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Lundi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 1 April 2019

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1^{er} avril 2019

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I want to invite everyone to join with me in the singing of Canada's national anthem. Today in the Speaker's gallery we have the A.Y. Jackson Secondary School senior chamber choir from the riding of Don Valley North to help us.

Singing of O Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The members may take their seats.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I want to acknowledge once again that we are met on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation as well as many other Indigenous peoples.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It gives me great pleasure to introduce the family of our page Benjamin Wark, who is from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. He's here with his mother, Jennifer Vallbacka; his father, Michael Wark; his sister, Sophie Wark; and his grandfather David Vallbacka. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to acknowledge, in the east members' gallery today, Judith Morris, president of Lambton College, one of the foremost renowned colleges in Ontario, with us today.

M. Guy Bourgoin: Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à Diane Quintas, directrice générale du Réseau du mieux-être francophone du Nord de l'Ontario; Estelle Duchon, directrice générale, Entité 4; et Jacinthe Desaulniers, directrice générale, Réseau des services de santé en français de l'Est de l'Ontario. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à la délégation de La Cité collégiale: la présidente, Lise Bourgeois; le président du conseil d'administration, Sylvain Chalut; et aussi à M. Daniel Giroux du Collège Boréal.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: This morning I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park Kathleen Lynch, president and CEO, and Kristen Oliver, board chair, of Confederation College in Thunder Bay.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to introduce members and volunteers of Diabetes Canada who are here today at the Legislature to meet with members on their annual lobby day: Stephanie Senteris, Glen Heatherington, Karen Kemp,

Brian Halladay, Megan Patton, Russell Williams and Farah Esmail.

I encourage all members to attend the reception in the legislative dining room this evening.

Hon. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome a few special guests from Bay of Quinte this morning: the president of Loyalist College, Dr. Ann Marie Vaughan; her board chair, Bob Forder; and from Our TMH, Mike Cowan, Sharon Urquhart, Wendy Warner, John Smylie and Dr. David Weinstein. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park Linda Franklin, my good friend and the president and CEO of Colleges Ontario, and all the other members of Colleges Ontario who are here with us today.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: I would like to welcome to the gallery today all the presidents and board chairs of colleges across Ontario and their representatives from Colleges Ontario.

I would also like to encourage all my colleagues to attend the college day culinary showcase reception this evening, where students from several colleges will be displaying the skills and knowledge they have gained through Ontario's publicly assisted colleges.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First, I'd like to introduce our mayor from the city of Timmins, George Pirie, who is here with us today. As well, I would like to introduce Fred Lalonde, the president of Northern College, who's with him, and of course Daniel Giroux, who is here from Collège Boréal.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: As a past employee of Georgian College, I'm very honoured to have my former boss visiting with us here today—MaryLynn West-Moynes, the president and CEO of Georgian College—as well as Don Gordon, the board chair of Georgian College. Thank you for being here today.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It being college day here at Queen's Park, I'm very pleased to welcome Don Lovisa, the president of Durham College, and Paul Macklin, board chair. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jane McKenna: First of all, I want to thank the people from Georgian College. My son got a heck of an education there, so thank you for that.

I also want to introduce the president of Colleges Ontario, Linda Franklin, who is here today.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I want to take this opportunity to thank the choir of A.Y. Jackson Secondary School for singing O Canada at Queen's Park. This school is located in my riding of Don Valley North. I met with the choir and their teacher Miss Lee in the morning. Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your visit.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to welcome two people from St. Clair College here this morning: Patricia France, the president, and Dan Allen, the chair of the board and former city councillor in Windsor—and from Mohawk College, Ron McKerlie, the president, and Katrina McFadden, the board chair. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I would just like to welcome, from my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean, Cheryl Jensen, the president of Algonquin College, who has recently announced her retirement. She has been a wonderful leader for our college in Ottawa West–Nepean and has shown leadership during its growth period.

Mr. Chris Glover: On behalf of the NDP, I'd like to welcome Colleges Ontario. It was a wonderful reception this morning, where we got to see some of the innovative work that the students are doing in partnership with businesses that are making Ontario one of the innovation hubs in the world. Thank you very much for being here today, and I encourage everyone to attend the reception—

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

The Minister of Labour.

1040

Hon. Laurie Scott: I would like to introduce Maureen Adamson, president of Fleming College, who is with us today, and Katherine MacIver, a director at Trillium Lakeshore District School Board, and thank them for the meeting we had this morning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have volunteers from Diabetes Canada in the House today: Bahar Ashtarieh, Aleks Ivovic, Rachel Moon Kelly, Amanda Thambirajah, Gabriella Simo, Grace Leeder and Lindsey Cosh.

I also want to welcome Daniel Giroux, president of Collège Boréal, and Bill Best, president of Cambrian College.

Hon. Bill Walker: I would also like to introduce the CEO, MaryLynn West-Moynes, and president, Don Gordon, of Georgian College—especially the great campus of Owen Sound in the riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Jamie West: As a proud graduate of Cambrian College, I want to thank Dr. Peter Best for attending. Welcome to the Legislature, and for bringing his research team.

As well, my son is a double graduate from Collège Boréal. He graduated from “garderie” when he was an infant and he graduated from their electrical instrumentation program just recently, so I want to welcome Daniel Giroux from Collège Boréal.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I would like to welcome George Burton, the president and CEO of Canadore College in North Bay, with a campus in Parry Sound.

Mr. Jeff Burch: On behalf of all four Niagara members, I would like to welcome Dan Patterson, the president of Niagara College.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I would like to welcome, from Durham College, president Don Lovisa and board chair Paul Macklin. I look forward to meeting with them later today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am proud to wear my Fanshawe alumni pin today and to welcome Bruce Babcock, chair of

the Fanshawe College board, as well as Peter Devlin, president of Fanshawe College. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I'm delighted to welcome Ms. Ann Buller, the CEO, and Scott Allison, the chair of Centennial College. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to welcome Chris Whitaker, the president of Humber College, where I graduated from. Welcome, Chris.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Lieutenant-General Peter Devlin, who is also the president of Fanshawe College. Welcome.

WEARING OF HOCKEY JERSEY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has a point of order.

Hon. Bill Walker: It's with a bit of regret that I actually stand today and acknowledge that my great Owen Sound Attack was defeated by the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds. I'm very reticent, but a deal is a deal. We try to promote inter-riding rivalries and competition, and I did make a promise that if they lost, I would wear the Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds' jersey, sporting Mr. Romano's name on the back. Promise made, promise kept. So I ask for a UC to sport this jersey, sadly, for all of question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The minister is seeking unanimous consent of the House to show his support for the Soo Greyhounds. Agreed? Agreed.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Niagara Falls, I think, had an introduction.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say, with the OHL, I've got a bet with my colleague from Sudbury, the exact same bet. I can happily say that both Sudbury and Niagara have moved on to the second round. Sorry about your team, Bill.

I would also like to take the opportunity to say good morning to my good friend Mr. Dan Patterson from Niagara College. Welcome to Queen's Park, my friend.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would love to correct my record. I think I inadvertently said Fred Lalonde, president of Northern College, when we all know it's Fred Gibbons.

INSCRIPTIONS IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Today, before we begin question period, I want to draw members' attention to some of the Latin expressions which were written long ago and were inscribed in this chamber.

Craftsmen toiled so as to inspire members who followed, including all of us so privileged to serve in this 42nd provincial Parliament, to reach higher.

At the back of the chamber, we see:

—Fortiter et recte, which, translated to English, means, “Boldly and rightly;”

—Animo non astutia: “By courage, not by craft;”

—Audi alteram partem: “Hear the other side;”

—Spectemur agendo: “Let us be viewed by our actions.”

All of this, carefully inscribed, to give us pause: the wisdom of the ages, passed down to us in our time, and for all time. Let us always remember.

I want to thank the member for Oshawa, who does such a great job as one of our presiding officers, for suggesting I point this out before question period this morning.

It is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Before I give my first question, I would just like to take note that it is Sikh Heritage Month in the month of April, and to wish everybody from the very diverse Sikh community across our province a happy Sikh Heritage Month.

My question, Speaker, is for the Acting Premier. Late Friday, the Ford government announced that they’re cutting funding for six overdose prevention sites. Public health experts said that the 21 sites that the government was originally allowing was grossly inadequate, and now we’re down to 15. The government has acknowledged that these sites save lives.

In the midst of an opioid crisis that’s gripping our province, how can this government justify this cut?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: To the community safety and correctional services minister.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It’s interesting how the NDP choose to spin the announcements. On Friday, we actually announced 15 safe injection sites. They are located across Ontario, as they should be: Toronto, Ottawa, London, Hamilton, Guelph, Niagara region, Kingston and Thunder Bay.

It’s important that we get this right, because this is only one component to making sure that our streets are safe and our people are safe. These sites are part of a larger process and a larger ability for our government to make sure that when people have addictions, when people need help, they have a government that’s willing to step up and make sure that those addiction services and treatments are available to them.

I’m proud of the fact that we’ve announced those 15 sites. As the member—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It’s nothing more than basic math: 21 minus 15 equals six sites closed by this government. That’s what that means.

More than 1,200 people died of opioid-related overdoses in 2017. This is a public health disaster. If you have

a loved one struggling with addiction, you know that these sites can be the difference between life and death, literally. The government knows this. The Minister of Health certainly knows it.

Will the Acting Premier tell the Premier today that this decision needs to be reversed and he needs to fund the overdose prevention sites required across the province to save lives?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, through you: The NDP continue to throw discontent. The first tranche of 15 were announced on Friday. We are actively working with communities that need the services to make sure that the entire wraparound process is there.

This is not just about injection sites; this is about making sure that people who need the services for treatment, who have access to treatment—that it will be there when we need it. The member opposite—the NDP, seem to believe that the only pathway is consumption treatment services. Our government believes that when people need help, when people are reaching out for help, we want to wrap around those services. We want to make sure that the treatment is there, that options are available, so that the drug use does not continue and our streets become safer. Because ultimately, at the end of the day, we need to protect our streets and we need to protect our people, to make sure they get the treatment they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When someone dies of an overdose, they don’t have any options left. They no longer have life left.

1050

The opioid crisis is killing people on a daily basis in our province. At a time when the government should be taking the lead and trying to save lives, instead they’re cutting support to people and families who desperately need it. They’re abandoning communities from Ottawa to Thunder Bay, and leaving them to deal with a public health crisis all on their own.

How many more people have to die before the government reverses this decision and takes this crisis seriously, and funds the needed overdose prevention sites from one end of the province to the other?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I think it’s important that we turn down the rhetoric a bit. Again, I will let the people of Ontario know that there are currently, and will continue to be, six consumption treatment services sites in the city of Toronto. In the city of Ottawa, there continues to be service, and in London, in Hamilton, in Guelph, in Niagara, in Kingston, in Thunder Bay. Applications continue to come in; applications continue to be reviewed.

But let me be clear: This is not just about consumption sites. We have to also focus on treatment, to make sure that people have the treatment they need to get out of a life of drugs, to get on a pathway to be safe and our communities to be safe.

I'm proud of the work that our Minister of Health has been doing on this very critically important file. There is no one more qualified in the province of Ontario to make sure we get it right. I'm proud to stand behind Christine Elliott as our Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. But I have to say, I'm devastated by that response. I think it's this government pulling the wool over their own eyes and not acknowledging the crisis that is upon us that has been ongoing for years now.

To the Acting Premier: Last week, 1,500 women and men in Windsor learned that they would be losing their jobs at the Chrysler assembly plant. Can the Acting Premier explain how the Ford government is responding to yet another devastating announcement of job loss in Ontario's auto sector?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: To the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Todd Smith: There was good news and bad news last week on the auto front. There was a great announcement in Cambridge with Toyota, where they announced a new line of RAV4s, but there was devastating news at the same time at FCA in Chrysler.

It has been 15 long years of Liberal mismanagement here in Ontario that has put those jobs in jeopardy and put jobs in Oshawa in jeopardy as well.

I can tell you that we've been in constant communication with FCA since we became the government of Ontario, working with them to ensure that Ontario became a more friendly environment for them to do business in.

I can tell you that the introduction today of the federal government's carbon tax does nothing to encourage future expansion in Ontario when it comes to our auto sector, or any manufacturing jobs, as a matter of fact.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families hit hard by job loss want to know that their government will fight for their jobs and the next generation of auto jobs here in Ontario, but what they've seen from the Ford government hasn't inspired a lot of confidence.

When GM announced that they'd be abandoning production after nearly a century in Oshawa, the Premier shrugged and said, "They're gone; they're done ... there's nothing we can do."

Over 4,000 auto sector layoffs have been announced since this Premier took office, and hundreds more spin-off jobs are going to follow.

Does the Acting Premier think their plan is actually working?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Government and Consumer Relations has to come to order.

The minister to reply.

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that in constant conversations, not just with FCA or General Motors but with all of the automakers here in Ontario, they will tell us loud and clear that there is a change when it comes to the focus of the government of Ontario.

For 15 long years, the previous Liberal government was bringing in policies that were making it more difficult for them to be competitive in Ontario. Those same policies that were making them uncompetitive were supported by the NDP, the official opposition here today.

The federal government has come in today with a carbon tax, which is making it uncompetitive for automakers and all manufacturers in Ontario. The NDP wants to not just have the highest carbon tax in Canada or North America; they want to have the highest carbon tax on the globe. That is going to make Ontario an uncompetitive jurisdiction. We've been doing everything we can to make sure that Ontario is open for business and open for jobs, and that—

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, last week, the Premier said that the auto sector needs to react to the market. At a time when the auto sector is embracing new technology, clean energy and reducing emissions, the Ford government scrapped the rebates for cars, like the Chrysler Pacifica that was manufactured at that Windsor plant, and they've ignored industry experts who said that this would hurt sales. So now they are reaping what they sowed.

The Premier says that carmakers should follow the market trends. Why is he ignoring the market trends, Speaker?

Hon. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite: Maybe the NDP believes that the government should be paying for people's vehicles. We don't believe that the government should be paying for people's vehicles. We are here to create an environment where those automakers can be successful. We've been working with FCA, General Motors, Toyota, Honda and Ford to ensure that we're doing everything we can to make them competitive. But we're not going to buy people's vehicles for them, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to get rid of the job-killing, regressive cap-and-trade carbon tax that the Wynne government brought in. We are lowering electricity rates in Ontario, and that's why, last week, the Minister of Energy, sitting right behind me, committed to reviewing electricity rates specifically for the auto sector. That's why we got rid of Bill 148, that was driving businesses out of Ontario at a record pace. We're doing everything we can to make Ontario a competitive jurisdiction for building cars and trucks.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, my next question is for the Acting Premier. But I can tell you that what New Democrats believe in is saving good jobs and helping people to have a more affordable life and participate in a greener economy. That's what we believe in.

Here's what people are worried about with good auto jobs in our province. Other jurisdictions are fighting to

attract investment in next-generation vehicles and clean technology. The Ford government is fighting electric car makers in court and scrapping incentives to buy Ontario cars, like the Chrysler Pacifica that is built in Windsor. Other jurisdictions are fighting GM's decision to move production. The Premier says that the ship has sailed.

Why does the government think this is a plan that's working when 4,000 people are losing their jobs?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Hon. Todd Smith: The federal government is bringing in a carbon tax in Ontario today. In case you hadn't noticed, that's going to drive up the cost of everything we buy, including gasoline at the pumps. And the NDP don't think that's enough. They want to have the most expensive carbon tax on the planet. How do you think that is going to impact vehicle sales here in Ontario?

The member opposite asked specifically about alternative fuels. I can tell you that we're working with these automakers in our Driving Prosperity auto plan. It's the first phase of our auto plan, which makes investments into research and innovation, training for new jobs in the auto sector—which is exactly what those in the auto sector told us that they needed. They needed the retraining so they can update their employees, their hard-working men and women, to create the vehicle of the future.

That's how we're investing in our auto sector. The largest carbon tax on the planet—

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

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What the government has done, Speaker, is taken away people's options and choices because they've gotten rid of the rebate, and now they can't go to electric vehicles because they can't afford it. It's about affordability. That's what it's about.

People want a government that is ready to fight for good auto jobs today and for the next generation of Ontario's auto industry. Instead, they see a Premier whose message to auto workers is, "Your jobs are gone. The ship has sailed." For the 1,500 people who learned that they're losing their jobs last week, licence plates that say "Open for Business" sound like a pretty sick joke.

1100

Will the government admit that their jobs strategy isn't working, stop pretending that slapping a campaign slogan on a licence plate is a substitute for a plan, and start working on a strategy to fight for these jobs and the next generation of auto manufacturing for our province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I'm going to ask the government side to allow the opposition members to ask their questions without yelling across the floor at them, such that I can hear the questions. I'll start calling you out by name if need be. Again, if need be, we'll move to warnings.

Start the clock. Minister?

Hon. Todd Smith: Maybe the Leader of the Opposition hasn't seen the StatsCan numbers: 132,000 full-time jobs have been created in Ontario under our watch—132,000 jobs have been created, Mr. Speaker.

While the NDP was out there calling on people to boycott vehicles that were made by General Motors in Ontario, we were busy working with General Motors to ensure that they would continue to invest in Ontario, to invest in the vehicles of the future. That's what they're doing. Hundreds of jobs are coming to the innovation centre at General Motors in Markham. I know the folks who represent Markham on our side, in our government, are excited about that, because we are working with those automakers for future investment in Ontario.

The NDP can boycott vehicles. They can call for the highest carbon tax on the planet. That's not going to create investment in Ontario. We're open for business and creating jobs.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Today is the first day legal bricks-and-mortar cannabis stores are permitted to open their doors in Ontario. On this side of the House, we know that it must be a priority to protect our kids, keep our roads and communities safe and combat the illegal market, including illegal stores and online delivery services.

Could the minister please tell the Legislature what people should expect as we begin to see legal stores?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Whitby for the question. We know that one of the best ways to combat the illegal market is to ensure that people are able to access legal cannabis grown by producers licensed by Health Canada. Unfortunately, due to the national cannabis supply shortage created by the federal government, we ended up taking the responsible approach and introduced a temporary cap of 25 stores to ensure the private retail outlets will have enough supply to meet customer demand. We expect to see 10 of those 25 stores open today, with others opening in the days and weeks to come.

In the meantime, customers can purchase cannabis from our licensed stores or the Ontario cannabis website, ocs.ca, which they can identify by the Ontario-authorized retail seal that all stores on the OCS website display.

We're taking a responsible approach and remain committed to moving to an open allocation of licences once we have certainty surrounding the federally regulated supply of cannabis.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I would like to thank the minister for that information. I would also like to understand what the government is doing to shut down these illegal stores that we're still seeing in some communities. Speaker, we've all seen reports that suggest some or most of these illegal stores have ties to and are funding organized crime. I believe that they are a dangerous and serious threat to our communities.

My constituents in Whitby know that this government is committed to keeping our communities safe. Can the minister please tell us what Ontario is doing to close the doors of these illegal stores?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for the question from the member from Whitby. I know that this is something that is very near and dear to his heart because he wants to keep his community safe.

Since October 17 of last year, we have seen 190 illegal stores close. We know that illegal stores have connections with organized crime and are incredibly dangerous to our communities. That's why the OPP has been working proactively with our municipal police services to shut down these illegal pot shops.

We've already seen police lay over 260 charges under Ontario's Cannabis Control Act against people selling cannabis illegally. We've also seen over 30 charges laid against landlords for allowing their properties to be used for illegal stores. And we've had over 100 charges laid against people for purchasing cannabis from illegal sources.

If you want to purchase cannabis, you need to be certain that you are shopping at a licensed retailer—

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

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre par intérim.

Ontarians want to have their say on the government's new health bill, which opens the door to unprecedented levels of for-profit delivery of health care. One thousand, five hundred and ninety-four Ontarians applied for a spot to speak to the bill, but the government limited the number of presenters to just 30.

Ontario is a democracy. The government never put out any discussion papers on these changes. They never put out any public consultations on these changes.

Why is the government so afraid to let Ontarians have a say in the future of our health care system?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I understand that in politics, we are not always going to agree. But I know the member opposite well, I believe, and I know how committed she is to making sure that a health care system is patient-centred and is going to actually help that patient travel through the continuum of care, from assessment to treatment to palliative—all the way through.

As I've said previously, the Minister of Health and the two excellent parliamentary assistants who sit behind me have been actively engaged with talking to Ontario residents, talking to people who are on the front lines, providing these services, and trying to find the best pathway to make sure that we get to a patient-centred model.

At the end of the day, we may disagree on how we do it, but I think we all understand in this chamber that ultimately it must—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: My office has been receiving calls from Ontarians from across the province. They want to share their experiences. They want to share their ideas at the committee hearings for the government's bill.

Natalia from Mississauga lives with a chronic condition and frequently finds herself in the emergency room. She wants to have her say. She wants to share some solutions.

Katy from Toronto has been waiting for three months for home care since her husband's hip was replaced. She has been paying out of pocket. She wants to share her experience and her ideas.

Lina from Scarborough wants to ask who to complain to when her long-term-care home doesn't hire qualified PSWs.

Those are only three of the 1,564 people who asked to present on the government's health bill but will never have a chance to be heard. Why does this government not want to hear from Natalia, from Katy or from Lina?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, as you know so well, there is a component of the public consultation period that includes written submissions. I would encourage those individuals to come forward with their stories, because, frankly, they will reinforce why we need to do this very transformational work.

I'm going to give a very personal example. The Minister of Health recently visited the Headwaters Health Care Centre in Orangeville. She spoke to paramedics; she spoke to crisis intervention people; she spoke to police officers; she spoke to individuals who actually work on the front lines in our emergencies as paramedics. She talked about how the opportunity to coordinate that care, as I said, from assessment right through to palliative, is so critical, to make sure that the patient is always at the front and forefront of what we do.

The two parliamentary assistants and our very capable Deputy Premier and Minister of Health have been doing that work—

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

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Amy Fee: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Ontario has the best auto workers in the world. More than 100,000 men and women go to work each and every day in our auto sector in Ontario, building the cars and the parts that drive our economy and our communities. The minister, the Premier and members of our caucus joined some of those hard-working men and women in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler on Friday. They stood alongside Toyota executives, community members and our front-line auto workers to celebrate the launch of the new Toyota RAV4.

1110

Can the minister outline for the House the importance of the announcement for Ontario's auto sector?

Hon. Todd Smith: It was great to be there along with the member who asked the question, and her colleagues in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area, for this exciting

announcement that Toyota made on Friday. The Premier was there as well, of course, meeting with those great auto workers who do such a fantastic job—those great jobs that are putting food on the table, putting kids through college and university and just making life better.

It's exciting to see this kind of an announcement being made at Toyota with the launch of the RAV4 there. It was great to be out there to celebrate with them. It's a great facility. You know, Mr. Speaker, the RAV4 is the best-selling SUV in North America, and the Toyota plants in Cambridge and Woodstock have won 16 J.D. Power awards for vehicle quality.

Our government is glad to see that Toyota is committed to building the RAV4 right here in Ontario, and, Mr. Speaker, that's not the only good news that's coming from Toyota. Stay tuned. There's more good news coming from Toyota very soon here in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amy Fee: Thank you to the minister for his answer. Some 9,000 people work at the Toyota plants in Cambridge and Woodstock. This announcement was an opportunity for them to celebrate the hours and hours of work that they put in every week making some of the best cars in the world.

But we know that our auto sector in Ontario has been falling behind. The news from FCA Windsor last week is a reminder of just that.

