiant ou abrogeant certaines autres lois et abrogeant un règlement.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: The Safer Ontario Act is a comprehensive public safety legislation package that, if passed, would modernize laws governing law enforcement and respond to the needs and current realities of our communities.

The proposed legislation focuses on improvement in four areas: shifting to a collaborative approach to community safety and well-being planning; defining community safety service delivery; enhancing police oversight and accountability to the public; and ensuring sustainability of First Nations policing.

1320

The proposed bill would repeal and replace the Police Services Act, amend the Coroners Act and create five new acts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane on a point of order.

Mr. John Vanthof: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the sponsorship of Bill 29.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Laura Albanese: I am seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be author-

ized to meet until 6:30 p.m. today, November 2, 2017, for public hearings on Bill 148, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and to make related amendments to other Acts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Laura Albanese: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on General Government.

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

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move that the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 15, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. and on Thursday, November 16, 2017, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 160, An Act to amend, repeal and enact various Acts in the interest of strengthening quality and accountability for patients.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 29

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the sponsorship of Bill 29.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. John Vanthof: I move that sponsorship of Bill 29, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to exempt Sikh motorcyclists from the requirement to wear a helmet, standing in the name of the former member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, be transferred to the member for Hamilton Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

REMEMBRANCE WEEK

Hon. Laura Albanese: I rise today in recognition of Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day.

Last year, Ontario passed legislation that proclaimed Remembrance Week each year beginning on November 5 and ending with two minutes of silence at 11 a.m. on November 11. The act was co-sponsored by all three parties and received unanimous support. It justly extends the opportunity that Remembrance Day has long provided to honour the courage and sacrifice of the men and women of all backgrounds who helped to shape our country.

Mr. Speaker, from World War I to World War II through to modern-day conflicts, soldiers and peacekeepers have fought to protect and uphold our values and freedoms. These brave individuals represent the best in us all. From generation to generation, they have selflessly answered the call to serve. They have stepped forward from their families and communities. They have come from all faiths and cultures, as diverse as Ontario itself, to protect our freedom and safety. During Remembrance Week, we honour them all.

I would be remiss if I didn't take the time to mention the Westlake brothers, who will be remembered on Remembrance Day in York South–Weston, the riding I have the privilege to represent. Thomas, Albert and George Westlake were three young men from the neighbourhood of Mount Dennis who, like many other ordinary Canadians, volunteered to serve and never returned.

All three Westlake brothers boarded landing craft on June 4, 1944, and were among the thousands of Canadian soldiers to land in the first wave on Juno Beach on the morning of June 6, 1944. George Westlake, 23, who had joined the North Nova Scotia Highlanders, was the first of the brothers to die, on June 7, only one day after storming the beach. Four days later, his brothers, Tommy, 29, and Albert, 26, members of the Queen's Own Rifles, were among 100 Canadians who died trying to take the tiny village of Le Mesnil-Patry, held by soldiers of the 12th SS Panzer Division.

Thanks to the perseverance of Gary Westlake, their nephew, and Toronto councillor Frances Nunziata, in 1996 a local park, Jasper Park, was renamed Westlake Memorial Park, and last year, a laneway facing the park, west of Cliff Street where the brothers lived, was renamed Heroes Lane.

Mr. Speaker, 73 years after these three brothers made the ultimate sacrifice for their country, more and more people in our community are gathering in remembrance of the Westlake brothers. It is heartening to see.

All across the province this week, public ceremonies and events are being held that pay tribute to our fallen soldiers and our veterans. The government of Ontario has prepared a province-wide list of all the ceremonies being held across Ontario and posted it on ontario.ca/remember. These are opportunities to gather together and reflect on the significant contribution of our soldiers and our veterans. I encourage all Ontarians to find and attend a ceremony in their community.

Ontario's official ceremony of remembrance will take place at the Ontario Veterans' Memorial on the grounds of Queen's Park on Saturday, November 11, beginning at

10:45 a.m. The Premier, together with members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their families, will lay wreaths in honour of the fallen soldiers and pay tribute to the veterans in attendance and the servicemen and -women who serve today in conflict zones around the world. I invite anyone who can be at Queen's Park on Saturday, November 11, to attend.

I would also urge people to visit the World Remembers installation at Old City Hall here in Toronto. Our government is proud to support this international project as part of Canada's and Ontario's 150th anniversary. The installation lists the names of the 21,000 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in 1917 during World War I.

Mr. Speaker, during this week, it is our duty to honour and remember those who gave their lives to keep us safe and free. I encourage all Ontarians to wear a poppy, attend a ceremony or observe a private moment of silence, and remember.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: As was mentioned, one year ago all parties in this House agreed to pass the Remembrance Week Act. The act was brought forward by myself and jointly sponsored by the members from Parkdale–High Park and Ottawa South as a tribute to our veterans. The Remembrance Week Act declares the week preceding Remembrance Day each year as Remembrance Week. It augments November 11 and is another reminder of the incredible sacrifices our veterans made for our country in the cause of freedom. I continue to be grateful to all members of this House of all parties for the support they gave towards this act in making Remembrance Week a reality in Ontario.

1330

Throughout my life, and I'm sure all of our lives, we've all admired our veterans and the amazing contributions they have made to Canada and to the world.

Speaker, for many of us, war is something far away we see through pictures or news reports on television. It's something we read about in books and magazines. Most of us have no experience with the violence and suffering that accompanies war and conflict. Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day is our occasion to pay tribute to the men and women who suffered so much on our behalf.

Our veterans were part of the generation that changed history. They rose to a magnificent challenge and made a brave choice. They didn't ignore tyranny and injustice. They crossed the ocean and fought and defeated the enemy and liberated captive nations. Instead of standing by and watching evil grow, they chose to act for the good of all.

Our military has an amazing history here in Canada and a tremendous record of service around the world. Our veterans answered the call many years ago to defend freedom and our way of life. We must always remember our veterans who served in Korea and Afghanistan, and our veterans who fought in other conflicts and peace-keeping missions around the world. Many paid the

ultimate sacrifice and didn't come home. Remembering their courage and dedication is very important.

Our soldiers didn't fight for glory or for medals. They didn't leave their homes and families because it was glamorous. They went because it was the right thing to do. The Remembrance Week Act itself states, "The people of Ontario must never forget the extraordinary courage and profound sacrifice made by the men and women who bravely and unselfishly gave their lives for Canada in wars and in peace support operations."

Speaker, this is a special year for us to commemorate our veterans. It is the 100th anniversary of the First World War and the 75th anniversary of the Second World War. Our world would be a much different place if our soldiers had not prevailed in those two world wars. These conflicts consumed the entire world and were a struggle for freedom and democracy. Today we live in a safe and prosperous country. November 11 lets us all remember the values we cherish. It is those values our soldiers fought and died to protect. We must never forget that our fundamental freedoms of democracy and liberty came from the sacrifice of so many.

Let us also take a moment to remember other places in the world enjoying freedom today thanks to the sacrifices of our veterans. Many countries were overrun by tyranny and were suffering. Our veterans helped liberate them from these conditions. The freedoms our fellow nations enjoy today are the ultimate symbols of the unselfish sacrifices our Canadian veterans made on behalf of the world.

On November 11, Royal Canadian Legions across Ontario will be hosting ceremonies for Remembrance Day to pay tribute and recognize the sacrifice of our soldiers. Please take a few moments of your day to attend and pay your respects. It's a day to reflect and honour their bravery and heroism. We owe them a debt that can never be repaid.

Lest we forget.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my distinct honour to stand in this Legislature and speak today in recognition of Remembrance Week. I know that communities across Ontario pay tribute to our veterans, men and women who have served or who continue to serve, and I know that every member of this Legislature would be able to speak at length about Remembrance Week and the importance of Remembrance Day in our communities. I am pleased to be able to tell a little bit of Oshawa's story today.

In Oshawa, we have many service clubs and Legions. We have the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 637 and Branch 43 in Oshawa. We have the General W. Sikorski Polish Veterans' Association, the Canadian Corps, the Oshawa naval club, and the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, 420 wing. We also have, in the heart of our downtown, the Ontario Regiment, which has just celebrated 150 years, and we have the Ontario Regiment Museum, with its amazing collection of tanks and armoured vehicles, and the proud Ontario Regiment Ferret Club. I invite everyone to come and visit.

Speaker, I would like to say that while we recognize our veterans and their families, we can never repay the debt we owe, nor can we be grateful enough for the freedoms and security we enjoy every day across all of our communities. We live each day in a community built on a safe and protected foundation, and each day we are protected and defended by men and women who put on various uniforms, whether military, law enforcement or emergency service. We thank them all for all that they have given and continue to give for the sake of our country and our communities.

As I said, Oshawa is fortunate to have a strong history of service. Our service clubs, Legions and proud active regiment continue to strengthen our community, and because of our deep service roots, we recognize the season of remembrance. More than Remembrance Week, we have remembrance season.

To start our season, we raise the poppy flag in Oshawa to begin poppy week, and we thank all of our Legion members who do such a fantastic job across our communities with the poppy campaign, raising funds and raising the understanding in our communities.

This year, we also had a special opportunity to recognize our local history of service. There were two plaques that started in Oshawa, commemorating GM employees who died in the two world wars. Those plaques left Oshawa, made their way to the Canadian Museum of History, and have made their way back home. We were able to share those with our community and they're now at our city hall.

Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to read from those plaques. One is a poem called Memory Lingers Long.

Memory lingers long

Tho' years have passed since whirling wheels gave place to clash of arms

And valiant souls neglecting self fought in our empire's cause

We still remember.

This tablet is erected to the memory of the service by those employees of

The McLaughlin Carriage Company

The McLaughlin Motor Car Company

The Chevrolet Motor Company Limited

And a tribute to those past and present employees of General Motors of Canada Limited who served in the Great War.

And, Speaker, another plaque; the verse is:

They gave their lives

But their memories live in our hearts.

They are buried afar

But they are Canada's sons.

May the new world we make be a memorial

More enduring than their names cast in bronze.

To the men of General Motors of Canada who died in their country's service in the years 1939 to 1945.

Speaker, I'm glad to share something local, but I know that every community across this province has a local

story, local families that have built our great communities, and we thank them.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to recognize our fine cadets across communities who are just awesome. At every opportunity we have to see them in their service—

Applause.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: We have so much to be proud of when we look to our youth, and certainly all of our cadets are a shining example of that.

As we recognize the men and women who have served, I'd like to take a moment to appreciate those women and children who for years waited and worried. Let us pay tribute to those wartime wives and women who picked up the tools and the torches to keep our communities moving forward.

Let us also recognize this Remembrance Week the caregivers and families of those who come home in need of love and support. Throughout each part of our history, we have been defined by the unwavering strength of our families and communities, and we need to thank them at this time as well.

We are proud Canadians and I'm sure that we are all grateful ones. To the men and women who have served or serve, and to those who support them, we thank you for all that you have given and continue to give.

Lest we forget.

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

It's therefore now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

DENTAL CARE

Mrs. Gila Martow: 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...."

I affix my signature and give it to page Thomas.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled "Create a Minimum Long-Term-Care Standard."

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents’ increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

1340

“Whereas several Ontario coroner’s inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommend 4.1 hours of direct care per day;

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

“Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we, constituents in Liberty Village and the King–Strachan corridor, ask for increased community consultation with SmartTrack, Metrolinx and the city of Toronto regarding their plan to build a rapid transit station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the current transit options out of Liberty Village are insufficient and crowded for a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the proposed location for a SmartTrack station labelled Liberty Village does not effectively serve community residents;

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

“Direct SmartTrack, Metrolinx, the city of Toronto and the TTC to consider moving the SmartTrack station from the proposed Dovercourt and Sudbury location to a location further east to better serve Liberty Village and the King–Strachan corridor.”

I send it via page Colin.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I’m really glad to say that this brings to 70,000 the signatures on this petition that I’m reading that comes from all over Ontario.

“Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of long-term-care (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families;

“Whereas over the last 10 years 50% of Ontario’s hospital-based complex continuing care beds have been closed by the provincial government...;

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in long-term-care homes keeps pace with residents’

increasing acuity and a growing number of residents with complex behaviours...;

“Whereas there is extensive evidence that a care standard can result in increased staff levels, which translates into improved quality of care for residents;

“Whereas for over a decade several Ontario coroner’s inquests into nursing” home “deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and increase in staffing levels;

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government first promised a legislated care standard for residents in the province’s long-term-care homes in 2003 but in” 2017 “they have yet to make good on their promise;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard—but falls short of actually creating one...;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“(1) An amendment must be made to the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) for a legislated care standard of a minimum four hours per resident each day...;

“(2) The province must increase funding in order for long-term-care homes to achieve a staffing and care standard...;

“(3) To ensure accountability the province must make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory;

“(4) The province must immediately provide funding for specialized facilities for persons with cognitive impairment...;

“(5) The province must stop closing complex continuing care beds...”

