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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CAP AND TRADE
CANCELLATION ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME
DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D'ÉCHANGE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 30, 2018, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / *Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When the House last debated this bill the member for Toronto–Danforth had the floor. He still has time. I recognize the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to continue my presentation. Recapping yesterday, in just a few sentences, we're dealing with a bill today that reflects the reckless approach of this government towards climate change, an abandonment of moral responsibilities that governments have to protect the people of this province from climate damage, from climate loss. Frankly, yesterday I had the opportunity to review the ways in which cap-and-trade money was actually being used to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cut the costs of operating hospitals, schools and social housing.

There is no doubt, Speaker, that the cap-and-trade system that was put in place by the Liberals had flaws. This government could have corrected those flaws and moved on, but instead, without having a climate change plan to put in place, they simply cancelled that program.

We are well aware, Speaker, of the urgency of the climate issue, the speed with which change is asserting itself, and to not leave the previous plan in place—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize. There are a number of audible conversations going on on this side of the House. I would ask you to quiet down so I can

hear the member for Toronto–Danforth, who is less than 10 feet away from me.

Member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. The Conservative government says that renewable energy and the investments from the cap-and-trade program weren't reducing carbon emissions, that they weren't fighting climate change. This bears a very distant relationship to any facts. In fact, that statement is a stranger to reality. They're correct in saying that the program wasn't doing enough, but to take a course of action in which we will lose months, maybe years, before we take the action that's required is not a responsible course of action.

The Conservative government speaks about the cancellation of cap-and-trade as making people better off financially. I want to say two things to that. First of all, in cancelling it, we come under the regime of the federal government, which will mean higher payments on a month-to-month basis for individual families. They could have decided to keep the lower-cost program in place, but no, they decided to give control to Ottawa, take control of those funds out of our hands, and put Ontarians in a position where they will be paying more.

The other thing, Speaker, is that their position is analogous to telling people they could save money by cancelling home fire insurance. Just a few little bits of information: There are around five million households in Ontario. From 2012 to 2016, we averaged a little over 600 house fires per year. So the odds seem pretty good that if you're living in Ontario, you won't see a fire in your house in the next few years and you may not see a fire in your home in your lifetime. Yet no one in this building would say that you shouldn't spend the money to insure your home against fire. Why? Because if you're wrong, the impact is catastrophic. Home fire insurance is a lot more expensive than what people were paying under cap-and-trade.

That being said, there are two big differences between proceeding with investing in climate action through cap-and-trade or cancelling your home fire policy. The first is that unlike your house catching fire, which may never happen, the climate is already breaking down. We're already seeing fire and flooding on an unprecedented scale. People are already getting Lyme disease in Ontario, as that disease spreads farther north as Ontario heats up. Without a substantial change in direction, without substantial cuts to emissions, we will be seeing our lives become poorer and harsher in the years to come. So there may not be a chance in a million that your house will catch fire this year, but I can tell you that it's a sure bet that Ontario is going to get hotter and we're going to pay for it.

The second thing that is ignored by the Conservatives when it comes to the cap-and-trade program is that over time, more and more of the burden was going to be carried by big polluters. The reality is that with this bill, the government is setting aside a system that would put the bulk of the cost on big polluters so that people in this province would get the support they need to make the transition that's required. I know they're not interested in it. This is the government for the rich people, absolutely, and they are quite happy to put the burden on the backs of everyday Ontarians, people from Ontario who already have a tough time. But no, they would rather protect big polluters and big corporations than look after the people of this province. It sends a very clear message to the people of Ontario: Lots of no future for you. That's the direction they're headed in.

We tried to amend this bill in committee, Speaker. I want to go over some of the amendments, because I think they're important in terms of how we should be approaching this issue. We tried to amend the bill to ensure that a proper foundation was there for the direction of action.

The Paris agreement of 2015 set a global framework for action to stop climate breakdown, to stop the chaos that comes from a drop in our standard of living and an ongoing disruption of our lives. So I moved, on behalf of the NDP, that the Paris agreement be incorporated in the bill. Every Conservative member voted against that—every one. If we come forward with a climate plan that doesn't have the Paris agreement as a foundation, what will be the basis for that plan? If we aren't using an internationally agreed upon standard for action on climate change, what will be the basis? No basis was given. We are already part of a global treaty, and we already know what needs to be done. Yet government members would not vote to put that foundation in a climate bill.

We move, then, to at least set targets for a reduction of emissions. We know that we have to move very quickly to cut back on our emissions so that we in Ontario will be doing our part and so that we can talk credibly to nations around the world about the validity and the workability of changing our economy. So I suggested, very simply, we go ahead using the limits, or the targets, that are already in place: a 15% reduction by 2020; a 37% reduction in emissions by 2030—which, to tell you the truth, Speaker, is about the same amount as we've done in the last 13 years, so really, a very reachable target. Then, for the target in 2050—totally consistent with the most recent findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—that we reach net zero by the end of 2050; that is, we capture all the emissions that we make, so that even though we're probably still going to be using fossil fuels at that time, the net emissions from Ontario are zero. There was no interest on the part of the government on that—no interest in those targets.

0910

I actually think those targets need to be re-examined, because in light of the most recent climate science they may well need to be tougher. But at the very least, we should have had those targets in place. There was no interest on the part of the government in doing that.

I asked that public hearings be held on the exact targets so that we could have that broader scientific discussion and make sure that we could meet the targets that are internationally agreed to: keeping temperatures well below two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to keep the change, actually, at 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels—no interest on the part of the government on being in any way compliant with the Paris accord.

So I have to ask myself: What feverish right-wing think tank somewhere in the United States is writing the foundation for this plan right now? What sort of backward step is the government prepared to announce? Because if they're not compliant with the Paris agreement, what they bring forward will be junk. It will simply be junk.

If the government is serious about a climate plan, then it has to have the structure of a plan that's actually addressing what the world needs. It actually needs to be consistent with where the bulk of the countries in this world believe we need to go.

We asked, in another revision, that the government, when they present their targets and any revisions of targets, set out the basis for the decision—an explanation of how the targets meet the terms and conditions of climate protection goals set out in the Paris agreement. That was a bid for transparency. I often hear the Premier talking about “the most transparent and open government ever.” There is a lot of debate on that, but at least that's what he's claiming. So this bid for transparency, to explain what you're doing and how it's going to meet the targets—no interest in adopting that, none. It was voted down by every Conservative member of that committee.

We further moved that the minister should prepare a climate plan and introduce the plan as a bill in the Legislature. This is a big departure from the Liberals, who would never do that. They would never introduce their bill into the Legislature for full public debate. It was a declaration: “This is what you got; like it or lump it.” Are the Conservatives any different? Absolutely not, they will not bring their climate plan to this chamber for a vote—no interest in that amendment. It should be here; it should be a matter of public record who takes what position. The public should have the opportunity to come before committee, present evidence and be questioned, and committee should have the opportunity to debate things thoroughly. It was rejected by every member of the Conservative Party sitting in that committee.

We moved that the minister present a new plan every five years, unless there are substantial changes in the science, in which case he should bring a plan more frequently—no interest.

To some extent, our amendments are based on the climate legislation in place in the UK, administered under the Cameron Conservative government, and now administered under the Theresa May Conservative government. They don't seem to have a problem regularly coming back to the House of Commons for debate and approval. They don't seem to have a problem with coming every five years because the science is changing and having that

debate here. But this Conservative government is apparently even less forthcoming than those Conservative governments.

We asked that there be a budget set out in their climate plan showing how much could be emitted in the different sectors so that people could judge who was carrying the burden and who was not; so we could decide politically what made sense, which is what we have to do—no interest in that.

We asked that the government present the estimate of costs to meet their goals. We asked that those be presented here in this chamber for debate—no interest in that. That alone should be troubling. There's a lack of a systematic approach, a lack of goals consistent with our global ambitions and a lack of interest in actually having political control.

We further moved that, in the preparation of the climate change plan, the minister address the potential costs to Ontario if we didn't take action. Because far too often when we debate this issue we have, on the one side, the cost of taking action, and on the other side there is silence. Very few are doing the analysis as to what the impact will really be. So if you are doing a cost-benefit analysis, you need both sides of the equation: cost, absolutely, but you need to know the benefit or the avoided risk on the other side. The government was not interested in costing the impact of climate change on this province.

In their plan, we moved that they look at the scientific knowledge about climate change, at the technology available to deal with it, at the economic circumstances that we would be effecting with a carbon budget, at the social impact and in particular the likely impact of a carbon budget on fuel poverty. We're going to have to balance all these things. But the government is not interested, in any formal way, in incorporating that into their climate plan. In other words, they are not interested in a comprehensive review of all the factors that would affect the plan and that we in this Legislature need to consider when we make a decision.

I moved—and this is one the Liberals rejected as well, so I shouldn't be surprised that the Conservatives rejected it—that the minister shall ensure that the climate change plan provides enhanced support for low-income, rural, northern and Indigenous communities, which are more vulnerable to climate change. Now, I would have thought, given their constituencies in many cases, that the idea that we look at rural areas for special consideration would have appealed to them. My colleagues from the north can talk about the difficulties that they face and the fact that when we're putting together a plan, the most vulnerable populations, those who will be most heavily affected by the plan and lack of changes that the plan is supposed to bring about—you need to look at all of that. I guess I wasn't that surprised when the Liberals rejected it when I tried to put it in their cap-and-trade plan, because after all, that's really not their constituency, right? Let's face facts. But I actually thought that this time this government might be interested, given their rhetoric on the matter. Clearly, I was mistaken.

Now, one of the things that I have noticed in a lot of the Conservatives talking points is talking about adaptation, effectively: “There's nothing we can do. We're too small a player. Let's just get ready for the rough stuff to come.” I don't think that's a good attitude. I think it's a dangerous attitude. It's an attitude of having given up, of passivity in the face of a huge risk. There's more on that, but I actually moved that the climate plan include an adaptation plan, because we're going to need both sides. We need to plan to reduce our emissions, and we have to plan to deal with the consequences of the climate change that's coming toward us.

I suggested a few things that needed to be critical in that plan: protection of life, because let's face it, with more extreme weather there will be greater risk to life. It was this past summer that a firefighter fighting forest fires in northern Ontario died. We need to have protection of property. I thought that was an easy sell to the Conservative Party. Protection of biological diversity: You need to have that if you're going to have a society and an environment that are healthy and thriving.

I also moved on behalf of my party that the adaptation plan include assistance to those whose jobs would be disrupted by a change in the form of energy that we use. It's called “just transition.” If you're working in the oil industry, distribution, processing, refining, as the economy changes, your life is going to be uncertain. We need, consciously, to put in our plan measures that will provide support for people to move from one economy to the next. I didn't think that would be particularly controversial. I thought it would be something that the government could adopt.

I also, on behalf of the party, the NDP, asked that the adaptation plan include provision of assistance to individuals, communities and businesses negatively affected by climate change. So, those communities in Ottawa that were hit by the tornado; or a few years ago, people in Goderich who were hit by a tornado; or people in Toronto who were hit by the ice storm—we need to have an ongoing system of providing assistance, and think in advance. These are no longer accidents. These are, unfortunately, relatively predictable events putting people, property and lives at risk. That was rejected by every single Conservative member sitting on that committee, every single one.

0920

Speaker, my time is short. I want to say this: The bill is a failure on two fronts. The cap-and-trade wind-down is not being done in a transparent way and is unnecessary. It puts us in a position where we will be subject to federal legislation and higher costs. And it's a failure in that the climate change plan doesn't have the structure to actually deliver the protection that Ontarians need. It doesn't have the structure for a reduction of emissions, so that we can actually say to the rest of the world, “This is doable.” We may be a small player—even though, here in this country, we're in the top 10 emitters in the world, but we're smaller than China.

We need to have both sides of the plan. We don't. This plan and this bill should be rejected.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Il me fait plaisir de me lever pour tenter de sauvegarder une dernière fois l'intégrité de nos efforts pour protéger l'environnement et combattre les changements climatiques.

I want to urge the government this morning to be cautious: cautious about our international reputation, cautious about the future of our province and our economic competitiveness, and to be transparent as well towards Ontarians.

Au cours des dernières semaines, des renvois éloquents ont été faits aux effets dévastateurs des changements climatiques sur notre société, et nous savons que les dommages ne font que s'accroître.

I know that the minister has said publicly that Ontario contributes only a small fraction of the worldwide emissions, as though this diminishes our moral obligation to participate in this global effort. It does not. How will we be able to conduct ourselves on the international scene to support our international reputation, which is essential to investment, to immigration, to tourism and so many other aspects, if we fail to honour the promises toward the Paris accord? We jeopardize our reputation when we don't follow through. We cannot pretend that we are alone in the world. This government is a free-trade government and we agree with this. In that context, it must worry all the time about its international reputation.

My plea today is that we not pass third reading of the bill to cancel the cap-and-trade program before knowing what the alternative is and what the government has in mind. Ontarians are entitled to know what the plan is before scrapping and shredding what they have. The government says that it wants transparency; it should give us some.

Many Ontarians are probably puzzled by this government's views on the environment and on climate change. A very large group of members of the government were part of the Patrick Brown team and signed the People's Guarantee, which had a commitment to carbon pricing. Now they've changed their minds within about six months, and are spending millions fighting the federal government on carbon pricing. So what was the problem in the People's Guarantee and how can people change their minds?

Many members of the government have spent their careers on reducing the size of government and reducing the number of regulations—red tape, as they call it. But the current version of the bill indicates that the minister will forgo market instruments in favour of regulatory instruments. This is bewildering. One worries about all these contradictions: Some people were in favour of carbon pricing six months ago; they no longer are. Some people spend all their lives fighting regulation; now, presumably, they will have to be in favour of regulation. All of this contradiction is worrying—that at the end of the day, the government will do nothing.

I know that the minister has promised his plan for next month, which is November. Shouldn't we just wait and see

what the plan is before voting for scrapping cap-and-trade? There's no urgency to passing this today. The GreenON program has been cancelled; it finishes today. We're out of the market, so there's no urgency. We could just see what the plan is and then be able to be transparent to Ontarians so they know what they're choosing. I think Ontarians are entitled to know what the government's position on climate change is before we vote today. In good conscience, myself, I think it's always wiser to see what is at stake so that we can evaluate the cost of the plan, its effectiveness, and where it leads Ontario before abandoning what we have.

A second point that worries me a lot: The FAO has identified that by not having a climate change plan, the Ontario government is leaving on the table \$420 million from the federal government. This is from a government that insists that the federal government owes it \$200 million to help settle refugees in Ontario, which is fair to claim that amount. But this does not make sense. Why would we leave money on the table at a time when we need it so badly?

Finally, in my last message, I want to expand a little bit on what I would like to caution the government about: missing what I would describe as the electric train on this issue. China just announced that it is going to have a cap-and-trade program. It is therefore opening a large market of exchanges, because it makes good sense to confront the reality of climate change. The economic benefits of going green are well known. They are experimented with throughout the world. Indeed, yesterday at Queen's Park, I had the pleasure of being visited by the heat and air conditioning group, who were talking about the benefits of GreenON in the Ottawa Valley. A group of small entrepreneurs were very distressed by the elimination of GreenON. They could not fulfill all of the promises to their customers, and they could see the benefit of the program for their own customers right there, not only helping them refurbish their homes, diminishing their energy bills, but also feeling more secure in their homes: better windows, better furnace, better air conditioning. All this makes sense. They were local jobs and local people that were involved.

So what's the new plan? Will this new plan replace this? Will there be an alternative to ensuring that people reduce their energy consumption by better insulating their homes? Will all these small businesses that made investments to support GreenON be compensated? Will they be allowed to continue to participate in the greening of the economy?

I worry that Ontario will be left out of this new opening of cap-and-trade with China. I said it earlier in this House and I will repeat it: The future will be green, or there won't be a future. Around the world, countries and governments recognize that they need to support the greening of their economies. They need to provide incentives to businesses to reduce their emissions and create greener products. This is where the competitiveness of business is going, and we should be part of this. This is the future economy. There will be manufacturing of green products. It's not being against manufacturing to say that manufacturing has to be

about products that will be competitive around the world because they are greener than their competitors. This is the way of the future, and this government should hold on to this and prepare us for the future. It's important. That's the job of government: to prepare us to be able to be part of large economic growth.

I heard my colleague say, "The future is not green; it's going to be blue." I wish the future—put a little blue in the green. Make it aqua; I don't care. Change the name of the programs because you want to label it under your own. I don't mind. But you need to be part of this. This is important. It's important to Ontario. It's important for small business in the Ottawa Valley, and it's important for big business around the province. It's important to continue to be competitive and ensure that we are there in a world that is green. Maybe, if you want, label it blue; I don't mind. I want us to be there and to ensure that we continue to cooperate.

0930

Today, I think my message is about urging the government to pause and present its plan before scrapping what we have. It is more prudent, it is more transparent, and it's fairer to the people of Ontario.

Aujourd'hui, je demande au gouvernement de ne pas passer la troisième lecture, de ne pas adopter le projet de loi avant d'avoir présenté à tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes le plan qu'ils veulent développer pour combattre les changements climatiques. Nous avons le droit de savoir ce qu'ils ont en tête. Ils ont le devoir de le présenter avant d'éliminer ce que nous avons déjà.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to wish you a happy Halloween, and just remind everyone that Ontarians today are getting a treat; they're not getting a trick. They're getting the treat of the scrapping of cap-and-trade. They will not be tricked into the carbon tax and paying for cap-and-trade.

Let me tell you a little more about these treats that they're getting. By eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax, we'll be saving the average family \$260 per year. In addition to that, removing the carbon tax from natural gas bills will also save families \$80 a year and small businesses \$285 a year. Not to mention that every time those families, every time those seniors, every time those new drivers are gassing up, they're going to be saving money on their gas. There are many treats this Halloween.

But it seems that despite the path that our government wants to take, the path of making tomorrow much easier and sweeter than yesterday, making next month much easier than the month before that—that is the path that we want to take: the path of prosperity for the province, giving back to those people who work so hard to stretch every single dollar that they make. That is what we got elected to do. We got elected on a clear mandate to bring relief and affordability to the people of Ontario and a clear mandate to scrap the cap-and-trade program and to fight the carbon tax.

This is a fight that the federal government could be working towards as an alternative. As Minister Phillips has stated, instead of taxing us, the federal government could be working with us on climate change, but that doesn't seem to be the appetite. The Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, said himself, "If Canada stopped everything tomorrow, and the other countries didn't have any solutions," it would not make a difference. Let me repeat that: "If Canada stopped everything tomorrow, and the other countries didn't have any solutions," it would not make a difference.

So why are we taxing people, then, with the cap-and-trade and the carbon tax? Why are we hurting those who need the help the most? Why are we espousing this elite policy on to other people because of the guilt? We're letting polluters get away by letting them pay into a system of guilt, essentially. It's okay if they pollute, but if they pay into the system, it's totally acceptable. It's unfair, because those people who are burdened the most—the regular people, the day-to-day average citizens that we talk to every day—are living on the edge. They cannot afford it. Those who have the means to pay this burden? Sure, they can make it. Sure, the corporations, they can pay it. For those people in the middle, they cannot. They are living on the edge. And it doesn't get better for them, it gets worse with a cap-and-trade system.

The FAO had stated that Ontarians are going to be saving \$7.2 billion over four years. That is a tremendous savings for the taxpayer. But it shows what side the government is on. The side of the government is with the countryman, is with the people—those people who work every day. They do not have time to come into the Legislature to give speeches; that is what we are elected to do. We were elected with a clear mandate to represent the people.

Unfortunately, the debate here is a detachment—the detachment of, basically, dictating from the top what is best for the people and taxing them and burdening them with things that they cannot afford. It's awful to think of the lack of interest that some people in this House have towards those people who cannot sit at the table of negotiating. Instead, the table they sit at—the kitchen table—their costs are going up, while everyone is talking on the world stage about taxing them and increasing their burden.

Mrs. Robin Martin: And their international credibility.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: And their international credibility; that is right.

This government—we do not admire China, unlike the Prime Minister of Canada. Sure, he admires China. He's going to follow suit with them. We do not admire China. Right now, they are too slow to the game. They are polluting, yes, and now they're starting to go into a cap-and-trade system. What will that do, Mr. Speaker? Well, it's going to be burdening a lot of the people that need it most: those people who are hungry, the people who use the food bank. In fact, it has been proven that high energy costs make people use the food bank most. And so if we

really care for the people, then why would we be increasing their burden?

That is why this government is providing relief to individuals, relief to Ontarians, those who work hard—relief like \$4.2 billion in gasoline savings over a four-year period. That is money saved for every single hard-working Ontarian in this province. And that's not it, Mr. Speaker. When we got elected with our clear mandate to repeal the cap-and-trade system and to challenge the federal government on its plan to impose the carbon tax, we made it clear that we will stand up for the people. But what I've been hearing is quotes about the United Nations and the report that they released earlier this month. Well, if we were to follow their report, Canada's share would represent 200 million tonnes; that is 0.8%. Ontarians simply cannot afford this. The same report suggests that the carbon tax—the same report that I was talking about earlier—would go up to \$7,183 per Canadian per tonne. That is the tax that is needed on every single Canadian in order to receive the desired approach by the United Nations.

I will go back to those kitchen tables again, because they are not at the UN. They are not making these policies. They are paying the bill and the consequences of these policies. And as energy prices are going up, as the price of everything is going up, these families cannot afford it. That is why we're providing hope. We're providing hope for those that are being kicked when they are down. That is unfair. Ontario is already overburdened with debt. They're paying high taxes. And now, when they're at that point in their lives, we're just going to kick them when they're down and give them another tax upon tax?