I know that our government is committed to creating an environment where automakers want to invest and create jobs. Could the minister please inform this House of what we are doing to support our auto sector and make Ontario more competitive for auto investment?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member again for the question. While Friday was a great day for workers at Toyota in Cambridge, it was a heart-wrenching day for those at Fiat Chrysler in Windsor. Our message to the auto workers in Windsor is clear: We're always going to fight for your auto jobs and we're always going to fight for the auto sector.

A few weeks ago, back in February, the Premier and I announced the first phase of our auto plan, Driving Prosperity. The Minister of Energy just last week made a commitment to review industrial electricity rates, particularly for the auto sector. We're investing in worker training. We're investing in research and innovation. We're cutting through the mountains and mountains of red tape that are making Ontario an uncompetitive jurisdiction, thanks to the former Liberal government, supported by the NDP. We're not supporting the federal government's massive carbon tax imposed today on Ontarians, the one that the NDP want to see exploding to the highest carbon tax on the planet, Mr. Speaker. We won't stand for that. We're standing for jobs in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I say to the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South, the member for Scarborough–Guildwood and the member for Waterloo, you can't yell across the floor at the other side.

Restart the clock. Next question?

LICENCE PLATES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, with your indulgence, I just want to take a minute to thank all my colleagues from every side of the House for their messages of condolence and support over the week.

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I received a message from the Premier, a call from the Premier, and I really appreciate it. And the love and support from our leader and my entire caucus has meant the world to us.

Speaker, my dad fought for social justice, fairness and equality and I know he would want me to be here today, so, unfortunately for the Premier and the government, the big, tough guy is back in the House.

With that, Speaker, I know that today is April 1, so I half expect the Premier to pop up and let us all in on this elaborate prank that he's playing on us, because late last week, the news broke that the Ford government was planning to rebrand Ontario licence plates with one of their slogans from the campaign.

Can the Acting Premier tell us how much the taxpayers of Ontario will be paying for their mandatory PC Party vanity plates?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: To you, Taras, I just want to say, fathers never stop loving their sons, and sons never stop loving their fathers.

Speaker, to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Bill Walker: To the member for the question: Under the leadership of Premier Ford, Ontario has become a business-friendly province once again. We are open for business and we are open for jobs. It would be only fitting that our commercial plates, in one way or another, reflect this.

After 15 years of Liberal mismanagement running our province into the ground, supported by the NDP, it's time that we say to the world that we are open for business and we are open for jobs. If it were up to the NDP, they would increase the costs of doing business in Ontario. They support the job-killing, regressive carbon tax introduced by the federal Liberals that is raising costs for business, as well as for anyone who owns a car, heats their home or buys groceries.

The fact, Mr. Speaker, is that for 15 years under the Liberals, Ontario businesses dealt with costly, burdensome regulations and red tape that drove jobs out. We are doing the opposite. We are promoting that we're open for business and we're open for jobs, and we're proud of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The minister's response, sadly, proves that the joke is on the taxpayers of the province when we have to pay for vanity plates for the Premier's ego.

The Premier clearly spends a lot of time thinking about cars and vans. We all remember the detailed blueprints he provided for the reclining leather couch in his personal pleasure wagon, but forcing cars to sport a vanity plate with a PC Party slogan, at taxpayers' expense—that, you can't keep off the books.

Will the Acting Premier tell us what research the government has, proving that the main barrier to attracting business in Ontario is a lack of appropriate messaging on licence plates? And while he's at it, can he tell us how much this vanity project will cost the people of Ontario?

Hon. Bill Walker: To the member across: I can tell you it's a lot less than the Prime Minister of Canada wants to do for the people of Ontario.

This NDP opposition wants the highest carbon tax—not only in Ontario, not only in Canada. They want the highest tax in the world.

We're going the other way. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we have actually become a business-friendly province once again. Our government has actually lowered the costs through the freezing of driver fees to make life more affordable. We're going to fight this regressive carbon tax to keep the costs of goods down across the province, Mr. Speaker.

We are committed to putting more money back in people's pockets and putting the people back at the centre of everything we do. We're proud, under Premier Ford, to say that Ontario is open for business. We're open for jobs, and we're going to promote that at every opportunity we can, whether it be through licence plates or signs at the border or just every day in our actions in our communities. We're open for business. We're open for jobs.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Michael Gravelle: My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

The Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, or the NIER program, as it's called, has been crucial for major resource-based industries in reducing their energy costs and maintaining the sustainability of their operations. Whether it's the mining, forestry or steel sectors, the NIER program has substantially reduced energy costs, allowing these major northern employers to continue to operate while they bring energy-efficient plans to their operations. Our previous government, in fact, made this program permanent, recognizing that this assistance was vital to the successful long-term operation of these businesses.

My question to the minister is, will you continue to support our major northern industries through the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the member's question. Obviously, this subsidized program has been important to major industries, but it hasn't been enough. Frankly, major forestry and mining operations are complaining about two important things from that last government's legacy: the unpredictable and high costs, still, of energy to energize those forestry and resource operations; and, of course, the job-killing carbon tax, which we removed and now the federal Liberals have implemented.

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I can't help but think, Mr. Speaker, that what's on the minds today of people who operate resource projects,

forestry operations, mining operations and manufacturing across northern Ontario is this job-killing carbon tax. Presidents of colleges that cover massive regions of northern Ontario are thinking about the increased costs they're going to have to pay as a result of a job-killing carbon tax that was brought in by that government and has now been reintroduced by the federal Liberals.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Gravelle: Minister, I will take that as a yes, that you will continue to support the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, a very important one across the major resource industries across the north.

Another program that provides huge benefits to northerners is the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, which, over the past 30 years, has created or retained over 25,000 jobs all across the north. The NOHFC is truly one of the key drivers of the northern economy and a vital part of future development in the north.

My question to the minister is this, a simple one: Can northerners expect that the fund will remain in place at its annual allotment, so that all parts of the north will continue to benefit from this key economic development fund?

Hon. Greg Rickford: What northern Ontarians will continue to benefit from is a government that's committed to reducing costs—reducing costs for businesses, for forestry operations and for mining operations, and making targeted and strategic investments in businesses across northern Ontario.

In just 10 more sleeps, the member will have some of the information that he might need. I can assure him that the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund will continue to be a key driver for creating economic opportunities across northern Ontario, unlike the job-killing carbon tax, which was introduced by that government, making life more expensive for the people all across northern Ontario, and now has been reintroduced by the federal Liberals. That's going to affect northern Ontario's economy, and we're going to hold those members of federal Parliament, and the NDP opposition, for wanting to have the highest carbon tax in the world. We won't—

Interjections.

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

Stop the clock. Government side, come to order.

Start the clock. Next question.

POLICE SERVICES

Ms. Jill Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The daily duties of a police officer are dangerous, and they see tragedies that none of us would ever want to see. Police officers face a unique type of stress, and the current system isn't responsive to the realities that front-line officers encounter on a daily basis. It is estimated that over a 30-year career, a front-line police officer is exposed to more than 900 traumatic events. These can include very serious incidents, such as fatal car accidents, murder victims, sexual assault victims and child fatalities.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell this House how our government is addressing the mental health crisis in the Ontario Provincial Police?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I know that this member from Simcoe North knows this issue very well, considering that the OPP headquarters is located in Orillia. So, thank you for the question.

In Ontario, we're heartbroken, knowing that 13 OPP officers have taken their own lives by suicide since 2012. My heart goes out to the families and the colleagues of these OPP officers.

The OPP is facing a mental health crisis, and they should not have to face it alone. The OPP have always answered the call when the people of Ontario have asked for their help. Our government is here to do the same for these courageous men and women.

Last week, I was proud to announce, with Rob Jamieson, that our government is partnering with the Ontario Provincial Police Association to launch a new integrated mental health support program. This new program will provide seamless support to deliver the right treatments at the right time for both OPP officers and their families.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her response. It is reassuring to hear that OPP officers won't be left to face the challenges of stress and trauma alone.

As a member of this government for the people, I am proud to stand here today and know that we are protecting our front-line officers, just as they protect us. As the minister said, the OPP headquarters is in my riding of Simcoe North, in Orillia. But also, personally, my partner is a police officer, so I know the stress our officers face.

Mr. Speaker, could the minister please share more about how our government is providing services and supports to these everyday heroes?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: OPP officers and their families will have access to confidential and personalized mental health supports and services with this new program. These services will be accessed through a one-door approach, to ensure that the essential front-line workers can quickly and easily and confidentially be connected to the supports that they need and deserve. This new program will provide continuous support and guidance from beginning to end, so that the patients receive the right treatment at the right time.

We are aware that many officers serve in remote locations far from our urban centres where treatment is provided. These geographic barriers have prevented OPP officers from accessing the treatment they deserve in the past. We are changing that. We're going to use technology and innovation to break down those barriers and to ensure that every OPP officer gets the help they need, regardless of where they serve in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock for a second. I want to remind all the members that the use of technology in the chamber is actually technically prohibited, but we've allowed members to use them if they're

using them unobtrusively. Obviously, it's totally inappropriate to be taking photographs in the chamber during question period, by any member, if that is happening.

Start the clock. Next question.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Acting Premier. As of today, vital overdose prevention services are operating without provincial funding. Six overdose prevention sites, including St. Stephen's Community House and Street Help, were thrown into chaos when their application to become a consumption and treatment centre was rejected.

Just last week in Ottawa, five people died in five days of an overdose, but instead of investing in programs that save lives, this government has stopped funding for a site in Ottawa. Why is this government cutting overdose prevention services while people are dying?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will remind the member opposite and the NDP that the government on Friday announced 15 consumption and treatment services. In the interests of clarity, let's name those: the Fred Victor Centre in Toronto, the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, the Regent Park Community Health Centre, the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, the South Riverdale Community Health Centre. Toronto Public Health is on hold, but we are actively working on this file.

You know, the Minister of Health and the two parliamentary assistants have been engaged on this file from when we were appointed government. There are a lot of parts to this piece, and it is not, frankly, just about consumption. We need to make sure that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Ottawa Centre has to come to order. The member for Niagara Centre has to come to order. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has to come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Acting Premier: We've heard from organizations across the province that they could not meet the arbitrary requirements this government put in place to become a consumption and treatment site, and are struggling to complete the onerous application process. Northern and rural communities that have fewer resources to jump these hurdles are being left without overdose prevention services for their communities.

Speaker, the poisonous drug and opioid overdose crisis requires a flexible response and immediate funding. When will the minister treat the poisonous drug and overdose crisis as the public health emergency it is, and remove the barriers that the government has created to opening overdose prevention sites?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I think it's important that the NDP understand that the ministry has actively worked and is consulting with the individuals and municipalities who are providing these services.

But let's be clear: 15 have been approved and are operating across Ontario. The suggestion that in some way there are onerous application processes doesn't match with what is happening on the ground, and the reality is that 15 across the province of Ontario are engaged.

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We are continuing to review applications. We are continuing to work with the individuals providing the services, and the municipalities, because communities also have a say in this. They want to be part of the conversation about what makes our streets safer, what actually provides the services people are looking for, and it's not only about consumption sites; it's about treatment. It's about access to things that will actually improve people's lives.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Our government was elected to make Ontario open for business and open for jobs. One of the bedrock industries in Ontario is the aggregate industry, which supplies raw materials needed to build the things we depend on, like our homes, hospitals, schools and bridges, all while providing thousands of quality, well-paying jobs.

I was pleased to see that our government hosted an aggregate summit with the industry on Friday in Bolton—that we are continuing to reduce red tape that creates a burden on industry. Can the minister update the House on the work we are doing to support the development that is beneficial to this sector?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member for his question and for his advocacy on open for business and open for jobs. I was pleased that so many of my colleagues were able to join me for that summit, including the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services; my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Barrett; and the member from Peterborough–Kawartha. We had a very productive morning on Friday. We met with industry and municipal and industrial partners to discuss how we can reduce barriers while maintaining our commitment to managing potential impacts from aggregate extraction.

Speaker, the previous government built barriers. Our government will always support development that builds our communities as we make Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I know my constituents agree with the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, who welcome the

message from the minister that the province is now open for business.

The aggregate industry is an important driver to our economy and critically important to our quality of life. We need to continue to reduce barriers that create an environment for growth and a sustainable resource sector. It is important that the industry is able to provide input so that we find solutions that work for everyone.

Could the minister update the House on the information taken from the aggregate summit?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Again, I want to thank the member for his question. As we look at how Ontario manages pits and quarries, we want to hear from everyone upon how we can improve upon this framework. I invite everyone interested in aggregate reform to submit their comments, if they have not done so already.

As the member has said, aggregates are the raw materials that help build our schools, our homes, our hospitals, our bridges and our roads, and are the foundation of industries that strengthen our economy and create high-quality, well-paying jobs. What some in this House may not be aware of is the environmental leadership shown by the industry as they use innovative techniques to rehabilitate former aggregate sites.

I'd like to close by thanking all the attendees at the aggregate summit. Our government values their input as we make Ontario open for business and open for jobs.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Education. I recently had the privilege of meeting with 40 grade 10 students from Resurrection Catholic Secondary School. I'll be sending their concerns over to the minister.

We had a spirited discussion about the changes and cuts that are coming to their education system. Mr. Speaker, they're smart and that's why they're worried about how this government's plans are going to affect their education. For example, the students already do some coursework online, so I asked them, "How many of you prefer online classes over classroom learning?" Not one student put up their hand. But under the new plan, they will be forced to spend hours online, and they won't be able to graduate unless they do so.

Why did the minister not consult with students in the province of Ontario on these changes? It is their system, after all.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much for that question. I'd like to start off by saying—you know what? We have to make sure—the member opposite referenced the fact that students are smart. Yes, they are, and we need to enable them to utilize every tool available to them in order to move them forward and push that bar. That's why we're excited about the e-learning that we're bringing forward to Ontario, from one corner to another.

Do you know what? Actually, I have teachers, I have parents and I also have students who are excited about the plan we have. They're embracing it because they realize that in so many cases, from board to board, it's already happening.

We're going to be working with our education partners to make sure we get it right. But for all intents and purposes, when the rhetoric is not presented first, people love the plan that we're bringing forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know, the Minister of Education should be focused on creating an education system that puts students at the centre of it. That's how you build a strong public education system.

Speaker, these cuts will affect students. Students who want to grow up and become plumbers, teachers, doctors and auto workers have no idea what their next year of school will look like because of this government.

During the discussions, one student asked, "So the government is doing all this just for money?" These changes don't make sense to them or anyone in education.

Students see right through this government. Because of this minister, students are now convinced that money is more important than their education system.

A quality public education system will serve everyone better in the long run. That is how you build a strong democracy. Why is this government balancing the budget on the backs of students in the province of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

The minister to reply.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: You know what? No one is buying any of the rhetoric that is coming from that side of the House—none, zero, zilch.

Speaker, we listened to 72,000 people. They have been absolutely sincere in their input and with their desire to get education back on track after 15 years of experiments and ill-conceived ideologies that led this past government to fail our students.

People from one corner of this province to the other are excited that we, the PC government of Ontario, are finally getting education back on track. We're going to be focusing on the basics. We're focusing on math, we're focusing on financial literacy, we're focusing on STEM and we're focusing on making sure they graduate with the skills, both job skills and life skills, that they need to be successful.

You know what, Speaker? People can't wait to hear more about what we're going to be doing, so stay tuned and be engaged—

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

Next question.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines. For 15 years, the previous Liberal government treated northern Ontario as an afterthought. The tragic consequences of their neglect have meant that investment and jobs have left Ontario for other jurisdictions as mills closed and resource development projects simply never got started.

Now we have the federal Liberal Bill C-69, which will add unnecessary delays and hurdles to the approval process, putting even more jobs in the resource sector at risk.

Can the minister update the House on how our government is standing up for the people of northern Ontario as we make the province open for business and open for jobs?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I appreciate the question from the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka, and his support in joining us in the fight against all of these barriers that northern Ontario has faced over the course of time.

It's true, Mr. Speaker: The job-killing carbon tax imposed by the previous Liberal government here in Ontario is now set to be implemented today. It's \$1.353 a litre in Thunder Bay; \$1.40 in Ear Falls this morning; \$1.30-something in Kenora. The people of northern Ontario are madder than a bunch of stomped-on polecats.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you I take great comfort in the strategic investments that we're making across northern Ontario: Algoma Steel, Lake of the Woods Brewing Co., helping out the forestry sector—the Minister of Natural Resources' masterful job on developing a new provincial strategy for forestry. We're thinking of those folks in Fort Frances and our support for them in ensuring that they have a vital economy in the forestry sector moving forward.

We're standing up for jobs for people across northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the minister for that answer.

In the forestry sector alone, tens of thousands of jobs were lost under the previous Liberal government. The sector continues to deal with the after-effects of a government that prioritized the concerns of special interest groups and environmental radicals. And this happened with the unwavering support of the NDP.

1140

It's reassuring to see that northern Ontario finally has ministers who care about the people and jobs in the north.

Northern Ontario welcomes the repeal of the Far North Act and the development of a provincial forestry strategy.

Can the minister please share with the House how these measures will help to ensure that northern Ontario is once again open for business and open for jobs?

Hon. Greg Rickford: To the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. John Yakabuski: I thank the member for the question.

I would just like to take a moment to recognize the hard work done by the Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines on this file. He has been a passionate advocate for northern Ontario in cabinet and caucus, and it was absolutely wonderful to have him participate in our forestry round table in Kenora earlier.

There are challenges facing the forestry industry in Ontario, no question, and many of them were brought about by the lack of understanding and the ignoring of the problems by the previous Liberal government. That is why it

has been so important for us to hold these forestry round tables.

We've had a chance to hear directly from the sector about the problems they've faced for the past 15 years, and what we can do to remove some of those barriers for success in that industry.

We're going to show that Ontario is once again open for business and open for jobs, and show our commitment to this industry that is sustainable for generations to come if it is treated properly.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

The front-line Thunder Bay staff at the Ontario Child and Youth Advocate office are packing up. Indigenous youth in the north are losing their services and their advocates. That means Indigenous youth in care will have nowhere to turn when they need help. Where will they turn when their caseworkers aren't listening or understanding, when they want to return to their communities or when their plan for care falls apart?

Minister, why are you leaving Indigenous youth in care with nowhere to turn when they need help?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank the member opposite for her question. It's a very important question, as we talk about children in custody and in care, and in particular children who are in care who are Indigenous.

We are committed, as a government, to expanding children's aid societies that are Indigenous-led with customary care throughout Ontario. As I've mentioned many times in this House, I think that's a strong legacy for us to build on and, I think, where we can be leaders in the rest of the country.

Let me be perfectly clear: We are committed to improving the outcomes of Ontario's child protection system through the creation of three new round tables dedicated to sharing ideas for improvement. One of these will be Indigenous-led for children in care, and will consist of those with lived experience in the fields of Indigenous child welfare. The others will be children in care and youth in custody. Their membership will have direct access to decision-makers, including myself.

That is why we are committed, as a government and as a ministry, to ensuring the greatest protection of all of our children.

But this was a decision made in the fall economic statement by the Ministry of Finance, and that's why we are proceeding the way we are.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

There is no plan. There is no plan to ensure that Indigenous youth in care have uninterrupted access to advocacy services. We are talking about some of the most vulnerable children and youth in our province, who are slow to trust and with good reason. When they have a problem, they will be asking, "Where is my advocate?"

Minister, where is the plan?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Perhaps the member opposite didn't listen to the first response. The plan is this: We have moved investigative powers and the oversight powers over to the Ombudsman, who we believe can provide us with stringent and robust support. He is an independent officer of this assembly. We are working with him.

In addition, we are expanding Indigenous-led child welfare agencies across the province of Ontario. I'm proud of that. We're leaders in Canada; we're leaders in North America. That's important.

I've indicated to the member opposite that those children who are Indigenous—that will be part of a round-table discussion that will speak directly to me as a table, as well as other decision-makers, so we can improve child welfare protection in the province of Ontario.

In addition, as I've mentioned many times in this Legislature, we will be embedding within my ministry a child advocate who will report directly to me so that we can make changes.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Ma question est pour la procureure générale et ministre des Affaires francophones. Nous soulignons récemment la Semaine de la Francophonie et l'importance que représente le fait français dans cette province pour notre gouvernement.

Vendredi dernier, la procureure générale et ministre des Affaires francophones s'est rendue à Sudbury pour encore annoncer d'autres bonnes nouvelles à la communauté francophone qui est là-bas. Elle a annoncé un projet pilote en vue de garantir et d'accroître l'accès à la justice en français dans cette ville et cette région.

Est-ce que la procureure générale et ministre des Affaires francophones pourrait nous faire part de sa visite à Sudbury, de l'annonce qu'elle a faite et des gens qu'elle a rencontrés sur place?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: Je remercie la députée pour sa question. Monsieur le Président, ma tournée du palais de justice de Sudbury m'a permis de rencontrer notamment les représentants de l'Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Ontario, l'AJEFO. À cette occasion, j'ai eu le plaisir d'annoncer une nouvelle initiative témoignant de l'engagement de notre gouvernement à l'effet d'améliorer les services de première ligne en français et l'accès à la justice en français.

La collaboration de la magistrature, des partenaires du secteur de la justice et de mon comité consultatif améliorera l'accès à la justice en français en offrant davantage de services et soutiens judiciaires en français pour que cet accès soit dorénavant rapide et fluide.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Goldie Ghamari: Je voudrais remercier la ministre des Affaires francophones de continuer le travail de ce gouvernement pour soutenir le développement des communautés francophones à travers la province, un accès à la justice rapide et fluide étant un aspect très important de la vie en français en Ontario.

Je sais que la ministre des Affaires francophones a rencontré d'autres intervenants francophones au cours de

sa visite et souligné un investissement important à l'infrastructure culturelle de Sudbury. Peut-elle nous parler des autres rencontres et discussions avec les représentants de la communauté francophone réalisées à cette occasion?

L'hon. Caroline Mulroney: En plus de notre aide pour garantir un accès à la justice accru en français, notre gouvernement investit plus de trois millions de dollars dans la Place des Arts du Grand Sudbury dont on vient de dévoiler les nouveaux plans. J'ai eu le plaisir d'être là avec les députés de Sudbury et de Nickel Belt, et j'étais ravie de les voir là vendredi dernier. La Place des Arts constituera bientôt un lieu de rassemblement important pour les amateurs d'art et de la culture, en plus de contribuer à la vitalité culturelle du nord de l'Ontario et de favoriser le rayonnement du français.

D'autre part, au cours de ma visite, j'ai pu visiter le Collège Boréal et rencontrer des représentants de la Caisse populaire Alliance et de la Société Économique de l'Ontario pour discuter de leur appui envers le projet de loi 66, qui vise à réduire le fardeau de paperasserie qui gêne les entreprises.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY CHILD ADVOCATE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: Order in Council 490/2019, dated March 28, 2019, appointing Diana Cooke as the temporary Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, effective April 1, 2019, to May 1, 2019.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I know the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has a point of order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that. I wanted to introduce seven representatives from Diabetes Canada. Please indulge me in welcoming Matt, Ethan, Sepelene, Don, Stacey, Charlene, and Jake Reid. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Sudbury on a point of order.

Mr. Jamie West: Thank you, Speaker. I rise on a point of order to congratulate my CA Nicole Ayotte and her husband, Joel, on the birth of their first child. On behalf of the provincial Legislature, I'd like to welcome three-year-old Isaac Gilles Ayotte to the city of Greater Sudbury.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Waterloo on a point of order.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to welcome John Tibbits, who is the president of Conestoga College, here to Queen's Park today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Orléans on a point of order.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: J'aimerais souhaiter la bienvenue à La Cité, le collège qui est ici : à Lise

Bourgeois et à toute l'équipe, qui sont venus nous présenter ce matin de belles initiatives qu'ils créent. Je voudrais les saluer et leur dire merci pour leur travail dans notre communauté à Orléans et à Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I just heard you say that you tabled the appointment of the temporary child advocate. I just want to point out it has always been a practice in this place that the government, in consultation with the recognized parties, goes through a process by which we agree on who's going to be one of those officers. I realize this is just for a month, but I want to put you on notice. This should have been something that you talked to the official opposition about, and you did not.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a valid point of order, but obviously the message has been sent.