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

ANIMAL PROTECTION

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I’d like to present this petition on behalf of Nuha Salem, a constituent of Ottawa–Vanier who is in favour of changing practices toward declawing cats.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the process popularly known as ‘declawing’ is actually an amputation, that is the equivalent of cutting off a human’s fingers from the knuckle up;

“Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association considers ‘declawing’ to be an unnecessary cosmetic procedure but unfortunately does not oppose declawing;

“Whereas research has shown that declawing a cat significantly reduces a cat’s quality of life and leads to behavioural and health problems;

“Whereas declawing eliminates a cat’s ability to defend itself when in danger;

“Whereas the process is considered to be inhumane and is banned in more than 40 countries;

“Whereas vets, unfortunately, encourage” sometimes “cat owners to declaw cats for the sake of money without discussing with them the consequences of the procedure, and do not offer them other humane alternatives;

“We, the undersigned”—and there are over 240 signatures here—“petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To ban the unnecessary and inhumane procedure known as ‘declawing,’ and/or tendonectomy (= deknuckling = amputation), in the province of Ontario.”

I put my name to it and I will give it to page Jacob.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas seniors and families deserve long-term-care beds that provide high-quality care in their community;

“Whereas, according to the Ontario Long Term Care Association 2016 report, 97% of residents need help with daily activities such as getting out of bed, eating or toileting;

“Whereas there are currently 26,500 people on the wait list for long-term care, and that number is expected to double in the next six years;

“Whereas long-term-care homes require stable and predictable funding each year to help pay for the rising cost of operations, provide quality care and invest in more beds;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to move quickly to pass Bill 110, the Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act, 2017, and ensure that funding for food and utilities reflect changes in the cost of living.”

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

PHARMACARE

Miss Monique Taylor: I will read a petition titled “Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care, and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medicines they need;

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medications as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

I’m very proud to support this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to page Linnea to bring to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

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

“Whereas the current transit options to service Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor are insufficient and not at pace with a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the communities of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor require increased community consultation regarding the planning for a new regional express rail station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the currently proposed location for a SmartTrack station to service Liberty Village will not effectively connect with residents and businesses;

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

“To direct Metrolinx to consider and review the re-location of the proposed SmartTrack station from the Dovercourt-Sudbury Street site to a new location further east that would ensure enhanced and accessible service to residents of Liberty Village and King-Strachan corridor.”

I strongly support this petition. I’ll sign it and give to page Payton.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Lorne Coe: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas seniors and families deserve long-term-care beds that provide high-quality care in their community;

“Whereas, according to the Ontario Long Term Care Association 2016 report, 97% of residents need help with daily activities such as getting out of bed, eating or toileting;

“Whereas there are currently 26,500 people on the wait-list for long-term care, and that number is expected to double in the next six years;

“Whereas long-term-care homes require stable and predictable funding each year to help pay for the rising cost of operations, provide quality care and invest in more beds;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to move quickly to pass Bill 110, the Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act, 2017, and ensure that funding for food and utilities reflect changes in the cost of living.”

I agree with the content of this petition. I’m going to affix my signature to it and provide it to page Jebreel to bring to the table.

1350

SHINGLES VACCINE

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

“Whereas the government of Ontario announced that starting September 15, 2016, the shingles vaccine would be available to all seniors 65 years to 70 years free of charge...;

“Whereas seniors over the age of 70 years will still be required to pay for the vaccine if they choose;

“Whereas the government of Ontario claims that studies show that the vaccine is highly effective when seniors are vaccinated between the ages of 65 and 70 and will not cover the vaccine for all Ontario seniors;

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

“This is unfair to seniors over the age of 70 and we urge the government to expand the coverage so that all Ontario seniors are eligible for the free shingles vaccine.”

I agree. I'll sign it and give it to Colin to bring up to the front.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we, constituents in Liberty Village and the King–Strachan corridor, ask for increased community consultation with SmartTrack, Metrolinx and the city of Toronto regarding their plan to build a rapid transit station in the neighbourhood;

“Whereas the current transit options out of Liberty Village are insufficient and crowded for a rapidly growing community;

“Whereas the proposed location for a SmartTrack station labelled Liberty Village does not effectively serve community residents;

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

“Direct SmartTrack, Metrolinx, the city of Toronto and the TTC to consider moving the SmartTrack station from the proposed Dovercourt and Sudbury location to a location further east to better serve Liberty Village and the King–Strachan corridor.”

I send it via page Max.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas after more than a decade of mismanagement of Ontario’s energy sector, including the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, and the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss have all put upward pressure on hydro bills; and

“Whereas a recent Auditor General’s report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion by 2032 if nothing changes; and

“Whereas Ontarians and businesses can no longer afford the rising cost of hydro, with 567,000 residential electricity customers in arrears in 2015; and

“Whereas the CEO of Hydro One has a \$4-million salary compared to the Quebec CEO’s \$400,000 salary; and

“Whereas the sell-off of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and may lead to even higher hydro rates;

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

“That the Liberal government stop the sell-off of Hydro One, stop signing energy contracts we don’t need, address out-of-control executive pay and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills for all Ontarians.”

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

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Alice Jodouin from Gogama in my riding for this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Highway 661 is a three-kilometre secondary highway which links the town of Gogama to Highway 144 and is in extremely poor condition throughout the entire winter season; and

“Whereas Highway 661 is an essential highway which all emergency vehicles, school buses and other vehicles, including snowplows, must travel into and out of the community daily; and

“Whereas the low standard of winter maintenance of this highway, always snow-packed and icy, creates a serious public safety issue, putting at risk the lives of the area residents;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Increase the winter maintenance standard for this single-access highway into Gogama to ensure that the residents have safer access to their home community.”

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

FAIRNESS IN MINIMUM WAGE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE DE SALAIRE MINIMUM

Ms. Forster moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to the minimum wage / Projet de loi 172, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d’emploi en ce qui concerne le salaire minimum.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today I’m proud to rise, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and New Democrats—my

colleagues who are here today—to address my bill, the Fairness in Minimum Wage Act.

The NDP have been clear on this issue from the start. In fact, we announced in April 2016 that we would introduce a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for all workers—no sub-minimum for some workers like students and liquor servers.

The NDP introduced many amendments over the course of Bill 148, at first, second and, now, third reading. At second reading, those amendments were all voted down by this Liberal government. Each and every one of them would have made workplaces fairer, but the Liberal government chose to vote against them.

I have listened to, along with my staff and some of my colleagues, and read about 1,500 deputations over the course of the last 18 months.

But today I'm going to focus on the minimum wage piece.

The Liberals have had 14 years to put in a decent minimum wage, to do the right thing. Instead, they introduced the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, but with wage tiering and many exemptions, it is the opposite of fair. My PMB seeks to remedy the exclusions left out of Bill 148, in particular wage tiering. Some 136 presentations at first and second reading and, most recently, this week stated that a \$15 minimum wage reduces reliance on social assistance, decreases stress and mental health issues, and reduces the gender pay gap.

Today we heard from Lauren Bates from the Wellesley Institute, who supports a \$15 minimum wage for all workers as a step forward. She presented on the negative health outcomes of low wages on physical health, psychological health and life expectancy, and about a study in Toronto that speaks to a thriving wage—that would need \$25 an hour for workers in Toronto if they actually could thrive in the city, to pay off student debts, to save a bit for retirement like people with real jobs are able to do, plus the normal rent, utilities and transportation costs, and that didn't even include child care costs.

Sheila Block from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives supports the \$15 minimum wage for all workers. She spoke about the studies on increases to the minimum wage and the flawed methodology of some of those studies. The real issue of income equality comes out of the labour market and the increasing income inequalities between the top half and the bottom half of wage earners, and that disproportionately affects indigenous folks, new immigrants and women. She challenged the committee and anybody else to not agree that all Ontarians should have the same basic human rights: good food, safe shelter, the ability to get prescription drugs, the ability to get health treatments they require that perhaps aren't covered by any of our benefit plans.

The Premier frequently states that no one working full-time in Ontario should live in poverty, but they are, and they will continue to do so—students and liquor servers, in particular. The wage-tiering exemptions that are going to continue to be allowed are going to grow. At

the moment, the difference between a student and the minimum wage is only 70 cents an hour—but that is going to grow, by 2019, to \$1.85 an hour. For servers, it grows to \$1.95 an hour. How can this be a fair workplace?

Employees serving liquor and relying on tips say it can be very erratic. As a server, you don't know if you're going to have a slow day; you don't know what your bottom line is. Financial planning can be difficult if that's the job you're relying on. There's a chance the money you receive in tips gets tipped out to a number of other people. The restriction of server wages on the basis of tips doesn't account for that.

During the summer, in Ottawa, we heard from a young man, in a bar at the hotel we were staying at, that many people sign their bills to their rooms and they don't leave a tip. So you never know, some nights you can make 10 bucks; some nights you might make 40 bucks.

We heard from Lydia Dobson in Ottawa. Lydia was a server for 15 years. She has her BA and master's, which specifically looked—and she specifically did research on the ESA. She wasn't able to find a job in her area of education, so she spent some time doing some research. The majority of bartenders and servers across this province are women, particularly young women. She currently works at two different restaurants in order to pay her bills, despite her education. She discussed the impacts on her employment and her take-home pay. She says that servers have no control whether they're going to be in a high-traffic area or shift.

1400

In Lydia's case, her shift schedules mixed with the impact of her tips on her income resulted in her being exploited into wearing revealing outfits. She refused to wear an outfit that was revealing and was taken off the shifts where she was making significant tips to morning shifts, where she only made 20 bucks a shift. Her income of her tips was cut down to only 10% of what she was making when she was asked to dress provocatively and could make 90% more tips.

She told us that relying on tips meant that, in many months, she couldn't afford to pay her rent. We heard from other servers who said they had to tolerate sexual and other forms of harassment in order to receive tips, and so, due to a tiered minimum wage, the tips were vital for them to afford basic necessities.

I'm going to move on to students. As the bill currently stands, students will receive a lower wage. High school students are working to save for post-secondary education. A high school student would have to work two summers full-time to pay the \$8,000-a-year tuition in the province of Ontario—the highest, I believe, in the country. The cost-of-living increase coupled with rising tuition means it's harder for students to afford post-secondary. Free tuition only applies to certain income levels, and if you happen to be in that middle range where your parents earn enough but they still can't afford to help you pay for school, then you have to go get a job. Some of these students get two and three jobs to juggle their rent and their tuition.

Many of them rely on food banks in addition to receiving loans. Chris Grawey from Hamilton \$15 and Fairness stated that a separate minimum wage for students under the age of 18 is reverse age discrimination. Right? We're actually discriminating against people on the basis of their age, and it affects poor families in a disproportionate way.

There is an argument that young people deserve a lower minimum wage because they live at home, but, in fact, studies show that a majority of young people in Ontario begin post-secondary education at 18 or 19. They move out of their parents' home and they never go back. Most students incur significant debt loads—over \$25,000 a year, on average—and the loss of a couple of hundred dollars per year because of the tiered sub-minimum wage actually leaves students with the choice of paying for food or paying their tuition.

Interestingly enough, and I'm sure everybody knows this, with 13 provinces and territorial jurisdictions in Canada, Ontario is the only one that will continue with a tiered minimum-wage system.

Students believe that it suggests that the government doesn't value the work they do, that they're less valuable despite doing the same work. The Canadian Federation of Students say that they can't afford to be paid a rate that's less than the general population because of the cost of living. In my area alone, I heard from students who are living in these housing units that are being built in our communities. They have a room with kind of a community kitchen. Some of them are paying as much as \$700 a month for rent, and they have to pay twelve months of the year in order to keep their place.

Students are forced into a situation where they have to take multiple jobs. We have an ever-growing mental health crisis that we heard about today here in the Legislature. The government could do the right thing by reducing some of the stress and anxiety by paying students the same minimum wage.

I have a couple of other stories here for you that I just wanted to share that came out of the committee today. They're kind of good-news stories, but they support a \$15 minimum wage for everyone.

Josie Rudderham, who is from Hamilton and is the owner of Cake and Loaf bakery, has a living-wage business that also hires students. She believes in one minimum wage for workers. She was raised in a middle-income family as the daughter of two social workers, but attended an inner-city school. She said that early on, she realized that her life was different than the kids living in poverty at her school. She worked in a number of bakeries after she graduated from school and she saw sexism, discrimination and all of those things that cause abuse and family stress, addictions, and the need to work multiple jobs. She started her own business in 2011 with her partner on the premise that they would not take a wage higher than the highest-paid worker working for them at the time. She promised that when the business took off she would give them two- to three-dollar-an-hour wage increases. She's been able to do that.

Her first year she had \$250,000 in sales, and seven years later she now has a million-dollar company. Her bakery employees earn \$15.50 plus tips, if they're front-line, and \$16 if they're behind the scenes. She says that she now has—and she has always had—loyalty from her employees, low sick time, less turnover, less training costs, all of those kinds of things.

She called upon businesses to go back and reprioritize to ensure that all Ontarians have a good job, because we all have a larger social responsibility to address.