That is not our approach, and that is why we got elected with a clear majority—such a majority that we actually extend to the other side of the House. We have colleagues on the other side; we have colleagues here. We have quite a strong majority. In fact, we're sitting on the same side as the NDP most days; that is how big our majority is. That shows you that it's clear that we were elected by the people to represent the people in their interests—not the interests of the private elite that sit at the UN table, claiming that they know what's best for the people that go to work every day, that gas up their cars, that have to drive their parents or their grandparents to doctor's appointments, that have to drive their kids to soccer practices. That is who we are listening to and that is who we are standing up for.

But don't just take it from me. Look at some of the reports that have come out. For example, I had stated the impact the carbon tax has on those who are most vulnerable: those who would have to use food banks with the rising food prices and the rising costs of everything, really. There was a study done in Nature Climate Change. It zooms in on how implementing a uniform tax on greenhouse gases and emissions would impact the agriculture sector, and therefore affect food prices. Well, you know what this report says, Mr. Speaker? "The results show that a blanket carbon tax 'would have a greater negative impact on global hunger and food consumption than the direct impacts of climate change.'"

So it's rich that people want to claim that they're standing up for individuals, that they're listening, that they

want the next generation to do better—but if they can't put food on the table, what good is it? That is why we want to have a balanced approach. We want to make sure we have a strong economy and a clean environment. Everyone wants clean water, clean air and clean land, certainly. But we're not going to do it with the consequences of taxing people and letting the big polluters get away with it just because, oh, well, they feel good because they're taxing people. Sure, we're all paying the burden, but what good is it if you cannot put food on the table the next day?

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Don't just take it from me. When we were in committee, we heard from many stakeholders that said how their businesses were going to be impacted by this carbon tax. Some of the people we heard from were people who work in the farming sector, like the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association. They said the existing cap-and-trade program represents increased fuel costs on their equipment and climate controls, for things like packaging and storage facilities and heat for greenhouses. These are all things that they're going to have to pay cap-and-trade on. They would have to pay it all year round for their fruit production, especially in northern climates. The cap-and-trade program would actually add, for their industry, an additional \$55 million to the cost of the production of fruit and vegetables in Ontario. To reiterate, they said they didn't support the cap-and-trade program because the costs of it are unsustainable for Ontario's fruit and vegetable farmers and for all Ontarians who are looking to put fruit and vegetables on their table.

Additionally, we've heard from other witnesses, such as the coalition of concerned manufacturers. They said they support the Ontario government's decision to end the ineffective job-killing tax called the cap-and-trade program. This was just one of the previous government's initiatives that did absolutely nothing—let me repeat that: did absolutely nothing—to impact the environment, but only served to stifle growth in Ontario and send jobs south of the border.

That is why, in addition to getting elected with the clear mandate of scrapping the cap-and-trade program, we also got elected on making Ontario open for business again.

Why is that so important in this day and age? Well, you look at our economy and the economy that we inherited. Ontario's debt is \$338 billion. That's staggering. The current debt-to-GDP ratio is resting at an uncomfortable 39%, as updated by public accounts. That is staggering. We talk about the future and wanting a brighter future, solving climate change for the next generation, but do you know what else the next generation needs? It doesn't need to be saddled with debt. That is what they need.

I was speaking at a high school last week, speaking to the Green Team. It was a lot of the science classes there. Many of them said they want to do something to combat climate change, but they don't want to do it at the expense of the economy. I posed a question to the group. I said, "You want to do something for the environment, but you don't want it to cost you money. Is this correct?" The vast majority of students raised their hand. So there is an

appetite to do something for the environment; don't get us wrong.

Of course, when we ran on our platform, we had a plan for how we would help the environment, things that I get from my constituents, things like cleaning up litter. I got a letter the other day. I will read it to you. It's from Lorna Atkins, from Gilford. She writes to me that she agrees that we should take action, but she wants it to be formidable action, action that doesn't punish her, as she's a senior. She says, "What I find day to day when I'm walking around is that there is too much litter around, and why can't we just have a government that focuses on picking up litter?"

Well, I'm glad to say that this letter comes with a promise, a promise in our platform that says we will go out there and we'll make sure that we combat those people that just use our land and our parks as trash cans. Certainly, that's not the place for it. But, again, these are tangible things that each individual can do to help combat climate change, things that do not punish them. They're not punitive. They don't take money out of their pockets, and they are used for actual environment programs.

We are often hear that, "Oh, if we don't have the cap-and-trade system, then we're not funding our hospitals; we're not funding our schools." Well, the wakeup call: It was never meant to do that in the first place. So I would be very scrupulous to say, "Where was that money? Why was it being redirected for purposes it was not intended for?" The culture of hidden agendas, the culture of unaccountability, of using programs for one intended purpose but really redirecting the money somewhere else, is simply dishonest.

Our government also got elected with a clear mandate for accountability and transparency. That is why we'll be accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario by making sure that we scrap the cap-and-trade program, that we'll put more money in their pockets, which will help them with their day-to-day costs, which will help them with their day-to-day errands, which will help them get to work, which will help them with their kids and raising a family and the costs associated with that.

But it's not just about those small, individual examples in our communities; it's also about what's happening across our country, what's happening in every province. Every province is now standing up for a made-in-Manitoba solution, a made-in-Saskatchewan solution, a made-in-New Brunswick solution.

Where is Ontario? Ontario needs to stand up for its people and have a made-in-Ontario solution. Why? Because here in the Legislature, we owe it to the people.

It's interesting when you have Premiers like Brian Pallister stand up and say, "We are standing up for Manitobans by saying yes to Manitoba's green plan and no to the carbon tax." They rejected the carbon tax, like so many other provinces have or will.

In Ontario, we are following suit. We're following suit for a made-in-Ontario program that is not punitive to those people who need the relief now. That is why we're moving vigorously. Today does mark the end of cap-and-trade, because Ontarians cannot afford to wait. They need the

relief now. They've been saddled with too much of the burden already—the burden for some fantasy dreams of something that cannot happen without punishing the hard-working citizens of our province. We are not going to be punishing and burdening those who are constantly living on the edge. Instead, we'll provide them with hope of a prosperous Ontario, an Ontario that thrives again, an Ontario that is the economic engine of Canada.

Unfortunately, those things do not exist anymore. That is why we are driven by each and every one of those individuals we spoke to when we were knocking on doors who just couldn't afford to pay that amount of a regulatory burden just so that we can feel good about ourselves.

It's not about feeling good about ourselves; it's about action, not just words. That's what this government is doing. Each and every day, it's taking action to make life more affordable for those hard-working Ontarians who need the relief the most.

Under the previous government, we saw energy rates triple, and they were driving businesses and manufacturing out of this province. But now you have a government that's willing to work with the people, willing to work with businesses, to drive those businesses back into Ontario to bring the prosperity again.

What does that mean? It means a lot of those people who came before committee who spoke against the cap-and-trade program don't just represent themselves. They represent a vast amount of people. For example, I mentioned earlier the agricultural sector. The agricultural sector makes our economy not just thrive, but it feeds a lot of our cities, it feeds our towns and it feeds our communities. That needs to be taken into account. When that does not happen, it affects the entire supply chain. Then you have families who are struggling between heating and eating, as has been said in this House. It's not just an anecdote, Mr. Speaker. It's the reality.

The more we go out and speak to people and actually touch down to earth with the people who are harmed by this policy, the more we realize it's needed now more than ever. The reason it's needed now more than ever is because there's a theme where the elites think they can dictate what is best to the hard-working middle class. That is unacceptable. While we're all talking about our image on the world stage, no one is talking about the people who are working every day. They don't have the world stage and a soapbox to stand on. They rely on us, the elected members they have put into office, to stand up and give them a voice. That is what we're doing. We're giving those individuals who cannot stand here in the House a voice by listening to them each and every day, saying, "Yes, we do have a plan to combat climate change, but it will not be at the expense of the economy, and we were transparent with it."

We did not hide, we did not misdirect, like the previous Liberal government. Instead, we were frank with Ontarians. We told them the cost of these programs, and they elected us with a clear majority.

What did we provide as a solution to them, in addition to keeping Ontario open for business, providing transparency and accountability? We also said, "Of course, we

need to keep Ontario beautiful,” by protecting and preserving our waterways and supporting and enforcing our air quality programs. It was written point-blank in our platform. In addition to that, we also promised to improve enforcement, including hiring more conservation officers and increasing policing of major polluters. We also said that we are going to clean up our communities and commit resources to reducing garbage in our neighbourhoods and our parks. Creating a cleaner Ontario—as a plan, all the initiatives—is over \$5 million over our mandate. We also promised, obviously, to set up an emissions reduction fund and to invest in new technologies to reduce emissions right here in Ontario.

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Mr. Speaker, we were transparent, and this is the platform that we were elected on. It was a clear platform, a platform that provides hope and prosperity back to Ontarians, letting them know that tomorrow will be much easier than yesterday. That is why it is important to strike the right balance between protecting our environment and the responsibility to make sure we have a prosperous economy.

And why is this important? Again, I will reiterate that not only can Ontarians not afford it—as we see the number of people who go to food banks increase—but the world can’t afford it either. Those people who cannot be at the United Nations, who don’t have that soapbox to stand on, they cannot afford it.

As we’ve seen in the same report I alluded to earlier, what will happen is, we’re going to be driving up the cost per litre on gas. If we were to achieve that plan, we would be driving up the cost of fuel by \$834. That is astonishing. Why would we impoverish not only our population but those around us? Therefore, if we think that we know best, I would urge you to start actually speaking to your constituents and asking them what it is that they’ve elected their politicians to do, because we owe it to the people to be their voice, to stand up for them in a time when no one else will stand up for them.

While there might be many people who can hire special lobbyists, who can hire special interest groups, to appear on their behalf, those people the cap-and-trade system affects disproportionately more don’t have the time to take off work to be able to appear before committee or to be able to stand up in this Legislature. But do you know what they did? They sent a very clear message. They sent a clear message by electing a strong majority Progressive Conservative government to the Ontario Legislature, because they want opportunity and hope for their children and for the next generation. But it comes at a balance of managing the economy, the climate and our environment.

It’s not to say that there is no plan. We’ve heard over and over again that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks is consulting with Ontarians and making sure that there is a plan. He has set out that he is committed to targets in the cap-and-trade bill. I ask the members in this House to consider supporting the cap-and-trade bill because it’s a different path. It’s a new direction, a direction that makes sure it’s not punitive to those individuals who work every day and who work hard to put

food on the table, but it is punitive to those who are the polluters.

That is why today marks a great day: a great day of relief and a great day of opportunity and hope for Ontarians knowing that light, help and relief is on the way. It’s on the way not only by strengthening our economy, keeping Ontario open for business and making sure they have money in their pocket, but it also means that we have a plan to make sure that we mitigate things and make sure that we do have clean land, clean water and clean air to breathe.

I don’t think anyone would disagree that those are important elements—certainly, they are—but we have to balance it. It’s a balance between making sure that those people who wake up every morning, and they have to commute for work—suddenly, if you tell them, “Sorry, your commute to work this morning was only \$15 to go halfway, but tomorrow it’s \$200, it’s \$300, it’s \$400.” What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? That individual cannot go to work. They’re at home. What kind of system are we creating in this province and in this country when we’re saddling people with these additional burdens so that they cannot go out and do their calling, a career or a profession that they’re very passionate about? They cannot get there.

In my community, many people commute. Some of them use the GO train. Some of them have to drive. Are we now telling those individuals who have to get to work: “Sorry, if you can’t afford to put gas in your car, you can’t get to work”? What kind of message are we sending to the next generation? What kind of message are we sending to those individuals who might want to save for their next house or might want to save for their kids’ post-secondary education? We’re taking those savings of Ontarians that they can reinvest in the economy or reinvest in real climate change initiatives that work—and we’re taking that away.

What’s more is that, even with this plan—as we’ve heard from the Auditor General, as we’ve heard from the FAO—it will actually not reduce greenhouse gas emissions to the goal that has been set out. In fact, I will quote from the Auditor General’s report. It states, “Less than 20% of reductions required to meet the province’s 2020 targets will be achieved in Ontario”—less than 20%.

Another witness coming to committee from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation had told us that if the cap-and-trade program were to go through and if the carbon tax were to go through, it would still have no environmental impact—zero; nil.

Thus, I question the motives of people who are in favour of something like a carbon tax and the motives of people who are in favour of cap-and-trade, and who exactly they are listening to. Are they listening to people who have the funds to lobby them, to present them with data that works in the favour of their industry? Or are they listening to those people who will be saddled with the extra money that they were going to have to pay so that others can pollute?

We don’t believe that individual, hard-working taxpayers should pay for others to pollute. We shouldn’t be sending money to other provinces so they can pollute and

then we can just tap ourselves on the shoulder and applaud ourselves because we feel good about it. It's not about feeling good about something; it's about actually doing the action. It's more than words—that's what I'm trying to drive across—it's more than words; it's the actions. That's the action our government is taking.

Today will mark the end of cap-and-trade. I will reiterate that we did get elected by a majority to do this exact thing, and we are getting it done. We said, "We're making a promise. We're getting rid of cap-and-trade." Promise made, promise kept.

Again, I will go back to questioning the motives of people who are supportive of cap-and-trade and the cap-and-trade system and the carbon tax, because we've seen that in order for it to actually be a formidable policy, the amount of tax that has to be imposed, not only on the individual but on our business sector, our schools, our hospitals—many people claim, "This is money lost. This is money that's not going to be going to our hospitals and to our schools." Well, it was never designed to do that in the first place.

A lot of people like to claim, "Well, it's money that the government is not getting," and I ask you to shake your head. What do you mean it's money the government is not getting? It means it's going back to the taxpayer. If the revenue is lost on the government side, it means it's going back to the individual, the taxpayer. So I shake our head why we got elected to be in this Legislature and who exactly we really represent.

The reason I pose that question is because every time we, on this side of the House, get up in the morning, we think of those individuals. We think of those individuals who either have to drive to work—they might have to take the GO train, they might have to use other means of transportation, but somehow they have to get to work. We're not Europe. We can't just walk to work. It's a great fantasy and a great fantasyland: Sure, why don't we just use speedwalks, like in the *Jetsons*, to get to work? That's not the reality that we live in. As comical as it is on Halloween to talk about dressing up as different characters from cartoons, the reality is that Ontarians can't be saddled with this.

If you look across Ontario and if you look across other provinces that have stood up to make a made-in-their-province solution, we are joining suit because we don't believe that doing nothing is acceptable. That is why we are doing something. It's why the minister has been working on initiatives and working on his plan to combat climate change. But it's a different approach. It's a path where we will do things to make sure that we have clean land, clean air and clean water. But it's not at the expense of individuals.

I will remind this House that if there isn't anyone here to voice the opinion of those who elected us, then what is the purpose of us being here? That is the very crest of why we got elected and why we're here. It's great to have these initiatives and these global goals, and they're very admirable, but if Ontario were to shut down all of its operations tomorrow, would we really make a big footprint or would we make a big dent in what the goal of the UN is to reduce

greenhouse gas emissions? I think not. Let me just quote Prime Minister Justin Trudeau once again, who said the very same thing.

So I find it rich that we think it's okay to burden other people so that we give big polluters the permission to pollute, but why are we doing it at the expense of others? That is a huge fundamental disagreement we have. We don't believe we should be kicking people when they're down, when they need that extra dollar or that extra two dollars to go a long way.

People will claim, "Oh, well, you pay a few dollars to do something about climate change." If it's a dollar or two, I don't think you would have people disagree, but when you're telling people it's costing them \$2, \$3, \$4, \$5, \$6, \$7, \$800, or \$8 million, or \$8 billion—you name the figure—they can't afford it. It's nice to have the hypothetical of, "If we charge everyone a dollar, we'll reduce the carbon tax," but if we charge everyone a dollar it will not reduce the carbon tax, and that has been proven not only by the Auditor General but by the FAO.

So I will remind everyone that today is a day where we say goodbye to the carbon tax, and we bury it. We bury it because Ontarians can't afford it anymore. They can't afford it anymore. That is why we got elected with a clear mandate to make sure we stand up to those individuals that we got elected here to represent. We're providing them many savings. Promise made, promise kept.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I rise in this House to remind this government that, under the Liberals, the cap-and-trade program and the environmental strategy were meant to provide a vision for Ontario of a carbon-neutral economy. It is now on your government to tell this province what your plan is to ensure that the future of this province is protected from an environmental perspective. That's what I want to remind you of as you seek to push through this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Oct. 3, 2018, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016.

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

I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Jim Wilson: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): No further business at this point; therefore, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1003 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gurratan Singh: It is with great pleasure that I greet in the members' gallery Savannah Chorney, from Sokoloff Lawyers, and Paul Miller, from Howie, Sacks and Henry, amazing advocates and amazing lawyers in the personal injury world.

Mr. Bill Walker: I would like to welcome members of the board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals: Ali Golbabai, David Johnston, Dan Lyons, Dale Shafer, Stuart Taylor, Paul Andre, Nikki Wright, Ryan Singh, Don Moors, Samar Ismail, Geeta Singh, Scott Munnoch and Michael Parent.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to welcome the Ontario Long Term Care Association to the Legislature today. I know they're going to have meetings with many members. I also encourage you to come to our lunch reception with the Ontario Long Term Care Association. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is a pleasure for me to welcome to the Ontario Legislature Jennifer Jonas, co-chair of FilmOntario and a producer with New Reel Films; Cynthia Lynch, managing director and counsel with FilmOntario; Jayson Mosek, business agent with Unifor; David Hardy, vice-president, industry, government relations and sustainability at William F. White International Inc.; and Marcia Douglas, director of business affairs and digital initiatives with the Canadian Media Production Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'd like to welcome Susan Kwong, my new constituency assistant, and Kiara Osborne Pimentel, an intern with my office. Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to recognize the good people from Ducks Unlimited who are here in the gallery today: Greg Weeks, Phil Holst, Kevin Rich, who is from Barrie, Sean Rootham, who is also from Barrie, and Tracy Smith.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker, and happy Halloween, everyone. It is with great pleasure that I introduce Cynthia Lynch, managing director of FilmOntario. I'd also like to say hello to Sue Milling, co-chair of the FilmOntario board and ED of ACTRA, as well as Jennifer Jonas, co-chair of FilmOntario, a film producer and director and founder of New Reel Films.

We had a wonderful time speaking with FilmOntario at the Motion Picture Association Canada advocacy reception today, where we talked about diversity, access, equity, inclusivity and our economy.

Miss Kinga Surma: I am pleased to welcome representatives from the board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals, who advocate for safer workplaces in Ontario. They join us today as part of their advocacy day at Queen's Park. Please welcome Ali Golbabai, David Johnston, Dan Lyons, Dale Shafer, Stuart Taylor, Michael

Parent, former board chair Paul Andre and executive director Nikki Wright. Please feel free to join them at the reception at 5:00 in the legislative dining room.

Ms. Sara Singh: I would like to welcome the students from Bramalea Secondary School who will be joining us here today in the Legislature. Please give them a big round of applause. They're a fantastic group of young students.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Good morning, Speaker, and happy Halloween. I wonder how spooky the opposition will get on us today.

Today I'd like to welcome the page from my riding, Eiliyah Siddiqui from Fallingbrook Middle School, as well as her dad, Azfar Siddiqui; mom, Ruquaiyeh Siddiqui; and sister, Asma Siddiqui. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very proud and pleased to welcome to the Legislature Emily Milana, who was one of my grade 8 students many years ago and is now a fourth-year poli-sci student. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'm very happy to introduce a constituent of mine from Simcoe North, Dr. Barb Loiskandl. She is here with me today discussing autism supports for young adults. Thank you, Barb.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to welcome Jose Vivar. Jose is the executive director of 25/7 Fitness, a not-for-profit gym that's located in the Donovan. That's the working-class neighbourhood where I grew up in Sudbury. Welcome to Queen's Park, Jose.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I want to welcome—they'll be here momentarily—Ruth Gebremedhin, Haiat Iman and Eva Molina from the Daily Bread Food Bank to the Legislature.

Hon. Christine Elliott: I would also like to welcome the Ontario Long Term Care Association to the Legislature today. I hope that your meetings with members go very well.

WEARING OF HALLOWEEN COSTUMES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm informed that the member for Ottawa West–Nepean has a point of order.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I have risen today to seek unanimous consent for a little bit of Halloween spirit. I see the member for Toronto–St. Paul's has also gotten into the spirit of it. Could we have unanimous consent for Halloween costumes today in the chamber? Do we have unanimous consent?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa West–Nepean is seeking the unanimous consent of the House for members to wear Halloween costumes in the House today. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Happy Halloween to all of the children at home.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I also want to start by wishing everyone a happy Halloween. I hope that children have a fun night, but a safe one as well.

My first question is to the Premier. Under changes that the Premier is making to the Employment Standards Act, people will now lose a day's pay if they miss a day for illness. On top of that, they'll be required to get a sick note, which most doctors charge for. Does the Premier think it's fair for people to pay just to take a sick day?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I thank the member opposite for the question. Look, for the first time in Ontario, workers are going to be protected with eight protected paid days off work every year for every worker in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, most businesses work well with their employees. They want to have good employees. We want them to have good jobs and we want good employers out there. That's why we're open for business. The province of Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford, has said Ontario is open for business so that businesses can have the confidence to come, to expand, to provide good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario. That's the best thing we can do for workers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Minister of Labour has conferred with the Premier about eight paid days off for workers in emergencies; that would be a progressive change for the future that I think workers would welcome.