The member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I just want to welcome David Agnew, president of Seneca College.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I'm delighted to welcome my niece, Muna Abdihakim Ahmed, to the Legislature. She is visiting us from the United States. Welcome.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to welcome a number of guests from Toronto Centre. I'm not sure all have made their way into the galleries yet, but I'd like to welcome Ann Mueller, Shirley Green, Brian Barkley, Darin Squires, Ken Murray, Roger Brennan, Adam Sanders, Heather Sanders, Margaret Patterson and Paul Hackney. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you for coming.

Mr. David Piccini: It's great to welcome friends from the Trillium Gift of Life Network who are here with me today: Ronnie Gavsie, president and CEO, and her colleagues, who are members of the Trillium team: Shilpa Sharma and Manraj Furmah. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thanks for joining us.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Jill Andrew: Last week, I held my first tenants and housing town hall in Toronto–St. Paul's. More than of 60% of my community are tenants, and in my riding the housing crisis is the number one issue I hear about. Residents told me they are scared that an above-the-guideline increase will push them out of their homes.

Tenants also live with the anxiety that they could be renocted at any time. They don't understand why their buildings are not accessible and why the government will

not improve the AODA and building code requirements. Tenants deserve better.

At my town hall, a young man spoke about his experience of reintegration after being incarcerated. He said that as the province closes halfway houses, young people are released from jail without any social supports, which increases the chance of reoffending. Young people deserve a fair chance to turn their lives around, and having secure housing is imperative to this.

As a life-long renter and a person who has experienced precarious housing myself, I stand with the tenants in saying that we desperately need more—real—affordable housing. Ensuring safe and affordable housing is a first step in addressing inequity in society. Affordable housing is linked to many other factors that impact the lives of Ontarians. Housing is a public health issue, an economic security issue, and an access-to-transit, -social services- and -education issue. The lack of affordable housing hits already marginalized populations even harder.

The government must remember: Housing is not a frill. Housing is a basic right.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. David Piccini: It's my pleasure to rise today to inform the House that April is Be a Donor Month in Ontario. This is a month in which all Ontarians are encouraged to show their support for organ and tissue donation by registering to be a donor. Today, I'm asking all my colleagues in this House to join me in taking a lead in inspiring every Ontarian to save a life: to be a donor.

It's important to know, Mr. Speaker, that a single organ donation can save the lives of up to eight people and significantly enhance the lives of up to 75 others through the gift of tissue.

The Trillium Gift of Life Network is a patient-focused agency of the government of Ontario that is responsible for planning, promoting and supporting organ and tissue donation across Ontario. They also work tirelessly to improve the system so that more lives can be saved.

We're joined today by members from the Trillium Gift of Life Network here in the gallery. Currently, there are over 1,600 Ontarians waiting for life-saving organ transplants, 39 of whom live in my riding of Northumberland–Peterborough South. Sadly, every three days someone dies a very preventable death waiting for a life-saving transplant. In my riding of Northumberland–Peterborough South, I'm proud that over 40% of residents have already registered to be a donor.

Today, I'm issuing a mayors' challenge: asking each mayor in my riding to promote Be a Donor and ask that every one of them encourage everyone in their community to register. How can you register? Go online and visit beadonor.ca. Create your own campaign. Mine is [/campaign/mppdavidpiccini/](http://campaign/mppdavidpiccini/). I'm also challenging all of my colleagues in this place to go online, create your own profile and challenge the mayors in your communities to do the same thing.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage every resident of Ontario to spend two minutes to register

online and consent to donate today. I would also ask every resident to spread the word that donating can save a life. Donate today.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I rise today, alongside my NDP colleagues from Windsor–Tecumseh and Essex, to show solidarity with the 1,500 workers at the FCA Windsor assembly plant who learned that they will be losing their jobs in September and the 9,000 additional workers at feeder plants and related businesses across the region.

This news has devastated our community. Everyone in Windsor–Essex knows someone that works at Windsor assembly. This weekend, I spoke with workers and they all asked me the same thing: What can the provincial government do to support them?

There are definitely steps that the Ford government can take to save jobs. They could create an auto strategy, which we have called for consistently. They could work with FCA, Unifor and the workers to secure a new product for WAP to build on their full flex line.

They could reinstate the EV incentive program that they hastily cancelled, which encouraged consumers to choose green vehicle options like the Pacifica Hybrid, boosting sales. Thanks to the incredible advocacy of Windsor West member of Parliament Brian Masse, the federal government has now included the Pacifica Hybrid on a list of green vehicles eligible for rebates. The Ford government needs to step up and do the same provincially.

We have a lot of options, and we can't afford to do nothing. The Ford government needs to take real action, not just offer lip service, during this time of uncertainty for Windsor and Essex.

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Today, I rise to celebrate the start of Sikh Heritage Month in April. April is a very special time for Sikhs across this country, because April, specifically April 13, is the day that we celebrate Vaisakhi, which is the founding of the Khalsa and also the day that we were initiated with the five articles of faith.

Over 500,000 Sikhs live across Canada and contribute to every aspect of Canadian society and are very much a proud part of Canadian heritage. One of those individuals and part of history that I want to highlight today is Private Buckam Singh. Private Buckam Singh was the first Sikh to fight for Canada in World War I and who died fighting for this country. It was great to see his sacrifice being recognized by the Peel school board this past week by naming a school after him. So I want to commend my colleague, the wards 9 and 10 school trustee, for initiating that and having this important piece of Canadian history realized within our schools.

I also want to let everyone know that Sikhs will be celebrating Sikh Heritage Month with Khalsa Day parades across this province, in Toronto on April 28 and in Malton on May 5. So I ask that the entire House join the community and celebrate.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You've heard the devastating news that hit my community hard late last week. Minivan sales have slumped. The Fiat Chrysler corporation wants to correct the market and lower inventory. They see that the easiest way of doing that is to eliminate the third shift at the Windsor assembly plant; 1,500 direct jobs are in jeopardy, and could be gone come September if sales don't improve.

The company had other options. They could lower the price on their vehicles or offer 0% interest on new car sales—and maybe they will, in the days ahead. That's their choice.

The Premier told the Windsor workers that he's standing with them and will fight tooth and nail to protect their jobs. I take the Premier at his word, Speaker. So today I'm asking the Premier to do what he said he'd do: to show he's actually fighting for these jobs and standing up for Ontario's automotive manufacturing industry. In order to boost sales and stimulate the demand for Windsor-built vehicles, will the Premier place an order today for 1,500 or more new Windsor-built minivans?

Speaker, you were here. It wasn't that many years ago, during another period of slumping automotive sales, that a previous government in Ontario did exactly that. Various ministries, health units and conservation authorities and so on use minivans. There's no reason why these vehicles shouldn't be built in Ontario. Our government should be buying the cars we build here in Ontario. If we're open for business, we should be doing business with our own automotive manufacturers. In other words, Speaker—to the Premier—as we said in Windsor years ago, buy the cars your neighbours help to build.

1310

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

Mr. Michael Gravelle: I was wanting to seek unanimous consent to make a statement today on behalf of the member for Don Valley East.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to deliver a statement on behalf of the member for Don Valley East. Agreed? Agreed.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Gravelle: Thank you to my colleagues.

Of all the decisions that have been made by this government, the one that continues to strike me as the most cruel is the decision to end the basic income research pilot. For the thousands of people who benefited from this program—1,000 of which came from my area of Thunder Bay—the ending of the pilot is pushing them back into poverty, dashing their hopes of a real opportunity to build their lives once again.

The Basic Income Pilot allowed the participants to seek higher education, improve their living situation, eat

healthy food once again, and begin to change the cycle that left them in poverty in the first place.

I have example upon example of my constituents in the program who told me that being on the pilot allowed them to dream of a better life in the future as they worked their way through the opportunity provided by this forward-thinking research project.

There is no question in my mind that the government was callously short-sighted when they decided to end the Basic Income Pilot, which is why I am calling on them today to reverse that decision and let the pilot run its three-year course.

There is much we have already learned from the people on this program, and it is my belief that the completion of the pilot would provide us with incredibly useful analysis and insight into the keys to ending poverty in the province—something I would like to believe all parties in this Legislature would be equally eager to find out.

SARAH LYNN LISI
AND CONNOR MAHONEY

Ms. Jane McKenna: I want to congratulate two extraordinary athletes from Burlington who had the experience of a lifetime when they won several medals at the 2019 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

Sarah Lynn Lisi, a 31-year-old gymnast, placed first and second in 10 events. Sarah is a 31-year-old and participated previously in the Canadian summer Special Olympics in both Vancouver and Nova Scotia. She says the experience has meant she has met many new friends and developed new skills.

Connor Joseph Mahoney is 27 years old and is a competitive swimmer. I had the pleasure of meeting him and his father, Tom Mahoney, who is his swim coach, for the Special Olympics when they came to my Burlington office to pick up some Ontario pins to take with them to Abu Dhabi. Connor's favourite events are the butterfly, backstroke and crawl, and he is fast. Connor has won many medals in the qualifying Special Olympics here in Canada, and in his first trip to the worlds he placed second in the 50-metre butterfly, participating and placing in six events.

I know I can speak for everyone in this chamber when I say congratulations to Sarah and Connor on their excellent performances at the World Summer Games.

More than 45,000 Canadian children, youth and adults with an intellectual disability participate in programs run with the support of local sport clubs across the country. They are supported by a network of 21,000 volunteers—can you imagine, Speaker? These Canadians are committed to helping accomplish something truly remarkable.

I wish I had more time to go on, but I'll just give another shout-out to them. I'm so proud of them.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I rise today, on behalf of the constituents in my riding of Essex, shocked but not surprised.

Last week, the Doug Ford government announced that it was going to spend \$1.2 billion on 123 various infrastructure projects around the province of Ontario. Conspicuous in its absence was the Highway 3 project that needs to be completed from Essex to Leamington, linking up that vital route to the Herb Gray Parkway—a route that has an enormous amount of traffic volume, a difference of volume, with heavy industrial, agricultural traffic and then your daily commuters who are working their way to the feeder plants and the tier 1 automotive plants in Windsor and Essex county.

There has been an enormous amount of accidents on that roadway. It needs to be widened. That volume of traffic makes that roadway unsafe, and it is the provincial government's responsibility to finish that roadway.

Speaker, during the election, the Premier came down and made that commitment. He said that he was going to immediately finish that roadway—immediately. We've seen him act with immediacy when it came to putting beers in convenience stores. We've seen him act with immediacy to put \$1 beer on the shelves. But when it comes to the lives and health and safety of the people in my riding, he's nowhere to be found. It's obvious now that it wasn't just a broken promise. He would say anything to get elected in that riding. It's unbelievable.

We call on this provincial government to do the right thing: Finish that roadway. I've seen it happen before. We've seen commitments from the previous government; they didn't do it. They didn't honour Bruce Crozier's legacy, a man that you sat with, Speaker, and that you know very well fought for that project.

We want to see this government—or they're going to suffer the same fate as the Liberals did down in south-western Ontario and be vanquished from any riding that they make promises towards.

OAKVILLE AWARDS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE DINNER

Mr. Stephen Crawford: This past week was the annual Oakville Chamber of Commerce business awards dinner held with the local rotary club. The Oakville Chamber of Commerce is the fifth-largest chamber of commerce in the province and provides local members with the opportunity to collaborate, network and share ideas in a social setting.

Their business excellence dinner event takes the time to recognize the great work of local business leaders and companies in Oakville that help contribute to our local economy. I have to say, the event was fantastic, but there was one common theme I heard over and over again from business leaders: The business leaders are very focused and very excited by what our government is doing with the open-for-business changes being proposed by our government. People were very happy to hear our government's plan to reduce regulations by 25%, and are excited to see that we are working hard to ensure Ontario becomes a more competitive jurisdiction and the economic engine of Canada again.

I'd like to extend my congratulations to all the award winners from last week: Geotab for the business icon award, May Court Club of Oakville for the charity/non-profit of the year award, Oakville Soccer Club for the community builder award, Encore Market Engagement for the large business award, BestLifeRewarded Innovations for the mid-size business award, Sounds Good AVS for the small business award, Oakville Academy for the Arts for the service industry award, Blake Wyatt for the young professional and entrepreneur of the year, and Mauser Packaging Solutions for the energy conservation award.

TORONTO BLUE JAYS

Mr. Stan Cho: It's an honour to rise today to speak about something that is very important to me and to many fellow Willowdalers. Last Thursday, the city of Toronto marked a new beginning, the start of something very special, the start of a new era. Mr. Speaker, on March 28 at the Rogers Centre, our beloved Toronto Blue Jays officially kicked off their 2019 season.

Now, although there is no denying that this may not be the championship season Jays fans are hoping for, it is a year to rebuild and invest for future seasons. We have been developing an exciting group of young prospects and others, and they are ready for the big leagues. The World Series is within our grasp.

The Jays are on a path to rebuild on a sustainable and practical timeline. They need to make some tough decisions now to make sure that the team is competitive down the road. It's incredibly important to recognize, as the managing staff and the front office do, that to pave the way for prosperity sometimes you have to make hard choices, transform and think outside the box.

Under the leadership of the new manager, Charlie Montoyo, the Jays will gear up for the new season of baseball. Not only are the Jays Toronto's team; they are Ontario's team and, indeed, Canada's team.

I invite my colleagues on both sides of the House to enjoy the summer as we cheer on the Blue Jays. Go, Jays, go. Let's play ball.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for members' statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ST. JAMES TOWN ACT (RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENTS), 2019 LOI DE 2019 SUR ST. JAMES TOWN (MODIFICATIONS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LES LOCATIONS À USAGE D'HABITATION)

Ms. Morrison moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 93, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 93, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation.

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

First reading agreed to.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to invite the member to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's my immense pleasure to introduce this bill, which is called the St. James Town Act. The bill came into my office as over 1,500 of my constituents from a 30-plus-storey building in the St. James Town neighbourhood were displaced by a horrible electrical fire that made it impossible for them to return home for many months.

If passed, this bill will mandate that landlords of rental residential complexes of 10 or more units maintain an account at a financial institution into which a percentage of rents from that complex will be deposited every 30 days for use to repair that complex. It will provide that the Landlord and Tenant Board may order an abatement, or discount, of rent in situations where the landlord does not comply with maintenance obligations under the act and allow tenants to apply for that abatement via written hearing should they so choose.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I would remind all members to keep the explanations of their bills as brief as possible.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Dot Klein and everybody from the Sudbury Health Coalition for handing me 6,000 signatures on this petition—and a special thank you to the ladies from Panache Lake Road. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the planned cut to more than 150 full-time-equivalent staff at Health Sciences North, including nurses, health professionals and vital patient support staff, is unsafe and puts both patients and staff at unacceptable risk;

“Whereas Sudbury has already seen three hospitals closed and replaced with only one hospital; and

“Whereas people already are left waiting for days on stretchers in hallways and other inappropriate places because there is not enough capacity in our remaining hospital to meet local and regional needs; and

“Whereas wait times are already too long and our hospital is virtually always running at more than 110% capacity—meaning that there are not enough staff for patients and not enough resources to provide for needs; and

“Whereas Sudbury's hospital funding per patient is lower than the rest of the province and Ontario already has the lowest funding in the country;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately stop the proposed cuts at Health Sciences North, to

improve funding to meet the average of other provinces in Canada, and to restore and rebuild our local public hospital services to meet public need for these services.”

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

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Will Bouma: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas buying a home is a significant and important financial decision for all Ontarians;

“Whereas it is clear to Ontarians that Tarion is broken; and

“Whereas the previous government failed to protect homebuyers by moving forward with key recommendations from the Honourable Douglas Cunningham's independent report from 2016 of the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and Tarion;

“Whereas Justice Cunningham concluded that there was a perceived conflict of interest with Tarion carrying out both warranty administrator and builder regulator functions;

“Whereas the protection of homeowners is paramount in this current government;

“Whereas Ontario's government is working for the people by taking action to protect hard-working Ontarians when making one of the biggest purchases in their life—new home;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the government's plan to make Tarion truly accountable to the people by:

“—establishing a new and separate regulator from Tarion for new home builders and vendors to address conflicts of interest;

“—exploring the feasibility of a multi-provider insurance-based model for new home warranties and protections in Ontario;

“—planning to introduce legislative amendments that, if passed, would, among other things, enable the minister to require Tarion to make executive and board compensation publicly available and move to a more balanced skill-based board composition;

“—introducing new initiatives to better inform and to better protect purchasers of cancelled condominium projects.”

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Gwen.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Jill Andrew: This is the “Petition to Restore Arts Funding and the Indigenous Culture Fund at the Ontario Arts Council.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has cut its level of base funding to the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) by \$5 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year...;

“Whereas the Ontario government has also cut its funding to the Indigenous Culture Fund (ICF) at the OAC by \$2.25 million for the 2018-19 fiscal year...;

“Whereas the ICF will not accept new grant applications this year while the program is under review, entailing the layoff of Indigenous staff in permanent positions;

“Whereas the arts are essential to the quality of life, cultural identity, social and community well-being, creativity, innovation, and economic prosperity of Ontario;

“Whereas the ICF was part of the Ontario government’s response to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;

“Whereas the ICF supported traditional culture, languages, teachings, protocols, knowledge, youth and elder-led and engaged community cultural projects;

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

“(a) Restore OAC’s funding to \$69.9 million this year...;

“(b) Restore the ICF’s funding to \$5 million this year, retain all ICF staff positions, and commit to funding the ICF at this level in the years moving forward.”

I proudly support this petition, affix my signature and hand it to Gajan for the Clerk.

CAMPUS RADIO STATIONS

Mr. Michael Gravelle: I have a petition sent to me by Tiina Flank, the station manager at Lakehead University, or LU, Radio. I’m very pleased to read the petition in the House today.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario campus radio stations consist of over 150 staff members and 3,500 volunteers, a majority of them youth and students;

“Whereas campus radio stations offer training and development for students, both as part of their on-campus course curriculum and within the community at large, including preparation for careers in broadcasting and journalism;

“Whereas campus radio stations in Ontario are key providers of emergency information under the National Public Alerting System;

“Whereas campus radio stations are an independent news and media outlet for students and communities that provides a platform for marginalized voices;

“Whereas campus radio stations have a high fixed cost compared to other student services;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deem campus radio stations an essential fee under the Student Choice Initiative.”

I’ll pass it to page Elizabeth and will sign it myself.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. Toby Barrett: It’s a petition that’s titled “Petition in Support of Constructing a Memorial to Honour Our Heroes” and directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas over 40,000 Canadian Armed Forces members served in the war in Afghanistan including the 159 Canadians who made the ultimate sacrifice; and

“Whereas the Premier made a commitment to the people of Ontario to build a memorial to honour the bravery and sacrifice of our armed forces; and

“Whereas, by remembering their service and sacrifice, we recognize the values and freedoms these men and women fought to preserve; and

“Whereas the memorial will show our gratitude to our veterans, their families and to their descendants; and

“Whereas the memorial will be a place of remembrance, a form of tribute, and an important reminder to future generations of the contributions and sacrifices that have helped shape our country;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately construct the memorial to honour the heroes of the war in Afghanistan.”

I agree with the sentiments and affix my signature.

MEN’S MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here signed by Steve Alexander and many other people from my part of the world.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the district of Timiskaming has a high rate of mental health and addiction issues in the male population; and

“Whereas there is no specific facility or program being offered in the Timiskaming district for men in crisis;

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

“To request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care work in partnership with community stakeholders to develop a crisis bed facility in the Timiskaming district.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and send it down with Ishwarejan.

1330

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I too have a petition titled “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario’s ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario’s ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

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

“That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf.”

I will attach my signature to this petition—I support it—and hand it to page Mathew.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition here signed by the great residents of York South–Weston.

“Fund Our Schools....”

“Whereas too many children are going to school in buildings without proper heating or cooling, with leaky roofs or stairways overdue for repair;

“Whereas after years of Conservative and Liberal governments neglecting schools, the backlog of needed repairs has reached \$16 billion;

“Whereas during the 2018 election, numerous members of the Conservative Party, including the current Minister of Education, pledged to provide adequate, stable funding for Ontario’s schools;

“Whereas less than three weeks into the legislative session, Doug Ford and the Conservative government have already cut \$100 million in much-needed school repairs, leaving our children and educators to suffer in classrooms that are unsafe and unhealthy;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Education to immediately reverse the decision to cut \$100 million in school repair funding, and invest the \$16 billion needed to tackle the repair backlog in Ontario’s schools.”

I fully support this petition. I’ll be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Mirren to deliver to the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize my seatmate, the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s awfully fitting that we do have the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry in the House today, so I thought I’d read this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the ban on hunting and trapping in sections of Ontario to protect the eastern hybrid wolf was put in place without regard for the overall ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban has adversely affected the ability of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), hunters and trappers to properly manage animal populations and Ontario’s ecosystem;

“Whereas this ban is no longer needed and is in fact causing more damage to Ontario’s ecosystem and increasing unnecessary encounters between wildlife and Ontarians;

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

“That the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry immediately lift the ban on hunting and trapping set in place to protect the eastern hybrid wolf.”

I’ve already affixed my signature to this and pass it to page Julien to bring to the table.

SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

“Whereas over 1,300 Ontarians and their families rely on independent facilitation, a service that helps those with developmental disabilities pursue work or school, live independently, enjoy hobbies and participate in their community;

“Whereas by cutting funding to independent facilitation, families will only be able to access this support through an inequitable fee-for-service model;

“Whereas the ... cuts to the independent facilitation program means fewer resources will now be available to people with developmental disabilities and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to provide permanent funding for independent facilitation services and support to be offered province-wide so all Ontarians with developmental disabilities and their loved ones can access this important service without financial or geographical barriers.”

I agree 100%. I’m going to sign it and give it to Katie to bring down to the table.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Ms. Suze Morrison: I’d like to introduce a petition entitled “Don’t Take Away Social and Economic Rights for Women and Marginalized People.” It reads:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario....”

“Whereas statistics show that women, particularly women of colour, are most likely to be employed in precarious work, and the Bill 47 amendments to the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Labour Relations Act, 1995 create conditions that lead to a growth in precarious employment while also eliminating protections for millions of Ontario workers;

“Whereas Bill 66 further erodes women’s and marginalized people’s social and economic rights; and

“Whereas the” Conservative “government continues to remove, cancel or freeze funding for other supports, programs and regulations that would increase women’s equality in the workforce and beyond;

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

“—reinstate paid sick days, the scheduled increase to a \$15 minimum wage, legislation to increase pay transparency, regulations that support equal pay for equal work...;

“—reverse changes to day care regulations that allow more children per caregiver;

“—reverse the retroactive cuts to funding for the Ontario College of Midwives;

“—reinstate funding increases to sexual assault centres;
 “—restore the” provincial “round table on violence
 against women; and
 “—restore the child and youth advocate commissioner’s office.”