I also heard from parents re their teenagers or young adults who are students doing the same work as a non-student or adult but making considerably less. They call it age discrimination as well. One parent even told me that her son had to pay \$60 for his own uniform with a company logo—at an inflated price, she says. It's such a shame, she says, that businesses that are making profits are making these kids actually spend 60 bucks for a T-shirt and an apron. In addition to that, they want them to accept a lower wage rate.

I also heard from Gilleen Witowski, a young woman here in Toronto who has a dog-walking business. She too came up with all kinds of great ideas where businesses can go back and re-evaluate and meet the needs of students and of liquor servers so that everyone here in Ontario is paid a minimum wage of no less than \$15 an hour.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this issue and I call on the government to do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm pleased to rise to speak to this private member's bill. Speaker, since I've been elected to the Legislature, one of the things that I've spent a lot of time on that I'm passionate about, as I know you know and many members know, is the issue of youth unemployment and how we tackle that challenge. It's a topic that I introduced a private member's bill on in my first year in office, with the goal of helping students to make more informed choices about their post-secondary education, so that when they graduated from college or university, they would be able to find a job. They'd pursue a degree or an education that would allow them to find a job.

That bill was endorsed by all the student organizations, the Canadian Federation of Students, OUSA, the College Student Alliance and the Ontario Graduate Students' Alliance.

The reason I raise all of that is because I've spent a lot of time researching this since becoming an MPP and previously in my role in business and as someone who studied economics in university. So I understand the issue of youth unemployment relatively well, and one of the things that I'm concerned about is how the member's legislation would impact young people in a negative way.

One of the things that we're always conscious of as legislators, and certainly in government, is the unintended consequences of what we do. One of the things that we have to be conscious of, I think, is that when we think

about the student minimum wage, one of the benefits to students of the student minimum wage is that it entices and incents employers to hire more students, to hire more young people.

Very often, students have less experience than more mature workers. As a result, if we were to raise the student minimum wage to the same level as all other workers—or eliminate the tiers, as the member mentioned—then my concern would be that there would be a lot of employers who would choose not to hire students, who would now choose to hire more mature workers. That, to me, is concerning because that would take away from youth employment. That would take away opportunities from young people who would otherwise get employment.

As I said, as someone who has studied the youth unemployment issue a lot, who has advocated for students on this issue, as someone who has worked hard on that topic and studied it from the perspective of economics and business, I'd be concerned about that particular amendment, that change, that the member is proposing.

1410

On the issue of the liquor server minimum wage, I think one of the things that we found—and I travelled with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs when we toured the province to consult on Bill 148. There were a number of presenters who came to us and actually shared with us their payroll information, without disclosing the names of the people who worked for them. They disclosed their payroll, all the details: how much employees made based on the minimum wage; how much liquor servers made based on hourly work, so based on the current minimum wage, and then how much they made in total after tips and how much they made on average per hour after tips. What we often saw—in fact, we saw it from all the presenters who came and shared this information with us during those hearings—was that, on average, liquor servers were making far more than the minimum wage, and far more than \$15, in fact.

I remember one presenter came to see us, I think it was in North Bay, and shared that, on average, his liquor servers, after tips, were making over \$30 per hour. I appreciate that not every night is a busy night, and on some nights liquor servers may not make a lot of tips and therefore their average wage for that night may fall somehow below the \$15. I realize that that's possible. But on average, we found that liquor servers make far more than the \$15 minimum wage that is proposed through Bill 148. I think the key here is to strike a balance that makes sense, so that's why I think the liquor server minimum wage shouldn't be raised further.

Once again, Speaker, because I'm passionate about helping young people get employed and making sure they have opportunities at an early stage in their lives, especially students, I think further raising the student minimum wage, as the member has recommended, is something that I wouldn't support.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 172. We want to keep the time limited because we want to keep the committee on schedule. But this is one of those rare occasions that I agree with the member from Etobicoke Centre.

I do have the chart with regard to—there's a good reason and a science why we have tiered wages. The presenter that he talked about in North Bay: I actually have the data, and it's based on credit cards, so only anything that was actually documented by sales on credit cards. Of nine employees, the average hourly gratuities, not including the \$9.90 liquor server wages, ranged from a low of \$16.75 per hour to a high of \$27.08. This is one restaurant calculated over a year. So, Speaker, there is a good reason to have a tiered wage structure for liquor servers in the hospitality business.

The other thing that we talk about is students, and I understand. Look, the easiest conversation you'd ever have as an employer is to go up to one of your people and say, "You're getting a raise." That's the easiest conversation you'd ever have. The toughest one is to say, "I'm going to have to lay you off." That's what I've actually heard from students in my riding and all across Ontario when we had our hearings, where students are concerned that they won't have a job. In fact, I spoke to a mother of two students last week. She was concerned about the college strike, and she said, "On top of that, my two boys have already been told, from the employer they had last year, that they won't have a job next summer because of the changes in wages."

Having a job is an important thing for any student. We need to keep it that way.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's an honour for me to rise and speak, of course, in favour of what I think is an extremely important bill. I would imagine some of my colleagues in this place, perhaps not the two gentlemen who just spoke prior to me—before I had even considered running for office, I actually was a server. In fact, I spent 10 years waitressing—what we used to call it back then—or being a server, in the early part of my life. I took orders; I ran dishes to pay my way through university and to start my life.

In the years since I spent that time counting on tips to pay the bills, life for servers has gotten more difficult as costs of living in this province have soared. Housing costs have gone through the roof, hydro bills have pushed people's budgets to the breaking point because of this Liberal government, and many servers are stuck trying to pay Canada's highest tuition rates as they try to make their way through university—a little bit different than me; tuition rates were not as bad as they are now, by any stretch of the imagination.

Over the last 14 years in this province, wages have barely moved and real purchasing power from those wages has slipped. For a server today, taking home enough money to make ends meet is harder than it has ever been.

Of course, none of that even touches on the unique challenges that servers face. Being a server in a restaurant or bar is precarious work. As the sponsor of this bill, the MPP for Welland, said in her remarks, shifts can change on a dime, schedules are changing constantly, and the sections to which you're assigned by the employer are always moving around, so tips are not consistently dependable for servers.

The meagre labour protections that this government has seen fit to pass thus far are rarely enforced in the environment of restaurants and bars.

A disproportionate number of servers are women, as has already been mentioned—something that only adds to the challenges when we talk about workplace fairness.

When we tell servers and students, some of the hardest-working people you'll ever meet, that they don't deserve the same wage as anyone else, we tell them that they are unworthy, and we tell them that they don't matter.

Madam Speaker, I think the title of this bill is a very appropriate title. It's called the Fairness in Minimum Wage Act. I know that Liberal Premier Wynne likes to talk about fairness a lot. She doesn't implement much to make things fair, but she sure likes to talk about fairness.

Every really significant piece of legislation that comes through this building or through any Parliament in Canada is supposed to be about fairness. I think that's what most of us got into this kind of business for. When you think about some of the big ones, like giving women the right to vote, or creating universal medicare, or entrenching labour protections like minimum wage that so many of us take for granted, fairness lies at the root of these decisions. And fairness lies at the heart of the bill before us today—true fairness, where people are treated equally. That's what fairness means.

I think servers and students should be paid no less than the minimum wage that anybody else is paid, because relying on the generosity or financial capacity of strangers is no way to pay the bills and plan for the future; and, more importantly, because an hour of a server's time or a student's time is not worth less than an hour of anyone else's time. That's what fairness is.

I hope the other members of this House will choose to side with fairness and side with the hard-working Ontarians in this province who are servers and who are students because they deserve no less than anyone else.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we know, this bill amends the Employment Standards Act, 2000, with respect to the tiered minimum wage category for students under 18 and liquor servers. As we also know, these changes have already been tabled by the NDP before our finance committee. They were rejected by the government. That was about two months ago, during the clause-by-clause consideration of amendments.

At the time, a local restaurant owner in my riding sent me an email: "Minimum wage jobs are not meant to fully support a family. It is supposed to bolster a household income, start youth on the right track to gainful full-time

employment, supplement retirement income...." He cites increasing costs of over \$200,000 a year. That was last May, with the existing increase in the minimum wage. He indicated that he will look at discontinuing his support of supporting and training young people to provide a bright future for them.

By and large, students under 18 do live at home. Any jump in the minimum wage with this particular proposal will kill student jobs and the kind of experience that goes with them.

1420

We've heard from Restaurants Canada, again—running small businesses who hire and train so many high school students as well as newcomers and others get looking for that first start in the labour market. As they indicated, "There is no question this will lead to fewer jobs, fewer hours and fewer employers."

They go on to say: "The government says it wants to get kids out of their parents' basements, but today's announcement will have the opposite effect. We're going to see more young people living in their parents' basements longer." The recent proposal will only exacerbate that problem.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to be able to have a few moments to be on the record in support of my colleague's bill, Fairness in Minimum Wage Act.

Speaker, it's not the first time that I've stood in this House as a previous server in my past life; it's something that I was able to raise my family on—myself and my daughter. But it wasn't always easy, especially when you couldn't count on tips. You can't count on tips to pay the rent, with the soaring rates of what our rents are these days. You can't count on your tips to be able to pay the cost of hydro that's happening in our province today. There is no reliability in a tip; the only thing that you can rely on is your wage. By not ensuring that you have a fair minimum wage that goes along with the rest of the province, then there just really is no fairness. It's unfortunate that the government found reason to create this tiered system that they have.

I'm proud of the work that the member from Welland has done on Bill 148: putting forward amendments, trying to make the government's bill better, and now another kick at the can to give the government an opportunity to do the right thing by workers in this province and ensure that people actually do have the ability to a fair wage. The only way to do that is to ensure that it's \$15 across the table, regardless of what industry you're working in. There should be no lower wage in the province of Ontario.

So I'm pleased to support this bill and look forward to, hopefully, watching the members of the government see fit to do so also.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. I'm very proud of my colleague the MPP from Welland for bringing forward this piece of legislation.

It always feels like we're trying to tinker and trying to fix legislation that this government brings forward to us. I have to say, you are consistent. I will tell you this: You seem to have embraced this culture of inequity, of building inequity into the legislation, about picking winners and deciding who the losers will be. It's very much aligned with the language that the PCs have just articulated: "Minimum wage jobs aren't supposed to be sustainable." Well, if it's the only job you can get in the province of Ontario, it needs to be sustainable.

Especially from looking at this legislation through a gender lens—in the committee, we heard from many women. The PCs and the Liberals will say, "Isn't this good enough?" and "Can we really afford to pay fair wages?" I remember one delegate being so very clear and so articulate and very emotional and saying, "Don't I have the right to live with dignity in the province of Ontario? Can't I have a chance to actually earn a living with a fair wage?"

You've built inequities into Bill 148. Help us help you. We're trying to help you. Help us do—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Do the right thing for a change.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Just do the right thing.

The story of the female server in the restaurant, in the bar, and having to decide whether or not you wear a provocative outfit so that you're in a high-traffic area so you make more money—these are the politics of these workplaces.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Which the Liberals are upholding.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, you are building it in. You are building in the systemic level of inequity in these workplaces. You have a chance, a genuine chance, to fix that here today.

I don't want my daughter making less money when she's serving in a restaurant, and I don't want it to depend on whether or not she wears a provocative outfit, whether she's in a high-traffic area and is going to make more money. So let's fix it right now. You have the chance to do so. It's never too late to do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a great pleasure for me, as critic for women's issues, education and post-secondary education, to rise to speak in support of my colleague's private member's bill, the Fairness in Minimum Wage Act. Certainly, in all three of my critic portfolios, this bill is a high priority.

I want to first speak about the bill from the perspective of women's issues. There was a study just released in February this year. It came to a troubling conclusion. It was a study conducted by a researcher at the University of Victoria. It said that the law that BC enacted in 2011 that set a lower minimum wage for alcohol servers has actually opened them up to more sexual harassment on the job. Speaker, research has actually validated the link between a lower minimum wage for servers and more vulnerability to sexual harassment.

Speaker, Alberta eliminated the minimum wage for liquor servers because they recognized the risks that this was creating for women, because we all know that the majority of the positions of alcohol servers are taken up by women. Women tend to be much more likely to work in those positions, and women are very vulnerable to sexual harassment from customers and from co-workers.

I also want to speak for a moment and reinforce the points that my colleague made about the unfairness of making this assumption that because a young person is a student, their labour should not be compensated the same way that we would expect anybody else's labour to be compensated.

Interjection: And they are expected to do the same work.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Yes. They are doing the same work as the person right next to them who may not be a student, and yet they are not compensated appropriately for their labour. And we can't make this expectation that, "Oh, they're living at home. Oh, they get an allowance already from their parents so this is just pin money." That is offensive to these young people, many of whom are living away from home, who are saving for post-secondary, who have all kinds of expenses to pay. We cannot justify it, and that's why no other province in this country justifies a lower minimum wage for students.