However, doctors in this province are raising some concerns. The head of the Ontario Medical Association says that with "prolonged wait times and hallway medicine ... we need to find ways to let people stay home to recover for minor illnesses."

Why is the Premier ignoring the advice of medical professionals and forcing people to lose a day's pay when they fall ill?

1040

Hon. Laurie Scott: I meant to say "eight unpaid protected days." I'm sorry for that, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Opposition benches, come to order.

Hon. Laurie Scott: But Mr. Speaker, we want Ontario to be open for business. We're providing workers with, for the first time, three days of sick leave, three days for family responsibility and two bereavement days every year for every worker. This is in line with other provinces in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the employers have the choice if they want to ask for a medical note from a registered health practitioner. Most businesses that we deal with—and that I know in the province of Ontario—want to have good relationships with their employees. This opposition keeps demonizing businesses as bad players. They are not—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it seems to me that the Minister of Labour just confirmed that her Premier is more interested in helping the bad-actor businesses in this province than making sure that workers can take a sick day off of work.

In other jurisdictions that have paid sick days and have had paid sick days for years, business owners actually celebrate them. To quote one: "[A] sick server could get 120 people sick.... They're touching glasses, silverware. Having people work in a kitchen or wait on you when they're ill does not make sense."

In fact, in US cities that have paid sick days, the majority of people use only half of the sick days that they have.

Does this Premier have any evidence whatsoever that forcing people to lose a day's pay every time they fall sick is actually good for business, or just good for bad businesses?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, most businesses, again, don't want their workers coming in sick. They're going to work with their employees.

These eight unpaid days are similar to what happens across Canada.

The previous personal workers' leave reforms were a disaster for businesses, and a disaster for employees if businesses couldn't keep employees employed.

Mr. Speaker, "Open for business" is our motto. We're going to attract good-paying jobs, better jobs for employees, better programs for employees, and better benefits for employees. That's what we want to achieve in the province of Ontario, and that's what we're going to do because Ontario is open for business.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader, come to order. Minister of Education, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. But I have to say, I don't know how this government thinks they can justify that making things worse for workers is somehow going to make it better for workers. It makes no sense whatsoever, Speaker.

For some people, the cost of taking a sick day is actually more than they can afford. Last year, at hearings on employment standards, one doctor related the story of a patient of hers from Marathon, Ontario. Marathon is a three-hour drive from Thunder Bay and most medical services are only available Monday to Friday, so someone needing a CAT scan had to take at least two days off in order to receive potentially life-saving care. This patient

did not undergo that procedure because he felt he couldn't afford to take two days off of work.

Does the Premier really think that's a choice a person in Ontario should have to make?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, what we saw under the previous government's Bill 148—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, stop it. The member for Essex, come to order. Stop it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Finance, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara West, come to order. The member for Essex will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex is warned.

We're currently on a response by the Minister of Labour. Start the clock.

Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

What we saw under the previous Liberal government's Bill 148 was a disastrous effect on our economy, with job losses. We saw on January 1—the first month of the bill being implemented—over 50,000 job losses. In August, we saw over 80,000 job losses—most of those part-time, most of those youth. How has that helped workers in the province of Ontario? It hasn't; they've lost their jobs. You're not listening.

Bill 47 gives the confidence to businesses, our job creators in the province, to invest and create better-paying jobs and better jobs for the people. That's what the PC Ford government is doing. We're open for business, and we're about better jobs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Regardless of this Minister of Labour's rhetoric, which is not backed up by facts, working parents should not have to choose between losing a day's pay and staying home with sick children. That's just the bottom line.

The evidence is very, very clear: Paid sick days give people a little financial protection when they get ill. It is the responsible, the humane, the proper thing to do for everyday workers in this province. If anything, it also protects businesses, who don't need sick people on the job.

Why does the Premier think Ontario's workers should have to try to choose between getting paid and getting well?

Hon. Laurie Scott: I don't know what the opposition has against better opportunities for employment in the province of Ontario. What have you got against people having chances to have better jobs with benefits? What have you got against that? What is the best thing we can do for our businesses to create better employment opportunities? Cut ridiculous amounts of red tape and regulations, giving them a secure business environment and a safe and protective workplace.

Open for business for Ontario is what we are on this side of the House. We're going to give people more opportunities—not like you have been doing.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What we do have something against is a mean-spirited, ill-informed, out-of-touch government. That's what we have something against.

Working people in this province don't ask for much, but having to lose a day's pay and then having to pay for a doctor's note just so you can go home and actually get better does not seem like a fair choice for people to have to make. And for some people, it's no choice at all.

Why does this Premier think that Ontario's workers should choose between getting paid and getting well?

Hon. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, I don't know what's wrong with the dignity of giving people good-paying jobs in the province of Ontario. I don't see how that's uncompassionate. I don't see how you, for years, supported the previous Liberal government in making life unaffordable. Why don't you listen to those stories that came—

Interjections.

1050

Hon. Laurie Scott: You made people's lives worse off by supporting that Liberal government, by making the province of Ontario unaffordable. You know what the best thing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Once again, I will remind members to make their comments through the Chair. This needs to be a debate. We need to make our comments through the Chair.

I will remind members we've got a long way to go. It's only 12 minutes into question period. I will remind members that there are a lot of people watching this question period and they're developing an opinion about whether or not we're debating these matters in a respectful way. Our constituents are watching.

Okay, start the clock. Next question.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. With each day, the concerns about the Premier's changes to the employment standards are getting louder, whether it's doctors raising concerns about forcing people to lose a day's pay and getting a doctor's note when they fall ill or working moms who had been counting on an increase in the minimum wage.

Will the Premier commit to comprehensive public hearings from all concerned stakeholders before ramming this bill through?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Leader of the Opposition: We've consulted businesses. We've consulted unions. We've consulted front-line workers. The most important thing that they want: Businesses want to be able to be profitable, to reinvest in their employees and reinvest in their equipment to make sure they have a thriving business.

When I talk to the employees, they want a secure job. They want to know that they're going to get a paycheque. They want to know that their government taxes are being spent properly. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition—through you, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has never created a job in her life. The Leader of the Opposition—all you know how to do is spend, spend, spend, tax, tax, tax.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thousands of Ontarians are going to be hit hard by the changes the Premier is proposing. Temporary workers may be hit hardest of all.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier about the ongoing Ministry of Labour investigation into the death of a temporary worker at a Fiera Foods facility, the fourth temporary worker to die on the job at Fiera Foods. The ongoing investigation may in fact have much to teach us about the nature of temporary work in Ontario and the impact of changes to the employment standards.

Instead of rushing this bill through, I ask the Premier again, will he wait until the results of this investigation are made public and have some robust public hearings before this legislation becomes law?

Hon. Doug Ford: I mentioned yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I think it's deplorable that a family is out there right now hurting and grieving, and the Leader of the Opposition wants to politicize it. She wants to politicize it, when the Leader of the Opposition knows that the employment standards inspections are unrelated to health and safety inspections. But you want to tie it all in together. You want to tie it all in together as the family is grieving right now.

Why don't you have a little bit of compassion? Rather than trying to politicize it after the death of a loved one—that's who wants to politicize it. We want to make sure that that family is taken care of. We want to make sure that they don't have to hear it on the nightly news, running over and over again. I think it's pretty disgusting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I would encourage all members to make their comments through the Chair, and I would caution all members on the use of intemperate language. It doesn't help us get through question period. It doesn't help enhance the debate.

Next question.

ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

Mrs. Nina Tangri: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Our government promised the people of this province that Ontario will be open for business. We know the importance of Ontario's film, television, interactive digital media and book publishing industries in creating jobs for Ontarians. We know that this is an industry that helps drive growth across all of Ontario's culture sector, which contributes over \$25 billion annually to the provincial economy and supports nearly 270,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister update the House on our government's support for this key economic driver?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: To the members in the chamber who were able to join us at the breakfast this morning at FilmOntario, thank you, because I think it's important that we remind everyone of the importance of the film industry in the province of Ontario.

It's not a trick, but it's a lovely treat, that \$3 billion is part of our economy as a result of this industry, including 54,000 well-paying, supported jobs. I think that we need to share that good news more often, and I also think that we have an opportunity in the province of Ontario with a Premier who understands that we are open for business and has made that a tenet of our administration, that we're open for business.

We're going to continue to expand this industry and support it, unlike the previous Liberal government, which tended to only put uncertainty in the industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Thank you for that response. I'm proud to hear that our government is engaging with lead industry professionals to help build a strong, prosperous economy for our province.

It is important for Ontario to have sufficient film studio capacity to meet the demands of a growing industry. However, the film industry is reporting that Ontario's film studio space is at capacity and, as a result, Ontario is losing over \$100 million in potential investment due to a lack of studio space.

Can the minister elaborate on how our government is engaging with stakeholders to address their concerns?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Mississauga—Streetsville. I think she understands better than most, frankly, because there was a recent announcement that impacts the community of Mississauga and, we've heard very recently, Markham and Ottawa.

Frankly, it speaks to the confidence that this industry has in Ontario that they understand this government is welcoming them and wants them to produce in the province of Ontario. We will continue to ensure that that business confidence is there, and we will continue to support the expansion of the film industry in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier seemed to be pretty stumped by a pretty simple question: How much of the people's money would he be spending on his plan to put up vanity road signs across Ontario? We have to conclude that the

Premier either has absolutely no clue or he simply won't say.

Speaker, can the Premier tell us which one it is?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: This is one of the best investments we could do, advertising to the world that Ontario is open for business.

We have a new culture here in Ontario. It's not about taxing. It's not about regulations and red tape. We're getting rid of regulations. We're getting rid of red tape. We have to advertise to tell the \$489 billion of trade that we do with the United States back and forth—we have to make sure that our friends south of the border know that we're open for business. Open a company here. Create good-paying jobs.

That's what we're doing at a very, very reasonable cost.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, it's pretty shocking the Premier can't give us a simple answer to a simple question. What's next, Speaker? Is he going to tell us, "Don't worry, Mexico is going to pay for these signs"? I mean, come on.

The people who sent us here sent us here to handle their money with care, but the Premier seems unwilling or unable to tell us how much of their money he's spending. One of the first questions most people ask before making a purchase is, how much is it going to cost? But perhaps the Premier doesn't care because it's not his money. We know the Premier has no problem paying for his former tour director a \$350,000 job to sit at a desk in Washington.

Let me try to make this easy, Speaker. Is the cost of the signs more than \$350,000 or less than \$350,000? Give us a ballpark answer—come on—a guesstimate, a rough estimate, anything.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Premier?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I understand the member for Essex wants to know the price, and we're going to unveil that price when we put up the signs. It's going to be the most reasonable price for marketing across this province that you've ever seen. We're going to hit 12 borders as millions of people are coming across.

This is simple business 101, but the member of Essex wouldn't have a clue about marketing, wouldn't have a clue about sales, because you've never sold anything in your life ever. All you've done is feed off of the taxpayers. You've been in the pockets—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I can't hear the Premier. I couldn't hear the Premier for the applause.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Next question.

SKILLED TRADES

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Speaker, I have heard

from many businesses and people looking for work in my riding about their concerns with the skills gap and the legacy of failed and reckless Liberal economic policies. They are frustrated that 15 years of Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, have left people without the skills they need and businesses unable to compete.

This is particularly true in the area of skilled trades, where I'm hearing from both employers and young people that many are having great difficulty becoming an apprentice in their desired trade. Can the minister tell us what our government is doing to make sure there's enough skilled labour in Ontario and that young people can enter their field of choice?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the question and their strong advocacy for the people of Simcoe North. Our government promised the people of Ontario to create good jobs and make Ontario open for business. My focus as minister is making sure that Ontarians have the skills they need for the jobs of tomorrow, so that Liberal policies will not haunt job seekers and employers for years to come.

That is why I am pleased that our government introduced legislation that, if passed, would standardize ratios for skilled trades in Ontario. Employers are saying that this change would create good, quality jobs for the people of Ontario. Cam Besseling of Besseling Mechanical says, "These changes to Ontario's apprenticeship ratios will allow our company to immediately start recruiting and hiring more young people. These changes will help to create job opportunities throughout southwestern Ontario. We fully support—"

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Supplementary.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you, Minister, for your hard work in making Ontario open for business and addressing the skills gap. I understand that many businesses would hire more apprentices but are barred from doing so by the current ratios. The Ontario Electrical League recently released a report that said 73% of Ontario's electrical employers would hire a new apprentice if it weren't for strict ratios. Speaker, that means better jobs to our young people today.

Our Premier promised the people of Ontario to fill the skills gap by increasing access to apprenticeships. Can the minister tell us more about why standardizing ratios and filling the skills gap would bring career jobs to Ontario?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Ontario has some of the most restrictive ratios in Canada. A single, standardized, 1-to-1 ratio will reduce red tape on employers and the economy and make it easier for employers and workers to navigate the system. Addressing the skills gap is an essential part of making Ontario open for business again.

Our government is listening to employers. They are telling us that they support our plan. Gian Fortuna, senior vice-president of Kenaidan Contracting Ltd., says, "The skilled trade shortage is the number one issue facing our company and lowering apprentice ratios will help us engage, train and retain the young trade apprentices to develop Ontario's future skilled labour force. This is a

great move by the government and is welcomed by all construction employers and employees.”

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for York Centre, come to order.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: We promised the people of Ontario to create good jobs and make Ontario open for business.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for York Centre is warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. Order.

Start the clock. Next question. The member for Brampton North.

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This question is to the Premier. There is a disturbing media report today revealing that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and his law firm have been embroiled in multiple legal proceedings that include serious allegations of misconduct and fraud over a period of almost two decades. Was the Premier aware—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I don't believe this question is relevant to government policy.

Next question.

INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question today is for the Premier. Last night, I had the opportunity to attend the final Massey lecture of 2018, and I believe that the member for Beaches–East York, the member for Kiiwetinoong—and there may have been others who were there. The series was given this year by Tanya Talaga. She's a journalist. She's an author. She's an Indigenous woman who has shone a light on past and current abuses that have created the urgent crisis of youth suicide in Indigenous communities.

Mr. Speaker, I've sat in many seats in this Legislature, starting up in the visitors' gallery in the 1990s, and in every seat that I've sat in, I've been able to see the increasing harshness of the debate in this House. It occurred to me again last night that one of the serious casualties of partisan political polarization is the possibility of any collaborative move towards reconciliation.

So my first question is really to simply ask the Premier if he will accept this gift of two of Tanya Talaga's books I purchased for him: *Seven Fallen Feathers: Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City*, and *All Our Relations: Finding the Path Forward*. I would like to send them over to the Premier with Eiliyah.

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

And I can't receive gifts.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): You just refer it. You don't add any additional information.

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you to the member opposite for her question. Obviously, I've spoken with the author, Tanya Talaga, who used to be a reporter here at Queen's Park, on the work that we're doing in this space, particularly for children.

What happened in Thunder Bay was a tragedy, but we accept the coroner's report—between 2014 and 2017, when we lost several children in the care of the province. I wasn't the minister—we weren't in government at the time—but I did indicate that the buck does stop with me, and we have made arrangements immediately within our ministry to ensure that those children who are in group homes and who are funded by my ministry and supported by the children's aid society need to have the wraparound services.

I was disappointed to learn that many of the young girls who took their lives, in the care of the province during 2014 to 2017, were actually trafficked. So we are taking important steps to make sure we work with our Indigenous partners, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and the Minister of Health to make sure we have appropriate mental health supports, as well, in place.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe the Premier will find that the gift of the two books falls well within the ability of the Premier to accept the level of gift.

The findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were sweeping; they were broad. I appreciate the minister's response on the Thunder Bay situation. But there were over 90 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on how we, as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, might be able to move together, forward, in order to give every person, and particularly every child, in this province a fair shot at a healthy life. Education is at the core of those recommendations.

Now, I know the Premier and I do not agree on much, but I'm asking today that we, together, find a way to work toward reconciliation. There's a lot of knowledge in this House and in the community. Even if it were possible to have informal and informative sessions with elders, with Indigenous youth, where any of us in the House could bring our knowledge and our experience without the expectation of being included in any formal action, we might find a way to raise the bar. There have been actions this House—the apology, for example.

What I know, having begun this journey as a young woman of 25, is that there are no easy solutions and that we all have to play a role. My question to the Premier is, will he and his ministers let us help?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: The Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the question and that member's ties as a young person to this opportunity, as well as my own. As somebody who started out in my early twenties working and living in Indigenous communities across northern Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Arctic Circle, I have a deep investment and some of my best friends are from these parts of the country. I take this opportunity very seriously.

It's why I've had an opportunity to reflect over the past 15 years. I still see, particularly in northern Ontario, a situation that's unacceptable: suicide rates, high unemployment rates, a clear lack of economic opportunity that rests with the previous government. We will pick up that torch. We will commit to those Indigenous communities, form full partnerships and create economic opportunities for new, educated Indigenous youth who want to get out there in the workforce, contribute and lead their communities moving forward.

EDUCATION

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is for the Minister of Education. After 15 years of reckless Liberal mismanagement, EQAO results have shown that nearly half of grade 6 students have fallen behind in math for years; Ontario has become significantly less competitive in the STEM field; poorly crafted legislation has allowed individuals who sexually abuse children to remain in the classrooms, where they are able to hurt students without consequences; and the lack of clear policy on service animals across the province has caused confusion and frustration to many, many families.

Speaker, through you to the minister, how does this government for the people plan to repair and improve for future generations the apparent damage to our education system?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for that thoughtful question. To the amazing member from Burlington, it's so good to have you back, for so many reasons.

But back to the question. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, through you, that I am pleased to inform Ontarians of the work that our government is doing to revitalize the education system for students and parents across this province.

When it comes to math in particular, we're going to continue to focus on getting back to the basics. We will ensure teachers are supported and have the tools necessary to teach math. In turn, parents will be able to have the confidence that their students are learning the fundamentals that they and employers across this province are looking for.

Furthermore, we are going to fix the poorly worded legislation which has created loopholes for child abusers. We will ensure that children are kept safe from individuals like that. This is all about restoring trust in the education system, and we're doing just that.

As for service animals, we know how important they are, and we're supporting our families and getting it right once and for all.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you for your thoughtful answer, Minister. I'm glad to hear that the education system is being returned back into the hands of Ontarians, and I'm sure my constituents will welcome the news.

This introduced legislation is underpinned by great ideas, but I know that my constituents are full of great

ideas as well, Minister. I've heard countless perspectives on how we can improve Ontario's education system. I know that parents, students and educators all have valuable opinions on how we can restore trust back into our education system.

Speaker, can the minister advise the House, my constituents and Ontarians across the province on the process for sharing their opinions directly with the government?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm always pleased to stand in this House to talk about the amazing consultation that we're facilitating, and I want to encourage everyone in Ontario—and all our members here in this House, as well—to participate. Go to www.fortheparents.ca to get started and share your comments.

We want to hear from Ontarians on subjects like mental health, health and physical education, the legalization of cannabis, and how to improve student performance when it comes to STEM, math etc.—science, technology, engineering. That's what we're hearing from employers. Those are subject areas and competencies that are frankly missing after 15 years of bad management. Do you know what? We also want to talk about how we can limit distractions in the classroom like cellphones.

This government for the people will review input from all people participating, and we're going to fulfill our election promise, because we're focused on creating the best environment for students to achieve.

RELEASE OF DOCUMENTS

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Last Friday, the documents demanded by the select committee were provided to the committee, the equivalent of a million pages. On Monday, there was a request by several agencies that, due to their commercially sensitive nature, these documents not be made public. As a business person, that made sense. They're commercially sensitive.

We made that case at the committee. Quite frankly, I was shocked that the government members of the committee forced it through, releasing a million pages of documentation to the public. Premier, why did you direct your members to do that? Because it certainly isn't business 101.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

Premier, response?

Hon. Doug Ford: Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, as you know and as the members know, the select committee is currently meeting to look into the mistakes that have been made and the decisions that were made, quite honestly, over the last 15 years by the previous Liberal government when it comes to playing with the finances of the province of Ontario and not ensuring that the numbers that were being signed off on by the officers of the Legislature were an accurate reflection of what the government's books actually were.

That's why it was very important for us to strike this select committee to get to the bottom of the decisions that

were made by the previous Liberal government. We have a \$15-billion deficit in Ontario now, and the numbers that were given to us by the previous government weren't signed off on at public accounts. The Auditor General refused to sign off on those documents. That's why we need to get our hands on those documents: to ensure that we get to the bottom of what happened under the Liberal government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: We're not talking about mistakes of the past government; we're talking about mistakes made by this government at the committee. On Monday, the government that claims to understand business released the equivalent of a million pages of information, some possibly commercially sensitive and private. On Tuesday, we come to the committee and one of those agencies—I will read from the letter from the IESO:

“We have discovered that confidential and commercially sensitive information that could jeopardize the IESO's very important relationship with electricity sector participants has been disclosed to the public by the committee.”

1120

It was forced through by your members. For 24 hours, you put up, in a very competitive business—I'm just a dairy farmer, and I understand that that is crazy. Why, Premier? Why did you allow that to happen?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll ask the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Government House leader, response?