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition. I will be affixing my signature to it and providing it to page Ishwarejan to deliver to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I’d like to thank Pam Graham. She sits on the family council for the Maple Villa Long-Term Care Centre, and she collected 518 signatures on the Time to Care bill.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard to provide an average of four hours per resident per day, adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Julia to deliver to the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for petitions this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESTORING ONTARIO’S COMPETITIVENESS ACT, 2019

LOI DE 2019 VISANT À RÉTABLIR LA COMPÉTITIVITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 26, 2019, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to restore Ontario’s competitiveness by amending or repealing certain Acts / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à rétablir la compétitivité de l’Ontario en modifiant ou en abrogeant certaines lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: As always, it is an honour and a privilege to rise in this House on behalf of the constituents of Parkdale–High Park, especially on this bill, Bill 66.

My office received over 1,500 messages from constituents, all opposed and all of them asking, “What can I do to

stop this?” The people of Parkdale–High Park care about protecting source water and prime agricultural land from corporate profit. They care about the safety of vulnerable members of our community, children and seniors, and the safety of workers. Parkdale–High Park constituents care about climate change and the real potential for irreversible, catastrophic damage, and they are concerned about the lack of action from this government. Today, I want to focus my comments on these concerns.

This omnibus bill attacks the rights of Ontarians on many fronts. This government presented Bill 66 as a way to create more and better jobs, but it actually risks severely damaging the environment as well as stripping away protections for workers and tenants in our province. If this government is committed to listening to people, as Premier Ford insists, then we must hear from them on all schedules of this bill, not just on schedule 10 on the greenbelt.

The people of Ontario are paying attention. The overwhelming reaction to the opening up of the greenbelt for development is particular proof that the Premier must take the concerns of people seriously, and not just the concerns of those he is in business with. Let me say that again: Premier Ford must take the concerns of people seriously, not just the concerns of those he is in business with.

The inclusion of this schedule in this bill proved an alarming lack of worry on the part of Conservatives about Ontario’s natural environment. This is part of a disturbing trend of anti-environment bills that this government has tabled in the last few months. When something as fundamental as clean drinking water is at risk in our province in order to promote the interests of business owners, I ask, who is Premier Ford really listening to? With this bill, he broke his promise to Ontarians.

1340

We know from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that we have just 12 years left to make significant policy and practical changes on a global level to reduce the impact of rising temperatures on our planet. Why can’t Ontario be a leader in this fight? Ten years ago, our Endangered Species Act was considered world-class. It was responsible for the preservation of not just animals but many of Ontario’s natural habitats, particularly the greenbelt. Since then, the act has been continuously under attack: First watered down by the Liberals in 2013, now it’s under threat again, thanks to the January 19 review of the act that was ordered by this government. I’d like to remind the Conservative members of this House that you will not be able to water down a law when there is no water left. The greenbelt must be protected from urban sprawl and development as a way to safeguard our natural resources and protect the health of Ontarians.

The stated goal of this bill is to create jobs, but there is no mention in this bill about green jobs for all, which is the way forward. Ontario needs jobs that transition us to a renewable and fossil-fuel-free economy. Transitioning into a green economy is possible, and it’s possible to do so without attacking the lowest-paid workers. It is possible to provide good jobs for all. Economic justice and climate justice are linked.

Schedule 5 in this bill also represents a threat to Ontarians' safety and environmental protection. It repeals the Toxics Reduction Act and regulation and risks the safety of workers and the public. This act, Speaker—which the NDP noted, back in 2009, was already incomplete and inadequate—is now on the chopping block, and with it regulations that protect our province and its people from exposure to harmful chemicals. Specifically, after 2021, only manufacturers and mines that are already reporting their use of toxins will be required to continue to make reports. Any new industrial businesses will be exempt, free to use toxins that put the health of Ontarians at risk, including their own workers, without making a report to the provincial government.

With this bill, the Ford government is also endangering the health and safety of workers. Why is this government chipping away at the safety of workers? Why is this government so determined to turn good jobs into bad, unstable part-time jobs? Ontarians support and need decent work. This means a \$15 minimum wage now and fair working conditions. But what did this government do? First, it cancelled the \$15 minimum wage just six weeks before it was scheduled to come into effect and postponed it at least until 2025. They scrapped the two meagre paid sick days, even though nearly 80% of Ontarians demanded this protection, including 64% of Conservative voters.

The truth is, the best social program is definitely not a job in Ontario, no matter what this government may have argued while cutting social assistance programs. Hard-working Ontarians who are forced to cobble together two to three jobs to make ends meet can barely put food on their table, and with Bill 66, jobs are about to get a whole lot worse. This bill will remove the requirement for Ministry of Labour oversight and approval of excessive hours of work. It will also remove the requirement for employers to apply for and receive approval from the director of employment standards for overtime averaging agreements. In most workplaces, especially in the absence of unions, workers have little power to negotiate, and this bill will give employers even more power to make staff work long hours with less overtime pay. If a boss tells you to sign a document to get your overtime hours averaged or to work 50, 60, maybe 70 hours a week, many will do so because they're worried they might not get to keep the job otherwise. Removing broad oversight of these important protections silences workers' voices. If excessive hours of work become normalized, we can also expect workers' health and safety to take a huge hit.

There's one more thing: While constituents demand good jobs, why is this government blocking job creation by allowing employers to rely on excessive overtime instead of hiring new staff? For employers who are focused on cutting costs at all expense, what will keep them now from forcing employees to do 70-hour workweeks as opposed to hiring additional workers? The answer is: nothing, really, because the Ministry of Labour will have no clue.

Also, Speaker, how can this government justify to Ontario's workers that their rights on the job will no longer

be guaranteed? For the last 15 years, the Employment Standards Act has required employers to post a copy of the Ministry of Labour's posters that describe employee rights and employer requirements under the Employment Standards Act. This bill would eliminate this simple requirement to post a poster in the workplace. This poster not only provides workers with general information about their statutory rights, but informs workers that they have a job-protected right to exercise those rights and provides Ministry of Labour contact information to do so. Making sure workers know about their rights at work is not a regulation we can afford to cut. Is this government afraid of an informed public?

What the Ford government is really doing here is sending a green light to bad bosses to ignore workers' rights—and this is not the first time. Soon after the Conservatives got into office, they blocked the planned hiring of 100 new employment standards officers. In September, through leaked documents, we learned that the Ministry of Labour was ordered to halt proactive inspections even though the ministry's own internal analysis showed proactive inspections to be the most effective method of catching lawbreaking employers.

Then, just last Thursday, the government replaced proactive enforcement inspections of workplaces with a new program which relies on employers to voluntarily report their violations of minimum employment standards to the government. Enforcement is key to ensuring a floor of protection for all workers and creating an even playing field for businesses, but this government is simply not interested.

Included in this bill are also new ways of chipping away at the strength of unions and their protections. If we let this bill pass, it will prevent agricultural workers and certain horticultural workers, the people who pick the very produce that we eat every day and are some of the most precariously employed and exploited workers in this province—this bill prevents these workers from forming strong unions and ensures those with the fewest rights, including migrant workers, who comprise a large portion of agricultural workers, will be denied a platform to fight for their right to safe and well-paid work. Speaker, this bill is attacking racialized workers.

This bill also attacks unionized workers. If passed, it will bring a major and contentious change: Municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges, universities and any other major institutional employers will no longer be considered "construction employers" for the purposes of building major infrastructure projects. Many such employers are covered by historic construction agreements that set out who can perform certain work. Eliminating the need for a construction employer designation is anticipated as having the effect of turning these projects into open-shop worksites such that these employers will no longer be bound by these agreements and major infrastructure projects will conceivably be able to employ non-union workers to do traditionally skilled labour work.

These changes actually were sought by former PC MPP Michael Harris in his 2013 private member's bill. These

changes are almost wholly lifted from a resolution in the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Compendium of Policy Resolutions, 2018-2022. That's right. It's wholly lifted from a resolution that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce passed as a resolution for 2018-2022. Once again, we see that the Ford government is advancing big business interests over those of workers of Ontario.

Speaker, I'd like to remind everybody in this House that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce actively lobbied against a \$15 minimum wage and called on the government to repeal the \$15 minimum wage. Again I ask: Who is this government listening to? It's not the two thirds of Ontarians who wanted the lowest-paid workers to receive a modest pay increase, because we know that, especially in urban centres like Toronto, a \$15 minimum wage is not a living wage. This government is listening to big-business lobbying.

1350

This bill, in schedule 3, also puts profit over people by amending the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Education Act. Some of the lowest-paid workers in this province are those taking care of our children. Nurturing and keeping our children safe is one of the most important jobs, yet the women—and I say “women” because this role is predominantly filled by women—aren't fairly compensated for the vital work that they do.

I was proud to add my name to the long list of Ontarians in support of the Wage Enhancement Grant. This \$2 wage enhancement was an attempt to rectify the long-standing gender pay gap. I hope that this government sees how this wage enhancement can benefit the economy.

In this bill, in schedule 3, the government is making it less safe for our children by raising caps on home child care centres. These child care regulations were added after four children died in a span of just seven months in 2013-14. This bill increases the maximum number of children who are younger than two years old that can be in the care of one provider from two to three, and in the care of two child care providers, from four to six. Speaker, how does this create good jobs? And we already know the risks of loosening restrictions on child care ratios. This is not how you solve the crisis in child care. I've spoken in the House before about Parkdale-High Park being a child care desert, but you don't solve that by creating more spots that are less safe.

We can improve child care in this province by making it public, bringing in affordable child care for all, by creating a provincial child care program and by paying women, who dedicate their lives to ensuring the safety of children, a good wage. Instead, this bill only makes way for more for-profit daycares and fewer not-for-profit daycares. When shareholders become the primary beneficiaries of an organization, how safe are our children going to be?

Finally, I want to address the proposed schedule 4 changes, which will put increased economic stress on tenants in Ontario, many of whom are already paying some of the highest rents in the country. In Parkdale-High Park, over 50% of my constituents are tenants, and the

average rent price for a one bedroom is \$1,200. Loopholes in rental legislation and above-guideline increases, displacement from gentrification, rising property values due to real estate speculation and money laundering, and renovictions: These are all causing skyrocketing rents and forcing long-term tenants out of their units and out of their communities.

There are corporate landlords in Parkdale-High Park benefiting from weak rent control laws, maximizing their profits by exploiting tenants, especially those who are new to Canada, those with limited English capabilities, those with disabilities, and seniors. In south Parkdale, over a third of our community lives in deep poverty and over 90% are tenants.

There are a number of corporate landlords exploiting the housing crisis for their personal gain. One such landlord is Timbercreek Asset Management, who, at this very moment, is trying to push out long-term tenants from residential apartment buildings 103 and 105 West Lodge Avenue.

When I visited the tenants after the February electrical fire, I heard tenants say that since Timbercreek took over West Lodge, it immediately launched a concerted effort to displace tenants from their buildings. As I speak, there are over 70 units that sit empty, and that's shameful given Toronto's affordable housing crisis. West Lodge tenants face conditions that are, simply put, unlivable. Many of the tenants report living in buildings without heat, infested with bugs, and in desperate need of repair. Four out of the eight elevators don't work, and there are 18 floors in each of these buildings. Tenants have shared experiences of floods, fires and electrical outages. I've heard horror story after horror story from tenants and housing activists who say that building maintenance and tenant concerns have been ignored by the landlord for years. Yet at the same time, thanks to the work of housing advocates and the brave tenants who are coming forward to report these, despite its neglect of the buildings, West Lodge owners continue to gain approval from this province to increase tenants' rent above the guideline limit and to renovict the tenants.

Since January, Timbercreek has reportedly taken dozens of tenants to Ontario's Landlord and Tenant Board in an attempt to evict them for bogus reasons. Parkdale tenants are already facing tremendous strain and housing insecurity, which negatively impact their mental health and overall quality of life.

In the High Park neighbourhood, Great-West Life is benefiting from low vacancy rates and vulnerable seniors. At an emergency community meeting on tenant issues that I hosted just yesterday, I heard from over 80 community members in a packed room that Great-West Life is failing to keep up building maintenance standards and is profiting off of the housing crisis.

Rental affordability isn't just an issue for racialized people and people receiving social assistance; it's an issue that is pushing seniors out of units that they have lived in and called home for decades. It's also pushing young people out of the city, simply because they cannot afford to rent.

Now the government wants to add yet another burden to tenants to benefit corporate landlords. Schedule 4 of this bill to deregulate rates charged for electricity could be disastrous for renters across this province. Many people are barely able to afford the rent under the current circumstances, and an increase in fees that in many cases will be larger than the total cost of the electricity used will make life even more unaffordable. I don't see how putting the burden of negotiating fair rates for electricity on individual landlords will benefit anybody but the service providers, and I don't see how cutting out protection for tenants from sub-metering companies is going to increase industrial investment in Ontario. But it will mean that sub-metering companies get to take advantage of 325,000 households in this province, many of them just barely able to afford the cost of rent and bills as it stands.

In Parkdale–High Park, we do know how to create good jobs for all and encourage economic investment. The Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust is a local organization working to acquire and manage land in the community to ensure availability of secure and affordable housing. Work done by the PNLT uncovered the crisis in the loss of rooming houses, and they developed calls to action to preserve rooming houses and to protect tenants.

Most recently, Parkdale People's Economy developed the Parkdale Community Benefits Framework: Guide for Development without Displacement. This is from the guide: The community benefits framework "outlines minimum standards that developers must follow when investing in Parkdale. It also provides a framework for policy-makers, political representatives, and the community to advocate and negotiate sound agreements. Ultimately, the framework calls into question how wealth is produced through neighbourhood improvement, and how it can be redistributed equitably and managed democratically for community benefits."

What we need is an investment in communities and in our public service. We must not have to compromise on tenant protections for corporate profit.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Every year, the regulatory burden continues to get worse here in Ontario and lighter in the US. I spoke to many small business owners, and they have had enough of the high cost of doing business here in Ontario. We can't continue to drive them away.

On June 7 of last year, we were elected with a clear agenda set by the people of Ontario. They elected a government that believes in fiscal responsibility, transparency and accountability. Our government listened and is fixing the mess left by the previous government through Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. Bill 66 will reduce red tape and lower business costs to make Ontario more competitive and open for business.

Madam Speaker, as you know, this morning we got a wonderful gift from our federal government: the carbon tax. A lot of people kept talking about the tax like, "It's fine. We are okay to pay an extra \$2." But what they're not understanding is the fact that the cost of not only the

gas, but also household items, things that are daily usage, is going to go up as well. Yes, I understand that it's good for the environment, but there are ways to fix the climate and everything and not get the people of Ontario to pay more tax.

1400

Madam Speaker, during some of our meetings, the businesses kept saying to us, "We do not want a carbon tax."

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Not only is this bill not for the people, it is anti-worker, plain and simple. By declaring municipalities and school boards and other public entities non-construction employers, this government is turning its back on workers who have fought hard for collective bargaining agreements they have in place with their employers. Workers across this province have fought hard for fairer and safer working conditions at their workplaces.

By tabling this bill, the government is signalling to the people that they do not care about the rights of workers; they do not care about fairness for workers; they do not care about all the efforts that workers have put into their workplaces to make them safer and more equitable for workers.

Madam Speaker, this government is hell-bent on making life harder for the decent, hard-working people of York South–Weston. They are allowing employers to force workers to work more for less, ripping up bargaining agreements, and putting the safety of our children in jeopardy by increasing the number of infants and two-year-olds allowed to be cared for by unlicensed child care operators in this province.

The Conservatives are taking things from bad to worse. This bill makes it clear that the Conservatives are not for the people. They are making backroom deals that favour big corporations and stick it to the hard-working people of this province.

Buried in Bill 66 are provisions that allow employers to avoid paying their employees the overtime they worked for and deserved. Under the current legislation, employers are required to pay 1.5 times the rate of regular pay for every hour they work over 44 hours a week.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions or comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member for Parkdale–High Park talked a great deal about issues around employment and jobs.

I do want to stress that Bill 66 will go a long way to improve our workforce situation. It cuts red tape. It eliminates that federal-provincial duplication.

For example, Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act came in 10 years ago. I was environment critic at that time. It was modelled on legislation in the state of Massachusetts. I phoned Massachusetts. I emailed Massachusetts. I had conversations back and forth with the Massachusetts Chemistry and Technology Alliance. They outlined their 20-year experience—that would now be 30-year experience—with the particular law down there and told me that,

essentially, there was no evidence that it led to anything. The way it was structured “has led to loss of jobs in Massachusetts and has done little or nothing to improve the environment down there.” You can argue that the use of toxics went down in Massachusetts. That was because industry left. They weren’t working with these substances anymore.

With respect to the duplication, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act—that was in 1999—and the complementary Chemicals Management Plan—in 2006—positioned Canada as a world leader in this field. Moreover, Ontario’s Toxics Reduction Act, which we are repealing, duplicates toxic substance reporting requirements under the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory—the NPRI—and Ontario’s own regulation 127/01, “Airborne Contaminant Discharge Monitoring and Reporting.” To get rid of this kind of stuff, you’re going to see more jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions or comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It’s a pleasure to follow my friend from Parkdale–High Park, one of the brightest and most passionate young members in our provincial Parliament today. She talked about this bill that supposedly is going to cut red tape and make Ontario more competitive. If you want to do that, if you want to create jobs, you also have to remember the need to protect and preserve the jobs you have.

Earlier today we talked about the need to do something in Windsor. The Premier said he was going to help save automotive jobs down there. He can go out and buy some more cars—1,500 new vehicles. Make the order today. That will help preserve some jobs. He can start working with General Motors and get a new product line in Oshawa and save thousands of new jobs up there.

The member also talked about clean drinking water and how we’re worried about the health and safety inspections that take place in workplaces to protect clean drinking water. If you want to create thousands of new jobs, go out and make a commitment to go to our First Nations reserves—reserves that have been under boil-water advisories for 30 years or more—and put the infrastructure in there so that we all enjoy safe drinking water in Ontario. I haven’t heard the Conservative government talk about that very much, and to me that is a shame.

You want to create jobs and cut some more red tape? My example in Windsor has always been—at the Canadian Club Heritage Brand Centre, I want the red tape to be cut so we can allow alcohol to be served where it’s made. The Canadian Club brand of whisky, because it’s now bottled under contract as opposed to bottled and sold by the distiller, can’t be sold there, and they closed this beautiful building. Some 15,000 people a year used to come to the heritage brand centre, Windsor’s second-largest tourist attraction. Cut that red tape, allow the alcohol to be served and we’ll create more jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Thank you, Speaker.

The bottom line is that with Bill 66, instead of making life better, the Ford government is actually making things

worse for people. It is very difficult for me to find in any place in Bill 66 where good jobs for Ontarians is really the aim of the proposed changes to the legislation.

I want to take a moment to thank the people of Parkdale–High Park who have been actively fighting against this terrible piece of legislation, and I want to urge Ontarians to continue voicing their objections to the bill.

I urge my fellow Conservative MPPs to listen to your constituents. This bill is not the way forward. This bill, what it really does, is it gives the developers and corporations a gift, and this gift is coming at the expense of the rest of us, the people of Ontario.

Of course, I think it’s pretty obvious, I will be voting against the bill. I urge the government to really think hard, and especially to listen to your constituents, before you cast your vote on the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Harris: I’m pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act. This act is a benchmark for the kind of change that our government has committed to delivering to the people of Ontario since taking office. As the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade put it during the bill’s second reading, this “bill is part of our government’s ongoing commitment to reduce red tape and burdensome regulation because cutting red tape helps create an environment in Ontario that supports good jobs.”

Bill 66 is just what the doctor ordered. Unduly costly and burdensome regulations are squeezing businesses in every economic sector and driving jobs and investment out of Ontario. In recent years, especially leading up to the last election, far too many companies said, “Enough is enough,” and packed up shop in search of greener pastures south of the border. Businesses of all shapes and sizes simply stopped investing in modernization and expansion of their operations here in Ontario. Time and time again, we saw good businesses providing hard-working Ontarians with high-paying jobs shift their operations to more welcoming climates south of the border.

In response to this troubling development, our government made the bold commitment to reduce red tape in Ontario by 25% by 2020. This radical reduction in red tape will go to great lengths in lowering the cost of doing business in Ontario and creating and protecting good-paying jobs.

Achieving this feat must involve every member and minister on the government side stepping up and bringing forward progressive ideas for making the process in the province more efficient. Bill 66 includes many of the positive steps forward that this government needs to take in restoring responsible regulation in Ontario.

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I’m going to focus my time today on three schedules in particular that I know will yield very positive results for industries and families in Waterloo region. More specifically, my time will be spent highlighting the positive impacts that schedules 1, 3 and 9 will have on parents and businesses in my riding and across the province.

Schedule 9 makes essential reforms to the Employment Standards Act, or ESA, and the Labour Relations Act, the LRA, some of which have been called for by businesses and workers in my riding for many years. These changes being proposed under schedule 9 are common-sense policy. That said, the positive impact that they will have for Waterloo region and the province cannot be overstated.

On the ESA side, schedule 9 reduces the regulatory burden on businesses by removing the requirement of businesses to obtain approval from the director of employment standards for excess hours of work and overtime averaging. As it was eloquently put by the Minister of Labour during third reading debate, “We are proposing to eliminate the need for the government to second-guess a worker’s choice regarding overtime hours.”

Ontario has long had a standard 48-hour workweek. It was considered the unofficial maximum workweek historically. Under the current policy, employers are required to file for permits with the Ministry of Labour to enable their workers to work beyond 48 hours. If you can believe it, some stakeholders have said their HR staff spend up to 80% of their time—80%, Madam Speaker—devoted to permit filing. This is not conducive to a productive work setting. That is why, with the changes under schedule 9, employers will no longer need to file for permits. Referring back to the minister’s comments once more, “Schedule 9 would eliminate the requirement for employees and employers to apply to the Ministry of Labour after they had both”—both parties, Madam Speaker—“agreed to additional weekly hours of work or overtime averaging. So we would retain the requirement for written agreements with employees, but applying for permission from the Ministry of Labour would no longer be necessary.”

The schedule 9 amendments allow companies of all sizes to be more competitive by giving them more flexibility to manage the shifts of their employees. These changes will make business operations more efficient and protect good-paying jobs by allowing businesses to extend their hours of operation and hire more workers.

Perhaps of greater significance to the constituents in my riding are the changes being made to the Labour Relations Act. Schedule 9 amends the Labour Relations Act to explicitly deem public bodies, including municipalities, school boards, hospitals, colleges and universities, as non-construction employers. If passed, the bidding process for public sector construction projects will become much more competitive. This, without a shadow of a doubt, is sure to be the case in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, as well as Waterloo region.

Just a few days ago in this chamber, I read aloud a letter from the regional chair, Karen Redman, in which she strongly endorsed the schedule 9 amendments to the Labour Relations Act. In this letter, she highlighted that the proposed changes in schedule 9 have long been called for by the region, stating that, “The proposed amendments will lead to open and fair tendering in a competitive environment.” Schedule 9 is proposing a fairer tendering process, one in which any and all construction companies will be allowed to bid for public projects.

The sad reality is that certain public sector entities have become bound to collective agreements and deemed non-construction employers even though they are not actually in the construction business. The principal aim of the amendments proposed under schedule 9 is to eliminate the contradictory precedent whereby non-construction employers became bound by collective agreements designed for the construction industry. Let me point out, Madam Speaker, that the result of binding public entities to said agreements is that these entities become bound to the unions who are parties to said agreements. What our government is proposing with schedule 9 is simple and straightforward: that public service providers will no longer be deemed construction employers.

Members opposite will likely continue to protest that schedule 9 is an attack on labour, but let’s be honest, Madam Speaker: Nothing could be further from the truth. Establishing fairer rules regarding the issuing of public contracts benefits all those contracting their services to this industry equally. There is no reason the government should be allowing for the enforcement of arbitrary rules concerning the issuing of public contracts, especially when they only benefit a select few unionized service providers over the rest.