So, Speaker, I applaud the member for Welland for bringing forward this legislation and I call on this government—which is so concerned about sexual harassment and so concerned about ensuring fairness—to actually do the right thing and pass this bill, make these changes and put some real protections in place for women in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I return to the member from Welland to wrap up.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. There have been a lot of comments made here today. The member from Etobicoke Centre talked about the company that came with its books—I think it was a Kelsey's or something—and showed that, yes, in their restaurants, in fact, servers were actually making somewhere between \$18 and \$25 an hour. That was one restaurant in the province. There are tons of little mom-and-pop restaurants. He probably could have afforded to pay his servers the regular minimum wage, but the bottom line is that there are many liquor servers in this province who can't survive on their tips. They have no guarantee, they have no predictability, and it is a physical, laborious job.

With respect to the students—you know what? Sometimes students actually increase the productivity of employers because they're young, they're energetic and they've got a lot of social media technical skills that perhaps workers of other ages don't possess, and so they actually can produce more for the employer and perhaps they should be paid more.

With respect to students in college: I know a young woman who left home at 16—didn't live in her parents' house. She's now in her fourth year of political science at a local university. She has lived on her own and worked

all through that time to put herself through university. She shouldn't be paid the same wage as any adult working in the same job as her? Come on.

1430

I call upon the government to do the right thing. I was on 640 News today. They said, "Why are you doing this? Trying to wedge the Liberals?" I said, "No, I'm trying to make the Liberals do the right thing for a change."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

WSIB COVERAGE FOR WORKERS
IN RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES
AND GROUP HOMES ACT, 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION
À ACCORDER AUX TRAVAILLEURS
DANS LES ÉTABLISSEMENTS DE SOINS
EN RÉSIDENCE ET LES FOYERS
DE GROUPE PAR LA COMMISSION
DE LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET DE L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

Mr. Fraser moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 145, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to rise and speak today to Bill 145, an act that amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to make it mandatory for workers in residential care facilities and group homes to be covered by WSIB.

Before I get started, I'd just like to recognize that I had a chance to introduce members from CLAC today. Thank you very much for staying here for the debate and for your advocacy. There are members from SEIU, and PSWs who are here today to support as well. Thanks for sticking around, especially with the traffic that's out there. I know there are members from CUPE who are here as well, and they're going to be here for the debate on Bill 33 after, which I very much look forward to. I know I saw my friend Bonnie earlier—she's up there somewhere—from Ottawa. I want to thank you for being here today, all of you, for your advocacy for people, especially PSWs and DSWs working in these situations.

I'd also like to thank two individuals: Trish Douma from CLAC, for saying a few words at the press conference this morning; and Jackie Haynes, who spoke at the conference as well this morning. I'll have a bit more to say about that.

I want to thank you all for the work you do for the people you serve. You provide hands-on care for people

who are either vulnerable because they are frail and elderly or because they have a developmental exceptionality. Simply put, you often care for the people we care for most. So I really want to thank all of your colleagues across the province for the work that you do.

I want to thank my colleagues for their support. I know Mrs. McGarry was with me this morning and she's supportive of the bill. She had done some work on the bill before becoming a minister, and I want to thank her for her advocacy.

I first became aware of this situation earlier this year—that workers in residential care facilities, retirement homes, group retirement homes and group homes are more often than not not covered by WSIB. I was quite surprised at that. I come from a business in the grocery business where we essentially had mandatory coverage because of our size. A lot of my job is—I spend a lot of time going in and out of hospitals, long-term-care homes and in other situations, and so when I heard this, it just didn't seem right to me because of the nature of the work. I know that many members who are here from CUPE to debate this bill would know that if you're in a long-term-care home or a hospital, your coverage is mandatory. When I tell most people that this coverage isn't there for those people, they have the same reaction.

As a family member, I've spent the last two years going in and out of a retirement home on a weekly basis. My mother-in-law and father-in-law are at a home in Ottawa, so I saw every week the care that was provided to those people, the loving care that was provided to the people, the hard work that was provided to the people who were at the home they were at. I also got a sense of the work being similar—so the same work in a similar setting. I was really quite surprised that this situation existed. I know that CLAC came forward and expressed this situation to the member from—I was supposed to write this down first—Hamilton-Dundas-Flamborough and Ancaster?

Miss Monique Taylor: Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale.

Mr. John Fraser: There we go; I've got it right. He traded up. I have to thank him. I thank him for trading up to give me the spot for this bill.

As well, then, I was approached by Sandee and workers in the group homes, developmental service workers, and the challenges they were having. Since then, I've been listening to many stories of the challenges that many people face: difficulty getting paid; difficulty settling disputes; things like out-of-pocket expenses for physiotherapy. If you're making \$15 or \$20 an hour, two physiotherapy visits in a week is \$120 or \$150. That's a lot of money out of your family income to be waiting on the other end for reimbursement—situations that really created hardships for workers and their families.

We have to remember that these workers are most often women, and can often be visible minorities and new Canadians—people whose voices it's very hard to hear because they are so busy working. That's the reason I felt very strongly that we needed to bring this bill

forward. It only seems fair that that woman who's working in a retirement home and cleaning up my mother because she has had an accident because I can't be there to do that—she has my back. Or that developmental service worker who's caring for a mother's 31-year-old daughter who has an exceptionality because the mom can't do it anymore, for a whole variety of reasons—that developmental service worker has her back. So it only seems fair that we have their backs, and that if they get hurt, we'll support them.

Two simple principles of fairness guide this bill: that people doing the same work in similar settings should have the same coverage, and that WSIB is income security. It's income security that all of us hope we'll never, ever have to use. It is something that people do need, and when they need it, it needs to be there.

WSIB provides better coverage, better benefits:

- 85%, compared to 65% or less for many insurance policies.

- Non-economic awards for permanent injuries.

- Compensation for lost retirement income.

- As I spoke about, direct payments for medical needs such as physio. You can't underestimate this. Remember that there is a large group of people who are earning \$15 to \$20 an hour. A \$150 physio bill is a lot of money. It's groceries.

- Strong return-to-work programs.

- Another key piece: With an insurance policy, you get replaced for the income you receive from that employer where you injured yourself. Many people who work as a PSW or a DSW in this field have two or sometimes three jobs. WSIB replaces that total income.

- A clear appeals process. There are a lot of difficulties sometimes in dealing directly with insurance companies because you may have one or two parties, including your employer, that are in the middle of that. So not having an appeals process that's clear and set out in legislation—if you get into a real wrangle and you're making \$15 or \$20 an hour, a lawyer is not an option, or not likely to be an option.

1440

Sometimes these people are left defenseless in these ways. There's a reason that we have workplace safety insurance in this province. I'll go back again: It's about income security. It's about ensuring that if you're hurt or injured at work or worse, we're going to take care of you, we're going to make sure that the supports you need are there.

Speaker, I want to say a few words about what Jackie had to say this morning. Jackie spoke very well about her experiences. I know it was not easy for her, and she did a really great job. I want to read a few of her words, because I want them in Hansard.

"I'm a proud developmental service worker. I am extremely passionate about my work as a DSW. I have grown up with a brother who is autistic and has severe behavioural challenges. Growing up with a brother who was extremely violent at times, I know how much risk and danger DSWs like me face on a daily basis. We are

punched, we are bitten, we are bruised. Our bones are broken, and sometimes our spirits.

"The care my brother needs inspired me to work for people who have developmental disabilities. While at work, as I approach the person in need, I always asked myself, 'Is this how I would like my brother to be treated?'"

Speaker, this is the ethos of thousands of people who care for people because they're vulnerable—they have a developmental exceptionality, or they're frail and they're elderly, or they're alone. They have our backs. We all have aging parents. We all have aging friends. We all know families who have challenges supporting a child, an adult child, with an exceptionality.

They have our backs. This bill is simply about all of us having theirs.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Whitby–Oshawa.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and good afternoon. I rise today to join the debate on Bill 145, the WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act, 2017. I come to the discussion as someone who worked as a civil servant in the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat for a period of time, where the residential care facilities legislation is resident, and also as the chair of the health and social services committee in the region of Durham for seven years. I had four long-term-care homes fall within that accountability area.

The bill highlights the importance of having sufficient workplace insurance coverage for workers in residential care facilities and group homes in Ontario—as they should.

I would begin by commending all of the employees working in this sector for their dedication and the work they do every day to provide a positive living environment to the most vulnerable groups in Ontario, Speaker—the most vulnerable groups in Ontario. These workers play a crucial role in helping those who need it most: in seniors' homes, developmental services, child treatment and youth correctional facilities. What's clear is that, day in and day out, these workers put others before themselves and maintain a high standard of living for those whom they serve, even if it means risking their health and well-being.

Workers in these fields who are injured on the job should have access to the coverage they need to receive proper care to get back to work, while also maintaining a decent living environment while they recover. For example, front-line youth workers at correctional facilities can experience extreme violence, emphasizing the importance of having access to workplace insurance coverage.

But this isn't the only work environment where workers are exposed to violence. For example, in an October 2016 report entitled *Workplace Violence and Harassment*, from the Ontario Nurses' Association, studies showed that the top five occupations reporting 84.2% of violence-related injuries in health care were nurses' aides and orderlies, community and social service workers,

registered nurses, registered nursing assistants, and visiting homemakers, housekeepers and related occupations. Further, 30.6% of lost-time injuries due to workplace violence or client aggression in Ontario occurred in the health care sector, the highest amount of lost time across employment sectors in the province.

Challenges associated with high-needs residents, staffing shortages, unit design issues, and communication gaps can all contribute to violent instances. In many health-care-related fields, violence is unfortunately considered part of the job. While no worker should have to face violence at work, many of these workers continue to do their duties and work in the best interest of their patients, while knowing that they could be a victim of violence.

This is not to say that these employers are not supported by their employer when it comes to workplace injuries. Many workplaces have private workplace insurance plans, often including lower rates with more benefits; however, it may not be sufficient for long-term disabilities sustained in the workplace.

Unfortunately, for many residential care facility workers, insurance coverage is limited, and some agencies only cover their staff's injuries for six months. This means that workers who sustain serious injuries on the job and face permanent injuries or disabilities are left unable to work and must go on long-term disability. Alternatively, they can be forced to find other solutions, particularly if they were part-time workers without the long-term disability coverage.

The potential risks associated with the work in this sector may lead people to choose a different career path due to a lack of insurance coverage when they need it most. This is juxtaposed against the need for more workers to enter careers working with vulnerable populations—as the jobs can be very rewarding for both the caregiver and the individuals they work with. However, the need to ensure that expanded coverage can be provided to protect more workers in Ontario needs to be balanced with the ability to pay for it by residential care facilities, seniors' communities and group homes. These facilities have already been pushed to the limit when it comes to their budgets, and the Liberal government continues to add more costs. Without additional funding, services may need to be cut in order to cover the WSIB costs.

On top of the additional costs, numerous psychiatric and mental health hospitals have closed under the Liberal government, compounding the demands on other service providers in Ontario. As a result, a significantly larger number of not-for-profit transfer payment agencies have been providing these services.

An Ontario Public Service Employees Union ad campaign also highlighted the challenges for workers who are forced to use transfer payment agencies. The campaign said:

“Ontario's youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines, depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS)

and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly.

“Yet OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.”

In summary, Speaker, the Liberal government does not provide enough funding to transfer payment agencies to allow them to provide their hard-working and dedicated employees with workplace safety and insurance board coverage.

I want to again commend the employees working in these sectors for the work they do every day in Ontario with vulnerable groups. I hope that through this bill, we're able to work with the Ministry of Health, our residential care facilities and group homes to find a solution that reflects their input and ultimately works for all parties.

1450

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm honoured to rise to speak, on behalf of my constituents of Hamilton Mountain, on the bill brought forward by the member for Ottawa South, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

I want to start by welcoming all the folks who are here today. This isn't the first time I've stood up in this House to speak about developmental service workers, about our vulnerable population, and about the hard work they do to ensure that our most vulnerable residents are cared for and cared for well—but it is no shock to them that I will say that it is with no help from this government.

The lack of funding that goes into these ministries to ensure that there is equal pay for equal work, that pay equity is covered, that people have the ability to pay for the services they need in this province—is at a complete shortfall. We see many of this sector's agencies completely underfunded. So while I welcome this bill wholeheartedly, there are so many challenges that are facing this sector. The government needs to step up to the plate and ensure that these ministries and these sectors get the funding they so desperately need to ensure that vulnerable people are being taken care of. We constantly ask them to do more with less, and it's not acceptable.

I want to spend a lot of this time talking about the challenges that are faced in the WSIB system.

Every single year, on April 28, we commemorate the National Day of Mourning. That is a day when we gather, as workers, as people of this province, to mourn the dead and fight for the living. It's a really important day for workers, because sometimes work can be dangerous, and sometimes it can be deadly. Accidents in the workplace can leave a person debilitated for life, through no fault of their own. These incidents can happen in any workplace.

I think—I hope—we can agree that all workers deserve compensation when they are unable to work due to injuries sustained in the workplace.