Hon. Todd Smith: The first thing I would say is there's no such thing as “just a dairy farmer.” We respect our dairy farmers across the province, including the member opposite.

What I would say, though, is that we really want to get to the bottom of what occurred with the previous government. That's why we have ordered the documents that we've ordered—over a million documents.

I can understand why the NDP doesn't want us to shine a light on what happened under the previous Liberal government. The reason that they don't want to shine a light on that is because they are complicit. They are complicit in what occurred under the previous government. The NDP don't want to have any light shone on this situation. We want to get to the bottom of what happened, and we're committed to doing that for the people of Ontario.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question is to the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. The people of Ontario are stretched thin, many to the breaking point. In giving us a mandate to govern, the people told us they could not afford the former Liberal government's costly, ineffective cap-and-trade system, nor can they afford Justin Trudeau's carbon tax.

I've heard recently from my constituents in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, who feel first-hand the

mounting pressure of rising costs. Hard-working families every day are finding it increasingly difficult to pay the bills. Ontarians are frustrated at seeing their hard-earned tax dollars being put into policies and programs that don't deliver results.

Last week, Trudeau made his intentions clear: He plans on imposing a carbon tax on Ontario. Can the minister share with us what support we have in our fight against the Trudeau carbon tax?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you, thank you to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for that question.

The member is quite right: Families cannot afford the Trudeau carbon tax. We know, and we've heard from the FAO, the price of that carbon tax. That's why our Premier has said that we will take every step that we have in our power to fight it. That's why our Premier met with the Premier of Saskatchewan on Monday: to talk about our joint fight against that. That's why just yesterday he met with the leader of the official opposition to talk about how we could fight against that.

It's clear that it isn't even just Conservative leaders who are taking on this fight. In PEI, the Liberal Party is speaking out against the carbon tax. In Alberta, the NDP are against the federal carbon plan. I'd ask the opposition, will they join their ideological soulmates and fight this job-killing federal carbon tax?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's clear that, with increasing support against the carbon tax plan, Trudeau's promise to give back more money to the people is their admittance that they have lost the argument with Canadians.

I know that my constituents are proud of a government that holds true to their word and is ready to do what they need to do to fight against the imposition of a Trudeau carbon tax. Ontarians need a government that is willing to do what it takes to make life more affordable to them. They need a government who has their best interests in mind in every action and every decision they make.

Back to the minister: Can the minister share with us how the imposition of this carbon tax will adversely impact the working people of Ontario?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I thank the member for his question. This tax is going to raise costs for families and for business. When the Prime Minister talks about taxing polluters, we know what he's talking about: He's talking about taxing commuters. He's talking about moms and dads taking their kids to hockey. He's talking about people who need a vehicle to go back and forth to work every day. It doesn't reflect the reality of life in Ontario, what he's talking about.

We have watched the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition in Ottawa ask for months, Mr. Speaker: How much will this carbon tax cost? What is the cost? They have just been met with non-answers. They've been met with redacted documents. Fortunately, the Financial Accountability Officer has told us: \$648 per family by 2022—and that's just the beginning for this government.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask again: Will the Leader of the Opposition in this House stand up with her comrades-in-arms in Alberta and stand with the people of Ontario, stand with the people of Alberta, stand with Canadians against this—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order.

Start the clock. Member for Davenport.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. Last week, the government jumped the gun on their own consultations and introduced legislation to create a new math test for teacher certification. Though the details of their plan remain secret, we now know that funding meant to help teachers upgrade their skills in math is set to come to an end, with no indication that the government will keep up that investment.

How can the minister justify imposing a new math test for teachers on one hand while cutting the funding meant to strengthen those skills on the other?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First and foremost, I would like to suggest to the member from Davenport—and to the rest of the party, actually, as well—NDP: No drama, please. What we are doing is hitting the pause button. The fact of the matter is, over the last 15 years, the government that they propped up has put Ontario in a \$15-billion hole. We've put a pause on EPO funding so that we can do our own line-by-line audit, so that we can justify the return on investment dollars that we're going to be putting forward in our EPO funding pockets, if you will.

The fact of the matter is that we're doing so much for teachers. Just on the weekend, I had a teacher come up to me at dinner. She said she loved the math resource guide that we provided to help them transition from discovery math—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would invite the minister to come and meet with the many, many, many teachers I have met with who are very disappointed in the direction that this government is taking on almost every single issue and, particularly, in math.

The funding to support additional teacher qualifications saw 15,000 applications for mathematics alone. By introducing a new test at the front end of a teacher's career but taking away those opportunities to build on the skills and keep them sharp down the line, it's clear that this government is more interested in playing politics than actually improving outcomes for students.

The minister is going to tell me that she already put money in this August. I just want to say ahead of her, those are actually existing dollars. We know that those are not new dollars that have been assigned.

Will the minister hit the pause button on this latest funding cut and make sure that teachers have the resources they need to teach?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, Speaker, I say "NDP," because what I said is that we're refocusing funding to support our teachers as well—actually, to the tune of \$55 million—to help teachers transition from discovery math to getting back to the basics. Do you know what? That's what people want to be hearing: that a responsible government is ensuring our teachers are prepared to help our students.

Get this: The great member from Durham actually has done a consultation herself in her own riding. Allison in Durham stated during this consultation that she has travelled around the world and notes that our students are at least two years behind. Wally, a retired elementary teacher, wants more focus on math and the development of and a return to the basic foundations of arithmetic and algebra. Mary wants teachers hired who are comfortable with math, and actually—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I had to interrupt the minister because the applause on the government side was such that I could not hear the minister.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): No.

Next question.

1130

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that our government has taken the necessary steps to protect the short- and long-term health of the people of this province. With flu season quickly approaching, it is crucial to have policies in place to ensure Ontario families are supported.

Tonight, as kids across Ontario go trick-or-treating, we may not be able to protect them from stomachs filled with too much candy, but what we can do is protect them from the flu.

Can the Minister of Health please tell us about the flu shot and how people can get one in Ontario?

Hon. Christine Elliott: I'd like to thank the member for this very timely question. The flu can be a very serious illness, so it is important to protect yourself and your loved ones. The best way to do that is to get the flu shot. It's the single best defence against the flu virus, especially for all of the kids out there who are going to be playing in the schoolyard tomorrow and trading their Halloween candy.

You can book an appointment with your doctor or nurse practitioner or visit your local pharmacy or public health unit. As a matter of fact, I got my flu shot on Monday and encourage everyone else to get theirs. It's quick, it's easy and it's free, so the sooner you get your flu shot, the sooner you'll be protected.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Back to the minister: I know the minister has been active on social media, along

with many of my colleagues, promoting the need for Ontarians to get their flu shots this year. Every year, there are countless hospitalizations due to the flu across this province. Ontarians should know just how important it is to get the flu shot and how serious the flu can be.

Can the Minister of Health please tell us why getting the flu shot might just be the best decision someone can make to keep themselves and their families healthy?

Hon. Christine Elliott: Thank you for the opportunity to reiterate the dangers of the flu and the need to get the flu shot.

When you get your flu shot, you're not only protecting yourself but you're also helping to protect your loved ones. The flu shot helps stop the spread of the virus and reduces the number of visits to the doctor, as well as hospitalizations and even deaths due to the flu.

We know that the flu can lead to serious complications for some people. One of the reasons we stress getting the flu shot is because it helps to protect those who are most vulnerable, like children under four years of age and adults over 65 years of age. This makes getting vaccinated against the flu every year an important part of keeping you and your loved ones healthy.

Please get your free flu shot. It's an important defence to protect yourself and everyone else around you.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The Daily Bread Food Bank just released its annual report this morning. It said that almost a million Torontonians needed to visit food banks over the course of a year. Food bank use remains 14% higher than it was in 2008 and continues to climb in the inner suburbs of Toronto, where it is harder for food banks to reach the people who need it.

Instead of addressing the issues that people need their government to tackle, like food insecurity and poverty, the Premier has instead cut in half the planned increase to OW and ODSP.

Minister, how much longer will Ontarians be left to fend for themselves while the government continues to make cuts that harm our most vulnerable citizens?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Thanks very much to the member for her question. This is very serious: One in seven people live in poverty in the province of Ontario.

That's why we're taking immediate steps, through the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, in ensuring that we have an Ontario open for business act so we can get more jobs in the province of Ontario. That's why, in the fall economic statement, our Minister of Finance is going to tell us how we're going to get back on track after 15 years of waste, scandal and mismanagement. That's why, in the next week and a half, I'll be outlining some of the changes that we're going to make in social assistance to better lift people out of poverty, get them back on track where they can get a job and, when they can't, provide better supports for them.

I have to say, though, I'm really happy to be the Minister of Community and Social Services—because of the

work I've been doing for the past 15 years with Barrhaven Food Cupboard, raising tens of thousands of pounds of food twice a year and tens of thousands of dollars for that food cupboard. I'm going to continue to work with the Barrhaven Food Cupboard and all food cupboards across this province so that we can make sure that those who need a social safety net get it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Year after year, poverty levels are deepening in Ontario. More seniors are needing to use food banks, and jobs aren't going to help them. Over 60% of food bank clients rely on that OW and ODSP that got cut—many of those people can't work, so jobs won't help them—and even then, the top three reasons that people still missed a meal were to pay for rent, phone bills and transportation. This is utterly unacceptable. People should not go hungry because they have to take the TTC or pay their rent on time.

When is the minister going to stop this outrageous disregard for Ontario's most vulnerable and start taking real action on the issues that matter to most Ontarians?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I completely reject the premise of the question. We raised social assistance rates by 1.5% across the board immediately after assuming office. We've got a 100-day plan in order to get people lifted out of poverty and back on track with their lives, providing them with wraparound supports through multiple ministries in this government. That's what we're committed to doing.

We do not want to see a continuation of the disjointed, patchwork, silo programs of the previous Liberal administration, supported 97% of the time by that party. So what we're going to do is make sure that we look at that \$10-billion program in social assistance that one million people are relying on and see how many of them we can get back on track through our total means of support.

As I've mentioned many times—and we value the work of our food cupboards. I personally value the work that I do with our food cupboards. But the best social safety net is a compassionate society, the best social circumstances are when people are working, and the best social program is a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Next question.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Mr. Dave Smith: Sensing the mood today, I have a fiery and incendiary question for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. This year, we've had one of the worst forest fire seasons ever in Ontario. We saw more than 1,000 fires burning in central and northern Ontario. In mid-July, upwards of 154 fires were burning simultaneously. That put a strain on our firefighters.

Our government took immediate action to support our emergency responders, most of whom were working around the clock. Under the leadership of the Doug Ford

government, we invested additional resources to make sure our firefighters had the tools they needed.

Last weekend, we saw snow in Peterborough–Kawartha. Winter is almost here. Can the minister update this House on the current forest fire situation?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough–Kawartha for that question.

Mr. Speaker, the wildland fire season is officially ending today, and I'd like to announce to this House that we have officially extinguished all the fires in the province.

I'd like to thank the almost 2,000 firefighters from across Canada and around the world for their dedication to putting out these fires.

Our government was able to provide over \$100 million in funding this past summer to successfully combat these blazes. This significant funding, along with the hard work of the emergency responders, allowed for an organized and effective response to the devastating forest fires throughout this province.

Ontario is an internationally recognized leader in wildland fire management. Annually, the government provides base funding of almost \$70 million to deliver front-line operations to fight forest fires. We couldn't have done this without our partners from the United States and across Canada, Parks Canada, and we thank them for their work.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock.

Restart the clock. Supplementary.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to thank the minister for his response. That's fabulous news. I'd also like to give the proverbial tip of the cap and a huge thank you to our front-line workers.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the support of the other provinces and countries that stepped up to help us. We would not have been able to beat this without that combined effort.

Mr. Speaker, this was one of the first files that the minister had to tackle when our government took power in June. I'd like to commend both him and the team he leads for the hard work and dedication they showed. Can the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry please provide more information on how his ministry played a key role in battling the record number of fires and keeping the residents of Ontario and their properties safe this year?

Hon. Jeff Yurek: I thank the member for his question. The Ministry of Natural Resources would like to thank all of those personnel who left their family for much of the summer to battle these blazes. I'd like to especially recognize Jerry Gadwa, a resident of the Kehewin Cree First Nation in Alberta, who paid the ultimate sacrifice after he died while working the fires in Red Lake. His death is a reminder of the dangers these firefighters face each and every day on the job.

Mr. Speaker, my ministry alone provided 780 highly trained professional firefighters, nine CL-415 heavy water bombers, three Twin Otter medium water bombers and 13 initial attack helicopters, along with other aircraft, to combat these blazes.

In this House, I would like once again to thank the best firefighters in the world for helping to make sure that damage in our spectacular northern forests was limited.

ETHICAL STANDARDS

Mr. Kevin Yarde: This question is to the Premier. Can the Premier lay out the ethical standards he sets for members of his cabinet, and where he sets standards in terms of professional conduct?

Hon. Doug Ford: I know where the member is going here, but let's be very clear: We have the most ethical, most transparent, most accountable caucus—not just cabinet, but caucus—I've ever seen in politics. They bring transparency and accountability. They make sure they don't make the backroom deals that we've seen in other governments. They don't do the backroom deals that you supported 97% of the time.

We have an ethical group of people here, and I'm proud to say that we have the greatest, greatest government I've seen in decades.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes question period for today.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: I'd like to rise on a point of order to introduce Markus Vivar; I neglected to introduce someone. I introduced his father, Jose Vivar, earlier. Welcome to Queen's Park, Markus.

PROTESTANT REFORMATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order: the member for Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I know today is Halloween and I want to wish a very happy Halloween, but I would also like to acknowledge, as I missed it last year, that today is also the 501st anniversary of when a young Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses onto the door of the cathedral at Wittenberg, starting a great Reformation across Europe, which has had an enormous impact on our democracy and on religious freedom right across the globe. So I want to acknowledge that as well.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to welcome the CEO of the Ontario Long Term Care Association, Candace Chartier, to the Legislature. Welcome to the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to rise and acknowledge a front-line police officer from the city of

Ottawa and a mentor to many in the Somali community, my very close friend Abdul Abdi. Thank you for your service.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Education concerning funding cuts to education. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

CAP AND TRADE CANCELLATION ACT, 2018 LOI DE 2018 ANNULANT LE PROGRAMME DE PLAFONNEMENT ET D'ÉCHANGE

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

Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.

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

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members, please take your seats.

On October 30, 2018, Mr. Phillips moved third reading of Bill 4, An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Piccini, David
Baber, Roman	Jones, Sylvia	Rasheed, Kaleed
Babikian, Aris	Kanapathi, Logan	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Karahalios, Belinda	Roberts, Jeremy
Barrett, Toby	Ke, Vincent	Romano, Ross
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Khanjin, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kramp, Daryl	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova, Natalia	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Lecce, Stephen	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Stan	MacLeod, Lisa	Simard, Amanda
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Martow, Gila	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	McDonnell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McKenna, Jane	Surma, Kinga
Downey, Doug	McNaughton, Monte	Tangri, Nina
Dunlop, Jill	Miller, Norman	Thanigasalam, Vijay

Elliott, Christine	Mitas, Christina Maria	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fee, Amy	Nicholls, Rick	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Ford, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Fullerton, Merrilee	Pang, Billy	Walker, Bill
Ghamari, Goldie	Park, Lindsey	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Parm	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Mike	Phillips, Rod	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Natyshak, Taras
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hassan, Faisal	Rakocevic, Tom
Arthur, Ian	Hatfield, Percy	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Horwath, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Berns-McGown, Rima	Hunter, Mitzie	Singh, Gurratan
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutla	Singh, Sara
Coteau, Michael	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Lalonde, Marie-France	Stiles, Marit
Fife, Catherine	Lindo, Laura Mae	Tabuns, Peter
Fraser, John	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Monteith-Farrell, Judith	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Glover, Chris	Morrison, Suze	Yarde, Kevin

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 74; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The member for Guelph on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I'm seeking unanimous consent to move a motion concerning the urgency of climate action regarding debate of private member's notice of motion 28.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Guelph is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion regarding debate of private member's notice of motion 28 concerning the urgency of climate action. I hear a no.

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act respecting the preparation of a climate change plan, providing for the wind down of the cap and trade program and repealing the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016 / Loi concernant l'élaboration d'un plan sur le changement climatique, prévoyant la liquidation du programme de plafonnement et d'échange et abrogeant la Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, we have angels amongst us, and wizards. What am I to think today?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SIKH MASSACRE

Mr. Gurratan Singh: Lynch mobs prowling the streets; thousands killed and thousands more displaced; women subjected to unthinkable sexual violence—all under the direction of senior members of the Indian government. These are just some of the horrendous acts committed in India during the 1984 Sikh genocide. Thirty-four years later, the Sikh community still awaits justice, while those involved in the genocide still walk free.

But hope prevails: In 2017, in an amazing act of unity, all parties came together in this assembly to recognize the horrific acts of 1984 as a genocide carried out by the Indian state. But in India, the lack of justice for the Sikh people has continued to allow the government to act with impunity.

Human Rights Watch has reported on the alarming increase of lynching mobs in India, this time targeting minorities throughout India, including Christians, Muslims and Dalits, as well as journalists, human rights lawyers and activists—a rise in lynchings described by the Washington Post as a crisis. Human Rights Watch reports further that, much like in 1984, members of the Indian government are accused of encouraging this violence, including Prime Minister Modi's governing party, the BJP.

Speaker, we must end impunity in India, starting by bringing justice to the victims of the 1984 Sikh genocide and continuing with the state violence that occurs today.

HENRY NORWEST

Mr. Toby Barrett: During the Great War, Métis Henry Louis Norwest was a famed Canadian sniper. In trench conflict, he needed excellent marksmanship with the ability to camouflage and stay still for long periods. Lance Corporal Norwest made 115 kills and earned two military medals. Norwest was killed by a German—also a sniper.

A companion recalled, "Our famous sniper no doubt understood better than most of us the cost of life and the price of death. Henry Norwest carried out his terrible duty

superbly because he believed his special skill gave him no choice but to fulfill his indispensable mission."

The current world record was made by an unnamed Canadian sniper in 2017 in Iraq, surpassing a record set by British sniper Craig Harrison in 2009, who had edged Canadian Corporal Rob Furlong's 2002 shot in Afghanistan. Furlong unseated Canadian Master Corporal Arron Perry.

During this time of remembrance, I think of Canadian Private George Lawrence Price of World War I's 28th Battalion. On November 11, 1918, he was shot at 10:57 a.m., three minutes before the signing of the armistice. He was the last soldier of the British Empire and of the Canadian Forces to fall—again, killed by a sniper.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Marit Stiles: After years of stagnant wages and gaps in the laws that protect workers, a broad-based movement of Ontarians was finally able to convince the former Liberal government to act on improving working conditions in this province.

In Davenport, where many of my constituents work two or three part-time jobs to make ends meet and many more work contract to contract with no benefits or job security, these long-overdue labour protections mean a real difference in their quality of life.

Now, with Bill 47, the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, rolling back the minimum wage, slashing paid sick and bereavement days, and weakening laws meant to create stability and security for workers. That stability doesn't just help the worker; it benefits their whole family.

Melanie Willson, a teacher at Bloor Collegiate Institute in my riding, was interviewed recently on the impact of fairer labour laws on education outcomes for our kids, something this government professes to support. She said, "When you have students coming to school exhausted, stressed, hungry, and anxious because of the realities of living below the poverty line—their ability to learn, to read, to write, and to do math is really compromised."

Mr. Speaker, when Ontario workers are paid fairly, have job security and access to a union, our communities benefit and so does our economy.

On behalf of my community, I call on the Premier to halt this short-sighted attack on working people and start defending Ontarians whose hard work drives this province every single day.

WEST LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I was born in August 1997 at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital, one of the thousands of babies born there every year at the renowned obstetrics program that has been an integral part of the community's health care since the hospital was built in 1948. Earlier that year, in January 1997, the community rallied to ensure the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital was not shut down.

Since before I was born, the new build of the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital has been a top priority of the communities of Lincoln, West Lincoln and Grimsby.

When it was first built, the West Lincoln serviced 8,000 individuals and families. Today, that number is closer to 130,000.

The community has endured deep hurt from the Liberal government's cancellation of the planned rebuild in 2012. The recent decision of Hamilton Health Sciences to potentially remove services from the hospital has caused deep concern and disappointment in my riding and across Niagara.

I'm so proud of Premier Doug Ford for coming to Niagara, hearing from local leadership about the importance of these services, and committing to work on a positive solution to the situation.

I know our Minister of Health is doing everything she can, through working with Hamilton Health Sciences, to keep the services at West Lincoln that my constituents deserve and expect.

As I've said in this House before, I will not stop fighting for the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital until the doors open on a new build.

Thank you to the thousands of community members who have come together to fight for our hospital. I hear you, and our government is on your side.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: We are heading into flu season. People are going to get sick.

Everyone at some point gets sick and will need time off work to not only take care of themselves and recover, but also to ensure they aren't exposing the public to infectious diseases, especially those experiencing serious illness.

Paid sick days are an important component of public health, but just as we're heading into flu season, this government is cutting the two paid sick days that workers fought hard for.

There is overwhelming support from people across this province for paid sick days. By taking away the two paid sick days, people will now have to choose between getting paid and getting well. Parents won't be able to stay home to look after their sick child and workers will be forced to work while they are sick, all because this government thinks two paid sick days is too much to expect.