There is a ton of quality union and non-union companies who can compete for projects in Waterloo region, so let’s let them compete. Schedule 9 is a win for fairness and transparency. Our government wants contracts to be awarded to the most qualified provider—again, whether that be union or non-union. We do not want public entities to be bound to specific unions when awarding construction contracts. The rationale behind our policy was captured well in a recent Sun news article: “The bill would restore a public construction market based on a company being qualified for the job rather than political connections or union affiliation.”

The amendments made by Bill 66 will be great for Ontario’s development sector and other sectors as well. The industries benefiting from the provisions of Bill 66 are diverse, because the provisions of this bill are broad in terms of their motivation and application. The broad impact of the amendments proposed under Bill 66 will be fully realized in Waterloo region due to the diverse range of stakeholders residing there. That diversity also exists, specifically, in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga.

My riding has a large contingent of farmers and agribusinesses to benefit from the amendments being proposed under schedule 1 of Bill 66. Under the current rules, farmers in my riding and across the province are wasting time and money filling out paperwork and working to comply with unnecessary regulations. That is why there are, included within schedule 1, changes to the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act. These changes will allow for the modernization of the Farm Business Registration Program by instituting electric delivery and a simplified registration process. Through streamlining these processes, our government will succeed in reducing the amount of time that farmers have to spend on registration. This will allow farmers to direct their time

and money toward more profitable pursuits. These are important changes that will have a positive impact for producers in my riding.

Acknowledging this, it is also important to note that the benefits of Bill 66 do not simply come from paring down rules and regulations but also from crafting rules and regulations that are smarter and fairer. For example, schedule 1 of Bill 66 also makes amendments to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Act, providing the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs the authority to establish or make small changes to the loan guarantee programs so that they can become more responsive to industry needs. This is a smarter system. When we do craft new rules and regulations, they should improve the sustainability of our industry, not hinder it. The amendments proposed to the Agricultural Employees Protection Act also fall into this category of smart and fair regulations. Schedule 1 amends the act to include ornamental horticulture production workers, providing equity, consistency and clarity among the workers in that sector.

We have regulations that work, and we need those regulations to be fully transparent. This demonstrates that our government is committed to enhancing regulations where necessary in order to increase transparency.

Finally, when it comes to making fair regulatory changes, our focus is not limited to the business sphere. Our government is committed to implementing policies that improve the lives of all Ontarians. Bill 66 not only works for the businesses of Ontario, but it works for the families of the province too.

Perhaps the best example of how Bill 66, if passed, will improve the lives of Ontario families comes from an examination of schedule 3. One of the biggest concerns for young and growing families in this province is access to affordable child care. Believe me, I know, Madam Speaker. As a father of five children, I know how important it is to access quality child care in the province. I have a vested interest, as a representative of many hard-working families, to see to it that the government follows through on commitments we made to the parents of this province. Parents do not just want affordable child care; they also want child care that is of the highest quality. They need a government that is committed to putting more money back in their pockets while improving the quality and accessibility of child care services available to them.

Luckily, Ontarians have a government that is on their side. The proof of this is found in the hard work that our government is doing to create a new child care plan for Ontario, a plan that will make life easier for families by reducing red tape and administrative burden, making child care more affordable, increasing choice and availability for families, and improving quality and delivering high standards of care.

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In amending certain provisions under the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Education Act, schedule 3 makes real progress in advancing the pillars of our government's new child care agenda. These amendments will create more spaces for children in quality programs by

allowing home-based child care providers and authorized recreational and skill-building programs more flexibility in how they operate while maintaining rules that keep Ontario children and families safe and healthy.

In her speech during second reading debate, the Minister of Education captured well what the tangible benefits of schedule 3's amendments will be: "This proposed change would allow parents the ability to enrol their children in one program at one location. Now that's what makes sense. Also, lowering the age limit would match the age of children who enter kindergarten and can participate in camps, ensuring consistency 365 days a year."

Home-based child care gives families more choice. More spaces in the home-based system would especially help rural and remote communities who rely on home-based child care. These amendments are all about providing more choice to parents so they can find the child care program that suits their needs. The fact is, we inherited from the previous government a broken system that is overly restrictive and unaffordable for parents. Under the current system, there is clearly a strong demand for increased infant care that cannot be satisfied by current supply.

During her speech, the minister provided a statistic that I find to be quite eye opening. Again I'm going to quote from the Minister of Education: "Only 3% of licensed child care spaces are currently for infants."

That is why our government is looking to expand access to infant care through schedule 3 of Bill 66. Many home-based providers excel in providing infant care. Therefore, by expanding access to home-based providers, our government is also taking a simple step forward towards increasing the supply of quality infant care.

Madam Speaker, some of the rules governing home-based child care providers simply do not make sense. Perhaps the best example of this is found in the limitations placed on home-based providers in terms of the number of children they can have in their care at any given time, which is five, and the fact that their own children, if they have young children, are counted towards this maximum if and when they are home during the child care program's hours of operation. This current standard is harmful not only to the many parents across this province who need increased access to quality child care services, but also to the home-based businesses trying to survive in this industry. As the minister explained, "Adjusting the limit on the maximum allowable for the provider's own children would mean that providers would no longer be required to count their own children in their head counts at any time once they have turned four years old. This is important. This is about increasing access for child care that's flexible and close to home."

Beyond this, the final big change that our government is pushing forward under schedule 3 is the removal of restrictions currently in place that prohibits parents from accessing in-home child care services unless they are on financial assistance. Under the new policy, a family's eligibility for in-home care will not be determined by income. Members on the opposition benches will protest

that home-based providers are not what they envision as quality care providers. Members opposite protest that the changes we are proposing under schedule 3 are “creating, with intention, an unsafe learning and care environment. It is doing child care on the cheap.”

Madam Speaker, that is a shameful position. I can assure you that circumstances coming from the opposition fall far from the mark. These proposed changes are designed to give home-based child care providers and authorized recreational and skill-building programs additional flexibility while still retaining the health and safety provisions under the current legislative framework. As the Minister of Education pointed out, “Any operators who contravene the Child Care and Early Years Act will be subject to the same enforcement measures that currently exist.”

For starters, the ministry already has a child care quality assurance and licensing branch. Within this branch, there is an established and dedicated enforcement unit. The ministry also has in place an online, searchable registry of violations. These components, in tandem, work to support and uphold compliance and oversight. Any complaints registered to the ministry are followed up on.

Let me remind this House that the ministry is not simply reactive in its quality assurance, but also proactive. In fact, in many cases the ministry performs inspections that are not based on complaints. Additionally, the ministry has the authority to take decisive action against any child care provider who has proven to be non-compliant with the rules in place. The tools at the ministry’s disposal include compliance orders, protection orders and monetary penalties.

As was explained by the minister, child care providers not following the rules may also be subject to restraining orders or charges under our child care legislation. Anyone who is found guilty of an offence is prohibited from ever providing child care in the future.

Expanding access to home-based child care will simply provide parents with more affordable choices, and this is something that families want and need.

In closing, I would like to say once more how proud I am to be part of a government that is willing to make the decisive decisions that Ontarians need in order to get this province back on track. Bill 66, as it stands, is a great leap forward for this province. It’s a bill that works for the businesses and families of this province, and it is one which achieves this, principally, through advancement of our government’s red tape reduction agenda. It takes significant steps to reduce red tape across a broad range of Ontario’s economic and administrative sectors. These reductions will go to great lengths in providing employers, workers and parents more choice in terms of how they spend their time and money.

Across all sectors of the economy and society there exist irrational, restrictive and duplicative regulations. Our government is fully committed to changing this, and Bill 66 is a great start. That is why I will be voting in favour of this bill, and I would encourage the rest of the members of this House to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I listened to every single word of the new, up-and-coming member who’s in the House today, and one thing I will say from where I stand is that a lot of the words he said sounded very familiar. It’s like something I heard, déjà vu—“cutting red tape,” “common sense.” I wonder where those words came from? And do you know what? Some people distanced themselves from him and came over to this side. Maybe they were afraid of what those words meant.

Anyway, I want to talk about a few of the issues he raised, particularly on schedule 9. I wouldn’t expect anything different coming from the member or from this government—where you have a government that’s going to be attacking workers. I expect that. It’s part of your DNA, just like privatization is part of your DNA. That’s what a Conservative government does. So we shouldn’t be surprised by that, and Ontarians aren’t surprised by that.

When we see that an employer will now not be required to get approval from the director of employment standards—coming from a Conservative government, I’m not surprised by that, and Ontarians should not be surprised as well. We’re mad as hell and we’re going to be fighting it, but this is part of what a Conservative government is bringing to Ontarians.

The fact that it’s going to eliminate ministry oversight—we shouldn’t be surprised by that. That’s part of a Conservative government. That’s what they do.

The requirement of having employees’ rights being posted in the workplace is going to be eliminated. We shouldn’t be surprised by that because that’s what a Conservative government does. That’s part of their DNA.

There’s one thing that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh did bring up—where, within the context of this bill, there’s a lot of legislation that was brought in by the Common Sense Revolution that wasn’t there, which attacked clean water systems. Why aren’t we talking about the technologies that we have here in Canada that we’re using in Third World countries to put an end to our First Nations—we’re not talking about that because that’s not part of their DNA.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Will Bouma: It’s great to be able to rise in the House and speak about Bill 66 again today, just briefly.

I have to point out a few issues that I have with some of what I’ve been hearing from across the way, and especially from Algoma–Manitoulin.

I want to just point out how thankful I am for the words from our member from Kitchener–Conestoga, because he’s reiterating our government’s commitment to the worker. Let’s face it, Karl Marx has been debunked. We’re not in some class struggle; we’re not in some warfare between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the worker versus—no. Let’s set that aside.

The reality is that this government is as committed to the worker as they are to anyone else, but the only way that we can be committed to the worker is by also being

committed—and being open for business. That’s the only way that we can be open for jobs.

1430

How do we support labour? How do we support the worker? Easy. Let’s not chase their jobs away. You know what? Let’s keep schedule 9, which allows any worker and their employer to be able to bid on contracts. Let’s open up those contracts and those municipalities and save not just the worker but the taxpayer millions and millions of dollars.

You know, we’ve heard from the member from Parkdale–High Park about the unfair rent practices and how that puts pressure on the people who live there. You know what? We support those people, which is why we need to eliminate red tape. If we make it impossible to build something because of red tape, then guess what? There will be no places for people to live; there will be no places for people to work. That’s why it’s so important that we eliminate red tape.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I listened as well to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. I wasn’t altogether surprised by what he shared in this House. What he left out was that the process in creating Bill 66 was a flawed process. It limited public consultation. We only had one day of consultation on 10 different schedules and pieces of legislation in Bill 66.

I wasn’t surprised that he thinks that schedule 3 is a step in the right direction, when every child care advocate across this province spoke out very loudly against it in the name of keeping children safe in the province of Ontario. I have to say, Careless About Child Care, the report that should inform policy and legislation, specifically indicated that having more than three children under the age of two in a home care situation, be it licensed or unlicensed, was not for the safety or well-being of children in the province of Ontario. Thanks to the region of Waterloo; they wrote a letter to this government and they asked them not to move forward with that for the health and safety and well-being of children. I must tell you, that’s not a surprise.

And do you know what? There’s a lack of understanding. I think that people in this province are worried about this government. That undermines confidence, the way decisions are being made, the way legislation is being created.

I have to say that my office has already received 123 inquiries about the “open for business” licence plates. They want to know who is paying for it. They want to know where the evidence is that it will create a strong economy in the province of Ontario, because they see right through it. When you have a Premier and a government that creates legislation in such a haphazard, irresponsible manner, that undermines the confidence in the economy. Bill 66 will be challenged in court by the carpenters in this province because it undermines collective bargaining. The lawyers are doing very well in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Before I get going this afternoon with talking about Bill 66, I do want to give a shout-out to a young man who is celebrating his 10th birthday, Calvin Douglas Nicholls, my oldest grandson, so to Calvin. He’ll have no idea what this means at all, but that’s okay.

When we talk about Bill 66, we talk about restoring competitiveness. We’ve got to remember something: We are in a \$15-billion hole. We’ve got to start doing something to start to turn the economy around. Our plan is to build up the economy, not to tear down our economy, something that the Liberals did while still being supported by the NDP at least 97% of the time.

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I knew that you would love to hear that. I’ve got some horrendous groans from the masses on the other side.

But you know, Speaker, when we talk about creating an advantage for Ontario—a lot of rules and regulations. We want to reduce that. We call that red tape reduction. We want to reduce it by at least 25%. So do you know what we’ve done? We’ve challenged all of our ministries to take a look for efficiencies within their ministries. We have to lead by example on that.

We also want to reduce the corporate income tax rate, as well as increase access to the supply of skilled labour in the province. Together, you combine the economic reforms. We feel a great level of confidence in the future of our economy and as well our prosperity, because, unfortunately, this was lost with the previous government.

I’m sure that at some other point I will have more to add.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: I would like to thank the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, of course, my colleague the member for Brantford–Brant, the member from Waterloo and, of course, the great member of Chatham–Kent–Leamington. I hope I enunciated that correctly.

There’s one thing that I want to go back to—the member from Algoma–Manitoulin mentioned it—and that was hearing some of these words before, words like “common sense.” Some people think that you should shy away from governments past. But do you know what, Madam Speaker? I am proud of what the PC government did in the early 1990s and into the mid-2000s. But there’s one thing that I don’t hear a lot from the other side of this House, on the NDP benches, and that’s talk about former Premier Bob Rae. They don’t seem to want to mention his name very often, Madam Speaker, and I wonder why. Maybe one day we’ll get to hear a little bit more about what our NDP counterparts think of those Rae days.

There’s one thing that I really want to touch on in my remaining time, and that’s schedule 9 of Bill 66, Madam Speaker. There’s a lot of talk from the other side of the House about how this is an attack on jobs and how we’re anti-union. This is opening up the ability for union contracts and non-union contracts. There are certain unions in Waterloo region that are not beholden to the carpenters’ union that cannot currently bid on contracts. I want to

know why the member from Waterloo seems to think it's a good idea to have closed tendering in the region and not have those union shops be able to bid on contracts.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate? The member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Dundas.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Friendlily known as “HWAD” if you're stuck. Yes, a lovely acronym.

I'm always proud to rise on behalf of the residents of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas. I'm proud to be their representative. I'm also proud to be able to stand here to speak against Bill 66, a bill that does nothing to help my residents and will, in fact, make things worse for them. From the very young to the very old, this bill does nothing but define those people as red tape and burdensome regulations. The people of Ontario don't fall under these categories of just red tape and burdensome regulations; these are people who live and work in our community. They expect a government that sees them through that lens of, “What can this government do to ensure that they have healthy, safe lives?”

This bill, Bill 66, does exactly the opposite. It looks at the people of Ontario as widgets, as something that they put into a formula. They want to reduce burdensome red tape and regulations, but it doesn't look at the lived lives of the people of Ontario, and certainly not the people of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

We're now here with this bill before us, Bill 66, for third reading. I'm at least happy to say that that particularly troublesome schedule 10 has been removed, which is a lesson to this government: The people are paying attention. The pushback that people had in the province of Ontario about what schedule 10 would do for the province of Ontario is something that this government needs to understand. People are paying attention, people are listening, and, as the member from Waterloo had said, people are concerned, if not afraid, with the changes that this government is making to the province of Ontario. I would have to say that it's not just the changes; it's the haste and the speed with which these bills are being pushed through the House.

The other day, the member from Carleton, in defending Bill 66, said, “I don't want to say that we were perfect in crafting this bill.” Well, I can assure you that I won't be saying that either. This is flawed legislation from beginning to end. Not only is the legislation flawed; the process by which this government put this through the House is flawed, as are so many of the other bills—the way in which this government rams this through the House is flawed, as are so many of the other bills—the way in which this government rams this through the House.

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I have to say that the very premise of this bill is objectionable. The fact that we are talking about making Ontario competitive again with a bill that sacrifices the health and safety of our children, of our workplaces and of our environment—this is an objectionable bill. The fact that it's an omnibus bill—it's a little bit of this, a little bit of

that, put into one big bill—makes it an even more indigestible dog's breakfast of a bill.

What we have before us is a bill that will make children less safe; that's schedule 3. We have a bill that reduce environmental protections, which is schedule 5. We have a bill that, really, will make our loved ones who are in long-term care less safe—schedule 8. And finally, we have a bill, under schedule 9, that takes away the protections of hard-working Ontarians. It takes away protections that they worked long and hard for. Those are the schedules that I will be focusing on.

I would really like to start with schedule 3, which addresses the changes to the child care act. These amendments to the Child Care and Early Years Act and to the Education Act are something that I never expected that I would be debating in the House. It is sort of a cold irony that I'm standing here debating this today on a day when yesterday was the last day that we had an Ontario child advocate. If I can do nothing else in my time here today, I would like to commend Irwin Elman and his staff for the tireless work that they have done to make children safe in Ontario. I would like to condemn this government for removing an independent officer who did nothing but look out for the most vulnerable children in our province: children in care, Indigenous children, and children who had no place to go but to this independent advocate. This government ripped that away like that. So I guess, in some way, I am not surprised to see what they have here in schedule 3, because that continues to be their tone-deaf way in which they are ignoring the most vulnerable in our province, which are children and youth.

The restrictions that this bill is taking away were put in place five years ago. It has been said in this House that they were put in place after children died in the province of Ontario. In fact, when we were discussing this earlier, a member on our side said that children died in Ontario. The member from Eglinton—Lawrence said that just one baby died. This is something that I couldn't believe I was hearing. I can only understand that what the member meant when she said “one baby” was perhaps was that that was simply the cost of doing business, that that was an acceptable number for us to consider, for us to say, “How do we, on balance, make sure that we have child care?” That was really something that I never expected to hear.

I would like to put on the record it was more than one baby; it was four babies who died in Ontario, four children that did not go home safe to their families—families that are living in grief probably now. So, the very fact that this schedule 3 has been put into this omnibus bill and ignores the grief and pain that families went through is something, again, that I cannot believe is in this bill and this government stands in defence of.

It has been said, when this bill was discussed at committee, that there wasn't anyone who worked in the child care sector or any child care advocate who spoke for this bill. In fact, they really spoke against this bill, for many, many reasons.

It's quite clear, if we look across Canada, that there is no other government that has gutted child care regulations

like this. People are putting these regulations in place, not removing them.

Our children deserve protection from their government. This is nothing short of a recipe for disaster. When parents, who are working, take their kids to place them in care in the custody of other families, they deserve peace of mind. They deserve to at least feel that their children are safe, that there are regulations in place that protect their children. In fact, I imagine that most parents would be shocked to learn that these regulations are being watered down at the expense of the safety of their children's lives.

The one thing that we talk about and that we hear is that there is a need, which we recognize, for universal child care programs, for public universal child care. That has been something that has been needed in this country, let alone this province, for years and years and years. We need a strategy to increase child care spaces—to increase safe child care spaces, developmentally appropriate child care spaces.

It was the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care that did say that this is child care on the cheap, and I agree with that. This is not a child care plan. This is not a plan that will increase spaces. This is, again, as I said, a recipe for disaster. We need to invest in child care. It has been said time and time again, and the evidence is rock solid: that an investment in child care and daycare has huge economic benefits. But I guess evidence-based decisions are not the forte of this government, particularly.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The return on investment is there.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The return on investment is there. The evidence is there that this is an investment that returns over and over and over again—not just in improving people's lives, which it does. It allows people to get back to work faster after they've had a child. It allows women to participate in the labour force at greater numbers than they have in the past. That's an important feature, because so often, in the case of women, they bear the economic consequences of staying home to raise their children. We need to ensure that if a woman chooses to go back to work, they know that they have safe places to put their children. That is a responsibility of this government, and it's certainly a responsibility that schedule 3 in Bill 66 walks back from. Instead of improving it, you've compromised this. You've made this worse for parents and children in the province of Ontario.

I just have to say, loudly and clearly, especially to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, that children are not red tape. Children are not about burdensome regulation.

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Pardon me?

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Where did he go?

Ms. Catherine Fife: They don't like that. They don't like it, but it's true.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's true, and I would suppose that's probably the reason—I'll talk about it later—why no one on committee from this side had a word to say in defence of this bill, because it's indefensible.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Silent.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Yes.

Let's move on to schedule 5, which is the Toxics Reduction Act. This is yet another bill intended to keep people safe in Ontario, to keep people safe in their workplace. We don't need less of this; we need more of this. In fact, the evidence is clearer and clearer that Canadians die prematurely every year because of pollution in Ontario. One in four young children are affected by asthma, so it's quite clear that we need to do more to protect Canadians and Ontarians from toxins, not less.

One of the things that this schedule does, the schedule that enables the repeal of the Toxics Reduction Act—this bill, this schedule and these regulations currently require large industries to develop plans to reduce use or generation of toxic substances and to report publicly on those uses. That seems like a pretty straightforward, common-sense, important thing to do for the people of Ontario.

Ms. Catherine Fife: They need a plan.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: They need a plan.

If regulating toxins in the environment is burdensome red tape, I'm not sure that I understand. I think we have a different interpretation of what toxins are and how, in fact, we need to treat them in the province of Ontario.

One of the things that I had said earlier is that I am proud to be from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas and to represent the people there, and one of the organizations that we have in Hamilton—a great organization—is Environment Hamilton. They did really fantastic work on pushing back and making sure that schedule 10 was removed from the bill. They had a whole campaign which was about saving the greenbelt, and there are lots of people in Hamilton who engaged in that campaign. I would like to credit Environment Hamilton for some of the work that we had to make sure that that very reprehensible schedule was taken out of this bill.

1450

Environment Hamilton also has some things to say about schedule 5 of Bill 66. I'm just going to quote Environment Hamilton. As we know, "Hamilton is a city with a heavy industrial core and an extensive base of manufacturing facilities. Environment Hamilton has worked for many years to see these facilities make improvements to reduce their emissions to air, land and water.... Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act and associated regulations represent an important piece in the ongoing effort to increase openness and transparency"—where have we heard those words?—"and realize progress in reducing and/or eliminating the use and release of harmful substances from industry wherever possible."

One of the things that we need to make perfectly clear when we're talking about schedule 5 is that this is not a duplication of the federal rules around toxins. In fact, there are two significant differences between what was in the provincial regulations and the federal, and that really has a lot to do with the ability of the province of Ontario—that requires facilities to report the use, creation and the addition of toxics in consumer goods. People need to know. This is something that the people of Ontario deserve to know. This is critical for us understanding our individual exposures to toxins in Ontario, and that's different than the federal legislation.

Secondly, the Toxics Reduction Act requires facilities to consider ways to reduce toxins by developing reduction plans. They need a plan. It's important to have a plan.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's not too much.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's not too much to ask.

In the years since the implementation of this act, 40% of over 1,000 facilities that indicated plans to reduce toxins in their operations have actually achieved reductions—and so that is what we would like to see in the province of Ontario. That's the kind of progress that we would like to see. The people expect their government to be overseeing the ability for them to have safe workplaces and safe environments.

I'm going to move on to schedule 8, which deals with health and long-term care, which deals with our long-term-care facilities. Many of us are at a point in our lives where either we or our parents are moving into this phase of their life where they are going to be moving to a long-term-care facility. I can tell you from personal experience that it is quite shocking, when you move into the system, to understand the state that it is in. The privatization of long-term-care facilities that we have seen under the previous government, beginning with the previous Conservative government, and now, currently, with the Liberal—and now this move to ensure that there's privatization of our health care in Ontario. This privatization has not served us well in Ontario. In fact, Ontario has the lowest standards in Canada for long-term-care facilities—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Vulnerable seniors.