That wasn't always the case. At the turn of the 20th century, workers had to fight, on their own, for that

compensation. They basically had to sue their employer and prove employer negligence. That changed with a historic compromise that saw workers give up their right to sue in return for a no-fault, employer-paid system that would provide ongoing payments to workers injured on the job. That was in 1914. It was the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Workmen's Compensation Board was established, which, of course, went on to become the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board in 1998.

As I already said, Speaker, injuries, or worse, can happen in any workplace, so I want to thank the member for Ottawa South for bringing this forward to extend mandatory WSIB coverage to employees of group homes, residential facilities and seniors' care. I think it's important that we appreciate the dangers those workers face when they go to work. There are dangers in every workplace, but there are also serious concerns about safety in some of the settings mentioned. For example, exposure to violence is certainly not uncommon. Like any other worker, they should be able to come home from work in the same mental and physical condition as when they left. That takes me back to the work that they do by being asked to do more with less—because when you overwork people, when you don't ensure that there are enough staff in place to be able to properly handle and to do your work, that leads to injury. When you're doing lifts for people who aren't able to lift themselves and you don't have the proper equipment or you don't have enough staff to be able to lift that person out of bed and transfer them into a bath, injury happens. And if they're unable to work, they should have access to compensation.

It's impossible to talk about this without talking about the really sorry state of our workers' compensation system and the way that injured workers are being systematically deprived of the money that they are entitled to. In many cases, they are being left destitute by unfair decisions that are being handed down by the WSIB. Some workers are lucky to be members of a union that has workers' compensation specialists to fight on their behalf.

The Office of the Worker Adviser can be a big help in the fight, but they are so inundated and so understaffed that many fall through the gaps. I'll tell you, in our constituency office—and there is no way that my office, I'm sure, is any different than offices right across this province, with every single member in this House. Our offices are inundated with WSIB calls: people being denied the medications they need, the physiotherapy that this government cut and now that member wanted to talk about. It just blew my mind to listen. These are the cuts that are happening to people on a regular basis. I hear stories of workers who are being dragged through process after process, only to be denied at the end. I hear about the opinions of several doctors who have examined the patient, only to be overridden by one single WSIB doctor. How is that possible?

Workers have their benefits cut because the WSIB deems them to have a job when they don't. They might

not be able to do the job that they were trained for due to an injury, but the WSIB believes that they're able to do another job so WSIB deducts their benefits. If people who are trained to work in our group homes and are maybe making—I'll just make the figure up—\$18 an hour are not able to do that job any longer, they are now able to go and work in the grocery store for minimum wage. That is the only wage that the WSIB will pay them because that is what they've been deemed to do by this WSIB system.

Deeming is one of the issues that was touched on by the Arthurs report in 2012. It was one of the many, many issues covered by the report that pointed to the glaring faults and failures in the system—faults and failures that have been raised over and over again by workers and by their representatives. Unions and the Ontario Network of Injured Workers, for example, have been calling for changes for as long as I can remember, but little ever happens. In fact, things have only gotten worse.

The Arthurs report, commissioned by the government itself, made a lot—and I mean a lot—of recommendations, most of which have never been acted on. When coverage for PTSD was given for first responders—which was a good move, by the way, that came from repeated attempts by my colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park—the NDP put forward amendments so that it could cover nurses and probation and parole officers, but the Liberals voted down those amendments.

While I welcome this bill and I will be wholeheartedly supporting this bill and I thank the member for bringing it forward, I wish that it was a government bill that, with the stroke of a pen, could ensure that workers right across this province had WSIB to cover them. There is so much more that needs to be done.

I thank the workers who work so hard in our province—and for the work they do for our vulnerable population. I thank you for the opportunity to speak about the crisis that's going on in WSIB.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Joe Dickson: It's a pleasure for me to stand today. I acknowledge the member from Ottawa South, John Fraser, for bringing this forward. He did address it with me in the latter part of October, and I feel very honoured to speak to it.

1500

When you look at Bill 145—for me, I remembered that I visited a seniors' home called Ballycliffe, directly across the road from my constituency office in Ajax. It's a lesson you learn in life; I have a few long-time friends—another generation, perhaps—I sign in and sign out automatically. If I want to take them somewhere, I do, and I'm very, very honest. On special days, and one of the special days is July 1, Canada Day—I can tell you that my wife, who is a long-time registered nurse, and I go over with two gigantic cakes and we share them with the residents. It's just a great time. We work hand-in-hand with them. The residents get tremendous care and tremendous health care as well as every day care, which is so important.

Bill 145: Of course, the intention is to extend the WSIB coverage to employees working in group homes and residential care facilities. As we all know, residential care is growing with an aging population. It grows every day that we're here on Earth. I want a new, larger, more convenient nursing home, over and above this, for my residents in that area. That's been a two- or three-year struggle. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been very, very good working with me. We're dealing with a proponent to do the facility. Without the Minister of Health and all of his assistants, we wouldn't be as far as we are now.

Many of the workers that are there are PSWs and DSWs who work to provide hands-on care to people who are vulnerable because they're frail and elderly or have a developmental disability. Just as I mentioned, at the seniors' home across the road from me, it's something I see every day. I know how hard the caregivers work because I'm in there regularly. I know they not only do a job; they care for people. That's what makes them special. I see it first-hand, and I'm very proud to know so many of them. I hear regularly from them on so many things.

Residential care facilities, of course, include, as the promoter put forward, retirement homes, rest homes and, of course, senior citizens' residences. The WSIB coverage is optional for employers in group homes and residential care facilities. Many, however, are covered by private insurance, which varies with each of the employers. I've been an employer in a business for 50 years, so I understand the process. When I see this, it's an upgrade, and it's very necessary. We have a lot of good people in health and long-term care who are giving us advice. I want to say that many of the workers in these settings are not aware of the scenario until the day they're hurt on the job. So I say that it's best that everyone knows about it, and the sooner they know, the better.

Private sector coverage is not typically sufficient for workers who largely make, in most cases, less than \$20 an hour. That's just not right. Employees in long-term-care homes and in hospitals, however, have mandatory WSIB coverage, and that's the way it should be.

Madam Speaker, I'm just looking at the clock. I know there are three speakers in this 12-minute sector, so I've got another minute, Madam Speaker? Madam Speaker never answers me; she just kind of nods and gives me—it's just like my wife: She'll look at me and then I know what direction I should go in.

It's important for income security and it's important that they have it when they need it.

I just have to tell you a quick story. I'm one of 10 children born to Mary and Lou Dickson, a special couple. They both loved God, they loved their children and, of course, they loved each other. My father always said, when the doctor told him at age 95 that he's never seen a man look this young, that he shouldn't look this young at 95—the doctor said, “You look like you're 60 years old. What's your secret?” He said—it just brought back the tinges to my caregivers, years and years ago—“Look: 10

children—I washed those cloth diapers every year, every day, for almost 20 years. It's the ammonia that has come out of them and kept me young.”

The last thing, if I could: Of the 10 children, I am blessed because seven of the children are girls—and a guy couldn't be any more blessed than that.

There's something special. Our caregivers need to know: We care for you, and you care for our residents, and we thank you sincerely.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: We're speaking today about Bill 145, the WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act.

I think that there are a few issues. One is that it is a long-overdue discussion; I think we can all agree on that. There are a lot of issues, but this is a very specific private member's bill on a specific issue, and I think that the government could have incorporated it—since this is a government member who presented this today—into some piece of government legislation such as Bill 148. But at least we're here, and we're able to give a little more focus. That's what's nice about the private members' bills: that we can focus on things a little bit more.

Nobody is really explaining from the government side how people are going to pay for the WSIB coverage, especially since we hear from so many out in the field that private insurance often is less expensive and better coverage. I haven't really had an explanation of why people have to have WSIB—it could be private insurance—which leads me into what I want to talk about, which is the fact that when I started practising as an optometrist—I guess we all repeat our stories here, so I apologize, but this is a new story—I did not have to pay WSIB for my office. It was considered more of a physician's type of clinic. Physicians today do not have to pay WSIB for their staff, even though there are needles and scalpels and things going on in all kinds of GPs' offices and specialists' offices. I know that up to a year ago, dentists did not have to have WSIB for their staff, and, wow, those dentist offices have drills and all kinds of things going on, so it's kind of surprising.

I remember an old Carol Burnett sketch—I don't know if people remember—where two of the actors are playing dentist and patient, and he's accidentally stabbing himself in the leg and anesthetising his hand and that sort of thing. It's one of those classics, I guess.

Dentists have dangerous equipment in their offices, and physicians do—they don't have WSIB, and I'm not suggesting that they should. But all of a sudden, I got a letter about 10 years ago at my optometry clinic saying that optometrists now have to sign up for WSIB for their staff. I called them and I said, “Gee, we never had to before,” and they said, “Now we've decided to put you under the category of opticians, so we're calling you ‘opticianry stores,’” or something like that. If you're an optometrist, you're an optometrist; they can't call just randomly call you a dentist or an optician. It's a completely different profession. But they were able to do that, and optometrists had to start paying WSIB for their staff.

I think that there's a lot that we have to discuss about balancing. That's what this bill is trying to address—the fact that obviously long-term-care homes and hospitals have WSIB coverage for their workers, so why don't group homes and other residential homes have it? I guess that's what we call the slippery slope sometimes, when we are talking to our constituents or representatives of a certain industry or advocacy group. They will say, "Because of this, therefore"—everybody always wants to move the line and say that it's not fair. Oftentimes they are right or they have a decent point, but we have to have more to the discussion or the argument than, "Just because one group has something, then, therefore, then, therefore, then, therefore" all the time.

I think that the focus should be about the workers. If the workers are not covered, they obviously need to be covered in some type of manner, some type of insurance. Does it have to be WSIB? I'm not quite so sure that it necessarily has to be, but perhaps it should be. The question is left as to why some facilities are able to get private insurance with greater benefits than WSIB. That does not speak well for a huge outfit like WSIB. Obviously, the argument is, if some of the residences are privately owned, yet they are working for the government because the government has some contracting out, why should they not be obligated to have WSIB?

1510

I understand all those arguments. I think that they all have some valid points. I am definitely looking forward to hearing from people who will be impacted by this and have strong feelings. I would also love to hear why optometrists were lumped in with opticianry shops, and why all of a sudden we were considered obligated to have WSIB when other physicians and dentists don't.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and good luck to the member opposite with his private member's bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to speak in support of Bill 145, brought forward by the member for Ottawa South, which would extend WSIB coverage to workers in residential care facilities, including retirement homes and seniors' residences as well as group homes. I want to begin by acknowledging the amazing work that is done by the staff who work in those facilities.

I want to give a shout-out to Community Living London, who toured me this summer to three developmental service group homes in my community. I tell you, Speaker, the compassion, the empathy, the caring that was exhibited by the staff who worked in these homes was absolutely commendable. It was moving. It was really important.

I was surprised, frankly, when I saw this bill come forward, because I did not realize that the people who worked in those facilities would not be covered by WSIB. I want to follow up on something that the member said when he spoke to his bill, and that is about the gendered nature of these jobs, the workers who work in these facilities who tend to be—the majority of these

workers are women. By not providing this kind of protection that many people take for granted—you assume that if you are injured on the job, you will be covered—by not providing the WSIB protections that are available to two thirds of other workers in this province, you are actually exposing these women workers to a much higher level of risk than other workers in this province.

I want to emphasize or reinforce some of the comments made by my colleague the member for Hamilton Mountain—and that is that extending WSIB coverage is meaningless unless we also accompany it with reforms to WSIB. We hear too many stories of workers who are consistently denied claims by WSIB for legitimate workplace injuries and accidents. This bill has to be accompanied by those kinds of changes as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I am really thrilled to speak to this bill. First of all, I think it's an incredibly important issue, but secondly, I'm thrilled to speak to it because I have the opportunity to support my colleague here, the member for Ottawa South, a very hard-working member who is thoughtful and brings forward excellent ideas. This is just an example of that.

I want to start by just sharing that the community I represent in Etobicoke Centre is one where we have a number of group homes that I have had the opportunity to visit, but we also have the largest percentage of seniors of any riding in the province. I have had the privilege of visiting a number of the seniors' residences, and I understand that employees, the people who work in those residences, would be covered by this particular piece of legislation. That's why I'm standing here to support this bill in particular, because I know how hard those folks work. I know how challenging the work is. I admire what they do, and what they do is an incredibly important service. It's a service to the people they are caring for, it's a service to their families, and it's a service to our community in Etobicoke and to all the other communities they work in.

I think these folks deserve to have the coverage that others have who do a similar type of work—very challenging work, and yet very important work. I would say that first of all.

Secondly, I want to say that when we think about the working conditions that these folks face, in many cases one can imagine the kinds of injuries they might sustain, be they physical or otherwise. I think it's really important that we recognize that when they choose to pursue this type of work, they are choosing to pursue—I think of it as public service; they are choosing to do this public service and put themselves in a position where they can get hurt or they can get injured. To me, it makes very good sense that if people are working incredibly hard, they're doing an incredibly important community service and are caring for people, and they get injured on the job, and others have WSIB coverage, that these folks deserve no less.