This government is also bringing back sick notes, which even doctors themselves have said is unnecessary and bureaucratic. Those who are sick should be staying at home and resting, not visiting doctors' offices and hospitals for sick notes, putting unnecessary pressure on our already burdened health care system. This is not how you end hallway medicine.

1510

Paid sick days save the health care system money. This government's decision is not based on evidence and is certainly not based on the best interests of the hard-working people of this province. By taking away the two paid sick days, this government is putting public health at risk, and

for what? Just to increase the profits of their big-business friends.

The Ford government is not making Ontario open for business; they're making Ontario open for sickness.

GUELPH-WELLINGTON

WOMEN IN CRISIS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm honoured to rise today to recognize one of the most vital organizations in my community. Since 1977, Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis has played an essential role in helping vulnerable women and making Guelph a caring community. Their many programs—the shelter, the sexual assault centre, the transition and housing support program, the rural women's support program, the family court support program, and their newest program to combat trafficking—deserve our support.

Under the inspiring leadership of their executive director, Sly Castaldi, GWWIC provides a continuum of services like no other in Ontario. They provide vital services to approximately 1,500 women every year and respond to 3,000 calls a year.

Their 28-bed shelter is full. The demand for their services grows, and women deserve support now. That's why I'm so concerned that some of the organizations funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General that provide services to address violence against women have not received funding for 2018. I'm eager to work with the government to make sure that vital organizations are properly funded, because violence against women should be a non-partisan issue.

I want to thank GWWIC for the vital services you provide to women in our community.

CLARINGTON SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Ms. Lindsey Park: On October 20, the municipality of Clarington celebrated the achievements of several local sports heroes. I rise today to highlight the newest inductees to the Clarington Sports Hall of Fame.

Steve Brinkman is an accomplished volleyball player who competed in more than 300 international matches and has made a huge contribution to Team Canada as an athlete and a mentor.

Angela Fice holds the title of Kyoshi 7th dan black belt in martial arts. She has been a world champion multiple times and a coach for Team Canada. She has also started a martial arts program for children with special needs at Grandview Children's Centre.

Sam Norwood for 25 years has been a champion for community baseball in Clarington. His dedicated leadership has propelled the sport forward and greatly improved access for Clarington children.

Nan Spencer's pioneering work for girls' hockey in Clarington helped Bowmanville get selected to host the women's senior provincial championships for the first time. Many who played in those championships went on to represent Canada at the first women's world hockey tournament and first Olympic women's hockey team.

Lastly, the Kendal Eagles 1976 senior D baseball team won the provincial championship, and the entire team was inducted.

Congratulations to all of the new inductees into the Clarington Sports Hall of Fame. I am very proud as your Durham MPP.

SNOWMOBILING

Mr. John Vanthof: Today is Halloween, and close to Remembrance Day. My poppy almost came off. But I'm here to talk about a season that is soon to be starting and the start of something near and dear to many people in northern Ontario: snowmobile season. We start seeing the snowflakes, and snowmobiling is a big deal in a lot of places. It's a huge deal in my part of the world.

I'd like to thank some of the volunteers with the many snowmobile clubs in my area, who maintain the trails and work hard. I hope I don't miss any. I've got the West Nipissing Snowmobile Club, Golden Corridor Snowdrifters, Club Echo, the Jackpine Snowmobile Club, the Tri-Town Sno Travellers and the Polar Bear Riders, up in Cochrane.

On behalf of those people, on behalf of the restaurant owners and the hotel/motel owners, I would like to welcome everyone from across Ontario to come not only to Timiskaming-Cochrane but to beautiful northern Ontario to experience our trails. You will see places that the only way to see them is on a snowmobile—the only way to see parts of this great province.

They do a great job. The trails are very well kept. They're very environmentally conscious of how they do it.

I remember when I started snowmobiling, I had a 1976 Ski-doo Elan. It was broken more often than it actually ran. It belched fuel and oil. My 600 Renegade is perfect.

I ask you to come to northern Ontario and enjoy our great province.

ASSEMBLÉE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE DE L'ONTARIO

M^{lle} Amanda Simard: Cette fin de semaine se déroulait le Congrès de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, l'AFO, auquel j'ai eu le plaisir de participer avec près de 350 convives de tous les coins de la province. C'était un grand rassemblement des chefs de file de notre communauté franco-ontarienne, entre autres, dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la santé, de la justice, des services communautaires et de la jeunesse—une fin de semaine innovante et rassembleuse.

Un nouveau conseil d'administration y fut élu, et j'aimerais prendre cette occasion pour féliciter le président réélu, Carol Jolin, et les nouveaux membres du CA : Claudette Gleeson, Éric Marcotte, Julien Géréme, Marie-France Paquette et Alexi Breton.

L'Ontario a le privilège de compter sur une communauté francophone forte, active et fièrement enracinée en Ontario. Je tiens à féliciter l'AFO et ses membres pour tout le travail accompli au cours de la

dernière année et pour le rôle essentiel qu'ils jouent dans l'essor de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

TAXATION

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I ask for unanimous consent to do a second statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from Niagara West is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to do a second statement. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: This is to be done to the tune of Monster Mash.

In the corner office we heard Kathleen say,
“We need more money, let's make them pay.”
Glen said, “That's no problem,
there's a law we can pass.
“We'll drive up the price on a tank of gas.”

Interjections: They did the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: They did the carbon tax.

Interjections: They did the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: They wanted all of your cash.

Interjections: They did the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We wouldn't have any stash.

Interjections: They did the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: They did the carbon tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Then Doug and his team
saw through Kathleen's scheme
And said, “No more money
from the people you'll glean.”
The people agreed and they armed for the fight
and sent the Libs packing on election night.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We stopped the carbon tax.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We stopped the carbon tax.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: You'll keep more of your cash.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We're open for business,
so relax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The Liberals were having
such great fun,
The party with the taxpayers' money had begun,
When Premier Ford and the Conservatives
stopped the carbon tax.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We stopped the carbon tax.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: They wanted to take
from your stash.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: You'll keep more of your cash.

Interjections: We stopped the tax.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We stopped the carbon tax.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I seek unanimous consent to do a second statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Parkdale–High Park is seeking unanimous consent of the House to do a second statement. Agreed? Agreed.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Before I begin, I'd like to give credit where credit is due. This poem was penned by the member from Kingston, Ian Arthur. I read this on his behalf.

Little Sam Oosterhoff was in quite the pickle
As government spending can be oh so fickle.
He was very upset that due to the debt
His hospital is to get cuts, no ifs ands or buts.
Now, bucking tradition he wrote his own petition:
“Government, please, I’m down on my knees.
“Don’t cut spending, my re-election is depending,
“And I’m in such a lurch, I’m being picked on by Burch.”
Now, the Minister of Health
said, “Sorry, we just don’t have the wealth.”
“Just keep feeding them fibs
and put the blame on the Libs.”
Now Sam was filled with dread, as he knew his stead.
The NDP would be there, heads held high in the air
As they asked the wealthy to pay a little more,
Because they had some values down at their core.
That was when Sam heard the drumming,
And he knew, in his heart, the NDP was coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I guess we’ve suspended the standing orders for a few minutes this afternoon. They’re now back in force, by the way, just to let everyone know.

1520

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pride to introduce a petition entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on

January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

These were provided to me by the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario regional leaders council meeting, where they collected many, many, many hundreds of signatures. I’m going to pass it along to Jacob to table it for me, and I’m proud to affix my signature.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled, “To Ensure the Safety of Residents of Ontario.

“Whereas the” government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the” government of Premier Doug Ford; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver’s licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition. I’m affixing my signature here, and I will pass it to page Amani.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Lorna Newland from Chelmsford in my riding for collecting all these petitions. It reads as follows:

“Save the Breast Screening and Assessment Service....

“Whereas Premier Doug Ford promised that there would not be cuts to nurses’ positions; and

“Whereas in Sudbury we have already lost 70 nurses, and Health Sciences North is closing part of the Breast Screening and Assessment Service; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will result in longer wait times, which is very stressful for women diagnosed with breast cancer; and

“Whereas cuts to the Sudbury Breast Screening and Assessment Service will only take us backwards;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Provide adequate funding to Health Sciences North to ensure northerners have equitable access to life-saving programs such as the Breast Screening and Assessment Service.”

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

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Deepak Anand: A petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“To Ensure the Safety of Residents of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

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“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

Mr. Speaker, it is an important petition, and I am signing it and giving it to page Rose.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I’m proud to table this petition on behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park. The petition is titled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

1530

I fully support this petition and will be affixing my signature to it as well and giving it to page Andrei.

WEST LINCOLN
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have in my hands a petition signed by 18,000 of my constituents over a five-day period. I'm very proud to present this petition. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“Whereas:

—The West Lincoln Memorial Hospital has served West Niagara very well since it was first opened in 1948, but since then has become dated and in desperate need of upgrades and redevelopment to serve the growing health care needs of the region;

—The former Liberal government called redevelopment of WLMH a priority, promising that construction would begin by 2009, and after subsequent broken promises, the government's 2012 budget cancelled the project entirely; and

“Whereas:

—Hamilton Health Sciences has announced the temporary move of some important services from the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital;

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

—Maintain all services in the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital;

—Expedite the process of rebuilding the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital.”

Speaker, I completely support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and I will give it to page Harry to bring to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: I present this petition on behalf of the fight for \$15 and Fairness and our community in Toronto–St. Paul's.

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers' employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

—three hours' pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

—three hours' pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days' notice; and

—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days' notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take” place “on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I absolutely support this petition. I affix my signature on this and hand it to page Marcel to table with the Clerk.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Aris Babikian: A petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“To Ensure the Safety of Residents of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Justin Trudeau government is not doing enough to protect the people of Ontario from convicted terrorists; and

“Whereas safety, security and peace of mind is of the utmost importance to the Ford government; and

“Whereas Ontario residents who have not been convicted of criminal acts could find themselves unable to gain access to various privileges they enjoy; and

“Whereas there are no provisions to prevent convicted terrorists from accessing privileges in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 46 and disallow anyone convicted of a crime under section 83 of the Criminal Code of Canada and any international treaties that may apply from receiving:

“(1) a licence under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997;

“(2) health insurance benefits under the Health Insurance Act;

“(3) a driver's licence under the Highway Traffic Act;

“(4) rent-geared-to-income assistance or special needs housing under the Housing Services Act, 2011;

“(5) grants, awards or loans under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act;

“(6) income support or employment supports under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“(7) assistance under the Ontario Works Act, 1997;

“(8) coverage under the insurance plan under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.”

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition. I will put my name to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAKING ONTARIO OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 POUR UN ONTARIO OUVERT AUX AFFAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 30, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 and the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 and make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi, la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail et la Loi de 2009 sur l'Ordre des métiers de l'Ontario et l'apprentissage et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from—oh—Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I always like the way you introduce me.

But before I start on my speech and go over what I believe is one of the biggest attacks on workers that I've seen in a long, long time, I would like to say to my family that I'm not going to be home tonight. It's Halloween. We're all not going to be home; we're all working. So I want to say to my wife, my three daughters, my four granddaughters and my grandson: Happy Halloween.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's nice to see you dressed up as Tom Selleck.

Mr. Wayne Gates: A short Tom Selleck—let's at least be clear about it.

But I also want to say that I can't think of a better thing that I'm doing, on behalf of my wife, my daughters and my grandchildren, than talking to a bill that I believe attacks women.

I'm going to say it, and I said it the other day: My daughters deserve the same pay, if they're doing equal work, as any man in the province of Ontario. I will continue to say to my daughters that I will say everything I can to convince the Conservative government to make sure that if a woman goes to work and she is performing the same job as me, she's going to be paid the same. It makes absolute sense. I don't know how anybody can't agree to that.

I'll start my little bit of my time here—I think I've got 20 minutes. Sit down and relax. You're going to enjoy it.

Just one other thing: I see that one of the members of the PCs was dressed as an angel, but I don't see anybody dressed as a Scrooge. I don't understand that, with this bill. I just thought I'd raise that. I'm not so sure that guy was an angel this morning, either, but that's a whole other story.

Thank you for allowing me to rise and speak to Bill 47 today. Some of the members that are here today would have heard me say this yesterday, but I'm going to repeat it: I've spent my entire adult life fighting for the rights of working women and men. I'm a proud union member. I was president of my union local for 12 years. I worked at General Motors, Local 199, in Niagara. I'm giving away my age a little bit. It used to be UAW, and then it went to CAW, and now it's Unifor. I was president, during the CAW and the Unifor period of time, of Local 199 in Niagara.

There isn't a day that goes by that I'm not proud to stand in this House and talk about the record of my union. I'm going to start right now. Quite frankly, I talked about my kids and I talked about the grandkids, but the reason I was able to raise my kids and buy a house, and have my daughters doing figure skating and baseball and rowing, was because I had a job. I had a job, quite frankly, with one of the richest corporations in the world, General Motors. The union was able to bargain a collective agreement that was fair and that included benefits and pensions. From that, I was able to raise my family. That's why I'm never going to stand up here and say that we shouldn't support unions.

The other thing that I got was a pension. I got benefits. You know what else is going to happen? It's going to happen; I know it's going to happen. I'm not in any rush for this, but I'm actually going to pass away at some point in time. We all are. But because of my union, and the fact that we were able to bargain with an employer that was the richest corporation in the world, guess what happens when I pass away? She's still going to have benefits. So I'm very proud of what my union has done for me.

1540

Mr. Speaker, you see, when I was with my union, whether as a committee person, a rep or a president, we saw first-hand what Tories try to do to workers when they get in power. Honestly, we knew this attack on labour was coming. It's not a surprise to me, but we're all surprised to see how quick and hard it has come. There is nothing new. Every time the Conservatives win power somewhere, they set their sights on working people to try and benefit their big corporate friends or business friends. They never cared about the average family that works day in and day out, and their policies make that clear. I worked in a plant for 20 years on steady midnights trying to raise my family, so I can stand up here and say that I was a worker, just like I'm a worker as an MPP.

What we're seeing here is one of the first attacks on working people and on the unions that represent them. This is to be expected from a Conservative government that has openly declared war on the environment, on benefits to working people, and on working and middle-class workers. Mark my words: This is not the last bill we'll see this government put forward that takes away from working people and the unions that represent them. Honestly, there are so many attacks and clawbacks in this bill, it's hard to figure out even where to start. Because this bill doesn't just repeal Bill 148; it changes other workplace laws as well.

So there is a lot here to talk about, and I hope I can get through some of the worst of it.

Let me talk about something in particular: this government's clawback of paid sick days for employees. As it stands today, and I hope the Conservative MPPs listen to this so they understand this, the act allows employees to take 10 sick days a year, and two—two, that's it, not 10—are paid. So out of 365 days a year, an employee is allowed to take 10 days off if they are sick, but only two are paid. I know if I take a day off, I get paid, just for the record—I want everybody to know that. Everybody in this House, if they take a day off, they get paid. Somehow the Ford government found that offensive. Somehow this government believes that employees taking off two days a year is too much.

I can tell you, I've met with the chamber, I've met with businesses, and you guys were just at an economic summit down in Niagara-on-the-Lake. You guys remember that? A nice place; Niagara-on-the-Lake is beautiful. I didn't talk to the business people who were there. I went and talked to the workers, to the single moms and the single dads who are providing that incredible service that they do at White Oaks. Every year, they're told that they're one of the best employers in the province of Ontario. And do you know what every one of those workers said to me? They said, "Gatesy, I need those two days. I'm a single mom"; "I'm a single dad. I can't afford to take a day off." These are the people who were serving you just last week.

Mr. Speaker, I know you're paying attention; that's something I like about you. You heard that right: Two whole days off a year was too much for this government. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

I want them to think of the consequences of this. This is something I can speak to very well, given the size of the tourism industry in my own riding of Niagara. For those who don't know, I represent Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Queenston, Virgil, Fort Erie, Ridgeway and Crystal Beach. Hopefully I didn't miss anybody, because if I do, I get in trouble. I want them to know the consequence of this. They're going to force people to go to work when they are sick. Think about that: You're asking people to go to work when they're sick.

You guys can tell me if I'm wrong. You're all here; you can listen. Imagine this: You have a fever; you're sneezing; you're coughing; you have the flu. Instead of getting the rest you need, you're going to work because you have to cover your bills, because this government thinks that two days off a year is too much for working people. I'm sure someone as wealthy as the Premier doesn't need to worry about this, but you know who does? The single mom and the single dad out there. They're the ones who can't afford to take a day off, who worry about losing their job if they can't make it. That's who this hurts: the supposed little guy—not me; there are other guys who are smaller than me—that the Premier pretends to care about. So now what do they do? Instead of getting better, they get dressed, like I did this morning, and they go to work.

People come from all over the world to my riding, one of the seven wonders of the world. I'm sure everybody has

been to Niagara Falls. I know you've been to Niagara Falls a few times. Imagine you're on vacation and you go to one of the nice restaurants we have—we have lots of good restaurants, lots of good wineries—and the worker is coughing. It's not their fault at all, but it might ruin somebody's night to see their server, sick, serving them drinks, maybe preparing their food, because this government thinks that two days a year is too much to allow that employee to take off. Particularly in the tourist sector, it makes no sense.

Or imagine—I can relate to this, because I came out of a factory; 40 years in the factory, by the way, just so everybody knows. I worked at General Motors for 40 years. General Motors might argue that I didn't work at all, and that's fair. Imagine you have a fever and you're working in a hot manufacturing plant, like we had this year. We had a lot of hot days in Windsor and Oshawa and Niagara in the automotive plants. I saw something online when I was reading about this that summed it up: Ontario isn't open for business; it's open for sickness and the spread of sickness, because you're forcing people to go to work and spread their germs all over the place.

There are serious health consequences to this. We know that our seniors and children are at higher risk when flu season rolls around. As a matter of fact, a lot of people are dying from flu—something we didn't see for a long time. That's why we're getting our shots. As a matter of fact, I got my flu shot last week.

If you're a young person, maybe a worker or a server or a dishwasher, you're going to have a hard night working while you're sick, but you'll survive, in most cases. But what happens to the seniors who are eating in the restaurant when you're sick? What happens to the other employees in the office who are there when you're sick? When you force someone to go to work when they're sick, they're going to get other people sick as well. Does that make sense to anybody? Can anybody nod their heads on that one?

Have you ever had a colleague come to work and you say, "You shouldn't be here. I'm getting your germs"? It happens all the time. Why are they coming to work in a lot of workplaces? Because they can't afford to take two days off. They've got to pay their hydro bill, which you guys privatized. They've got to pay for food. They've got to pay their rent, in some cases—in most cases—or they've got to pay their mortgage.

When someone forces someone to go to work when they're sick, they're going to get other people sick. Where do these people go? Mr. Speaker, help me out. Oh yes, you can't answer that. Okay, I'll help you out. Where do they go? That's right: They go to our hospitals. They've got the flu, they're sick and they're going to our hospitals. And what do we have? We already have hallway medicine. There's no place for them to go.

This causes serious health issues in our community. Why does this government not care about them? I don't understand it. Because some of their friends in big business asked for a favour: "We don't want to pay people two days." Maybe you guys should go and talk to your business buddies. I haven't come across one business—and I talk to them all the time; not one business came to my

office, or when I'm eating at Antica or I'm at the Hilton. No matter where I am, they're not saying, "Gatesy, we can't afford two days off a year for our employees." They are not saying it. Wherever you're getting your information from, it's got to be a big corporation. The ones who have a small business: They don't want their employees coming in sick, because you know what? They're like family to them. They don't want them coming to work sick and they don't want them taking it home to their families. It's absolutely ridiculous.

You don't have an argument on sick days, guys; you don't have an argument. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Don't heckle me on this one, because you'll get me wound up even more. There is absolutely no reason—I'm going to say it again—for your government to take two sick days away from people out of an entire year. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Don't heckle me on this issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

1550

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I'm settled down, but you know what? Don't heckle me on something like this. It just drives me nuts.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Don't tell us you're on the side of the little guy if every decision you make takes away from the little guy. It takes away.

Another part of this bill that's awful is the return to a demand for a doctor's note. This one drives me even crazier. This is bad because even the doctors I'm talking to—I go to doctors quite regularly; I'm just saying. They're telling me they don't want this. They've been clear that when this provision is in place, it forces them to clog up their waiting rooms and takes away valuable time, trying to get these notes. That's if they even get these notes at all. Sometimes it's such a hassle to get one that people just force themselves to go to work instead.

I can tell you, I've been in the plants, and you know one of the things that drove me nuts, Mr. Speaker? You have a lot of good supervisors in a lot of workplaces. I've worked with a lot of good supervisors, but if you had a supervisor who didn't like you and you took a day off—and it might be the only day you took off all year—he would request a doctor's note. Then he'd have to go and get a doctor's note to prove that he had the flu and then he'd have to pay \$35 or \$40. It makes no sense.

If a business wants to fix an absenteeism problem, then you fix the absenteeism problem when there's an absenteeism problem, but you don't go after the guy who takes one or two days off a year because he's sick. I'm going to tell everybody—it's not a surprise—we're all going to get sick, all right? It's going to rain again some time this year. There are some things we know. We're going to get sick. To ask a doctor to be doing this makes no sense.

So doctors don't want it. The workers certainly don't want it. Then why is the Ford government so determined to

force people to get them? It makes you wonder who actually has the ear of the Premier. It certainly isn't the little guy.

Their formula is even worse than what it was in the first place. You've got to listen to this one. This is really interesting. I don't know who thought of this, but he wasn't very good and certainly didn't care about people.