Ms. Sandy Shaw:—again, back to the most vulnerable people in our community. We've gone from the very youngest children in daycare, who are now being made more vulnerable by Bill 66—and now we're looking at the kinds of changes that this act will have for people who are in long-term care.

The very fact that this bill, in many ways, takes away oversight of facilities that look after our loved ones—I cannot imagine, if anybody has experience of being in long-term care, either with their parents or grandparents, that they think that those privatized systems need less oversight. They need more. In fact, that's why we, as a party, continue to push for a mandatory four hours of hands-on care in these facilities. Without that push, we're not going to see that.

Finally, let me talk about schedule 9, which really is—there really is no way out of describing it as an attack on workers, an attack on the most vulnerable people in the province of Ontario, workers who have had hard-earned advances in the workplace, and schedule 9 just callously rolls those back. We've talked about it quite a bit, but the two areas where this schedule 9 affects are overtime and posting of the Employment Standards Act. As has been said, in the workplace, overtime, if it's negotiated with a third party to ensure that it is something that is mutually agreed on—that balances out the power imbalance that's in a workplace. When there is no requirement for employers to negotiate appropriately with workers on overtime, you can end up in situations where workers are more precarious. They have unstable lives. They can't make

plans for their future. It really does make the workplace less friendly for workers and in fact there's a likelihood that they could end up having less compensation for those overtime hours.

Really, the fact is that all workers want is a sense of what their work is going to be and to get paid for overtime. It seems like a fair enough thing to do. I can't understand the—I almost want to say the pettiness of a government that won't even allow employers to paste on a wall the Employment Standards Act, the rights of workers. They can't even require them to make sure that employees have that basic understanding. Really, is that red tape? Actually, there's tape involved; it's Scotch tape. Good for you getting rid of the Scotch tape so employees don't even understand what their rights are in a workplace.

Interjection.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Masking tape, gaffer tape, red tape—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Duct tape.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Duct tape.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Whatever it is, stick it up on the wall.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: That's right. Put it on the wall.

Let me just close by saying, as I said earlier, that I will stand here and oppose this bill because the changes here are indefensible. I also have had so many calls to my office, people from one end to the other, from the very young to the elderly, saying, "This bill affects me in the most negative way."

I would just have to say that it's not even the bill itself; it's the way that this was rushed through this House and the way it was rushed through committee. I can only say that committee is where the people of Ontario can have a chance to say what they want about legislation. We have Bill 74 coming up. Some 14,000 registered to speak to Bill 74, but we're going to get one day of committee. We had five hours of committee on Bill 66. It's not just the legislation that is flawed. It's the way in which you trample this through the House and do not listen to the people of Ontario.

No one government has all of the answers. No one Premier knows what is best for Ontario. I would encourage this government to take time with the legislation that they're putting forward in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I stand in supporting Bill 66. I myself am the owner of a business for the past 25 years. I have four children. Children have never been the red tape for my business. Instead, I am here to support Bill 66 because we really have to get ourselves competitive, not only locally but globally as well. Cutting red tape is one of them. The high cost of doing business is another.

When I was trying to pitch for some of the jobs, the kind of paperwork, the documentation that I had to do with the government was so cumbersome. Not only did it take a lot of my staff time, I finally decided it is not really something that we can even push forward.

I served on the Richmond Hill Board of Trade; I was the chair. I was also serving on the Markham Board of

Trade; I was their vice-chair. I understand both small businesses and large businesses, all their needs. All of them are concerned about high costs and the problems that we have doing business.

I was talking to some real estate owners, and they said, “Come on, speed up the process. We could have got a lot of things processed and the housing problem wouldn’t be such a problem anymore.”

It takes a lot of time for them to process any of the documentation, and all of a sudden the costs go up. We are the ones who suffer. The business owners cannot get the work done.

Actually, I still remember in the year 2002 I did have increasing staff. I’d have to cut off half by now because of the red tape that I’m facing—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Questions and comments?

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Ms. Suze Morrison: It’s certainly a privilege to respond to the comments that my colleague from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas has made. She had some really powerful words to say about this bill, and the changes that are in this bill are truly indefensible. I think specifically about her comments around children being red tape for this government and the increases to the number of children under two who can be in a child care facility.

I’ve had fire on the brain lately; as many of you know, we’ve had a significant fire in my riding in the last little while and a number of electrical issues in a number of our high-rise buildings. To my good colleague here: If your house was on fire, how many kids under the age of two do you think you could carry in your hands if your building was on fire? How many kids? Two?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Two.

Ms. Suze Morrison: Two, yes. There’s a reason we have a limit of kids under the age of two: They can’t walk yet. If the building is on fire, how do you expect those providers to get those kids safely out of that building when you can’t physically carry more than two of them?

This brings me to my next point, which ties—again, fire has been on the mind lately, and I want to touch briefly on the sub-metering piece of this bill as well. As many of you know, I have a lot of issues in my riding in downtown Toronto with aging electrical infrastructure in a number of high-rise buildings, which has led to 1,500 of my constituents being displaced from their homes. Those folks will not be back in their homes for another year.

I canvassed one of the buildings nearby that area just a few weeks ago. In talking to a number of the tenants there, the first thing you notice when you go in the building is that the hallways aren’t heated. So we started talking to tenants about the heat. They said, “Oh, we’re on sub-metering in this building and our utility rates are \$400 a month for a 500-square-foot apartment.” Four hundred dollars a month to keep the heat and hydro on for the sub-metering through the utilities. So do you know what they’re doing, Speaker, in those units? It’s cheaper for them to use stand-alone electrical heaters plugged into their walls, those high-efficiency heaters, than to use the

electrical baseboard heat that their sub-metering pays for, and that is a fire hazard. You are not thinking through the—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to thank the honourable member for her speech and also other members for contributing to this important piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, ever since getting elected, one of the things I’ve been doing, along with many of my other colleagues, I’m sure, is speaking to our local chambers and speaking to local businesses. One thing we’ve heard loud and clear is the burden of red tape and the regulations that businesses have to absorb and deal with on a day-to-day basis, be it federal, be it provincial or local.

Madam Speaker, I’ll share an example. We recently had a round table in the agriculture sector. I have a significant portion of my riding with the farming community. My counterpart, the federal MP Lisa Raitt, and myself hosted a round table. One thing I can tell you that we heard over and over and over from businesses is the burden of red tape and the regulations and the amount of time that they have to spend each and every day trying to deal with the paperwork alone.

It’s no secret; Madam Speaker, we know that the average business in Ontario spends roughly \$33,000 dealing with red tape compared to some of the other provinces, which range roughly from \$25,000 to \$27,000. Our government has set a clear goal of reducing red tape by 25%. With the agenda that has been set and how aggressive we have been working, I have no doubt that we will achieve that goal.

If we want our province to prosper, if we want our province to attract investments, if we want to help create jobs, these are important steps that we have to take as a government. I would encourage all of my colleagues in this Legislature to support this important piece of legislation so we can get the province moving.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I’d like to address and thank the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas for her comments.

I’ve been speaking to stakeholders, and when they look at this piece of legislation, they’re puzzled. They see problems with red tape, but they’re really curious about why the government saw these as priorities in trying to change things.

One concern that has come up is the changes to schedule 9. Schedule 9 will eliminate the requirement that employers obtain approval from the director of employment standards before overtime averaging. The proposed changes would effectively eliminate that oversight. The proposed changes would effectively rely on self regulation, and that’s a bad idea.

The Ministry of Labour has reported to the media on numerous occasions that many employment standards in Ontario, like overtime rules, are not being followed. In Thunder Bay–Atikokan, we have strong, hard-working

citizens, and many of them are unionized. But there are many who are not. I think of the young workers. I think of the workers who are challenged in their use of English. So we need strong workplace protections, and we need them to be enforced.

When I talk to small business, when I talk to the chamber, most employers across this province will tell you that they want policies that are fairly balanced for workers' and employers' interests. That's good for employers and employees. Rules about overtime help people strike a balance between work and their lives.

When we create or change rules, we must ensure that they are fair, they balance competing interests and they will be uniformly enforced. Schedule 9 fails on all counts and should be withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you to everyone who spoke today on Bill 66.

To my colleagues across the way, I have to say this: You talk about this, that it's just common sense, but we've seen this common sense movie, this Common Sense Revolution, before. It ended up with things in Ontario that nobody is proud of. It ended up with Dudley George killed at Ipperwash. It ended up with people dying because of the impact of Walkerton. That is not something that we want to see happen here again in the province of Ontario. There's nothing about that that's common sense.

In fact, the very fact that this government keeps talking about red tape and burdensome regulations when we're talking, on this side of the House, about keeping children safe in child care—it just boggles the mind that, in fact, you cannot make the connection between what we're talking about. Really, how can children be seen as burdensome red tape? If this government is truly looking at reducing duplications of regulations and red tape, why are they focusing on children and child care? Why are they focusing on workers when, in fact, workers need more protections, not less?

The label of this being about burdensome regulations and red tape really masks the true intentions of this government, which are to undermine the rights of workers. In fact, it will result in putting children in unsafe situations. I hope it never comes to this, but if disaster strikes, if there's a fire, as our member has said, where children unfortunately are injured or die in the workplace—I would urge you to think about this because, do you know what? When we stand and vote and your name is registered in support of this bill, I hope that you can live with yourselves if this results in the kinds of things that we're trying to protect the children of Ontario from.

Thank you very much for your time, Madam Speaker. I urge the government to reconsider.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to contribute to debate on Bill 66.

Bill 66 is less about cutting red tape and more about removing the protections for the people and places we love

in Ontario. It really starts with children. It says a lot about the Ford government that they consider child care ratios that are there to keep our children safe to be red tape. I don't see how anyone who has read the 2014 Ombudsman report, *Careless About Child Care*, could vote in favour of schedule 3 of Bill 66. The so-called red tape was put in place not because one child died, not because two, not because three, but because four children died in unlicensed care facilities. I ask the members opposite to take the time to read *Careless about Child Care* before you vote on Bill 66. Do government members really want to be on the record for reducing child safety when a future report will likely ask the question why any government would not only ignore the Ombudsman's report but actually overturn the child safety ratios put in place in response to that report?

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Madam Speaker, I want to be clear: I support home care. I grew up on a farm. One of my children went to a home care setting and was well cared for. As a matter of fact, I support parent choice in child care, but not at the expense of safety. If home care providers are struggling financially, then we should look at tax incentives or subsidies to support these child care providers, not a weakening of the standards that protect our children.

Next, likewise, I don't understand how any government would consider reducing toxic emissions to be red tape, especially at a time when we know that increased exposure to toxins is putting people's health at risk, putting more pressure on our health care system and increasing the costs of delivering health care. The Toxics Reduction Act does not duplicate federal legislation. Unlike the federal legislation, it actually requires companies to have a toxics reduction plan, so I would argue that we should be strengthening the act, not weakening the act.

As a matter of fact, before the act was brought into place, Ontario had the second-highest level of toxic emissions of any jurisdiction in North America. We were second only to Texas. Even places like Mississippi and Alabama were performing better than us. Since the Toxics Reduction Act has been brought in, our performance has improved. According to the Ministry of the Environment in their 2017 report, we've seen, year over year, toxics reductions in Ontario. As a matter of fact, in that year they were at their lowest level since 2012. But the government wants to get rid of it. They consider that red tape.

I ask them—because I know a lot of them represent rural ridings—there are over 800,000 people who work in the food and farming sector, contributing over \$40 billion to Ontario's GDP. Do we want to risk toxics released onto that farmland that supports so many jobs in our province?

I also want to point out to them that in my riding of Guelph and in ridings across Ontario, one of the biggest challenges to urban revitalization and affordable housing is brown fill remediation. So many people talk to me: "Wouldn't it be more fiscally responsible to reduce the toxins in the first place instead of spending millions and sometimes billions of dollars cleaning it up afterwards?" I don't see how anybody who would consider themselves fiscally responsible could vote for schedule 5 of Bill 66.

I want to say to the people of Ontario a quick thank you for the work you've done to remove schedule 10 from Bill 66. It's because of your voice standing up to protect our greenbelt and to protect clean water that schedule 10 has been removed from Bill 66.

Madam Speaker, I know my time is limited, so I just want to take a brief moment to talk about schedule 9, because schedule 9 takes away pensions and benefits from front-line construction and trades workers. They came to committee offering amendments to Bill 66 that would achieve the government's objective, which was to have more contract options for municipalities while, at the same time, protecting the benefits and pensions of front-line, hard-working tradespeople. Unfortunately, they brought those amendments at 5:45 and the deadline for amendments was at 6 p.m., so we didn't even have time to listen to people, respond to people and put forward sensible amendments to Bill 66.

I want to conclude by saying I'm a long-time small business owner. I want to see small businesses have less paperwork to fill out and lower regulatory costs, but Bill 66 doesn't achieve that, and I can guarantee you I don't know of any business in this province that wants to invest in a place that doesn't stand up and protect our water and our farmland, our air, our soil and our most vulnerable citizens, because that's the kind of Ontario that people want to invest in, the kind of Ontario that protects the people and places we love.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's great to rise in this House and offer my comments to the member from Guelph.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: They didn't applaud when you stood up.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I see. Anyway—
Applause.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you so much.

Do you know what I really like about the member's statement? It's the first one that I know of from any of the opposition benches that has mentioned agriculture at all. The agriculture industry is probably the largest industry we have in this province, and I don't hear anyone talk about agriculture and the changes they are making. It's incredible. Whether you agree with them or not, you don't acknowledge what agriculture does to this province. That's quite shameful. But again, I guess, if you stay in your own little bubble, you don't do these things.

I do want to disagree with the member on his statement about the construction industry. I have two sons in the trades. They're non-unionized, so they would not be able to work at some of these places or some of these projects because of that. To me, that's unfair. In order to help our economy, especially municipal economies, we need to have a fair, open and transparent contract-bidding process. We don't have that right now in some spots. I think we need to think of those individuals in the trades who don't belong to a union shop. They are skilled trades. I heard one member of the opposition say, "Well, they're not skilled trades because they don't belong to unions." Pardon me? Yes. Look it up in Hansard; it's in there. I think that's a

very unfair comment, because my two sons who are in the trades do a very, very good job. At least they're still employed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to follow my friend from Guelph on his comments this afternoon. He started off his comments by talking about child care. I must say, the words that I heard that have most resonated with me this afternoon on child care came from my good friend from Toronto Centre when she asked us, "How many toddlers can you carry out in your arms in case of a fire? It's two." This bill, of course, is going to allow private child care spaces to have more than two toddlers. That is a scary thing, especially, as she said, in her riding, where they've had some terrible fires recently.

The other thing I heard that really resonated with me this afternoon was from my good friend from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, who talked about children not being red tape. I think that is something to resonate with all of us: that when we're talking about cutting red tape, we should not be talking about any safety to do with children as well.

The member from Guelph did talk about safety. I should remind the government members that later this month we have the Workers Day of Mourning. My concern is that, with some of the provisions and some of the cuts that are being made here in health and safety, next year we're going to have larger numbers of workers that we will be remembering, who have been injured on the job or who have lost their lives on the job because of some of the cuts in this bill.

We all know that in politics, perception becomes reality. If we're saying that Ontario is open for business, and by doing that we're cutting some of the health and safety regulations, then people are going to say, "These are not healthy workplaces anymore." This is something that we should be very cautious of when we move forward with this bill: not to cut anything to do with health and safety.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: I'm so honoured to show my support for Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act.

I've been a judge for many different competitions for years. Whenever there was a match, I always heard people saying, "You win some; you lose some." Whenever I heard this, I noticed that people say this to losers. When you talk to a winner, you say, "Congratulations." I think this government is looking for ways to be a winner among all the jurisdictions in the country and all over the world. What I've heard from different members is that they are about regulations. I have no problem with regulations, but overregulation is unusual. When we need to win and when we need to run fast, we need to put down our burdens. Well, we still have to wear something—we are not naked in running—but we have to put away unnecessary burdens.

1520

In the last few months, I met with different stakeholders in Queen's Park and in my constituency office. Many of

them were so excited that we are working so hard to remove all the red tape and burdens from them. You may notice that we are not just taking care of one direction. We are looking at education. We are looking at business. We are looking at our commerce. We are looking at manufacturing. We are looking in all directions, 360 degrees, and therefore, with this bill, we are restoring Ontario's competitiveness—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

I'm just going to ask the members to remember, when you're going to get up and speak, to make sure your phone is not just on vibrant; it's on silent—or set it on the desk beside you. If it goes off while your mike is on, it's very loud to the folks in the booth up there. Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much for that reminder, Madam Chair. It's also a health and safety issue for our workers here in the building of Queen's Park.

I just want to commend the member from Guelph. We sat in the committee all day on Bill 66, on the one day that we had delegations. We shared our time so that we could get a good cross-section of questions to the delegations.

I think there has been some misunderstanding, really, on the part of the government on exactly what schedule 9 does. Schedule 9 has been described as a massive intrusion into free and collective bargaining in the province of Ontario. This was brought forward by the Ontario building and construction trades. Pat Dillon came. The carpenters' union came, and they came on behalf of all workers in the province of Ontario. They presented a legal brief—Madam Chair, you may be interested—which laid out a very valid charter challenge that will come forward against this government because you are interfering in free and collective bargaining in the province of Ontario.

You may not like unions. You may not like the people who lead unions, but those workers who built this building, who built hospitals and who built schools have rights. You cannot just take them away with the stroke of a pen in a weak piece of legislation like Bill 66.

I commend the member from Guelph for raising this issue because those people came before us and they proposed solutions. But this government was not interested in listening. They weren't interested in listening to the health and safety recommendations around child care in schedule 3. They weren't interested in listening to the toxics reduction changes that actually need to happen in the province of Ontario to keep our environment—because a good, clean environment is also good for business, Madam Chair.

Once again, this government is going down the wrong path and once again is creating many jobs in the province of Ontario for the legal profession.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I just want to say how much I appreciate my honourable colleagues for participating in the debate here on Bill 66.

I want to remind people in the House today that public health, protecting our children; protecting our water, air

and land, and protecting our seniors: That's not red tape. I think there's this misunderstanding—when most people think of red tape they think of, “Can the 16-page form be a three-page form?”, or, “Can we do compliance online?”

There was actually one schedule in the bill that made it easier for truckers to fill out their logbooks. I voted in favour of that at committee because that's reducing red tape.

But the schedules, like schedule 3, schedule 5 and schedule 9, raise serious concerns that need to be addressed before anyone would vote for this bill.

I appreciate the member from Windsor–Tecumseh reminding us that you can only carry two children out of a burning building. If you move it to three, what are you going to do about the third? That's what this government is doing.

I want to thank the member from Waterloo for reminding us that Bill 66 exposes the province to potentially expensive legal risk.

And while I certainly appreciate my colleague from Perth–Wellington bringing up the fact that non-unionized tradespeople should be able to access and bid on municipal contracts, I'll remind my colleagues that the building and construction and trades unions actually came forward with a compromise that would have opened the bidding process up while still protecting bargaining rights, and the government voted it down.

I'm going to be voting against Bill 66, and I encourage my colleagues to vote against it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Lindsey Park: It's an honour to rise today to contribute to the third reading debate on Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2019. This is a bill that was introduced by our Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. This is part of our government's red tape reduction strategy and our ambitious target of reducing red tape in Ontario by 25%. This bill is a first step in delivering on that commitment. Why set this target, you ask? Well, unduly costly and burdensome regulations are unnecessarily squeezing businesses in every economic sector and driving jobs and investment out of Ontario. We heard this non-stop during the last election campaign. This was, without a doubt, one of the number one priorities that the people of Ontario asked us to set.

Far too many of Ontario's regulatory requirements are inefficient, inflexible or out of date or, as you see in a number of cases in this bill, they duplicate federal or municipal regulations. They contain heavy-handed requirements that just cost companies a lot of money and add paperwork—that's what we're talking about when we talk about red tape—and they do this without adding greater protections to the people of Ontario.

Speaker, I would never stand here in this Legislature and ask you to reduce important protections for health and safety or reduce important protections for the environment. We're talking about regulations that are outdated, that add extra regulatory burden without an equivalent additional protection of health and safety.

Many companies have had enough of the high cost of doing business in Ontario. They're simply not investing in modernizing or expanding their operations here, which means they risk falling behind the competition in the US or elsewhere. Others are taking their new investments to more welcoming places or actively exploring options to shift their entire operations to the US. I will not stand for that, and this government will not stand for that.

We're listening to Ontario businesses that are experiencing a widening gap between Ontario and the US states that are our chief competitors. We are not an island in the Pacific Ocean. We have to consider Ontario's competitiveness in everything we do, in every regulation that is set, or in this case, being repealed. That's why we've called this bill the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2019. That's the focus of this bill.

There are many different aspects of this bill I could spend time speaking about today, but in the interest of time I'm going to zero in on a few specific aspects. I'm going to focus on the changes to the Employment Standards Act, I'm going to focus on ending duplicate environmental regulations, and then finally on the open tendering changes in the construction industry.

First, I want to speak about the Employment Standards Act changes. The first aspect of that I want to talk about is the removing of posting requirements. Bill 66 would remove the requirement that an employer post in its workplace a hard-copy poster, often on a bulletin board, prepared and published by the Ministry of Labour, concerning the rights and obligations of employers and employees under the Employment Standards Act.

1530

On this side of the House, in the government, we think it's important that employees understand what their rights and obligations are in a timely manner upon taking employment. That's not what we're here to debate. What we're here to debate is how it's done. It needs to be done in a 21st-century way. It's no longer realistic—I can't think of the first—I haven't looked at a bulletin board in this place since being elected. No one looks at bulletin boards anymore, Speaker. We read things we receive by email. We receive things that are put on our desk. Well, that's the same for every worker in Ontario. It's unlikely that they're going to look at a bulletin board in the first place. I think it's important that our employment standards in the 21st century are responsive to that reality. And to be clear, the act would retain the requirement that the poster must be provided to an employee within 30 days of their employment with an employer.

As our Minister of Labour said, "Perhaps this approach made sense in the 1950s, when employees gathered in the lunchroom or everyone worked on the same floor. Today the workplace could be anywhere: a GO train, a coffee shop, a construction site or a home office." What good is a bulletin board when they're sitting on the GO train?

"Our reform in schedule 9 recognizes the reality of today's workplace. If passed, our reform will mean that employers will be responsible for sending a copy of the poster directly to their employees. Ontario employees will

know their rights, and Ontario businesses won't be trapped under a legislative requirement designed for the 1950s."

Speaker, I think that's enough on that topic. I'm going to move on to the next aspect of the Employment Standards Act changes. Bill 66 would eliminate the need for Ontario employers to obtain approval from the government for excess weekly hours of work and overtime averaging requirements.

That first aspect is removing a requirement for director approval at the ministry to override limits to hours of work. Bill 66 would remove the requirement that an employer apply to the director of employment standards before making any agreement that allows its employees to exceed 48 hours of work in a workweek.

The second aspect of that is removing the requirement for director approval to average hours of work for overtime. Bill 66 would remove the requirement for an employer to receive approval from the director of employment standards before entering into agreements that would allow it to average its employees' hours of work for the purpose of determining the employees' entitlement to overtime pay.

This is just common sense. Why on earth was an employer having to write to the Ministry of Labour on these items? This sounds like the definition of unnecessary red tape.