To me, this is about fairness. This is about honoring people who are working hard, who are doing incredibly

important work. I know that the people who are cared for by these folks, whether it be in group homes in my community of Etobicoke Centre or in seniors' residences in my community of Etobicoke Centre, would absolutely support something like this. That's why I support something like this and support the member for Ottawa South and compliment him on this initiative.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I must say it is truly a pleasure to speak in favour of the bill put forward by the member for Ottawa South. The member has truly done an outstanding job, as he usually does, with this piece of legislation. He is altogether a truly great colleague and a real public servant.

When I hear from health care workers from my riding of Davenport and those who work in the area in this province, I'm always reminded of how much they care about their patients and clients. I know that home care workers take pride in making sure that vulnerable seniors and children are treated with compassion, and I know that health care workers bring comfort to the lives of people every day in our community.

We know that these workers do great work no matter where they work, which is why I find it strange that we treat these workers differently based on whether they work in a hospital or in a group home. Many of these workers are personal support workers and developmental support workers who work to provide hands-on care to people who are vulnerable because they are frail and elderly or have a developmental disability. Simply put, they often care for the people we care for most.

I want to thank all of them for the hard work that they do and for their compassion, for their caring way of doing things. I want to thank especially those that have joined here this afternoon in debate—to thank them for the work that they do for those that are most vulnerable in our communities and in our province.

We know that despite performing comparable work, employees in group homes or residential care facilities often do not have equal access to the same workplace protections as those people in long-term-care homes and hospitals. In truth, before the member from Ottawa South brought this bill forward, I, like most people in Ontario, thought that workers in group homes or residential care facilities would be covered just like anyone else. That is so far from the truth. While some facilities are covered, others are not. The fact is, private insurance doesn't make sense for those people, who often make less than \$20 an hour.

One of the major provisions that we have put forward in Bill 148 is our firm belief that there should be equal pay for equal work. It makes sense that protections for personal support workers, be it in long-term-care homes or in another group, should be the same. I'm proud of the action that we are taking to make work fair in Ontario, and I believe this bill will be another step forward in making work more fair for everyone. I'm proud to lend my support, and I hope to see this bill speedily passed through to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Ottawa South to wrap up.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the members from Whitby–Oshawa, Hamilton Mountain, Ajax–Pickering, Thornhill, London West, Etobicoke Centre and Davenport for speaking to this bill.

I would like to address a couple of items, one in particular that the member from Whitby–Oshawa mentioned. Affordability is always a concern. I know that WSIB has worked hard on their unfunded liability to keep their rates competitive. There's no question, when you move forward with an initiative like this, that it's a partnership, that we need to work it out. The principle of this bill is—the people who need our support, and I appreciate his support in that regard.

1520

I have yet to see an insurance policy that has the same types of coverage that I described earlier. I haven't seen one yet. What I've mostly heard are concerns of people actually being compensated properly, and that's a great concern to me.

I know that we've had some debate in this bill that's gone beyond the scope of the bill that I put forward. I anticipated that we would get that, and that's fair, from the point of view of what opposition does. It's an opportunity to highlight the shortcomings of the government. The reality is, whatever we do here is continually imperfect. Our work is never done. We're never finished. We are never finished doing the things we need to do for the people that we serve.

Interjection: Fourteen years.

Mr. John Fraser: I appreciate the member's comment. What I'm asking you for today, and I think I heard it, is your support for groups of people who need us to have their back.

Speaker, I want to thank you very much for giving me this time. I appreciate very much the words from my colleagues on both sides of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM
CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM
STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ
AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT
UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

Mme Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care /
Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les

foyers de soins de longue durée afin d'établir une norme minimale en matière de soins quotidiens.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Bill 33 is called the Time to Care Act. It is rather simple; it does exactly what it says. The bill will mandate four hours of hands-on care to every one of the 78,000 people that live in one of the 700-and-some long-term-care homes in Ontario, averaged across the residents. The bill goes on to say that the minimum hours may be increased above four hours of hands-on care but cannot be decreased below. It goes on to say that every long-term-care home will have to report as to how many hours, averaged across their residents, of "touch time," as we sometimes call it—of hands-on care—residents are receiving. In order to give us that stat, they cannot include hours paid in respect to vacation, to statutory holidays, to leaves of absence, to sick time or training time, or to any other purpose that does not involve direct patient care.

The bill is simple and it could be very effective at making sure that we respect the people in our long-term-care homes. In fact, the bill was written with that goal in mind: to make sure that we treat everybody who lives in a long-term-care home with respect and dignity. They tend to be mainly seniors, but not all of them.

Families across this province are worried. They are concerned with the treatment that their loved ones are receiving in long-term care and they want us as legislators to protect our most vulnerable citizens with a minimum of hours of hands-on care. I think Ontarians living in long-term care deserve our protection.

As I've said, Madam Speaker, there are over 78,000 people living in long-term-care homes. A little bit of stats: Most of them, the majority, are over 85 years of age. The average age is 85 years old. Over three quarters of them have some form of dementia, often in the form of Alzheimer's, but many other dementias also. Most of them have mobility issues.

You have to realize that you have to qualify to get into a long-term-care home. What does qualifying mean? It means that somebody, usually a nurse, will go and assess you. They will assess how you can do your activities of daily living. They will assess your cognitive function, your mobility and a number of items on the assessment. Then, depending on where you score, they will say, "You qualify for long-term care." In order to qualify, it is because you need help. You need help with your activities of daily living, you need help to be able to live your life in safety, but also in a respectful way.

Did you know, Speaker, that Canada has the lowest level of care among all countries with equivalent economies? And Ontario is number 10; we are the lowest in Canada. Bill 33 would legislate a minimum standard of four hours a day of hands-on care, averaged among the residents.

I want to quote from Andrea Legault. Andrea is a PSW with 18 years of service in the long-term-care sector. As soon as you meet her, you know that she is a

caring person. You know that she loves what she does. She wouldn't have it any other way. But she also told us that she has, on average, between five and 10 minutes to help her residents with their morning routine. That includes helping the person get up, wash, get dressed and, like most of us, go to the bathroom, which sometimes goes through a commode.

Just play that in your head, Speaker. Most of us did that this morning: We got up, we got washed, we got dressed and we went to the bathroom. Did you do that in 10 minutes? Now imagine that you are 92 years old and you have mobility challenges and mobility issues, and you have to get this done, every day of your life, within 10 minutes of getting up. This is too rushed. I don't like being rushed in the morning, and I can assume that when I'm 92 years old, if I make it there, I'm not going to like it any more. This is what we do to every single one of those 78,000 residents in the morning.

Andrea Legault goes on to say, "The hardest thing for me is the residents that we literally force into incontinence because we don't have enough staff to get to them when they call for help" to go to the bathroom. This is basic dignity. This is why you go to a long-term-care home: Because we know that you deserve the dignity and the respect to continue to live your life, but you need a little bit of help with things, like going to the bathroom, that we all have to do.

A lot of people who go into a long-term-care home are not incontinent. They know when they have to go; they know exactly—but they need a little bit of help. They call for help, and the help does not come. Then they get panicky, and then sometimes they can't hold it anymore, like every one of us. Then they feel really bad, and when the PSW finally comes to help them, they apologize and they feel really bad that they're actually going to add to her day and add to the work that she has to do, because now they need help to get cleaned up, because there was nobody there to help them.

This is not respect. This is not dignity. Every PSW knows how to help people go to the bathroom. They are happy to help out. But when they don't have time to do that, things go bad.

I know that they have organized a campaign, and over 5,000 letters were sent to MPPs about this bill and about this issue. I want to quote from Shirley Erkila, who is one of the people who participated in the letter-writing campaign. I know that all of my colleagues have received at least one, but I wanted to read it into the record. It says:

"As a constituent in your riding, I am writing to urge your support for a law that would require an average of four hours of hands-on nursing and personal support services for Ontario long-term-care residents every day.

1530

"In the fall of 2016, the NDP introduced Bill 33, the Time to Care Act, to mandate exactly this kind of daily care standard for our loved ones living in long-term care.

"Please be in the House and vote to support Bill 33 when it comes to its second reading on this Thursday, November 2.

“Like many Ontarians, I believe this kind of care standard is overdue and seriously needed for long-term-care residents. They deserve more care than they are receiving, and I am appealing to you to help make this happen.

“Our residents spend long hours alone waiting for basic needs to be met. Residents are in potential danger of resident-on-resident abuse, and as we have seen of late even staff-on-resident abuse. Staff are burning out. Resources and staffing levels are simply inadequate and won't change without the power of legislation to require it. This is why Bill 33 is so important.

“This matter is very important to everyone living in Ontario, and especially those who make long-term-care facilities their home....

“Please support Bill 33 this Thursday, November 2 when it comes for second reading and give nursing home residents the care and the respect they deserve.”

That's signed, “Sincerely, Shirley Erkila,” who happens to be from my riding, but I want to thank all 5,000 people who took time to write to their MPPs to encourage them. I think your hard work has paid off. When I talked to my colleagues on all sides of the House, I know that some of them have received the letter and I know that some of them will support this bill. This is thanks, in part, to all that work.

I also want to thank Tom Carrothers. Tom is the chair of the Advocacy Committee of Family Councils. He was at a press conference with me yesterday where he talked about having seen first-hand the result of cuts to our long-term-care homes. He says, “It's not acceptable that our loved ones, the people who spent their lives building our province and caring for our communities, are now being neglected in their final years.” Tom wants more hands-on care. He calls it “touch time,” and I think that says it all.

I also want to thank Grace Welch. Grace is the chair of the advocacy committee from the Champlain Region Family Council Network. Through their work, through the work of CUPE and through the work of a lot of people in long-term care, they were able to gather 70,000 signatures on a petition. I have been presenting, Speaker—and I think you've been there for some of this—boxes of petitions from people who basically ask all of us to do the right thing. They ask us to bring back the respect, to bring back the dignity to our long-term care system by mandating, legislating, a minimum of four hours of hands-on care, averaged across all the residents.

I think that there is goodwill on all sides of the House. We're about to hear from all of you. Remember that those people, most of the residents of long-term care—there are a few exceptions out there—don't have a voice. We are their voice. This is our basic responsibility as legislators: to protect those who are worthy of our protection, and the people in long-term-care homes are worthy of our protection.

We have the opportunity this afternoon to change things for the better. We will look back upon this day and

say, “We did the right thing.” I urge all of you to do the right thing and vote for Bill 33, the Time to Care Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to stand and respond to the member from Nickel Belt and debate Bill 33. I am going to be supporting this bill, and I want to congratulate the member for bringing it forward, and the family councils and representatives who have done the work across the province to bring this forward to raise issues in terms of how we are caring for our elderly.

I have two large long-term-care homes in my riding: St. Pat's, which has been around for a while but redeveloped, and Perley and Rideau Veterans. That's about 750 beds. That's a lot of long-term care. There's some really great work that's being done there. I'm fortunate to have witnessed that and been around for about 16 years in terms of spending a lot of time there. I have family who are living in long-term care right now. I've had the opportunity both in my work and as a member of a family to witness situations where, you know, I think this isn't working, and to hear from people. I talk to staff who recognize me. I put my face out there enough so they know who I am in the riding, so if I'm walking down the hall, I'll get stopped and they'll tell me about a particular situation.

There's no doubt in my mind that we need to apply additional resources to serve those people in long-term-care homes, to help ensure that they have dignity. You know what? I'm going to say this out loud—there's not very many of them here right now, probably none of them: We have to apply additional resources. In the homes that I go into where managers get out of their office and help or feed or are on the floor, I find things work better. For those who are doing that, thank you for that work. It helps you to see what's there. And those that aren't, you need to be out there.

I grew up in a totally different business, as a manager in the grocery business. You've got to be there with the people who work with you and support you, and support those people. I know there's not many here today, but maybe there are a few out there. Maybe they'll get Hansard.

I do want to say I support this bill. The only concern I have, as I see it come forward, is that it may be a bit of a blunt instrument that needs some more around it to ensure that people get the right care from the right people in the right place, that it doesn't become something where resources may be measured but not applied appropriately because of the interpretation of “minimum.” I think that's something that we have to be very careful of. Long-term-care homes, how we fund them and pay for them, the kind of regulations that are in there, are complex, and we have to ensure that when we apply a rule to that or set up a structure, it's going to work because, more often than not, we can see that through successive governments and successive administrations where we apply things and it doesn't quite work the way we thought it would.

I want to reiterate: I'm really pleased to support this bill. I'm really thankful that the member brought this forward, for her advocacy and for all the advocacy that's occurred. I appreciate the time to speak to this, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Our government is committed to ensuring that residents in long-term-care homes continue to get the care they need in a safe, secure and compassionate environment. We know that it's important for residents and their families to know this commitment has driven our decisions related to long-term care, which is why we continue to enhance the care and services we provide to residents of long-term-care homes.