They've taken the 10 days that workers were entitled to and reduced them to eight—sort of; I'll say that again—sort of. Because the formula they're using is three personal days, three sick days, so they've broken them up on how you can use them, and two bereavement days. So you get two days off if a family member dies. These days don't get rolled back in. You can't bank them. So if your family is healthy, really, you're only getting six days off a year, not 10. If you don't have anybody die—and that doesn't happen that often in our families. It does happen, but not very often. So you're really down to six, almost cut in half. And remember, none of them are paid—none of them. It's just another way the government has decided to take from workers—quite frankly, families too. When somebody dies, it's a whole other story.

Mr. Speaker, just as I mentioned with the doctor's note, this bill says nothing about needing to provide death certificates to prove you've gone to a family funeral. Think about that. You have a member of your family die—and I have friends who are grieving even today and are struggling months later—and what's the most important thing, Mr. Speaker? Go get a death certificate. By the way, I'm at home and I'm crying. Maybe I'm blaming myself for what happened. I have no idea what it is, and you want a death certificate? I certainly hope this government will clarify that point because I think it is downright awful to ask a person to provide a certificate to go to a funeral of a loved one. It's just terrible, quite frankly. When people are already struggling with a loss, the last thing you need is another step mandated by this government.

You say you're cutting red tape—not to the little guy: "We don't trust you. We don't think your family member died. Go get a certificate to prove that you needed two days off." What are you guys doing over there? You guys have caucus meetings. You must talk about this stuff. You have family members. How do you defend this in your riding? It's indefensible.

Let's talk about the wage issue here. I'm probably not going to get through all my—no, I'm not going to get through my comments. I need an hour on this.

We saw in the last election that the Conservatives were itching to stop the minimum wage going up. The reason we're in this spot in the first place is because of the Conservatives. Mike Harris—

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mike Harris froze the minimum wage for years. We might not be in this place in the first place. I've only got a couple of minutes left, so I'm going to talk a little bit about that—where people are getting paid the wages they deserve.

So here's what we did. There are some new Conservatives here. They might not have the history, but I'm going

to give you a history lesson today. The Harris government came in 1995 and they were here until 2003, eight years—

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: The lady over there that's heckling me, I wish she would listen—eight years; \$6.85 is what the minimum wage was when they came into power. Do you know what it was, Mr. Speaker, when they were voted out? I know you can't answer. It was \$6.85. It never went up a penny for eight years. You know what happened during that time? They told the working poor, "Go eat baloney sandwiches. Go buy a"—

Ms. Marit Stiles: A can of tuna.

Mr. Wayne Gates:—"a can of tuna that's dented; it's cheaper," and that kind of thing.

Here is what happened—nobody talks about this. When you're arguing that the minimum wage went up too fast, nobody talks about what happened there. But I'm going to tell you in the last minute what happened. Every year they were in power, inflation went up. In 1995, 1996, 1997, it was about 1.7%, 1.9%, in that area. Then, in 2000, 2001, 2002—and I'm going off the top of my head, so I might be out by a percentage point here. Over eight years, do you know what it went up, Mr. Speaker? It went up 18.3%. Inflation went up 18.3%, and the minimum wage stayed at \$6.85. So you know what happened? The person who was getting \$6.85 an hour in 1995 had to try to survive when inflation went up 19%. Does that make any sense to anybody?

The reason we're in this problem today is because your government didn't think enough of people working in our workplaces to raise the minimum wage. You should be ashamed of yourselves for that, the same way you should be ashamed of yourselves on sick days, doctor's notes and all the other stuff I talked about.

Thank you very much. I appreciate the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Ross Romano: I'm going to say this: I heard a lot of "shame" coming from the other side of the room, and you know what? I am very proud of what we're doing—very, very proud of the bill being proposed here. In fact, I'm so proud that I have been getting nothing but compliments from everybody back home—constant compliments because people are happy that we are finally getting rid of Bill 148 and all the negative aspects of it.

This was a job-killing bill. It was making life so much more difficult for businesses. It was making things so much more complicated. People earning what used to be the former minimum wage, actually, would say to me— young people—"Yes, it's a really great idea that they're going to move up our wages to \$15, but I'm not going to have a job anyway because nobody is going to be able to afford to keep me." You know what? They get it.

We look at what we're doing to change the minimum wage. We're going to increase that wage in 33 months' time, and then we're going to tie increases to the rate of inflation. Doesn't that make a lot of sense? The former government had 15 years to do it, and then waited until right before an election to suddenly increase it by over two

dollars an hour, overnight, and expected small businesses out there to be able to survive.

To the member from Niagara Falls: I really have a hard time believing that—really, what separates us, quite frankly, isn't that much in our ridings in terms of what is important to people and what is important to businesses. All I hear is: Thank you, thank you, thank you to our government for getting rid of this horrible Bill 148, which was making things so complicated for business owners. We heard countless complaints. Just look at the facts: Over 50,000 people lost their jobs in the month of January last year alone. It's projected to be 90,000 over the year.

We're here to be open for businesses. We're here to help businesses compete, because that is what we promised to do and we just keep our promises. Promises made—

Interjections: Promises kept.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'll have a chance to speak on this at greater length in the future, but the government member says that he's proud for doing this and that he has talked to people and they keep on thanking him. Well, he's talking to the same person. He's not talking to workers who are affected.

Let me put this in some context. There are all kinds of people in our society who work at middle incomes—\$50,000, \$60,000, \$70,000 a year—who do not have a collective agreement, and they don't have benefits when it comes to how many days off and the different benefits you get when it comes to bereavement, sick leave etc. What this bill tried to do is to modernize the act to reflect today's workplace. In today's workplace, people work multiple jobs. A lot of people are working for \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year and they work in employment areas where there is no set rule when it comes to bereavement leave, there is no set rule when it comes to sickness, there is no set rule when it comes to what happens to a woman if she's trying to escape domestic abuse—at least part of that has been protected. There are all kinds of things that workers across this province face on a daily basis, but there are no provisions in the old Employment Standards Act from 30 years ago that give them the kind of dignity that other workers have.

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Now, I agree with the government: Where were the Liberals for 15 years? For 15 years, they had a chance to fix this, and they were converted on the way to the election and got this done just before. Better late than never, but this didn't fix the problem. The reality is, we work in a workplace today in this society of Ontario where we don't have the high degree of unionization that many of us were lucky to have in our workplaces, where these things were spelled out in a collective agreement. Now the majority of workers work in non-unionized workplaces, and they don't have collective agreements to provide the very basic things. If my mother dies, I don't have to come in with a slip proving she's dead to be able to attend the funeral. I think it's—I can't say the word—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Reprehensible.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —reprehensible what the government is doing now.

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

Mr. Doug Downey: The member from Niagara Falls wants to go back and do some revisionist history. He just missed the mark by a little bit, because we need to talk about the Rae record, the NDP record, if we're going to talk about what direction this province was going. Some of us were there. Some of us were fighting to make sure the businesses in this province weren't under strain and weren't put underground.

The most recent Liberal government picked up the mantle from there and for 15 years made life harder and more difficult for small businesses.

Do you think we don't talk to workers? We talk to workers all the time. My company represented hundreds and hundreds of small businesses, mom-and-pops who were trying to employ people and make a dime and survive. These are not rich fat cats. These people have parents who die. These people have family members who get sick.

But why is it that the NDP is just so free to give away other people's efforts? Why is it? Why is it that they're so free to say, "We can spend your time more than anybody else. We will decide in your business how you will give away your time and how you will invest in your business and how you will do things"?

Mr. Speaker, they don't have a monopoly on that. The small businesses need to be able to grow. They need to be able to reinvest in their people. They need to be able to make their businesses work the way that they should in this environment.

The member thinks that 1995 is some sort of base for logic. The member from Niagara West wasn't even born yet. He's reaching here to try and justify his position that is so outdated, it doesn't meet today's environment. We talk about today's workplaces. We're in a whole different world, and we're modernizing government to serve the people.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: I want to thank my good friend from Niagara Falls for his very heartfelt comments. I've watched over the last 40 years as he has fought for workers in Niagara and across Canada, and he's well positioned to give a lecture to this group here who are making things worse for workers.

There are two major issues we face: One is climate change, and the other is income inequality. This government is actually making both of those things worse. It's absolutely incredible.

But the member from Niagara Falls mentioned his three beautiful daughters. One of them was my 10-year-old son's schoolteacher last year. He knows about fighting for women and women's rights.

This legislation removes vital provisions in our labour law that provide equal pay for temporary, part-time and casual employees. This is what this government is missing. If they perform substantially the same kind of work,

if they require substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility at that job, if their work is performed under similar working conditions, then they should be paid equally.

Equal pay provisions are common sense. It's common sense to conclude that Bill 47 will have a disproportionately negative effect on women, and the member from Kitchener who spoke the other day highlighted this.

Speaker, I will be opposing this legislation. There are a myriad of deeply problematic provisions in this bill. It is shameful that this government continues to push this legislation through despite the evidence that it will make life worse for the people of Ontario, especially women and especially workers that are living in poverty. In the region I'm from, 74% of all the people living in poverty actually work a full-time job, and most of them are women; it's shameful.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the member from Niagara Falls for final comments.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I would like to say to my colleagues across the way: You guys should practise saying the word "workers," because you know what? There are no businesses in Ontario without workers, without what we do every day providing the productivity and the quality and the health and safety that we do. There isn't a business person in the world that makes any money without workers. It's about respect; respect workers.

With this bill, you're showing absolutely no respect not only for the workers, but for the health care system, for the doctors—all that stuff—you're showing absolutely none. You're showing no respect for my kids, my daughters, my granddaughters.

I want to say: How did we go—they talk about us getting to \$15. Remember, you guys are really happy you're going to get to \$15? Now, I'm not great in music; most people will tell you I'm not. I think there was a song called In the Year 2025—or was it 2045? Whatever the song was, I think it was 2025. That's when the minimum wage will get to \$15. In 2025, it will get to \$15.

I've got 50 seconds left.

I told the story about me being lucky, coming out of high school, going into a plant, working for an employer that was the richest corporation in the world. They were able to share that enormous wealth that we were creating in the form of better wages, better benefits and pensions.

But do you know who is the richest corporation in the world today? Walmart. And do you know where \$15 and Fairness came from? It came from Walmart, because on a Friday in the States—I think it was in Alabama—they put a note on the wall at Walmart. And do you know what they said on payday? "When you get paid, go to the local food bank to get food vouchers." That's how \$15 and Fairness started. It started at the richest corporation in the world. So if the richest corporation in the world won't pay their employees \$15, we've got a problem. When they have that much wealth, created by respective workers, wouldn't you think it would be fair, it would be reasonable and should be expected by the province of Ontario—and, quite frankly, our country—to share that wealth?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Don Valley East.

Mr. Michael Coteau: As always, it's a pleasure to be able to speak in the Legislature today. I think this is an important issue that we're debating today. I was elected in 2011, and I would say that of my seven years here at the Legislature, this is probably one of the most important issues because it speaks to a larger issue. It's not specifically just the bill, but affordability and where we go from here as a province.

Last year, there was a constituent who came in to see me. I don't know her very well, but I know her from my days as a school board trustee. She showed up to the ward councils. Ward council meetings are an opportunity for parents to come in to talk to the school board trustee in a forum format, much like what we do as politicians here in the Legislature when we go back to our communities.

I had the opportunity to sit down with her for about 45 minutes. We talked about her life and affordability issues. I didn't really know her story. I knew that she had some children, that she was a single mother. She told me a story about her last 10 years working. She worked at a health care facility here in the city and was making just above minimum wage, so above the \$14 mark. She told me about her life over the last decade. She said, "Michael, I've never gone on vacation." She explained the struggle she had, economically, raising two children by herself and what it was like to earn just over minimum wage. It was a pretty good job, because that was when the minimum wage at the time—she was getting \$14-plus when it was \$11.85, and she was telling me how difficult it was.

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The reason she came in to see me that particular month was because she had a challenge paying her rent that month. She showed me her history over the last year of going into the short-term loan places like Money Mart and the interest attached to it. The way her paycheques actually were allocated—sometimes it was the 3rd or 4th of the month, and she had to pay rent before, and it was at the tail end, and it was difficult. There was an ongoing pattern. She said, "Michael, you can see through my paycheques here, working full-time, that—and here's my cost of living." She broke it down for me—very detailed. She had her transportation costs. She had her food costs. They were right to the exact amount. It was simple stuff: her TTC pass, her food costs, a small clothing allowance. She showed it to me. It was really hard for her just to get by. I remember hearing her story. She said to me that day, "Michael, I don't know what I'm going to do. I followed all the rules. I did everything I was supposed to do. I've never gone on vacation in over a decade. I don't do anything to spend beyond what you see here. It is impossible. I don't know how I can carry on."

This was, from my perspective, a very successful mother, bringing up two children by herself, one who went to university and one who was in high school at the time. I knew her when her kids were in elementary school, when I was a school board trustee. When she came in to see me that day, I

thought to myself, "Can you imagine? A person working full-time in this beautiful province?"

We're all here for the same reason. I really don't want to make this a Conservative issue or an NDP issue or a Liberal issue. I just want to give you a snapshot of what I saw that day in my constituency.

She said to me, "I don't know how I can go on. You can see my paycheque, Michael. I've done everything I can." I thought: How is a person in this province, working full-time, raising two children, doing everything she's supposed to do, keeping her kids out of trouble, getting them into post-secondary education—how is a person like that failing when it comes to affordability, when they've done everything they're supposed to do? But that's the new reality for many people in this city. It's the new reality for many people across this province.

When we look at what has happened since the 1950s and 1960s, with the prosperity in this province, we've seen over the last 20 years a decline in actual wealth for many people. We've seen a gap that has increased between those who have money and those who don't have money. I was reading earlier today, when I was just doing a bit of research, that here in Canada, we have—and what I'm saying is not to divide people who have money and people who don't have money. I think it's good if people go out there and actually work hard, set up a business and they're rewarded for that business. But what has happened here in Canada and in North America and all around the world—it's the same phenomenon—there's a growing gap between those who have money and those who don't have money, and the distribution of that wealth has gone to an extreme on one side. In Canada, we have the top 100 people who have money—they have more money than three of our provinces combined, the people in that province. That would never have happened 30 years ago, 40 years ago. I'm not here to say that we have to stop people from making money, but there has to be a better balance between how the wealth is distributed so we can continue to build a strong middle class.

I think what people fail to realize is that when the middle class is compromised in any country, it has a negative effect, not only on those in the middle class, but it has a negative effect on those who are affluent as well. This challenge we have here is not about \$14; it's not about \$15; it's even beyond Bill 148 or, in this case, Bill 47; it's about how we are going to address the affordability issues in the next couple of decades here in Ontario and here in Canada. We have a responsibility not only to Ontarians, but we are the economic engine of this country and we always have been for the last, I would say, 100 years or 80 years. I think we're going to continue to be that engine for this country, so we have a responsibility to keep Canada moving as well. When we talk about affordability and when we talk about building a strong middle class, again it moves beyond just a number and it goes to an approach, a philosophy, of how we are going to do this together as leaders in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I just got a note here from someone—I'll keep talking as I look at this note. But I think it's—I see.

The microphone is not picking me up properly, Mr. Speaker, so I'm just going to move back a bit. There we go. Thank you very much to the Clerks' desk.

We have a pretty big challenge in front of us as a country and as a province over the next few decades. Some people refer to how the third industrial revolution is here when we see a transformation that's about to take place in communication, obviously, the Internet of Things and how we all connect to each other. With transportation we see automation, and also with AI and other pieces like that going into transportation. The other piece is energy. We know that energy is going to get cheaper as we go. So we're going to go into a new phase of productivity.

Even at the very best energy output for any type of industrialized country, you get maybe 20% outcome out of the energy you consume from the earth. There's about 20% of that energy that goes into the final product that's captured. We're going to move way beyond that over the next few decades, and we have a real opportunity here in this province to think about how we best position ourselves.

The other thing that's really challenging for us as Canadians and as Ontarians: We know that by 2100, Canada is going to move out of its traditional spot being in the top 12 countries for GDP. We're going to move into the 30 mark, roughly. There are countries around the world, like Nigeria, that will move into the 11th place by 2100, and Canada moves to almost 30. This is a fact based on today's trajectory. We have a choice on what we're going to do to best position this country and this province for success.

Mr. Speaker, prior to being here, I was the executive director of a literacy organization. We knew at the Conference Board of Canada, through their research, that when you had a 1% increase in literacy levels in Canada, you had a 1.5 billion—or a 1.5% increase in GDP. I'll repeat that because I kind of messed up the last part: With a 1% increase in literacy, you've got a 1.5% increase in GDP.

We know that investing in workers here in Ontario and in Canada actually helps our bottom line. That's why I fought for literacy, to increase adult literacy, to make sure that people were equipped to take on the challenges that I think the digital age has brought forward. My specialty at Alpha Plus—that was the name of the organization—was to look for ways to increase the digital literacy level. We did that through a concept called workplace literacy, looking for ways to actually educate people in the workplace so they could benefit from the growth and the benefits that literacy has to bring.

We found that when you invested in the worker, it actually helped the businesses. The retention level went up when you increased literacy levels in the workforce. There was a study at McDonald's in the UK, in London, where they actually had literacy programs in the workplace, and the retention level increased; people stayed longer and it cost the employer less.

We know that here in Ontario, when we make an investment into workers, we actually increase productivity. It could be through literacy; it could be through investing in them to get educational pursuits or even an increase in pay.

My brother is a welder, and I know that the company he works for, every quarter, allocates a percentage of the profits back to the workers. My brother likes that, for obvious reasons. But he feels like he has a commitment back to that company because they have profit-sharing, which I thought is a great thing.

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The bill that we introduced as government before was to look for ways to strengthen the workplace so it would benefit individuals and try to tackle some of the challenges around affordability but at the same time strengthen our business sectors here in the province of Ontario so it would allow for our businesses to grow.

We hear constantly that the increase in the minimum wage was hurting businesses. This is something we always hear. We hear this often from people. But there were so many businesses that were consulted and brought into the mix to talk about how we could improve the workplace for workers and therefore help businesses at the end. It wasn't like this was a fly-by-night decision. This took many years to come forward. The former Minister of Labour, Kevin Flynn, went out and actually spoke to many businesses. I think it was the "good places to work" research that they did. They came back and they found that there were a lot of businesses that were very supportive of investing in workers.

The minimum wage was never supposed to be a new normal. It wasn't supposed to be something that everyone, by default, went to. The minimum wage was a benchmark at the very bottom, to say, "This is the least you should be paying people." But it became a new normal. Businesses relied on it to increase their profitability. It was a mechanism to increase profitability. There are only a few ways you can make money in businesses. Either you focus on the product you're selling, or you look for ways to minimize your labour expenses so you increase your profitability.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the products that were being developed—the middle class was strong. Many of us in the Legislature—our parents benefited from that. They had the opportunity to go, work hard and at the end of the day be able to raise a family. Why is it that in this province, in this day and age, unlike in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and maybe up until the 1980s, that if you're two people working hard in this province, you can't have the ability to save for a down payment on a house, maybe to buy a used car—not even a new car but maybe a two-year-old car—every four or five years and maybe go on vacation once every two years? That's not normal for certain families today. But back when many of our parents were growing up, they had the ability to do that because people were paid properly.

In Ontario, and particularly in Toronto, we know that the cost of living has increased. It's an 11% increase last year to this year just for rental costs for condos in downtown Toronto—an 11% increase. The average rent in the city of Toronto—I'm from the city of Toronto, but I know there are many conversations that are similar across the province. I want people to remove the politics from the

conversation and just think about this one simple fact: If the average rent in this city for a two-bedroom apartment is \$2,500, and if you're working full-time at minimum wage in this province and you get, on average, \$24,000—that's the average: \$24,000 after deductibles—how does it work out?

Ms. Jill Andrew: It doesn't.

Mr. Michael Coteau: It doesn't work out.

So what happens when that doesn't work out? There are consequences for those types of situations. We see it every single day. We see people compromise their ability to get the right education that they deserve. It compromises their ability to be in the home with their children, to help raise them. They don't have the ability. They have to sometimes go and get second jobs, and it's very rare that they're there to put their children to sleep or to read that book to them. We start to see even the very social fabric of society compromised in many ways because people are not allowed, because of the pressures placed on them to pay the bills, to actually be there for their families or, even more importantly at the point, because they have to take care of themselves, they're not there for themselves. They have no ability to take care of themselves.

So what are the effects? We see an effect on the health care system. We see an effect on young people going astray and getting into problems and into trouble. We see so many different things happening because people are not able to just take care of the very basics in life because they're just trying to pay the bills.

I grew up in a community in Toronto where there were economic challenges, like many parts of Ontario and many communities where there are people who have economic challenges. I can remember some young people, when I was growing up, not coming to school with food and the school providing lunches for them and things like that. I think that if we cannot, as a society, even allow people who choose to work hard and who choose to play by the rules to actually make a decent income, then we fail as members of provincial Parliament, all of us—not just the Conservatives or the NDP or the Liberals, but all of us.

I think, even more importantly—how do we take on the challenges that the future is about to bring forward to us, like I said, with all these changes that are taking place? If we can't take care of our own people in this province and look for ways to really enhance our local economies and allow people to really build locally, then we're going to face more challenges and we, as a society, will have larger problems to take on.