Lucas Mapplebeck, who is an employment lawyer at Filion Wakely Thorup Angeletti in Hamilton, Ontario, said that small business owners are sometimes reluctant to engage with the government on employment standards issues.

He said, "Small employers can be intimidated by applying to the director of employment standards. For whatever reason, rightly or wrongly, they may feel like they don't want to bring scrutiny into their organization, or they're just intimidated by the process—maybe they can't afford legal counsel.

"The actual ability to make these agreements without additional steps and applying to the ministry is going to be welcomed." Again, that was Lucas Mapplebeck.

The proposed amendments—and this is now from Craig Stehr, who is a partner at Gowling WLG in Ottawa, also an employment lawyer. He said that the proposed amendments are really about flexibility for employers. He said, "To borrow on Ford language, it aims to really cut red tape that employers do run up against. I expect that the amendments, if adopted, will make it easier for employers across Ontario—regardless of their industry or sector—to better manage their workforce, particularly around the issue of scheduling."

Next, Speaker, I'd like to discuss the proposal in schedule 5 of this bill to end duplicate environmental regulations by repealing the Toxics Reduction Act at the end of 2021. I know this has been a hot topic of much interest in this Legislature, and so I hope to clarify what is truth from myth, as I speak about this section of the act and of the bill.

We're proposing changes to the toxics reduction program to remove unnecessary duplication with the federal

Chemicals Management Plan and reduce burden for industry. We're proposing to no longer require facilities with toxics reduction plans to review them, and exempt certain facilities from having to report and plan in the future.

We also propose to repeal the Toxics Reduction Act, not immediately but, rather, on December 31, 2021, by which time all substances that are regulated by the Toxics Reduction Act in Ontario will be covered by the federal program. We're confident in the federal government's comprehensive chemical management plan, and will rely on it as other provinces do. This is not new.

Under Ontario's Toxics Reduction Act—and let's be clear on just what the requirements are here, for a second—regulated facilities need to report publicly on their use of certain toxic substances, and are required to identify options to reduce them through toxics reduction plans every five years. The federal government's program, the Chemicals Management Plan, also requires facilities to take action on toxic substances, which can include identifying options to reduce their use.

If you don't want to take my word for it, if you don't want to take our minister's word for it, here's what the federal ministry of the environment's website says, as of today's date; this is today, on their website. You can look it up while you're sitting in your chairs. This is what it says:

“The Chemicals Management Plan (CMP) is a government of Canada initiative aimed at reducing the risks posed by chemicals to Canadians and their environment. The next phase of the CMP, launched in May 2016, will address the remaining 1,550 priority chemicals out of the original 4,300 chemicals identified as priorities during the categorization. The Minister of Health and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change have committed to addressing these chemicals by 2020. The CMP builds on previous initiatives by assessing chemicals used in Canada and by taking action on chemicals found to be harmful to human health and/or the environment.”

This is the federal plan. It's one of the best in the world. It has been recognized across the globe as the gold standard for managing chemicals. Why are we trying to somehow duplicate that at the provincial level?

This is right out of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. This is where these powers come from. “CEPA” is what it's known as. That's the acronym, if you've heard it in the media. It defines toxic substances, in section 64, as those that enter or may enter the environment at levels or under conditions that have or may have a harmful effect on the environment; that are or could be dangerous to the environment that life depends on; or are or could be dangerous to human life or health.

This is the mandate of the federal government. It's set out right in legislation.

Here, further, is what the federal ministry says about the risk management process of these toxic substances that are identified: “Risks to the environment and/or human health are determined through the risk assessment process. Once it has been decided that a chemical substance poses a risk,

risk managers figure out how best to minimize or eliminate the risk to help protect the public and the environment. To do this, the risk manager must understand how the chemical substance is created, used, who uses it and how it reaches the environment or the people. Risk management instruments are then identified, developed and put into action to help prevent, reduce or eliminate that risk.” That sounds like exactly what we should be doing, and it's exactly what the federal government says they're doing.

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The long and the short of it is this: The federal government has the tools to deal with toxic substances, and I expect them to use them. The Chemicals Management Plan is one of the most successful chemical management programs in the world, and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act gives the federal government the tools to prevent the dumping of toxic chemicals.

It doesn't make sense to have policies at two layers of government dealing with the exact same objectives. It would make sense if, for example, constitutionally the Ontario government could do something in this regard that the federal government could not do, but that's not the case here. We have a wildly successful federal program that is meticulous and is based on science. It's appropriate that there is a one-window system through which businesses are regulated when it comes to the use of toxic chemicals.

Now, lastly—I think I'm going to run out of time if I don't speed up, so I'll summarize this section that I was going to talk about.

Let me talk about the open tendering changes in the construction industry. First, let me describe what the changes are. Bill 66 proposes to amend the Labour Relations Act to clarify that broader public sector employers are not construction companies for the purposes of the Labour Relations Act. Currently, some public sector employers have become bound by construction industry collective agreements even though they're not strictly in the construction business. The changes would make bidding on more publicly funded construction contracts open to all qualified companies.

So what are the publicly funded construction contracts we're talking about? Well, it's helpful to look at schedule 9, paragraph 14 of the bill, exactly where it sets it out. It lists out all of the entities that will now be considered non-construction employers. That's municipalities, local school boards; you've got hospitals, publicly funded colleges and universities, and the broader public services as set out in the Public Service of Ontario Act.

This is an extensive list. There are a large number of publicly funded contracts that fall within this. We're talking about every municipal road, every school being built, every public hospital expansion, almost every building being built on a publicly funded college and university campus, and many more projects. And you know what? Right now, a majority of Ontario construction workers are excluded from these contracts. How is that fair?

Some 31% of Ontario's construction workers are unionized as of 2018. That means 69% of Ontario's construction workers have been excluded from working on

these publicly funded construction jobs. That does not even include the workers who are barred because they're bound to a different union than the one affiliated with the employer and the given construction project. The proposed changes will bring fairness, finally, to Ontario's construction industry. They'll result in more open, flexible and competitive bidding processes. The tendering process would be open to a wider range of contractors, including non-union contractors. This is about fairness.

Some critics of the changes will argue that this could mean companies who are less qualified will get awarded contracts because they come in with a bid at a lower price. First of all, that argument assumes non-unionized construction workers are less qualified, which I doubt there is any evidentiary foundation for. Second, this argument assumes a tendering process which automatically accepts the lowest bid, and that's just not the reality of the tendering process used on big contracts in Ontario today. This is not what has developed in the tendering process around either private or public contracts over the last few decades.

On smaller projects, yes, some contracts are still drafted in a way that the bid with the lowest price will automatically be accepted. However, on projects of any significant size, it's common that right in the contract setting out the terms of the tendering process and inviting bids, many other factors are required to be considered, like the qualifications of the company and its workers, or prior experience on that type of project or that size of contract.

Let me talk about health and safety standards. They're required to be met, whether you're an employer of union or non-union workers. WSIB governs employers regardless and visits and checks on the worksites. Employers still have to pay WSIB premiums and follow their requirements.

Just to conclude, I want to share one ringing endorsement of this plan from the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association—I'm not going to have time to share it, so I just want to say that you guys can look it up: a press release from December 6, 2018. I hope you'll all support this great change.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I would like to thank the member from Durham for her comments. I do want to take exception with her comments around schedule 9. It's clear that she misunderstands the part of the bill that talks about overtime averaging. As a former union representative for health care workers but also as a manager—I managed over 40 staff in my last job. If you understand the power dynamics between employers and employees, you know that this is a terrible piece of legislation that slants things completely in favour of the employer.

Whereas, before, the employer had to get permission from the ministry—which, in itself, the employer already has an advantage over the employee—now the ministry admits that all the employer has to do is include this in their conditions of employment. Somebody walking into a workplace and applying for a job, going through the application process, has no idea that their rights to overtime

have been given away. And the ministry admits this. So the person goes in, they get the job, and they sign the terms and conditions of employment, their overtime is gone and they don't even know about it. They didn't even have a conversation about it. It's a terrible, terrible piece of legislation that slants things in the employers' favour so badly that the employee doesn't even know that their overtime rights have been given away. So shame on the government for even thinking about something like this.

Then, the mean-spiritedness of also taking away a poster, for goodness' sake, that gives them a basic run-down of their rights: They can't even have a poster on the wall that points them in the right direction so they can learn their rights. What a ridiculous—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order.

Mr. Jeff Burch:—what a ridiculous prejudice against employees and their rights by this government. It's absolutely shameful, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member for Durham makes what I consider a compelling argument, an explanation of the duplicate regulation with respect to the Toxics Reduction Act. It's a program; it's an awful lot of red tape and reporting and paperwork. It suffocates business, it suffocates jobs, with very little evidence that it's doing anything with respect to the environment.

It does raise the question: Why should we be spending government resources and why should we be spending business resources on an inadequate, bureaucratic system that is doomed to achieve very little with respect to effective results? It really makes little sense to go through the bureaucratic process for the simple reason of just going through the process.

By way of example, it brings to mind an experience I had. I had an opportunity to talk to an awful lot of US soldiers during the time of the Vietnam War, and I spent time in Southeast Asia. I was shocked at how that war was being run. There was bureaucracy that consisted of sending memos, at the time, by fax to McNamara reporting what sounded good on paper. I'll use an example. One fellow I talked to—his platoon set up a perimeter in a park in Saigon. They secured it with razor wire, and they lit it. Every night, they would go around in circles doing a patrol—obviously, no danger in the centre of the city—and then every night, late at night, they would send in a memo: "Here's the process. Here are the bureaucratic requirements. We completed on our patrol"—no results, no win, and, as we all know, there clearly was no win with that particular war.

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The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank you.

An interesting presentation, and I know the member was trying to do justice to the bill. I can understand that, as a member of the government, obviously, you have to defend what the government is putting forward.

But there are some serious problems with this bill. One of them is around the toxic chemical act. The government says, “Oh, but it’s a complete duplication of the federal system.” Well, that’s actually not the case. You can read from people who know more about this issue than you and I, as legislators, and they will actually tell you there are some fairly large, significant differences between what the provincial act allows and the federal act allows or doesn’t allow. So, essentially, this is about lessening the requirement for companies in this province when it comes to the handling of toxic chemicals.

I’m not going to argue for a second if there is a way we can make it easier. Of course, let’s try to make it easier for whoever has got to do the job. But we also have a responsibility, as producers, to make sure that whatever we’re doing is not going to harm, first of all, our employees and people who have come in contact with the materials that we’re handling, and certainly is not going to be a problem within the environment.

I come out of the mining industry. We had all kinds of chemicals, as my friend here next to me did as well: MIBC and different types of chemicals that we used, cyanide included, in the mining and milling process. There are some very real reasons why things had to be logged, why things had to be processed in a certain way, why we had to store chemicals in certain ways, because each chemical is different. We need to make sure that we don’t repeat the errors of the past where some of those chemicals were spilled and caused either bodily harm or death, or have done damage to the environment.

I don’t accept the argument that this is a clear duplication because, in fact, it’s not.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I’d just like to take a moment and add to the comments that our member from Durham mentioned in her 20 minutes. Again, these are all about some ringing endorsements for the changes that we’re making to schedule number 9.

This is what the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association had to say in a press release dated December 6, 2018: “For too long, some very competent contractors have been shut out of publicly-funded project work in their local communities. The government’s action today will bring a much greater degree of fairness to procurement processes across the province.”

And then: “With the majority of public buyers already operating on an open-tendering model, these changes will simply even the playing field and treat all qualified contractors in the same manner on public contracts in every community in Ontario.”

Here’s what Larry Taylor, the current president, had to say in the news release: “The OSWCA believes in a fair and open tendering process on all publicly-funded construction projects. Research shows that restrictive tendering practices result in fewer bidders, which translates into higher costs. Open competition on publicly funded projects will ensure public buyers are getting the best prices and are being accountable to local taxpayers.”

Giovanni Cautillo, executive director of OSWCA, said, “For decades, both our union and non-union contractor members have successfully competed alongside each other to bid on, and build, public infrastructure in most communities across the province. The changes outlined in this bill will simply give every qualified contractor a fair shake, by allowing them to bid on work that is being funded from the public purse.”

Again, Speaker, all construction workers deserve a shot at helping to build a community in which they live and where they pay taxes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Durham.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I want to thank the member for Niagara Centre, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, the member for Timmins and the member for Chatham–Kent–Leamington.

Thank you to the member for Chatham–Kent–Leamington for sharing that endorsement. That’s directly from the people. That’s directly from an organization that represents the workers who would be working on these jobs.

I just want to clarify something that the member from Timmins said. He described a situation—he was talking, I believe, about some mining up in his area, about setting requirements for storage of chemicals. That’s exactly what happens when a substance is approved federally: They set out those requirements about what’s appropriate storage for them. You’re going to have to come forward with a different example than that if you’re trying to say that our provincial legislation is needed.

I will just close by saying that I care deeply about the environment. Federally, I had the chance to work on the Chemicals Management Plan and tried to find any reason—looking at chemicals coming into our country—why a chemical should not be allowed in; looking at the science. We have incredible scientists working at the federal ministry of the environment who are already looking at these exact same chemicals that you’re saying we should create an entire duplicative process for at the provincial level, with limited government resources and trying to respect taxpayers’ dollars. I’m sorry; I just can’t stand for that. I’ll stand every day for environmental protection, but there’s no need to have a whole additional level of government doing the exact same thing. That’s not respecting taxpayers, and it’s not what voters expect from us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to add my voice to this debate as we are discussing Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act. I’ve had the opportunity to hear much of the debate and have looked forward to this chance to add a little bit more and try to bring some perspective from the folks in my home community of Oshawa. I’ll do a bit of a recap of what this bill says it accomplishes versus how I perceive it will unfold.

This particular bill is full of deregulation. The government talks about job creation and industrial investment

and says that everything in this bill makes it easier to do business in Ontario.

There is a lot of deregulation that we need to have that conversation about. We don't want to choke business. We don't want to put unnecessary obstacles in the pathway of growth, but that's not what we find in this bill. What we find in this bill are changes that are concerning and that I would say create some dangerous situations. So, Speaker, that is what I'm looking forward to sharing with the folks and hoping that the government members will take some of it to heart before this is a done deal and maybe reverse course on some bits of it.

With this particular Bill 66, children in daycares will be less safe. Seniors in long-term care will have fewer protections. It makes our children less safe by raising caps on home daycares. These regulations, Speaker, you will recall, were added after four children died in the span of seven months in 2013-14. It takes away protections, as we've heard, about toxic chemicals. I'm not going to get into that so much. I have appreciated all of the debate and we have some folks in this room who are very passionate, but I'm very passionate when it comes to our children.

You know that I come to this room by way of education. In this bill, we have changes to the Child Care and Early Years Act and to the Education Act that loosen restrictions that were put in place five years ago after a number of baby deaths. It could make way for more for-profit daycares and fewer not-for-profit daycares. We've been in this room and heard the government yell at us for fearmongering or painting all child care providers with the same brush, but I want to take us back in time and tell a bit of the story of Eva Ravikovich. This is from the *Hamilton Spectator*, an article in April 2017—just two years ago.

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I'm going to read part of it from this article that said, "The Death of Eva Ravikovich, the Child Who Changed Provincial Daycare Laws...."

"In November 2012, two Ministry of Education employees inspected the daycare and discovered seven children in the facility. The ministry sent Panfilova a letter, dated November 26, 2012, telling her to reduce the number of children in her care. She did not.

"When police were called to the daycare on July 8, 2013, there were more than a dozen dogs on the premises, along with the children, and there were bags of dirty diapers in the kitchen. The daycare was later shuttered by health authorities who found dangerous bacteria and filthy conditions in the home, the *Toronto Star* previously reported...."

"The Ministry of Education revealed in August 2013 that it had failed to follow up on 25 of 448 complaints about unlicensed daycare crowding in the 18 months before Eva died, including four at 343 Yellowood Circle...."

"During a news conference in 2013, Eva's mother said she now has 'nothing to live for,' except for pushing to make daycares safer.

"I know that this is my job now.... I have no other choice."

These are parents who are advocates and activists, and we can't forget what they've been through. They lost their baby girl, and they're not alone.

We don't paint all child care with the same brush, but we want all child care to have limits on how many children they can take. There is a reason that we have regulations in place, and loosening those restrictions is absolutely the wrong way to go.

This is from the *Toronto Star*, October 2014:

"Ontario Ombudsman Slams 'Systematic Government Ineptitude' for Daycare Deaths.

"In a scathing 142-page report, Ontario's Ombudsman decried the 'systematic government ineptitude' in oversight of unlicensed home daycares in the wake of the deaths of four children in the GTA over seven months in 2013-14." It yielded an unprecedented 113 recommendations.

"Marin urged the ministry to consider tougher standards for the unlicensed sector, including a centralized registry."

He said, "Our investigation revealed just how bad it was—and believe me, our title, *Careless about Child Care*, is putting it mildly. The momentum spurred by these children's terrible deaths must not be lost."

Madam Speaker, what is happening to that momentum now? We're actually dialing it back, and there is not a person in this room who can tell me what the relationship to job creation or industrial investment is. This is potentially putting our children in a risky situation, and it doesn't accomplish what this government labels this as. This says that it's about job creation; no, it's not. I don't know the motivation, but I worry, and I think that is fair. I think the government members know enough about this to know that they're going to cross their fingers and hope that nothing bad happens. No one in this room wants bad things to happen to our children. I know that's true. So let's not go in that direction.

Another challenge that is in this bill—this is an interesting one. Schedule 4 strips the Ontario Energy Board of its authority to regulate rates charged to tenants by unit sub-meter providers. Some of us in this room would be familiar with the Global story about the students who have been taken advantage of by Wyse. Wyse is a sub-metering company. Sub-meters, for the folks at home, allow landlords to shift the cost of utilities from one large bill for the entire building to individual bills for individual units. By the way, Wyse began lobbying this government shortly after the election—interesting. According to the government backgrounder on this bill, sub-meter providers will save an estimated \$1.3 million per year in compliance costs, and that doesn't even include the additional revenues they'll now be allowed to extract from tenants.

Let me tell you about some of those tenants in the last couple of minutes that I have. Holy jumpin', time flies.

From the article—and this is recent—"University Students Claim Ontario Utility Company 'Taking Advantage' of Low-Income Hydro Subsidy": This is about that group of Brock University students who said that their utility company and property manager were taking advantage.

Imagine that you live with some roommates in university, and you get a bill. You split it however many ways; there are three or four of you. You divvy it up, you pay your fair share—end of story. That's what we used to do, anyway. Now, with the sub-metering, they were encouraged by Wyse Meter Solutions, the same ones that I said have been lobbying the government since right after the election—they encouraged the students to apply for a monthly subsidy through the Ontario Electricity Support Program, or OESP, on an individual basis. That's supposed to be for households. If you are eligible, it's money to help with the bills. It's government money, which means taxpayer money, which the government usually talks about, that the best dollar is—anyway, whatever their messaging is. Here's a case that they're not following through with what they say they believe in.

These students were encouraged to apply for this subsidy on an individual basis even though they share the same apartment, the same electricity meter. The OESP money is supposed to be associated with household incomes. I don't know whether Wyse, when they were encouraging these students to take advantage of this program and bringing that money in, would jack up what was on their bill, so more money went to the company, not—the students weren't out that much because they were getting this benefit, but that's taxpayer dollars. That's government money. That's our money that could go to so many other things. They knew that they were being taken advantage of. This is government funded; it's our tax dollars. Where's the responsible government there? Pretty quiet.

I guess Wyse is one example. They are across our communities. There are companies like them in Oshawa with the sub-metering. Rather than tightening regulations, this government says, "Thanks for registering as a lobbyist," and away you go.

That's my time, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jane McKenna: I first of all just want to do a shout-out this morning. We had Ontario colleges here, and the first thing I want to talk about—my past seatmate is the member from Simcoe North, who I do miss terribly—is MaryLynn West-Moynes. I hope I'm saying her name correctly. She is the president of Georgian College.

I have four girls and one boy, and when my son was going through high school, he said, "Mom, I know the girls went to university, but the reality is, it's a hard no for me. I'm not going to university. I want to go to college."

Anyway, he sourced it all out. I just kind of followed his lead. We went up to Georgian College and he decided he wanted to take his welding and get his tickets. So he signed himself up that day, and I just want to say this: When he was in high school, I had to phone him every morning to make sure he was out of bed; I paid for him to go to private school because he was constantly floundering at high school. When he got up to Georgian College, I never called him once. He was up, ready to go. He graduated from that school and the next day he had a job up north—it was phenomenal—with a skilled trade.

The reason I mention that is because there were so many of my friends' sons—obviously, I'm not going to generalize everybody, but boys do generally learn differently than girls. My girls all did extremely well in school; they excelled and didn't need to be micromanaged. My son, on the other hand, wasn't in that state.

But today he's 23 years old. He came to see me last night because he's bought himself an excavator, he's bought himself a barge, he's bought himself a tugboat that he came down and bought yesterday here—actually, in Port Dover. This kid, at 23, has now got his own business called Mac's Barge. I said to him yesterday that I've never been so proud of anyone in my entire life, because I don't want him to be one of the 69% in construction who don't have an opportunity to bid on anything.

I am so proud of Bill 66. I can't wait to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Order, please.

The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I certainly appreciate that you did raise about the colleges, because I met with the colleges today and they're upset with the lack of funding that they get. It says right here—this is from their own document—"open for business." Not without a skilled workforce. You're not funding the colleges so they could take care of our youth.

I've only got a few minutes to talk here, so I want to talk about section 3. My colleague is absolutely right. I want to say to everyone on that side of the House: Most of you—well, not most of you, but a great deal were over here when we had those young people die because they were in unlicensed daycares. And you're allowing the regulations to allow more kids to be taken care of. I'm going to say to you that you can support this bill—and you probably will, because you guys have made a lot of mistakes since you got here. But let me tell you, if another child dies because of what you guys have done in this bill, it's on your head. It's your fault. I want you to understand that.

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Do you know what? You guys decided to attack the Toronto city council because you wanted to control the city council of Toronto. Do you know what Toronto did? They took a look at Bill 66. They had meetings around it. Twenty-two councillors—because that's the number you guys wanted, and then you had most of your friends, so you tried to control that council. But here's what happened on section 3 of this bill: They voted 20 to 2 against supporting Bill 66, section 3. They also voted 20 to 2 on section 5.

The other bag of shit that you put in here—

Interjection: Whoa.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Oh, I'm sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the member for Niagara Falls to withdraw.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Withdraw.

Section 9: All that is, quite frankly, is an attack against workers, unionized workers in the great province of Ontario that built this province.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Don't worry, member. I'll get to you about Walkerton later.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): I'm going to ask the House to come to order. I don't need people on any side of the House trying to do my job for me. Thank you.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's a pleasure to speak, and I certainly am honoured to be able to speak on Bill 66.

I would disagree with my honourable member there that Bill 66 is an attack on workers. I think, on the contrary, we're bringing people in that weren't even part of the process before. Imagine that. Imagine if you're a business, and you were trying to do an acquisition or whatnot, and you didn't even look at the full picture. You've got to take a look at the full picture here. We have a fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers of Ontario to make sure that we get the best people on the best jobs. So I disagree very much with that.

But I would like to go back to the real reason why we're actually putting this bill in, in this Legislature, and it's the fact that there are 380,000 regulations in Ontario today. That is significantly higher than our second-closest province of British Columbia. It's no coincidence that over the last 15 years, we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs in this province. This province has been hit, by far, the hardest—it's by far the hardest-hit of any province in Canada. Now, overregulation is not the only reason; that's one of many reasons which our government is trying to address. But certainly one of the reasons that businesses are leaving this province is because of the overregulation.