That's why I'm proud to sit with a government who understands these needs and is supporting those who need the care. In fact, since 2003, we have almost doubled the funding for long-term care, from \$2.1 billion to more than \$4 billion this year. Thanks to these investments, an additional 7,400 staff have been hired at Ontario long-term-care homes since 2008, including 5,000 PSWs and 2,400 nurses. These new staff have helped improve patient care and reduced wait times by almost half since 2008. We've also opened over 10,000 new long-term-care beds and redeveloped over 13,500 long-term beds since 2003.

1540

Staffing is an integral part of ensuring safe and quality care for long-term-care-home residents. We are committed to providing resident-centred care and investing in the people who support our residents each and every day, which is why I am pleased to see the member put forward this bill. At the end of the day, people are concerned about the care that their parents and grandparents get, and they have a right to be concerned and to demand the best. I have two parents myself who are getting older. My constituency office in Davenport has been inundated with calls and emails and letters, and I've had an opportunity to sit down with constituents whose parents are aging, who are also feeling these pressures.

I believe that these are issues that need to be discussed and debated more, and that is why I will be proud to support this bill. I hope to see it pass second reading here today. I believe this conversation will bolster our government's already-strong action through our investments in staffing. In addition to the general staffing increases that we have made, we have also been targeting specific streams, including an \$18.5-million investment in the High Intensity Needs Fund for the 2016-17 fiscal year; \$60 million of funding annually to fund registered practical nurse positions; \$64 million for physiotherapists; and an additional \$10 million for behavioural supports for specialized services for residents with cognitive impairments who are exhibiting challenging and complex behaviours.

We know that these staffing investments continue to have a direct impact on long-term-care-home residents, who have not only seen an increase in the number of

hours of direct care but also have enhanced quality of care to support them in having their individualized nursing and personal care needs met.

Again, Madam Speaker, we know that people in our province deserve the best when it comes to care. That is why we have made these investments and we continue to look at how to make the system better and work more for people. That is why we want to keep talking about issues like care hours and why I will be supporting the passage of this bill here this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 33, the Time to Care Act. I am pleased to speak in support of this bill. As members here know, in my role as long-term-care and seniors' critic for the PC Party, I have been very vocal in my efforts to hold the government to account for their many shortfalls in the long-term-care system that happened and continue to happen under their watch.

I have been speaking out because I personally believe the government is not keeping up with the growing needs of Ontario's seniors. In fact, I think this Liberal administration has failed the almost 100,000 seniors in long-term-care homes. Here is why—these are facts, Madam Speaker: Under this Liberal watch, the wait-list for long-term care has now ballooned to 32,000 seniors. That's 32,000 seniors without access to a long-term-care bed and a wait-list that will double to 50,000 by 2021, and yet no new beds have been committed by this government. Under their watch, we have 60% of long-term-care beds that require significant renovation or to be rebuilt, and the current program put forward to renew them has had very limited success. In fact, homes are warning that the funding from this government is so inadequate that they may have to shut down due to unaffordability. Also under their watch, we have as many as nine in 10 seniors with cognitive impairments, and half of them are going without the needed behavioural supports. Finally, we have a government that allowed seniors in long-term-care homes to receive less funding for food than prisoners, who are fed on \$9.73 a day.

That is why last spring I introduced legislation here at Queen's Park to call for guaranteed funding in long-term care. This is about a commitment to improving long-term care by guaranteeing that funding is indexed to the consumer price index every year and that it never falls below inflation. In other words, it's about stable funding that ensures that seniors get better care, better oversight and better protection every year.

Governments are guilty of getting away with one-time funding that is done when it's politically convenient to do so, like in an election year. Unlike the funding trends we're seeing under this current Liberal administration, like the one-time top-up or temporary hospital beds or spaces, I want to see long-term, stable and predictable funding in long-term care. Without this, how do you guarantee seniors will get better care, better oversight and better protection?

As we've always said, Premier Wynne and the Liberal government are not on the side of seniors and never have

been. They are only interested in representing special interests and their friends. That's why they duped Ontarians for up to \$39.4 billion with their unfair energy act over 30 years, and \$4 billion in unnecessary interest on hydro—\$4 billion that won't go to seniors' long-term-care facilities—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw that.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw.

As I mentioned earlier, we found out last week that there could be as many as 14 nursing homes here in Toronto that could shut down and 1,800 seniors at risk of losing their beds in the city because their capital redevelopment program is unaffordable. They could have put \$4 billion there or toward getting better care, hiring more nurses and personal support workers in nursing homes and focusing on front-line delivery of care.

Consider what each of these \$1 billion the Liberal government wasted equals to. It equals the loss of one year of long-term care for 17,000 seniors, one year of home care for 55,000 people, 3,550 palliative care beds for one year, 8,000 new affordable housing units, \$260 a month for one year for each ODSP recipient, one year of free tuition for 2,000 students and 10,000 new school playgrounds.

We have people who are suffering from mental health; we have hospitals that are overcrowded and 600 schools targeted for closure. But miraculously, this government found a way to borrow \$25 billion, which is going to cost us between \$43 billion and \$93 billion to pay back, on the backs of generations to come, all because they want to save their political skin.

This is money that I find it egregious that they can find for this, in a year coming up to an election, but they can't find more money for seniors. They can't find more money for care for our seniors, who deserve the dignity and who deserve that care at the front lines at every opportunity.

I'm pleased to see this bill is coming forward. At least it's a step in the right direction. We'll be pleased to support this. It truly is about care at the right time, in the right place and by the bedside, where we want it—not administration, not more regulation. We want it to be care beside the bed.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's always a pleasure to the rise in the House as the MPP for London—Fanshawe on behalf of my constituents. As the critic for home and long-term care and seniors' affairs, I am honoured to speak to Bill 33, Time to Care Act.

The Time to Care Act ensures that a legislated minimum standard of four hours of care is given to residents and seniors who need it. The Time to Care Act prevents corners from being cut or people from being short-changed on their care. With this standard, staffing assignments in each long-term-care home would be made on the basis of individual acuity and the level of need, while also maintaining that the minimum hours of hands-on care is assured.

I would also like to share a story from Janice Duffy, whose father has been a resident in long-term care for over three years. Her father experienced all types of abuse and neglect, causing Janice and her family to be fearful of leaving her father alone in the home. Janice's father had experienced so many accounts of abuse and neglect in the long-term-care home that it was difficult for Janice to choose just a couple of stories to share with me.

An instance she does share happened just this last summer, when her father had fallen. Prior to visiting, she was told that her father had sustained a small bruise on his back from the fall. Upon her arrival, she lifted her father's shirt and found a black bruise the size of a dinner plate, with a gaping wound that had never been dressed. She sent the photos and they were exactly what she described.

The wound was eventually dressed. However, a few days later, Janice came to visit her father once more. She immediately noticed that the dressing had not been changed. On top of that, her father's bedsheets were clearly soiled. She was later informed that it was not his day to have his bedsheets changed.

It is clear that our seniors are not receiving the time and care that they rightfully deserve. Seniors, loved ones and front-line workers themselves feel that they are in crisis. Residents are forced into incontinence because there is simply no time to toilet them. Families are discovering that their loved ones are only being bathed once a week or have not had their nails cut in over six months. Front-line workers are telling us that they are trapped in a system that currently limits the time and the care that they can give the residents. These issues will only worsen as the demand for care of our aging population increases.

We have been given a chance to finally step up and do what is necessary for our seniors. The MPP from Nickel Belt was absolutely right in that Bill 33 was written with a specific goal in mind, and that is to protect the health and the dignity of our seniors.

It is our duty to pass Bill 33, Time to Care Act, so that our residents, our loved ones and our front-line workers can be heard and supported. Giving residents a minimum of four hours of direct care each day will significantly impact not only the quality of care but also the quality of life for our seniors. With a growing aging population, Bill 33 has the potential to truly make a difference in the long-term-care system and how we deliver care to our seniors.

1550

This bill is a step in the right direction by seeking to prevent the instances of falls, injuries, soiled bed sheets, skipped meals or baths, and the list goes on. Please, may I implore all the members of this House to vote yes to Bill 33 today, as it is our chance to truly make a difference in the way our mothers, our fathers, our grandparents, our children and all the people we love are treated with respect and care and dignity in the long-term-care system.

In wrapping up, Speaker, I just want to commend the member from Nickel Belt. She truly is an advocate for health care, and I am so proud that I am able to work together with her and make seniors' lives better with the Time to Care Act, Bill 33.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Jeff Leal: It goes to say that we will be supporting Bill 33. But I really want to look at this in a very personal context. In February 1959, my younger brother was born: a great joy to us. He was born with Down syndrome. He was a joyful part of our lives for 57 years, and I was his guardian for the last 20 years. But when he was born, his life expectancy was to be 30 years old. He lived until 57 years.

The last three years of his life, he was a resident of Fairhaven long-term-care home, a municipally owned home in Peterborough. I was there on a very frequent basis. Fortunately for me, I was able to bathe him and shower him and help feed him. That gave the opportunity, normally, for those hard-working staff at Fairhaven, if they were providing service to my brother Ted and I was there, to go and help someone else who may not have had any relatives, which is the case in many long-term-care homes, whether it's in Peterborough or Windsor or Toronto or Thunder Bay or Cobourg or Cornwall. That's just the reality, sometimes, of people who are in these long-term-care homes.

That experience, Madam Speaker, really helped me—the great pressures and demands to continue to support people who are in these long-term-care homes. As I said, as a matter of fact, the folks at Fairhaven, who I have the utmost respect for, couldn't have been any better for my brother Ted, right up until his last few days on this Earth. They were exceptional people.

I think part of this bill that's been brought before us today is to reinforce, to assist those exceptional people. My wife is an elementary principal in Peterborough, and Karan often says to me that for those teachers who teach kindergarten, it truly is a special calling. And I often think the people who are working day in and day out in our long-term-care homes in Ontario are individuals with a very special calling to support the residents there. Many of them, of course—I know at Fairhaven in Peterborough or St. Joseph's at Fleming there are veterans in those long-term-care homes, the people who really made it possible for us to serve in the offices that we hold each and every day.

I'm also very familiar with St. Joseph's at Fleming in Peterborough. A good friend of mine, a long-term colleague of mine, my buddy on Peterborough city council where I served for 18 years, Glenn Pagett—his wife Velma, a wonderful friend of mine, is in St. Joseph's at Fleming suffering from Alzheimer's disease, as is one of the great NHL hockey players of all time that came from Peterborough, Red Sullivan. He's also in St. Joseph's at Fleming with Alzheimer's.

I talk to Glenn on a very frequent basis about, again, the great work that's being done by people, day in and

day out, in terms of meeting the demands. Many of us, I'm sure, many of the 107 members that sit in this House, have been in long-term-care homes and seen what goes on up front and the demands each and every day to provide dignity and comfort because, in effect, as it was for my brother—that was his home for the last three years of his life.

I think this is a very important discussion we are having here this afternoon. To look at this bill is a positive step forward. You know, Madam Speaker, when it comes to health care, we can get into the partisan give-and-take, but when you really start talking about our seniors, the kind of people who built my community, whether it's Peterborough or Cornwall, in many ways this is a non-partisan issue that we should be working on together in their best interests.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to be able to speak this afternoon in support of Bill 33.

One of the assumptions upon which we have designed our society is that all citizens are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. We must never lose sight of that, nor must we forget what we owe the people who helped build this province. The province our children and grandchildren live in will have been shaped by this generation. We must make it a province that values the contributions that seniors have made and values the contributions they have yet to make.

In the spring of 2012, the provincial government asked Dr. Samir Sinha, director of geriatrics at Mount Sinai and University Health Network hospitals, to lead the development of a seniors strategy. After consulting with a variety of health care and municipal sector officials, Dr. Sinha delivered his report, entitled *Living Longer, Living Well* in January 2013.

On the basis of Dr. Sinha's recommendations, in particular, the need to do more to help our long-term-care homes evolve to meet the changing needs of Ontario seniors, the Liberal government committed to amending the Long-Term Care Homes Act. They also made the same commitment in Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors. Inexplicably, the government ignored some of the key recommendations in both reports.

What's clear is that Ontario should have the best standard of care. Long-term-care residents deserve dignified, safe and quality care and should never worry that their health and safety may be at risk. There is ample empirical evidence that suggests long-term-care residents need more and better care than they're presently receiving. The Liberal government needs to commit to more and better care for long-term-care residents so it can manage current demands and meet future needs in long-term-care homes.

I should add that the Ontario Long Term Care Association also called for these investments in their 2018 budget submission. In addition, staff working in long-term-care homes—particularly in my riding—know that the proposed legislative changes are long overdue and,

taken together, will make a significant difference in nursing and personal support services.

In closing, now is the time to provide assistance to long-term-care residents in ways that improve their quality of life and overall dignity. We owe present and future long-term-care residents no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Durham.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oshawa.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Oshawa. My apologies.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to stand and speak in support of Bill 33, the Time to Care Act, on behalf of my constituents of Oshawa.