There are some great industries in Ontario. We've seen, in the last 10 years—actually, the last seven years, maybe five—the craft brewing sector here in Ontario. It went from 10 craft brewing companies a decade ago to 240 today in Ontario. They're using local products. They're using local labour. They pay their employees well. They sell in the community. It's a really good example of localizing the economy. They've taken away, I think, 7% or 8% of the market share from the big companies that used to be Canadian. Now, they are in their communities,

and I'm sure every single member here has a local brewing company that's doing great work.

That's the type of thing that we should be investing in, and making sure that workers are protected so that when they are sick they feel invested in and they have the ability to take care of themselves, and when their child is sick, they have the ability to take a day off to invest in their children. I believe that by investing in the people of Ontario, as employers, and investing in your employees and paying them properly, you're going to be able to develop a better business.

Thank you, everyone, for not heckling me and listening; I appreciate it. I appreciate your time, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? The minister—oh.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry. I recognize the member from—

Hon. John Yakubuski: Scarborough–Agincourt.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Scarborough–Agincourt.

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

All of us are cognizant that affordability and the cost of living is an issue in our country. But to tie affordability and cost of living to minimum wage is misleading and it is disingenuous. Minimum wage is something for which the previous government, the Liberal government, for 15 years did not do anything, and on the eve of the election, they suddenly discovered that increasing the minimum wage to \$15 was something that might benefit them. That was the whole intention of the \$15 minimum wage.

There are other factors about the increased cost of living. The issue is that, when they brought the minimum wage increase—one of the first casualties of that was my niece. She is a university student; she was working part-time, and she was one who was let go because her boss, her employer, could not afford to pay her \$14, and \$15 coming down at the new year.

1630

Coming back to one of the issues that I am very much interested in: My colleague stated that the average rental in Toronto is \$2,500 for a two-bedroom apartment. It is surprising to me. I had been involved in settlement issues for three years before I was elected, on a daily basis. At least in the north end of the city, the minimum rent for an apartment is around \$1,600, \$1,700.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: I would like to thank all of my colleagues on our side as well as on the government side who have spoken today, as well as our Liberal independent members.

My statement is this: Neo-liberal bootstrap ideology, this idea that we can all pull ourselves up by our bootstraps and we all have equal access, and if you work hard, you'll get it, and if you don't work hard, "Oh, well. Poor you. You're at the end of the line"—this is what we have to fix, folks, and this is the type of ideology that Bill 47 is rooted in.

There are many people who are working very hard. My family has worked very hard. I've worked very hard. On the other PC side, I heard a member say, "Well, I worked really hard to make it," implying that everyone else isn't working hard. But the fact is, many of us are starting from different places. We have different needs.

Education is deplorable for many people. We have housing situations that are deplorable for many people in our city. I campaigned; I spoke to people in Toronto—St. Paul's who said to me, "You've got to fight for \$15." In fact, what they said to me is, "We need \$18. Even a \$15 minimum wage isn't enough."

It's shameful to me, as a new MPP who is now in a different economic bracket.

To all the hecklers on the other side in the PC government who might have been making this salary for many, many other years than I certainly have—these are my first few months—how dare we sit in this building, with the privilege of being here, telling Ontarians, telling my residents of Toronto—St. Paul's that \$15 an hour is too much for them, when we're making \$116,500 every year? This is—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciated the comments from the member from Don Valley East, and I appreciated that he shared that story about the constituent he met with. I think all of us, as representatives here in this House, can relate to having those people who come in and share those stories that are moving and make us want to do something.

I, myself, had a number of people who came in to meet with me about Bill 148. I had small business owners who came in to talk with me about the challenges they were facing, getting the books to reconcile with the sudden steep increase. I also had charities that came in to see me. That's something that I think has been missed in this conversation—the number of charities. There's one in particular in Ottawa, Children at Risk, that was looking at having to cancel the summer camp they ran for children with autism because they couldn't absorb this sudden, steep increase.

So while I appreciate the desire, when we hear some of these stories, to take quick action, I think sometimes we need to remember that you need to play the long game; you need to take the long vision of what's going to be beneficial for Ontario, for our workers, for our businesses in the long term rather than just the short term.

If we want a model to follow for that, we need not look any further than the previous federal Conservative government, which I had a chance to serve under with the late finance minister Jim Flaherty. Under that government, we lowered taxes to the lowest level in 50 years, and the middle class in Ontario was stronger than the American middle class for the first time. We saw child poverty reduced to some of its lowest levels of all time. That's the model we need to follow, Mr. Speaker. We need to focus on making

a pro-job, pro-growth environment in Ontario. That is what's going to help everyone.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to add some comments to those of my colleague from Don Valley East. He hit on a couple of issues that I think are poignant, especially around the cost of living in areas like Toronto, and how would you do that on minimum wage? It just seems impossible.

I've always seen myself as just a worker, even in this job—nothing more than a worker. I work on behalf of my constituents. My community sent me here. I work at their pleasure, and it is an honour to do so.

In that light, I wonder if the government see themselves as more than workers—more than that. Clearly, they see themselves as better than the rest of the workers out there in Ontario, because the rules that they've brought in in Bill 47 don't apply to them.

Let's just even take the changes to sick days. Instead of having two paid sick days under Bill 148, they are eliminating those, and you'll be required to provide medical evidence that you were actually sick to not be reprimanded at your workplace.

The fact is that for members on that side of the House and this side of the House, those rules don't apply. They could take 365 sick days a year and have no repercussions in their workplace at all—zero. So I'd love to see them actually apply the rules that they have in Bill 47 to the standing orders. Let's see them actually have to, just at the very least, provide some sick notes when we don't see them here in the House, when we don't see them in their constituency. Let's see them actually provide a death certificate when someone in their family, a loved one, passes away. Let's see them have to apply the same rules that they think are good for the workers in this province to their very own caucus. I would love to see that. I think the people in the province of Ontario, the people in our communities, would like to see that too, because anything less than that—well, we know what the word is; we're not allowed to say that word in this House. But we know that when they don't apply the same rules, it's not fair to the workers in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I return to the member from Don Valley East for final comments.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I want to thank all the members in the Legislature for their words.

I think it's important for all of us to pay attention to the issue around affordability and how we best position the economy for the future.

In the past, Conservatives, Liberals and NDP were all locked into certain ideologies—the Liberals and the NDPers mostly from the New Deal and Roosevelt that trickled into modern times, and for the Conservatives, it was based on Reagan-based economics. This is where we find ourselves today. We have the legacy of these systems that are in place. But my point at the beginning was that the world is changing and the economy is changing, and we're going into a third industrial revolution.

All I'm saying is that we need to look for ways to best position ourselves for the future as Ontarians, and to really look for ways to work together, because the issues we're going to tackle in the next decade we've never been presented with before.

Just a couple of comments: The member from Scarborough–Agincourt questioned the average rent number I used. Let's go to his number of \$1,600 or \$1,700. That's still \$20,000-plus a year. I said that it was \$2,400. So you're left with \$3,500. That's \$290 a month left over after you pay rent. So even at \$1,700, even at \$1,600, even at \$1,200, even at \$1,000, you're still challenged.

I think the other comment from one of the members across was that the Liberals never did anything about the minimum wage. Back to the member from Fort Erie: He said that the minimum wage was \$6.85. When we came into power in 2003, we raised that to \$10.25. That was a 30% increase just during Dalton McGuinty's years. So I reject the position that we did nothing for the minimum wage over the years.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: It's an honour to rise in the House today and address our government's Bill 47, the Making Ontario Open for Business Act.

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Our government for the people has been working hard during the past four months to clean up the mess the Liberals left behind. We committed to restore accountability and trust, to put more money back in the pockets of Ontarians and to create good jobs. We are working on cutting hospital wait times and ending hallway health care. We're expanding hospice and palliative care in communities to provide quality end-of-life care to patients. We're making OHIP+ more efficient and cost-effective by focusing benefits on children and youth who do not have existing prescription drug insurance plans; and announcing the creation of 6,000 new long-term-care beds and over 1,100 hospital spaces in advance of the upcoming flu season.

For the first time in 15 years, Ontario has a government that understands small business and working people. That is why, last week, I stood up with my colleagues the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and the Minister of Labour to speak to the people of Ontario. We announced that Ontario's government would introduce legislation that, if passed, would reduce stifling regulatory burdens.

The proposed Making Ontario Open for Business Act, 2018, will cut burdensome red tape and pave the way for job creation. Bill 47 sends a message to the world that—

Interjection.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I couldn't hear you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I'm talking to Sam.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: —we are delivering on our promise to cut red tape and make Ontario open for business. We need to reduce the regulatory burden to ensure businesses we count on to grow and create jobs in Ontario are competitive across the country, North America and the world. The purpose of Bill 47 is to reduce burdens on our

job creators while preserving real benefits for Ontario's workers.

Unnecessary regulations are squeezing businesses in every economic sector and driving jobs and investment out of Ontario. Unnecessary red tape and regulations are job killers. They actually discourage businesses from hiring, and block unemployed people from finding work and supporting their families.

There is an important place for regulations that can effectively protect health, safety and other important priorities. Unfortunately, far too many of Ontario's 380,000 regulatory requirements are inefficient, inflexible, out of date, or duplicate federal or municipal regulations. Red tape costs employers' time, money and resources that they would rather invest in growing their business, creating good jobs, and launching innovative products and services that will improve people's lives.

We see the real cost of red tape in the businesses that are forced to close their doors, the job-creating investments that we scare away or in the workers who are forced to leave Ontario in order to find work. We cannot continue to drive companies away.

Ontario is open for business, and we will continue to remove stifling burdens for job creators, lower business costs and make Ontario more competitive. "Open for business" means open for everyone, including workers across all trades. We believe that if you are prepared to do the work, then you deserve a shot at the job. We'll target unnecessary regulations while taking care to safeguard the health and safety of Ontarians, and we'll make it easier and faster for companies to do business with the government.

This plan is a huge step toward building prosperity, putting Ontario back on track as a growth leader in North America and restoring our province to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada.

We have begun work on a system that will support jobs in trades. There are many tremendous and vibrant opportunities available in the skilled trades in Ontario. In fact, one in five new jobs in the next five years will be trades-related. But there's a problem: Employers can't find apprentices and apprentices can't find jobs. Business owners and employers are telling us there are not enough people on the skilled trades path and that there is a mismatch of skills and employment opportunities. Yet despite this labour shortage, we have young people who want careers in the skilled trades who are actually forced to leave the province to find work. They deserve a shot at a job here in Ontario. This is a clear sign that the current Ontario apprenticeship system is broken. With our modern economy, we need an apprenticeship system built for today, one that makes Ontario open for business.

I've heard first-hand about the difficulties in the skilled trades, the inability to find jobs, the barriers to entering the trades and the burdens placed on employers. In Ontario, our ratios are amongst the highest in the country and are a major deterrent for employers looking to hire apprentices. The current ratio regime limits the number of apprentices an employer can train, and this makes no sense, especially when employers need apprentices and apprentices need

employers. This ultimately limits our growth and the number of jobs available in Ontario. We need to prepare Ontarians for the jobs of today and for the future.

Another critical issue is our trade reclassification system. The current system is complicated and outdated. The classification review process has a direct impact on the labour market and should be used as a tool to strengthen Ontario's economic prosperity and create opportunity for all.

Since the Ontario College of Trades began accepting members in 2013, we have continued to hear concerns regarding numerous membership fees, inefficiencies, red tape and obstacles to addressing the skills gap. I heard a story from one business owner who had a fifth-year apprentice apply at his company. His ratio was already met, but he decided to hire this young man as a general labourer. One day, an inspector came to a job site, and he had a screwdriver in his back pocket. The inspector reported this, issued a penalty, and the business owner was forced to fire this young man. We can no longer ignore these issues.

In response to the issues raised, our government intends to transform and modernize the apprentice system, starting by proposing amendments to the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009. If passed, amendments would immediately lower journeyperson-to-apprenticeship ratios to a simple 1-to-1 ratio, making us more competitive with other provinces.

We will also establish a moratorium on trades reclassification and de-prescribe 24 low-volume trades where apprenticeships are not in demand. Further, if the legislation is passed, we would move forward toward the repeal of the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009, have a mechanism for interim governance structure and provide for an orderly transition to be completed in 2019.

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Defenders of the College of Trades like to pretend that it has a role in protecting labour standards, but they ignore the fact that Ontario is alone among all provinces in clinging to this kind of model. And the other provinces are doing just fine. As far as we're concerned, if you are prepared to do the work, then you deserve a shot at the job. That means the status quo has to be fixed. While these are big changes, they are necessary in order to respond to the needs of apprentices, of employers, and to address the skills gap and help people reach their full potential.

During this time of transition, the government intends to maintain the essential system functions and ensure certainty as we move forward. We need to look at post-secondary education and training in the broader context of what is best for Ontario's economy. That means making sure it is efficient, cost-effective, financially sustainable and is providing the skilled workforce we need to restore Ontario to its rightful place as the economic engine of Canada.

We have a plan. Solving the skills mismatch is not just a priority for me; it's essential to our province's prosperity. Let me tell you a story about why I feel passionate about ensuring that we have the right skills-trades mix, with a modernized apprenticeship system being a crucial

part of that mix. I can personally attest to the value of the skilled trades because it is part of the foundation of my own family.

My father-in-law grew up in Poland during the Second World War. He arrived in Canada in 1950 and began to train as a plumber. He worked hard to develop the skills he needed to thrive in his profession and founded what eventually became one of the largest HVAC companies in Canada. My father-in-law was an excellent example of how hard work, dedication and opportunity for all can allow anyone to prosper in Ontario.

We are so fortunate to have a strong tradition of skills training and apprenticeship in this province. Look around, and you can see the influence of our apprentices and skilled trades everywhere: in the buildings we're in today, in the vehicles that got us here, and in the roads that we travel on. Skilled trades play such an essential role in our economy, our society and our everyday life. They will continue to do so as part of the backbone of our economy.

We also face an aging workforce in Ontario, particularly in the skilled trades, and we must ensure we have the workforce on hand to meet this growing demand. But what business owners and employers are telling us is that these days not enough people are on that path. I heard from Shawn Lamarche, president of Lamarche Electric: "The labour shortage is the number one issue facing our company, and lowering ratios will help us find and keep young apprentices."

We can't let good jobs and opportunities pass by Ontarians. If we want to get Ontario back on track, we need to make sure Ontario businesses can easily find the skilled workers they need, and they need to find them right here at home.

Unfortunately, Ontario has a broken apprenticeship system—the path to those skilled trades. I was told about a young lady who wanted to be an electrician but cannot find a sponsor in her area, nor can she afford to move away from her home town. Her cousin decided to leave the electrical trade after finding out his sponsor did not submit the training agreements or hours. The company then shut its doors and he never received credit.

Too many barriers exist that hold people back from entering the trades. The regulatory burden on employers is limiting growth, and we've heard time and time again how the regulatory burden on employers is limiting that growth: "We often turn away young apprentices seeking employment, as restrictive ratios mean we are not allowed to hire them." That comes from Domenic Mattina of Mattina Mechanical.

It is apparent that we cannot afford to wait any longer. If passed, the proposed act will mean immediate changes to begin modernizing and transforming the skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

We are making big changes. They are necessary in order to respond to the needs of apprentices and employers and to address the skills gap and help people reach their full potential.

Sean Reid, vice-president and regional director, Ontario, for the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada,

believes these measures will help the future of the province: “This is a great day for Ontario’s skilled” trades “workers and employers. We’re pleased the ... government” has taken these bold steps to reduce journeyman-to-apprenticeship ratios and bring down bureaucratic barriers to the skilled trades. This “will put thousands to work ... throughout our industry and will lead to the development of the next generation of” Ontario’s “skilled trades workforce.”

We want the world to know that Ontario is open for business. We want business and industry to know we are cutting red tape and reducing burdens. We want post-secondary institutions to know that their training is creating skilled workers who are needed and desired in their trades. We want current and potential skilled trades workers to know that we are working to make their system better and stronger. We want to make sure that the tax dollars we invest in post-secondary education and training get the people in our province a good return.

I am excited to be part of this vital work as we reconsider and rebalance our post-secondary offerings to best suit the current and future needs of the province. I entered politics with the desire to give back, a fundamental principle that has guided me throughout the course of my career.

In my prior career as a family physician, I learned the key to finding solutions to issues is listening to and considering different perspectives when working towards the best possible outcomes. The key is listening: to our constituents, to our partners and to our colleagues. Moreover, we need to listen to a diversity of opinions. I believe in the importance of robust and open dialogue, because every opinion adds value to a debate.

In my role as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I am listening. What I am consistently hearing is that we need to deliver high-quality education and employment programs that benefit students and job seekers. We must not wait any longer.

I support, and Ontario needs, education and employment programs that make the best use of every taxpayer dollar invested, leading to sustainable economic prosperity. We need all Ontarians to reach their highest potential, and post-secondary education is critical to our collective prosperity.

I will work with all our colleges and universities to create the conditions that make it easier for people to access high-quality education and training. Our post-secondary institutions are the incubators and launching pads of Ontario’s future economic endeavours and successes. This is why we need to strengthen the links between employers, businesses and our post-secondary institutions. We need to prepare students so they are ready and qualified for jobs in an increasingly competitive global climate.

We will do this. We will do it by reviewing and curtail-ing unnecessary investments; by reducing the regulatory burden on businesses, apprentices and journeypersons; by bringing accountability back to government spending; and by making the responsible financially sound decisions that

the people of Ontario elected us with a strong mandate to make.

This is about Ontario’s future. It is about the future of our workers and the future of our families. I hope you join in collaborating and making sure that we have the best prosperity in this province.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Please be seated.

Questions and comments?

1700

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You can rest assured I will not be collaborating with you on this bill.

I want to talk to the issue of the apprenticeship ratios. First of all, let me tell you a little story. Some people from the government side may not know this, but I’m an electrician by trade. I apprenticed in the mining sector, became an electrician and held a licence until—I finally let it go once I got elected here because what was the point of holding on to it at that point?

I’m just waiting for the minister to sit down. Okay, there we go.

The issue is this: I apprenticed in an area where there were no ratios. The mining sector was not affected by ratios. If the mine wanted to have one electrician to 20 apprentices, you were allowed. There are other sectors that did the same thing.

Here’s what would happen. I was hired in the early 1970s, or 1975 or 1976—whatever it was. When I got hired as an apprentice, they hired seven apprentices, within the same period of time, to one journeyman. We worked underground. We did work servicing batteries, charging stations, putting up trolley lines and different things. Here’s the trick: The company, because we had a weak collective agreement, determined skills and ability. If there was not enough work, they were able to let you go, like any employer can. But here’s what they would do. They would have you work for about a year and a half to two years. When you moved from code 3 to code 2—which was the code that you got to once you went to school, in your first term of basics—they would lay you off. Out of the seven people who were hired with me, they all got laid off, including myself.

What they would do is wait a year, because we had a one-year recall right in our collective agreement—I’m seeing my good friend Mr. Bailey nod his head, because he experienced the same thing—and then they would come back and hire another seven apprentices the year after. It didn’t do anything to train people to be apprentices. It allowed the employer to hire people to work in the electrical department on the cheap. That’s all it did.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: Happy Halloween, Mr. Speaker.

This government believes in the dignity of work. The opposition says that we just want to help businesses, but they omit one word. We want to help businesses hire. I can’t wait to vote for Bill 47, and I’m proud to be a member of this government that will be passing Bill 47.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: You still had another minute and 30 seconds to talk. If that's the best you can do, I don't know.

I'd like to talk about the change this bill will make to ratios in the province. Going down to a straight 1 to 1 will significantly hurt the industry and will limit the opportunity for apprentices. Sure, contractors will hire more apprentices on job sites. What happens when they finish their apprenticeships and become journeymen? That's what the member was talking about. When you are an apprentice, you are still learning the trade. There must be an appropriate amount of skilled professionals who ensure that you learn the basics of your trade and you work safely on the site.

This is all about being cheaper for businesses. We all know why the government is changing ratios. We know that businesses have wanted this for a long time. They might want you to think it's to increase the amount of apprenticeship opportunities for youth in trades. I can guarantee it's not. It's about making more money—period. It's about filling up our job sites with lower-paid apprentices so the business can make a little extra money, and all the while safety standards and the quality of the trade are thrown out the window.

This will diminish the value of skilled trades in our province, but frankly, I don't think the Conservative government cares. They care about helping their millionaire friends get rich off of the backs of skilled trades workers in our province. And I'm going to talk about it, because I talk—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Listen. Why don't you guys listen for a change instead of hollering?

I talk to journeymen. I've represented skilled trades for my entire life, unlike you, member from Grimsby. You've never worked in skilled trades. You have never represented them.

Let me tell you what's going to happen. Once you do this—the journeyman, by the way, is going to get laid off. He's going to go work in the underworld economy. The apprentice, when he finishes five or six years, depending on what trade it's at, is then going to finish his apprenticeship but will never become a journeyman because they've hired behind him nothing more than apprentices—two and three and four—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I just would like to remind all speakers in the House to come through the Speaker, please. That alleviates a lot of the cross-dialogue.

We will now continue with further questions and comments.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, let's just say, on behalf of the government, I think it's clear to say that we don't share this dark, dystopian view of job creators, of those who are trying to build small businesses up, who are trying to hire more employees and create opportunity in an area of skilled trades, where there is a significant shortfall and

a significant skills gap that we are doing our best to address.

I know that the members on the other side have this perspective of doom and gloom. They don't recognize the opportunities. A lot of my friends are in the skilled trades. I have worked in the skilled trades, and I look forward to correcting the member's record on that.

But I know this is an important issue, one that we're going to continue to work on.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for a final comment.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the members from Timmins, York Centre, Niagara Falls and Niagara West. Thank you to everyone.

This bill is about, just as its name has stated, making Ontario open for business. That means open for everyone, including workers across all trades. We believe that if you are prepared to do the work, then you deserve a shot at the job.

We've heard from employers who told us about the regulatory burden, who told us how difficult it was to find an apprentice and how they were being driven out of this province, potentially packing up and leaving. We want to make it easier and faster for companies to do business, to invest in business and make Ontario a prosperous province again.

We've begun to do that work that will support jobs and the trades. We're listening for feedback, and we will adjust if necessary. I want to reassure people that we have the concerns of the apprentices, the employers, the workers and the businesses in mind when we are creating our policies here.

One in five jobs in the next five years will be trades-related. We recognize how important it is that we do this well. I look forward to collaborating and making sure that we get Ontario back on track and open for business again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to discuss Bill 47, this so-called Making Ontario Open for Business Act. I want to thank all of the members present today who have participated in the debate about this very important and, frankly, potentially damaging legislation. I appreciate everybody's comments.

I thought I would start actually by just reflecting on something that the minister said and that has come up a few times here in the debate this afternoon, which is that somehow to be concerned about the role that business might play, without regulations and enforcement for business to do the right thing—that somehow that is anti-business.

But let me tell you something: Change has never come easily for workers. I want to remind the members opposite that every single thing that workers have gained for centuries was done through blood, sweat and tears, and organizing, and mobilizing, and striking sometimes. People died for these rights, and we all know that. Even the things that we take for granted every single day in this province, the

weekend, maternity and parental leave—these are all things that, frankly, workers organized around and unions advocated for.

So don't tell us that this isn't something—that businesses are just going to wake up one day and say, "Yes, this is the right thing to do. We're just going to give all those workers extra sick days, paid sick days." I wish it were true, but it has never worked before and I don't believe it will work now.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that workers have fought long and hard for working conditions in our province and for an overall better quality of life. I want to remind the members opposite as well that it was years and years of advocacy, that workers advocated in Ontario and won legislation that provided safer working conditions, paid sick days and higher wages. Today, it gives me very great pride to be here to defend those gains, and I have to say it is absolutely disheartening that this government is attempting to take away those hard-fought-for, hard-earned rights.

1710

I can't pretend that the former Liberal government made these changes out of the goodness of their hearts either. In fact, as I recall, they allowed wages to stay flat until it became a political problem. It took massive amounts of pressure to get them to do the right thing. New Democrats, joined by labour unions, by faith-based groups, by health care professionals and by ordinary people who simply believed in fairness—all came together to advocate for those changes.

When the changes were finally made, they weren't without their problems; we all know that. The minimum wage increase didn't apply to all workers, for one thing, and if you worked in the service industry or if you were a student, you could still be paid less. That's just one example. That there were flaws and room for improvements shouldn't take away, though, from the fact that these changes mean that today workers enjoy better pay and greater protections. The government's attempt to turn back the clock on those gains will do nothing but punish working people in this province and cause more uncertainty for employers.

Bill 47 is going to return a lower hourly wage for part-time workers and temporary workers who are doing the exact same work as a full-time employee, rewarding the boss for hiring temporary, part-time staff instead of creating permanent jobs. It's like writing a blank cheque for temp agencies.

The bill also repeals equal pay provisions and cuts the number of personal leave days, all of which are crucial to workers in this province; not to mention that it takes nearly \$2,000 a year out of the pockets of the lowest-paid workers by cancelling the \$15 minimum wage that people were counting on—and they were counting on it. For a government that constantly claims to be out to save people money, I am very interested to hear how the members on the other side of the aisle will explain to their minimum wage-earning constituents that they simply don't deserve that \$2,000 a year.

I also want to remind the government that Ontario's minimum wage was frozen for 12 out of the 20 years between 1995 and 2015. I know the member from Niagara Falls made this point very eloquently earlier. I just want to point out that adjusted for inflation, a \$15-an-hour minimum wage is barely \$1 more than the minimum wage was in 1977. Just let that sink in for a little while. By rolling back the minimum wage and freezing it again until 2020, when it is set to, of course, rise with inflation, minimum wage earners won't see a real increase for at least another four or five years.

I just want to mention that labour law firm Goldblatt Partners projects that even when factoring in the upper end of inflation of 1.6% in recent years, the general minimum wage is not projected to reach \$15 an hour until 2025, seven years from now. Just think about that for a moment. That's a quarter of the way to the 21st century, and they'll still only be making \$15 an hour.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when so many Ontarians are falling behind when it comes to the basics, like paying rent or feeding their family, a fair minimum wage is going to be the thing that makes that difference. It may be hard for the members opposite to realize it, but I'll tell you, so many of my constituents in Davenport are living paycheque to paycheque, and minimum wage earners can't afford rent.

I want to reflect for a moment. Every once in a while, I go to a United Church in Toronto; a friend of mine is a congregant there. On Saturday evenings every month, they provide a community dinner for people from all walks of life, anybody who needs it. They always do it at the end of the month, and some of that is because of the people who are on ODSP. I would tell you, it is remarkable going in there. I often bus tables that evening, and it's interesting to talk to people, because a lot of them are actually minimum wage earners. They're not not working; they're making just a pittance. And do you know what they do? At the end of the month, they go into that hall—

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I see the member opposite nodding; you know what I mean—and they bring all these containers with them. The first time I saw it, I was kind of shocked, I've got to admit. They bring all these food containers in, and we just keep piling the plates up, and they keep scraping the food into the containers because they're going to need that food for the next little while because they don't have enough money to live on in that month, because of the rent they have to pay, because of the cost of transit and all the other issues. A lot of those people are also single parents. It's very disheartening.

But it's not just minimum wage workers themselves who recognize the benefits of paying people a decent wage. Small business owners across the province have stepped up to say that they support fair wages. They recognize that when workers are paid fairly, they're more productive, they take less time off and they stay with that business longer, which is so valuable. For others, though, it's just the right thing to do.

I want to share with you some letters I've received on this issue from folks in my community. Alanna, a small business owner in my riding of Davenport, wrote me on this bill, and I want to share her words with you now. She says:

"Dear Ms. Stiles,

"My name is Alanna, and I live in your riding (Davenport), and I wanted to be in touch with you about the recent news about the freezing of minimum wage at \$14.

"My case is a bit of an unusual one, as I'm the sole proprietor of my own business ... meaning that an increase in minimum wage will do little to affect me personally. I'm writing to you not because I have something to gain, but because I honestly believe it's the right thing to do.

"The employment legislation that was meant to come into play in January was vastly important for Ontarians, and not only those living in low-income households who could desperately use a boost. It also meant paid sick days, job-protected emergency leave, equal pay rules, and important scheduling rules—all of which, to be frank, seem like such basic human demands that it's all the more outrageous that we even have to advocate for them in the first place.

"Particularly in precarious economic times, it's the responsibility of the government to ensure that its most vulnerable citizens are looked after, so I ask that you insist on protecting and extending our rights in the workforce, particularly when it comes to holding the government to task for the \$15 wage increase that had been promised by" the previous government.

"It might be a new party in charge, but those who need protecting are still the same.

"Sincerely,
"Alanna."

That's just one of countless messages. I'm sure that all of my colleagues have also received emails, and I know the members opposite have received a deluge of emails from people who are concerned about this issue. I've received many. These people want us to not only keep these recently won gains for workers but to continue to advance those rights.

Sophie, another constituent of mine, wrote:

"Dear Ms. Stiles,

"I am writing to let you know that I do not believe there is anything more important right now than raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour and fighting for the labour improvements that we have all been waiting for for decades."

Brenda copied me on her message to the Premier:

"Dear Premier Ford,

"I hope that your government is not considering cancelling the \$15 minimum wage.

"As an older Ontarian, I see my grandchildren struggling. For their dignity, they need to earn enough to take care of themselves."

I just want to mention here for a moment, as an aside, that my riding has some of the youngest workers in the country. Many, many, many of the workers in my community work many part-time jobs; they're precariously

employed; they have to balance numerous temporary jobs. It's a big issue in many communities and it's a growing issue: the precariousness of employment in many communities.

Anyway, I digress. I'm going to return to the letter now. Brenda says to Premier Ford:

"I know there are other provisions that became law that will help many people. Those of us who have a decent job forget that there are so many workers who don't get any sick time off—paid or unpaid."

You forget, when you've got a full-time job—

Mr. Wayne Gates: You take it for granted.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You take it for granted.

She says:

"This isn't right.

"And there are so many people working in temp or part-time jobs who need to be paid fairly and have work schedules they can rely on and plan for.

"Please do the right thing. Support the changes to the labour laws that came in last year."

"Sincerely,
"Brenda."

For people like Brenda, a grandmother—it sounds like she has had a good job most of her life—it's hard to imagine that the government would use its power not to help working people get ahead, but to actually strip them of their rights.

The government will answer again and again that this is about creating jobs. The Minister of Labour has repeatedly said that if Ontario's lowest-paid workers accept less—less in wages, less sick days, less scheduling certainty—then somehow good jobs will simply appear for them, out of thin air, at no cost—like the signs—and that they're not going to have to take minimum wage jobs, that it's not going to be an issue anymore.

1720

Well, I want to ask you—ask anybody, actually, out there who is looking for work, Mr. Speaker, or anybody who is trying to get by on the minimum wage here in Ontario—if you ask them about that, you will quickly realize what a false premise that is. I know the members opposite like to say, "I reject that premise." Well, I reject that premise. It's like unicorns and fairy dust: Where does it come from?

Right now, people in our communities are working, as I said, two and three jobs, sacrificing their health, often sacrificing their time with their families, as we all know, and their own leisure in order to scrape up enough to get by. In a province that is as rich as ours—because it is; we are so very fortunate—no one who works full-time should have to struggle to make ends meet. No one who juggles several part-time jobs should have to struggle to make ends meet. Nobody who works as hard as so many people in this province do should see their wages, their meagre wages—minimum wage workers—cut. Speaker, it's just that simple.

I want to talk a little bit more about some of the things that have been said in the debate, because one of the things that really bothers me about this legislation is the putting

of the onus back on some of the lowest-paid and most marginalized workers to pursue issues at the board, like proving that they're employees and not independent contractors—removing that reverse-onus provision that so many fought so long and hard to achieve. It puts the responsibility, again, back on workers to prove to a court or a board or an employment standards officer that they're an employee.

These are things that people have worked so hard on, and pushed and pushed for. It did not come easily from the Liberal government, you'll recall. It did not come easily, and it came very recently—very, very late in their term. But those were things that were important achievements, and you're just rolling things back. It sounds familiar, right? Back to 1998. Back beyond that, let's just face it; back way beyond that.

Listen, I just also wanted to mention that I worked very proudly for many years at ACTRA, which is the union of performers working in recorded media, for those of you who may not know. You may be familiar, Mr. Speaker. People often think that this industry is kind of glamorous and high-paying. I was thinking about it today because we were joined, of course, here in the Legislature by the folks from FilmOntario, a major employer in our province; a major economic generator, the film and television industry, as some of the members opposite also mentioned today.

But the truth is that many workers in that industry are self-employed—in fact, almost all are self-employed, independent contractors—and the very nature of their work is precarious. In fact, in order to continue to work in that industry, to some extent, it has to be, because you have to be free, you have to be available, and jobs are not often very long-lasting. When the economy is doing well, when everything is right in the world in that industry—and it's booming; it's doing quite well right now—you can be very busy.

But there are a lot of times it's not like that. Even the most successful in that industry have peaks and they have valleys in their earnings, and years, often—many, many years—where earnings dip very, very low. As we probably all know, many of those workers work in the service industry to make ends meet. They patch together other jobs. Indeed, they have to approach their career very carefully. That was something I learned in working with so many professional performers: actually treating your work as a business, you as your own business and having to manage that over many years, and to save and to invest. They have to approach it very carefully.

Andrew Cash, who many of you will remember as the former federal MP from my riding of Davenport—a very successful performer, songwriter, singer for many years himself—talks about them as the urban workers in our city because there is such a high number of precariously employed people. He talks about them a lot. He actually created an organization called the Urban Worker Project because he's talking about the people who work multiple contracts, who are precariously employed, who are very highly skilled and need protections, and those protections,

again—so we're talking about very low-income, very marginalized people, but we're also talking about a big segment of the workforce that has fought for years for protections, that finally saw some of those protections, and unfortunately this government is going to overturn them. Andrew Cash fought for many years in Parliament for better legislation for interns, for better legislation to protect those precarious workers.

When you have a union like ACTRA, what they do, which is very, very unique actually, is organize independent contractors—a bit like the construction industry, actually—and provide protections and provide benefits, which are impossible to come by if you're a performer or you're working in the industry unless you're part of the union. But you can access those benefits. They're so important. I cannot tell you how many times people came to me and said, "I don't know what I would do without that."

I feel like we're missing something here. We're missing an opportunity, and I guess what I wanted to say finally is: Wouldn't it be nice today if we were talking about improving life for working people instead of taking away some of the most basic protections and rights?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We are.

Ms. Marit Stiles: No. No, you're not. Wouldn't it be nice if we could be talking about bringing in universal dental care? Wouldn't it be nice if we could be going further than the status quo, like introducing five paid days for every Ontario worker, plus five unpaid? The repeal of even those two days is an absolute insult. It is completely unnecessary. Nobody is demanding that. Nobody's business was going under over that. I absolutely disagree.

We could be moving forward on parental bereavement leave. We could be moving forward to ensure that we protect temporary agency workers, not hand the temporary agencies a blank cheque on the backs of those workers. We could even be moving beyond that. We could be spending our time talking about building a truly universal child care program in this province that would help so many workers. Instead, this government wants to move us backward.

As the education critic for the opposition, I see a theme here. It is just all about moving back. We fought the previous government for years on a lot of these issues. We pushed and pushed and they finally moved forward, and now you're going to take it all away.

That's right, Sam. Yes, that's right. You think it's really funny, do you? Well, you know what?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You can talk to the minimum wage earners—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. David Piccini: I think the real theme here is open for business. We're taking concrete actions. The minister announced a number of changes that I've only heard in my riding from the trades community that are going to take us out from the past and into the future. She mentioned that not a single other province has the sort of regulatory burdens

that we see, the redundancy—the College of Trades that’s stifling growth in this industry. We’ve got a \$3.5-billion skilled trades gap. We’re going to address that. We’re putting students back in the classroom at York University. We’re cutting red tape—over 380,000 regulatory burdens—and that’s going to create a climate for businesses to thrive.

We talk about workers. It’s going to be very tough to have workers if you don’t have businesses to hire them. You’ve got to create the conditions for economic opportunity. That’s what we’re doing with measures in this act. We’re going to ensure businesses thrive so that we don’t hamper them with a \$15 minimum wage economy where everybody shares in equal misery that the NDP want us to share, and that is socialism. We’re going to lift them up out of that, ensure well-paying jobs, get people back to work and create a thriving business climate in this province.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

Thank you very much for liking my ears, the government. I wish you would like Ontarians and stick to a \$15 minimum wage.

Doug Ford is ripping off, our Premier is ripping off, the lowest-paid workers—

Hon. John Yakabuski: Oh, oh, oh, Speaker. Speaker.

Interjections.

1730

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Settle down.

I would just ask the member—again, we refer to members in the Legislature by their title or by their riding. Just a friendly reminder. I know you caught yourself, so thank you for that. All right.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Our Premier of the Conservative government is ripping off the lowest-paid workers by \$2,000 a year by cancelling the \$15 minimum wage that people are counting on. Let me be clear on this: They are not asking for something that is outside of their right. They’re asking for a livable wage. They are asking so that they can pay for their housing, they can pay for their education, so that they don’t have to choose between lights and dinner. This is why folks are demanding the minimum wage.

We have spoken about precarious workers. This is a fact: When you have no contract, when you are not unionized—like the many folks I know who work in the arts, who work in the film and TV industry—it is a matter of life and death; it’s a matter of employment or no employment; it is a matter of sickness or health if they are not able to stay home when they are sick. You cannot work 14 hours on set if you’re sick with the flu.

You’ve got to trust Ontarians, Conservative government—trust Ontarians. We know when we’re sick.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: We heard that it would be nice if we were talking about improving life for workers. That, in fact, is what we are talking about. We also talked to many workers in our ridings during the election, and they want

jobs. They’re really upset that, unfortunately, after the legislation was introduced, a lot of businesses had to cut back and they lost their jobs. They want an opportunity to work. That’s what we’re providing them, with this legislation.

With your stories about—you mentioned Brenda. I could mention some stories as well. If I had 20 minutes to speak, I would tell you about Kevin, a young man who tried to apprentice in the plumbing industry and was stymied because he couldn’t get a job. I could tell you about Joe Simon, who wants to hire more apprentices and can’t—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would remind members that I’m finding it very difficult to listen to the member.

I will refer back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, and I would ask that we listen attentively.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I’ll just conclude by saying that this government is using its power to help working people get ahead. Obviously, we have a different view of how that should be done. But it has been done the way you suggested many times, and it turned out that socialism is a bad idea.

I would like to point out that if you look at the legislation, it says that an employer “may require” a note, not that they must require a note, for any of those issues. You’ve demonized employers by suggesting that they all would.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now return to the—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): She’s had two? One more? My fault; forgive me. Sorry.

I now recognize the member from—

Interjection: Brampton Centre.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Brampton Centre.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much for remembering the riding this time.

Interjection: Just helping out.

Ms. Sara Singh: You were. Thank you.

It’s a pleasure to rise here. I’ve been listening very intently to the debate on Bill 47. We’ve heard a lot from the government side, and we’ve heard a lot from our members as well, with respect to finding a balance that will meet the needs of businesses but also protect workers.

I’ve spoken with workers across this province who have indicated to us that, at a minimum wage, they require two to three jobs in order to be able to pay their mortgage and take care of their children.

When I went back into the gallery, I spoke with one of our staff here at the Legislative Assembly, who indicated to me that she actually has to work on the weekend in addition to the job that she has here at the Legislative Assembly in order to make sure her children have the opportunities that they deserve. That is not fair. It is not okay that workers need to make ends meet by putting jobs together. She also told me the story of how, because she’s

working the amount of hours that she is in order to make ends meet, she does not have the time to spend with her children. This is the reality for workers in this province.

Businesses across the board have indicated to us that they want to do the right thing. They want to pay workers fairly and they want to ensure that they have benefits when they need them. Unfortunately, many small businesses across this province cannot afford those benefit packages for their employees. It's easy for members of the government side to say, "They should get their benefits from their employer." There are small business owners who do not have benefit packages for themselves. Where do you want them to get the money to provide those packages to their employees?

It's very unfortunate that instead of working with businesses to find solutions that would put employees ahead of profits, this government is moving us backward, cutting the minimum wage for those hard-working workers across this province and not finding incentives we can give those business owners to make sure that they are compliant and taking care of workers very fairly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Now I return to the member from Davenport for final comment.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I wanted to, first of all, thank all the members for their comments and their responses. I certainly agree that I believe we all do want the best for Ontarians. I really, truly do.

Applause.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, we do. We do have different perspectives on how to get there, but I really do feel that it is important to think back to history. The businesses that I know, the small businesses in particular in my community—and there are some large employers in my riding as well—I have not heard from one person a complaint, actually; not one. I find it mystifying that we could be hearing such completely opposite things. I think if you talk to workers, particularly minimum wage workers, with respect, they're not asking you to roll back, they're not asking you to freeze their wages; they're not asking you to do that—no. I absolutely disagree.

I also want to quote my colleague the member for Sudbury, because when he spoke yesterday, he said something I thought was really important. He said, "I don't think

Ontario really has a jobs problem. I don't think you can go very far before you meet somebody that has two or three jobs and is still struggling to make ends meet. What we need to focus on in this government—and I mean all of us in here—is creating careers. I think that's what you" need to "talk about when you say strengthening business, so we can build careers." Right?

This government wants to talk a lot about how the increase in the minimum wage was too fast and too soon. But I just want to remind the members opposite that this was a giant leap because the Conservatives, the last time they were in power, froze the minimum wage for eight years—froze the minimum wage for eight years—at a time when the cost of living was soaring.

Mr. Speaker, I feel like the fair thing to do and the right thing to do is to back off of this decision and withdraw this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and one half hours of debate on this motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless, in this case, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities specifies otherwise.

Minister?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: No further debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities moves adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that we—I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On division.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Carried on division.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1739.

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Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Wayne Gates
Stan Cho, Jill Dunlop
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Stephen Lecce, Gila Martow
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Lindsey Park, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Stephen Crawford
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Doug Downey
Sol Mamakwa, David Piccini
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Lorne Coe
Chris Glover, Christine Hogarth
Logan Kanapathi, Daryl Kramp
Natalia Kusendova, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Dave Smith
Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Roman Baber, Rudy Cuzzetto
Amy Fee, Vincent Ke
Andrea Khanjin, Marie-France Lalonde
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Jeremy Roberts, Marit Stiles
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

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Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
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Michael Coteau, Mike Harris
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Catherine Fife, Goldie Ghamari
Jim McDonnell, Norman Miller
Suze Morrison, Michael Parsa
Peggy Sattler, Kinga Surma
Daisy Wai
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