This is a vital conversation for us to be having, but more to the point, this is a necessary change that members of my community have been advocating and asking for. Family members, personal support workers and seniors have been asking for better care in our long-term-care homes. Bill 33 ensures a minimum standard of care—four hours of hands-on care per resident.

As I look around the Legislature today, I see that we have a very full house, and we welcome health care workers and advocates to Queen's Park today. Also, we thank them for their commitment to care in Ontario and their continued advocacy.

We heard from some of those folks at the press conference yesterday, who made it plain that there is a dire need for more touch time, more real attention with staff. We heard that improvements are badly needed and that the acuity of need is increasing every month. We heard terrible stories about the shame, embarrassment and anger felt by elderly residents who do not get the care that they deserve or require. Most residents are over 85, almost three quarters have some sort of Alzheimer's or dementia, and the vast majority have mobility issues.

We also understood that the only guarantees that long-term-care residents have are that there will be one nurse onsite 24 hours a day and that they get two baths a week. This is why it's important to be talking about minimum standards of care. Right now, residents have, as we've heard, only between five and 10 minutes of help with their morning routine. That includes waking, washing, oral care, dressing and using the facilities. Speaker, I know that I could not condense my routine to eight minutes, and I don't have dexterity or mobility issues.

1600

I have had many conversations with family members and health care workers who are begging for help for our seniors. When a senior needs assistance to use the toilet but there aren't enough staff to help them—because the only two staff on the floor are helping to lift a resident or helping with showering, or are responding to a violent incident—so often, that resident and many others are left for hours to sit in their own waste. Our system, because we aren't willing to care or invest, is forcing incontinence on our seniors, among other countless indignities.

This House voted to support the NDP motion to expand the scope of the long-term-care inquiry into the Wettlaufer murders and to more broadly consider the long-term-care system. I don't know how many of you remember that day, but the motion passed. We want to investigate and understand what is and isn't working, and to really figure out how to better look after our seniors. Even though some of the government members voted for that motion, and even though it passed in this House, the government says that they have no intention of honouring that vote. They refuse to expand the scope and look behind our long-term-care curtains, and that, Madam Speaker, is shameful.

Our office in Oshawa—as, I'm sure, are others—is busy on any given day, but more and more, our office is dealing with folks coming through the door in crisis when it comes to health care and long-term care. We used to refer to long-term-care facilities as old folks' homes or nursing homes, but the nature of care has changed, because now we are talking about care in the long term. Whether that is a man in his thirties with schizophrenia who needs care in the long term or, in the same hallway, a grandmother in her nineties, these are complex, evolving care needs, and our system is not reflecting that.

Our constituency offices are hearing from constituents sending letters and making phone calls. We're having meeting after meeting, and I actually have a letter I'd like to share with you:

“As a personal support worker in the nursing department of a long-term-care facility, I am a front-line worker who can personally attest to the many challenges of the job.... All too often there is a ‘conveyor belt of care’ mentality where residents and their care needs are designated as an ‘assigned task’ to be completed during a 7.5-hour shift. Personal care needs are often not met in a timely manner because resources and staffing levels do not adequately reflect the increasing needs of our residents. And the needs ... do not only encompass important care and personal needs alone, but the baseline basic human needs which we all deserve: interaction and a connection with others, a sense of well-being and worth, and not just to be a timed ‘task’ on a nurse's to-do list. And who amongst us doesn't deserve a caring person nearby as we pass from this world to the next? Let me tell you, it is often the case that seniors and vulnerable people die alone in nursing homes as there is not enough time in a shift or enough caring hands to be with those at their time of need.”

We hear from folks who are literally dying on an endless waiting list for long-term care. We hear from families who are being blocked with trespass orders for advocating for their loved ones. We hear from health care workers and family members who just want our seniors to be comfortable, respected, safe and cared for, and that should never be too much to ask.

The fact that we are begging this government for a minimum standard of care, that we're fighting to guarantee a minimum amount of human contact and hands-on care, boggles the mind. This government had better be

prepared for the heck Ontarians will give them if they don't pass this bill today, through committee and into law, and actually decide that it's time to care.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm happy to support Bill 33 and ensure that debate continues, that we have further discussion and opportunities for amendments. I, frankly, think that there are opportunities for improving Bill 33, but I also know that what we have in Ontario right now isn't working.

I want to sort of start at the beginning. We all deal with constituents, and the calls I get begin when there is a change in the health status. First, family members and loved ones are looking for help at home. They have to fight for that. The famous CCACs—we all know the stories. We all have the waiting lists. We all make the calls, over and over and over again, to get the hours of service to the home. And I can give you a very specific example: Two elderly people in my community—the woman was attempting to look after her husband post-cancer surgery and she got injured. She was trying to help her husband because she wasn't getting the home care she needed. Now, instead of dealing with one recovering elderly patient from cancer surgery, we actually have two people. Of course, now we're looking at long-term care. Well, my local Central West LHIN, in one year, had an increase of 30%. There are almost 800 people who, today, are looking for long-term care in one LHIN, in one part of Ontario. That story can be shared, duplicated and told over and over again, no matter what LHIN you represent.

Then, they fight and fight and they try to find a long-term-care space for their loved one. Eventually, miraculously, they find one. Again from my own community, I have an elderly 80-plus-year-old man who is driving over an hour to visit his spouse because that was the closest long-term-care facility he could find. He could keep saying no, but he couldn't continue to care for his spouse. The stories go on and on.

When someone finally gets that bed in a long-term-care home, they think, "Okay. Now life is going to get easier. Now we can focus on having the quality of life." No, no, Speaker. You know what happens then? Then, there is encouragement for the family members to come during meal time or in the evening. Why? Because they need help. They need help to eat. They need help to prepare for bed. They need help to begin their day. Instead of actually bonding and having a social relationship, they become the de facto caregiver again in the long-term-care facility.

We are not doing this right. We can do better. I don't want to repeat what has been happening, but we know the stats. We know what's happening in other jurisdictions. We know that Ontario is the lowest, so let's actually start talking about the entire system.

Absolutely, I'm happy to support Bill 33, but I think we all can acknowledge it is one part of a very large continuum that really, really needs some serious studying and some serious improvements, for no other reason than our loved ones deserve it. We shouldn't have to be

fighting every stage of a system to get support and help for our loved ones. I believe that is what Bill 33 is attempting to do. I appreciate that you are doing it in the best of intentions. As I say, it's one part of a continuum, so let's make sure that we allow Bill 33 to continue, that we have that debate at committee, but please don't stop there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise on behalf of my constituents to express my strong support and to applaud the work of my colleague the member for Nickel Belt on Bill 33, Time to Care Act.

I made this point when we had a debate about expanding the scope of the inquiry into long-term care, but one thing we have to be very aware of as we talk about the Time to Care Act is that the burdens of the long-term-care system are felt disproportionately by women. You walk into any long-term-care facility, and the overwhelming majority of the most frail residents are women. The overwhelming majority of the people who work there are women. I've had a revolving door of women who have been coming to my constituency office to tell me they've had to reduce their hours or sometimes leave the workforce altogether so that they can go into the long-term-care facility and help support their aging parent. Women are carrying this burden. We need to step up as government and ensure that every resident of a long-term-care facility has those four hours of touch time they need to live with dignity and with the respect they deserve.

I also want to say that people here know that I was a researcher before I was elected, and I always love when we make policy that is actually informed by research. A couple of years ago, I had the opportunity to go to a breakfast with Dr. Pat Armstrong. She talked about this idea, this finding, that four hours of care is necessary for a quality long-term-care system. This was based on research that was done by an international team of 26 researchers who went to six countries, looked at promising practices and identified this as what we must do if we are to appropriately support people in long-term-care facilities.

This is an important bill. It is informed by research, and it will benefit women in our society who are currently disproportionately carrying the burden of the failure of our system.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Nickel Belt to wrap-up.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am delighted to see that there was support from all sides of the House for Bill 33, the Time to Care Act. I'm not one who wants to give people false hope. I hope, and I've put my full heart in this, that we are passing Bill 33, the Time to Care Act, for second reading with the goal of bringing it to the finish line.

I'm putting a warning on the record right now: We are dealing with an omnibus health care bill right now called Bill 160. Bill 160 will see the finish line, and I am telling you right now that the Time to Care Act—four hours of hands-on care—will be an amendment to Bill 160, to make sure that it makes it to the finish line.

This House, in a few minutes, will speak, and I feel pretty reassured that all sides of the House will vote in favour. The process would be to send it to committee, and I will send it to committee. Then there would be public hearings, then there would be a third reading, another vote, and then royal assent.

Only the Liberal government gets to decide which bills go to committee, which bills see the finish line, so I don't want to take any chances. I'm sort of hedging my bets here. But I'm putting on the record so that everybody knows: I am not giving 78,000 families false hope.

We all said nice things about the need to do better. We all said the right things about respecting elderly people in long-term care. Those cannot be empty words. Those people deserve the truth. So you either vote for, and it reaches the finish line, or vote against and be honest.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Consideration of private members' public business has concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours allotted. This House is therefore suspended until 4:25, at which time I will be putting the questions to the House.

The House suspended proceedings from 1613 to 1625.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

FAIRNESS IN MINIMUM
WAGE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE
DE SALAIRE MINIMUM

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 7, standing in the name of Ms. Forster.

Ms. Forster has moved second reading of Bill 172, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to the minimum wage. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We'll vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

WSIB COVERAGE FOR WORKERS
IN RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES
AND GROUP HOMES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION
À ACCORDER AUX TRAVAILLEURS
DANS LES ÉTABLISSEMENTS DE SOINS
EN RÉSIDENCE ET LES FOYERS
DE GROUPE PAR LA COMMISSION
DE LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE
ET DE L'ASSURANCE CONTRE
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Fraser has moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to amend

the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member from Ottawa South to identify the committee it's being referred to.

Mr. John Fraser: Regulations and private bills, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member has referred the bill to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed. Congratulations.

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM
CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM
STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ
AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT
UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1628 to 1633.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Members, please take your seats.

FAIRNESS IN MINIMUM
WAGE ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ EN MATIÈRE
DE SALAIRE MINIMUM

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Forster has moved second reading of Bill 172, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to the minimum wage.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bisson, Gilles
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea

Miller, Paul
Sattler, Peggy
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Dickson, Joe	Mangat, Amrit
Bailey, Robert	Duguid, Brad	Martow, Gila
Baker, Yvan	Fedeli, Victor	Moridi, Reza
Barrett, Toby	Fraser, John	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Chan, Michael	Harris, Michael	Oosterhoff, Sam
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Hoggarth, Ann	Potts, Arthur
Coe, Lorne	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Damerla, Dipika	Jones, Sylvia	Walker, Bill
Delaney, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Yakabuski, John
Dhillon, Vic	Malhi, Harinder	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The eyes are 15; the nays are 29.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will open the door for 30 seconds before the second vote.

TIME TO CARE ACT (LONG-TERM
CARE HOMES AMENDMENT, MINIMUM
STANDARD OF DAILY CARE), 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR LE TEMPS ALLOUÉ
AUX SOINS (MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES FOYERS DE SOINS
DE LONGUE DURÉE ET PRÉVOYANT
UNE NORME MINIMALE EN MATIÈRE
DE SOINS QUOTIDIENS)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All right, members, take your seats.

Ms. Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act to amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007 to establish a minimum standard of daily care.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fife, Catherine	Mangat, Amrit
Arnott, Ted	Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila

Bailey, Robert	Fraser, John	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	French, Jennifer K.	Moridi, Reza
Barrett, Toby	Gates, Wayne	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bisson, Gilles	Gélinas, France	Oosterhoff, Sam
Chan, Michael	Gretzky, Lisa	Potts, Arthur
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Harris, Michael	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coe, Lorne	Hatfield, Percy	Sattler, Peggy
Colle, Mike	Hoggarth, Ann	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	Horwath, Andrea	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Hunter, Mitzie	Vanthof, John
Dickson, Joe	Jones, Sylvia	Walker, Bill
Duguid, Brad	Leal, Jeff	Yakabuski, John
Fedeli, Victor	Malhi, Harinder	

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The eyes are 44; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to turn to the member from Nickel Belt to identify which committee.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wish to send it to general government, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member has referred it to the Standing Committee on General Government. Agreed? Agreed. Okay.

Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Hunter has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

Interjection: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): On division. The House will be adjourned until Tuesday, November 14, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1638.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioc Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté

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) Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	York–Simcoe 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	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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	
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	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

**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
Mike Colle, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Cheri DiNovo, Michael Harris
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, 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 / Présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
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
Grant Crack, John Fraser
Lisa Gretzky, Julia Munro
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Granville Anderson, Lorenzo Berardinetti
James J. Bradley, Wayne Gates
Cristina Martins, Sam Oosterhoff
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Nathalie Des Rosiers
Amrit Mangat, Jim McDonell
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Ross Romano, Monique Taylor
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
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 permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Grant Crack, Jennifer K. French
Jack MacLaren, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Mario Sergio
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
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