We need to make a change. We have made a commitment to reduce regulations by 25% over the next four years. We're starting with Bill 66.

So what are we doing? There are a lot of things in this bill. I can certainly touch on a few. One of the things we are doing, and I hope my honourable members support, is allowing credit unions—those are part of our local communities. Maybe many of you are members of credit unions. We're allowing them to participate in federal bank syndicates, so they can loan money. They weren't even allowed to do that. Imagine that: your local community lenders not being able to participate in loans lent by banks. Of course, most loans in Canada are lent by banks. We're allowing them to participate in that. That helps our local communities that we're a part of.

That's just one example of one of the great pieces and schedules within this legislation. That's why I'm certainly supporting Bill 66.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: When this legislation was proposed, I had a visit from child care workers in my riding. They were from public sector and private sector and home daycares. They sat down and they told me that

they found that the change in regulation was going to be disastrous. They had serious concerns about the safety of children. They said that the ratios were changed and they were changed to the better, and they should stay changed and not increase. They also said that they required support for child care, because in our area in rural Ontario, child care is often something that's very difficult to find. It's very difficult to find because it's not supported by the government.

Their approach to this was not a matter of red tape. Their approach to this, as professionals who deal with children every day and the parent groups that were also part of their organizations—because many of these daycares have parent councils and parent participation—are seriously concerned about these changes and worried that there will be people that will come forward and use these regulations against them and against children, because there will be just too many children and toddlers under the care of one worker. I encourage the government to really consider child care as part of their economic plan, because parents need to go to work but they need to be able to afford to go to work.

I want everyone to know that this plan is flawed, and I seriously hope that we do not see any tragedies.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Oshawa.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to have an opportunity to answer some of the comments from the folks around the room. To the member from Oakville, who strenuously objected to what it was that I had said, I talked about child care and I talked about sub-metering and our responsibility for looking after tax dollars, specifically in the OESP plan. I don't know which part of that he strenuously objected to.

I think that much of what is in this bill has to do with favours and playing favourites. As I said, the sub-metering company just registered as a lobbyist right after the election, and now they stand to gain so much. I think that that is fundamentally wrong. It was a good thing that those students at Brock caught on. Whether it was legally and technically allowed, it's using up our money. It's using up taxpayers' money, encouraging students—"Hey, go ahead, it's free money for you. There's a benefit for you. Take this money from the government"—but it all ends up going to that company. No skin off their back, nothing technically illegal—well, if you want to focus on stuff, tighten that up.

I will not echo what I heard from the member from Niagara Falls. You're lucky I wasn't in the chair. But to the member from Thunder Bay—Atikokan and her comment about child care: If we have affordable child care in this province, we have more folks who are able to go back to work, who are able to travel that much farther, earn that much more—whatever it is, they have options. Let's give folks options. You talk about choice, but they're never really choices. They're choices that you give. They're not choices people would necessarily make.

If you want affordable, safe, licensed child care, let's have that conversation every day, but loosening up restrictions because children died—wrong way to approach it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Will Bouma: As always, it's a great pleasure to rise in the House today, talking about Bill 66. I think we need to take a moment—and I mentioned it earlier today—to get away from this narrative of class warfare that we're expecting from this bill.

I'm speaking in support of this very important bill, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. Businesses in Ontario, and especially small businesses like businesses in the community that I'm from, are the drivers of our economy. They contribute to our dynamic and prosperous community. They innovate and discover novel solutions to some of society's most challenging problems, and they provide good jobs to hard-working people.

But Speaker, businesses in our province find themselves in a very precarious position over the last 15 years. The number of regulations in our province has ballooned. As they've ballooned they've really strangled small business along the way. They're finding it harder and harder to do business in our province.

In essence, Ontario for the last 15 years has been crushing vital job creators by enacting onerous, unnecessary and ineffective regulation and red tape. We're pushing them away so that if this continues, small businesses will go under due to the cost of regulatory compliance or they will leave our province for a more business-friendly jurisdiction.

I talk to businesses every single day that get offers all the time from our trading partners across the border: "Come here. We'll do this." That was a key message when we had a round table in my riding with the PA from economic development.

Our government, through Bill 66, has introduced regulatory and legislative changes targeting the redundant, unnecessary and outdated regulations that have been preventing growth for business in Ontario. The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will establish consistency and clarity, with equity for all employees.

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I think that's important to remember: This isn't so much about businesses per se; it's about workers. In order to do right by our workers, we have to be supporting businesses and making those things open for business and open for jobs. By doing that, we'll have those better-paying jobs and we'll attract those investments that will lessen the burden of redundant regulation. This will make Ontario a better place to live, work, play and raise a family.

This legislation represents just one step in our government's plan to make Ontario competitive again. The problems and challenges that are facing business today will not be solved overnight. It took us a long time to get here. As has been said many times before, these issues—the burden of red tape on business—have been increasing over the last 15 years, without easing up. Over that time, the regulations have increased to the point that businesses have to comply with over 380,000 regulations. To put that in perspective, we know and we've heard already that in British Columbia I think they have around a third of the

regulations that we have here. With so many regulations, can you imagine what it takes for any business to comply and to keep up with all of those regulations? That holds especially true for small and medium-size businesses with limited resources to spend on compliance.

There's a research paper that shows just how bad things are. The paper, by scholars at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy in Toronto, shows that in Ontario it costs businesses \$33,000 per year to comply with regulations. What does that mean? I did a little bit of math. If you paid someone \$18 an hour, you could employ that person full-time for a year for that \$33,000.

At lunchtime today, I called my chamber of commerce in Brantford–Brant, and I asked them, "How many small businesses are there in Brantford and Brant?" They said, "Well, we don't know." I said, "Well, how many members do you have?" "We have 650 active members, and then we send stuff out to another 300, but that's not all of them. Those are just the people we have contact with." Can you imagine, Madam Speaker, that in my riding alone, we have 1,000 small businesses that have to put up with that \$33,000 a year in red tape? What that means is that just in my riding, we could have another 1,000 good \$18-an-hour jobs by getting rid of some of that red tape.

That's what I hear again and again from business owners. They tell me that the government doesn't understand the value of small business, nor does it understand the impact of ever-increasing regulation. I've heard from them how they've forgone business investments and that they've given up on new innovation, simply because of the government and what has been described to be overzealous regulation. Keep in mind that we're talking about hard-working small business owners, the ones who simply want to get on with work without having any intrusive government to deal with.

Again, Speaker, I want to mention my good friend Jim, who just recently opened a new facility for his business in the industrial park that the county of Brant has been constructing. That industrial park that the county of Brant was planning on taking 10 years to fill out was filled in five, so we have a lot of people who want to set up shop in our region and in Ontario, but we have to get out of their way. Given the headaches that so many of our businesses face on a daily basis in order just to get things done, to get a building permit, to be able to do just the routine things, and the cost involved in doing those things, how many opportunities have been lost? How many jobs have been lost? How many good workers have been turned away because of our burdensome regulation? This is plain unacceptable. We should be supporting and enabling our businesses to be job creators instead of hindering them, and then we shouldn't be talking about how we're just trying to put down the workers with our plan here in Bill 66. We're trying to make a favourable environment for them.

Let me be clear: Our previous government left business in crisis. Companies are packing up and moving out. Some of the announcements that we've been hearing about—they've gotten tired of what's going on here and are

moving on. And yet we have other companies that are so excited about what we're doing here that they are planning on investing in our province. Of course, this doesn't mean that regulations aren't necessary; it's just the burdensome and repetitive and duplicative regulation.

So what's the end result of all this? The end result is business choosing to leave Ontario for more competitive jurisdictions in other provinces, or states south of the border. It's job losses and investors fleeing our province, along with their talent and innovation. Ontario's economic vitality and prosperity depends on reversing this trend and restoring business trust in our province, and that's exactly what our government is doing with this bill.

We understand that the problems that we're facing today don't stem from just one industry or sector. The problems of oppressive red tape and burdensome regulation, as I've just discussed, span across every industry, every sector, every ministry. It's a broad, far-reaching problem and it requires a similarly comprehensive solution, and this bill is just one step in that direction. It addresses red tape and regulation that burden businesses operating across many different industries, whether that be agriculture, communications, manufacturing and many others. Each of these industries is crucial to the prosperity of our province.

I'll just use agriculture—it's still the biggest industry in my riding, and I want to use that as an example. Farms across Ontario provide food for our communities, they contribute greatly to our economy, and they provide fair and good jobs to hard-working people. However, farmers are being crushed under burdensome regulation that, again, does not serve to protect the environment or worker health and safety; it only serves to increase the size and role of government in farming and agriculture. This is hurting our farmers severely. This legislation will ease this burden. It will change the way that farms are registered by making it easier and simpler.

This bill, if passed, will decrease the amount farmers need to fill out by delivering farm registration electronically. In addition to that, this legislation will assist our farmers by making provincial loan guarantees easier to access. This amendment will allow farmers to receive the relief they need by having faster and easier access to these government programs. This small change will help 19,000 beef farmers in ways we can't even imagine.

These two provisions will make it easier for those in the agricultural industry. It will make it easier for farmers to operate and contribute to our economy, and it will also benefit those who are employed in the industry. Getting rid of red tape helps everyone.

Mr. Speaker, we want our province, its people and its workers to be as prosperous as possible, and we can do that by attracting and keeping businesses and jobs right here in Ontario. We often like to think of our province as an economy in itself, but it's just a small part—although I know the Premier is fond of saying that if Ontario was a country, it would be the third-largest trading partner with the United States of America. Yet we're part of a regional economy, and a lot of these businesses can move from one place or the other.

In conclusion, I'm proud of the work that our job creators and residents are doing for this province. In this bill, we're going to make life easier and more affordable and we're helping our economy thrive. We promised to provide relief for families, we promised to get government out of the way of our job creators, and we promised to create an environment where businesses could thrive and grow and create good jobs for the province of Ontario. And, Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing. Ontario is open for business, and we want to let the world know it. We're open for investment and we're open for jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to add a few thoughts on the member from Brantford–Brant's comments on Bill 66, which is called the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. I appreciate that he talked about hard-working small business in his riding. His friend Jim with his new business in Brant: We wish him well, as we do with any new business across our communities.

To really be smart and work with business and come up with strategies and solutions to ensure that they can thrive, that is the right way to approach things. I appreciate what the member said, that we have to get out of the way. Except that when we're in their way in so many other places, we should focus on that.

Here's something that isn't in this bill, and might be out of the scope of it, but in terms of competitiveness, I hail from the Durham region and we have the 407 east that is being constructed and is still in public hands and—touch wood—will stay in public hands. But the employment lands along that corridor are still in your hands, and we'd like them back as a region. That would restore our competitiveness. That would give us a chance to be competitive. Could that be in here? Or is that the next one?

So a couple of things: If you're going to be working with businesses and communities, let's really listen to them and make sure that we do give them what they need to grow and thrive and be the job creators, because that was another thing that we just talked about here.

1630

I'm glad to talk about beef farmers, and I'm glad to support them and give them what they need. But I really appreciate having the conversations around children and keeping them safe, and I'd love to hear the government talk about that today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Roman Baber: I've enjoyed listening to my friend from Brantford–Brant, and before that to my friend from Durham.

I've been thinking about Bill 66. I'm so incredibly proud of our government's courage to bring about this piece of legislation and schedule 9, in particular. I come from north Toronto. We have yet to have complex or evolved or good subway construction—something our government is going to change shortly—which means that

I'm subjected to constant traffic. All day long, east, west in north Toronto: traffic, traffic, traffic. A large part of that traffic, or what causes that traffic, is construction—the never-ending construction.

Sometimes, I drive around—it's not uncommon for us to be driving around the province of Ontario, north Toronto or elsewhere—and see that no construction is being done in a construction site. That is something that I constantly hear from my constituents: “Roman, why is Finch Avenue closed for six months with just construction pylons? Roman, why is it that Sheppard has been under construction for a year and a half?”

Just north of here, Queen's Park north, the park has been under construction for a year to a year and a half, and it's going to be under construction for another year to a year and a half. I don't understand why that is, Madam Speaker.

If we can conceive a way where we could encourage competition and customer service to government—because we're the customer here—that will speed up construction, then there are very few things I would not entertain by way of a regulatory regime as to not expedite that construction. I'm so proud and happy that we're finally going to allow for competition in public tendering in the city of Toronto. I'm so incredibly proud, because I'm looking forward to less construction and more movement and less traffic and more subways.

Interjection: Subways, subways, subways.

Mr. Roman Baber: And subways, subways, subways.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member from Brantford–Brant for his comments.

When you listen to the government, they like to embellish this as if it's restoring Ontario's competitiveness. Does it really, though? A child care provision that makes things more dangerous for children: How does that really restore competitiveness? A Pawnbrokers Act that the police don't even recommend that makes it harder for people to recover their property: Does that really make Ontario more competitive? Labour regulations that take away a person's right to overtime without even telling them when they get hired: Does that really make Ontario more competitive?

The only really substantial part of this bill was schedule 10, and they had to remove it because it was so bad and because so many municipalities revolted against the government when they tried to take away environmental protections for the province. So the only substantial part of the bill was bad. It reminds me of when I used to mark papers in university. We'd tell some students, “Your paper is both good and original, but what's good is not original, and what's original is not very good.”

Also, this open-for-business stuff: I keep hearing “open for business,” and now we've got a licence plate. When I talk to people where I'm from, in Welland, and I say that the government is going to actually put this on their licence plate, they do one of these and they say, “Oh, that's so embarrassing for all of us in Ontario, to change licence plates to ‘Open for Business.’”

I actually had to do a double take. I saw a satirical web advertisement on my Twitter. It had an alternate licence plate sticker, and it said, “Welcome to Ontario. Washrooms are for customers only.” I actually had to do a take and think, “Will they actually put that on a licence plate?” It's getting so ridiculous.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'm proud to speak today to support Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. I'd like to thank my colleague from Brantford–Brant for his participation in the debate today.

This bill was introduced by the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. As the minister said, this government was elected in June with a very clear mandate: to cut job-killing red tape, to create more and better and higher paying jobs.

The previous government nearly doubled the number of provincial regulations. Fifteen years ago, we had 200,000; today, we have 380,000. Incredibly, the Liberals added over 10,000 regulations every year for 15 years. That's an average of over 30 new regulations every single day.

Small businesses spend hundreds of hours every year and up to \$7,000 per employee just to comply, and many of them simply cannot afford it. When the Liberals passed Bill 148, we lost 52,000 jobs last January.

The member also mentioned speaking with the chamber of commerce. I know that many of us met with chamber representatives last week when they were here. I myself, with some of my colleagues, was part of a panel with the Ontario chamber, and I did see some of the NDP colleagues there as well, prior to us participating.

I'd like to quote the chamber president, Rocco Rossi. As he says, “We applaud the government for holding to its commitment to cut unproductive red tape.”

“With over 380,000 regulations, Ontario is currently the most-regulated province in Canada—a burden which continues to limit Ontario's competitiveness and economic prosperity every single day.”

Today, with Bill 66, help is on its way for small business across Ontario. I urge all members to join me in supporting this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Brantford–Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: I really appreciated all the comments this afternoon. I'd like to thank the members from Oshawa, York Centre, Niagara Centre and Simcoe North for joining in.

I really appreciated the comments from the member from Oshawa about the employment lands that will be going along the highways, like at 407. I think that's a really great idea, and I look forward to having those conversations with the minister. I feel the exact same way about the employment lands along the 403 in my riding.

Those are the sorts of things, and putting those—someone said something about schedule 10. I found that really interesting, because in its defence, it put the responsibility back into the hands of the municipalities, which I really liked about that.

But you're absolutely right: The municipalities spoke loud and clear that they did not want that kind of responsibility to be able to make decisions for it to be open for business locally, and they wanted that to be provincially, which still doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

I appreciate the comments from York Centre. Subway, subway, subway—not really what this bill is about, but we know that we want to get people moving and make things work.

Niagara Centre: I wasn't really sure where some of those comments came from, but thank you for joining the debate.

Simcoe North: Obviously, you added some very valuable comments to that.

Madam Speaker, the loyal opposition often emphasizes that one of their primary goals is to support the worker. I couldn't agree more. If you really want to support the worker, if you really care about what happens to workers in Ontario—I'm looking forward to seeing the opposition's support for Bill 66.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Third reading on Bill 66: I get about 10 minutes, and I just want to make a couple of points—actually, three points.

The first point is that members of the government are standing here and talking about regulations all being a bad thing. Now, do we all agree on both sides of the House that it is a job of government, being us, to make sure that interactions with government and government ministries are done in a way that's sufficient, that they're not so onerous as far as rules of how you've got to do things? I think we can both agree that that's what we all want. But the government tends to try to say, "Regulation is all red tape. Regulation is all bad. If we just can get rid of regulation, we'd be so much better off."

The reality is, regulation comes out of experience. For example, in the daycare modifications that were made by the previous administration—children died as a result of the way that daycare was set up and the number of children that were allowed to be with the daycare worker, and other factors. There was a coroner's inquest, and the coroner's inquest found that these children died unnecessarily and their deaths could have been prevented, and recommended that a number of things be done in order to make daycare centres safer for our children. So governments along the way, including provincial Tory ones in the past, made regulations in order to learn from those things.

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I get somewhat annoyed when I hear the government talk about all regulation as being red tape, because the reality is there are regulations for good reason. For example, I'm a pilot. Thank God there are regulations about how people fly out there, what you're allowed to do and not do, how you have to maintain your airplane and how people have to be qualified. We could make it a lot cheaper for airlines, let me tell you. We can have all kinds of planes flying out there with less regulation, but I don't think you're going to want to get on them, because they won't

be safe. When you bring your airplane in to be serviced, it's done by a licensed AME. They have to follow all of the procedures when it comes to maintenance and they also have to follow all ADs, meaning that if there was a problem with a previous airplane and you learned that there was something wrong, that AD would be applied to your aircraft, be it a 737 or be it a Lark Commander like mine.

My point is, regulations are not all bad. For the government to all of a sudden say, "Oh, red tape: Let's just get it out of the way. The world will be better"—well, I don't know how changing and weakening regulations about how we care for children at a daycare is a job-creating initiative. It doesn't make any sense to me. And we've come to these regulations for reasons, many of them out of coroners' inquests.

The other thing is, the government likes to make itself out as a party that's opposed to red tape. Well, I served with a previous Premier by the name of Mike Harris, and his son serves in this Legislature—an honourable member, a very, very nice man. But let me tell you something: There was nobody better at making regulations than the previous Tory administration under Mr. Harris. There were more regulations done under the Tories, who were supposedly the red-tape-killing Conservative government with the Red Tape Commission—they did regulation after regulation after regulation. Why? Because there were coroners' inquests when they were government. Why? Because we had Walkerton when they were government and we learned experiences through Walkerton and coroners' inquests—I see the that member across the way, who I won't name, is shaking his head to the negative. But I do remember. I was here. We learned from those experiences and, rightfully so, the Conservatives changed the regulations around water because of what happened in Walkerton. Yes, there were regulatory changes, but there were reasons for that.

These guys went out and created the Red Tape Commission—you're the guys who created the College of Teachers, I would say. You created the College of Teachers, which is an organization that was put in place by the Conservatives to supposedly regulate teachers. On the one hand, they say, "We're opposed to regulation." On the second hand, they created the College of Teachers. They are the government that created Drive Clean, which now the government is getting rid of. It was a Tory initiative. Mr. Sterling, who was then a minister under the Mike Harris government, is the one who created Drive Clean—this from the guys who said that they were the anti-red-tape government. Mike Harris: There was nobody who was going to get rid of more red tape than him. My God, I've got to tell you, that was a lot of red tape.

The biggest red tape creator of all is when the Harris Conservatives created the TSSA. Remember the Technical Standards and Safety Authority? That was created by the Conservatives. It used to be that as an electrician, when I needed to get a permit to disconnect and reconnect power and have a place inspected, I got hold of Ontario Hydro, they sent an inspector over the same

day, and it got done. Try to do that today under the regulatory burden you guys created under the TSSA. It is one of the slowest things I've ever had to deal with.

These guys like to talk out of both sides of their mouth when it comes to being able—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I withdraw, Madam Speaker, before you even try.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There we go. But my point is, you're trying to say two things at the same time. You're trying to say that you're opposed to red tape, but then you create it.

Let me just get the Ontario Gazette from the last two weeks. You know what the Ontario Gazette is, right? That's where governments have to post every week what they've done when it comes to the passage of legislation and regulation. I pulled the last two weeks just to see what regulations you have put in place. You know what, guys? They're creating regulation. Go take a look at the Ontario Gazette: It's full of them. This government is doing their own regulations. Now, mind you, some of the regulations are withdrawals, but there are a lot of them that are pretty new things. We'll just go through some of them.

They've got a regulation here: the Archives and Recordkeeping Act. They're doing a whole bunch of changes on that one when it comes to regulation.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act: regulations under that bill.

Highway Traffic Act: There are at least two or three regulations under the Highway Traffic Act that you're putting forward. Do you know where they come from? They come from the study of work that has been done as a result of accidents. We try, at times, in regulation, to fix those things so we can lessen the amount of accidents.

The Local Roads Boards Act has been amended.

The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act was amended.

The Ontario Energy Board Act has been amended. You should see the size of that one; it's about five pages long.

You've got the Alcohol, Cannabis and Gaming Regulation and Public Protection Act, 1996, that's being amended.

You've got the Crown Employees Collective Bargaining Act, 1993, that's being amended.

You've got the Development Corporations Act being amended.

You've got the Farm Products Marketing Act being amended.

It goes on and on and on. Why? Because governments, at times, need to do regulations, because we as legislators—wrongfully so—decided to delegate our authority as members to cabinet to write regulation. When the minister comes into the House and drafts a piece of legislation and gives us the legislation to be debated, the legislation is created in such a way that all of the power of the bill is created under regulation, so that the cabinet then, in the stealth of night, can draft whatever regulation they want, to empower whatever in the bill, and the only light that we

have on it is what comes out in the Ontario Gazette. I would suggest that you look at it.

For this Conservative government, undifferent from the previous Conservative government under Mike Harris, to say you're the slayers of regulation—nothing could be further from the truth. You guys will regulate. You have regulated. And you do it for a reason: It's because it's part of the legislative process these days. When the House decides to delegate its authority under an act to cabinet to make regulation, cabinet makes regulation. So you're doing it every day. You're trying to pretend as if you're the slayers of red tape. My God, you've got a machine in cabinet that's pumping it out as quickly as they can put it in. You're trying to have it both ways.

I end on this point: There was a very good point made by previous debaters in regard to some of the changes that you're making when it comes to the daycare act. That is a really, really interesting and kind of dangerous thing that you're doing with these regulations. Again I say, we created those regulations as a result of coroners' inquests, because children died. The government of the day, rightfully so, decided that we needed to listen to the recommendations of the coroner and we needed to make changes in the act by way of regulation, because we've delegated our authority under those bills to cabinet. So they have the right to make regulation.

You're coming here today and you're saying, "Bill 66 is going to lessen the requirements of the Day Nurseries Act and other acts that govern daycare, and that's going to be a job-creating bill." That sounds to me like we're just doing something that, quite frankly, turns the clock back to what it used to be before the coroners' inquests, which were a result of children that died in daycare because of some of the problems that were addressed by the regulation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lindsey Park: We seem to be having a great debate about the definition of red tape, and I'd be happy to have that debate with you. I don't love to quote Wikipedia in this chamber, but this at least provides us with a starting point. Wikipedia says, "Red tape is an idiom that refers to excessive regulation or rigid conformity to formal rules that is considered redundant or bureaucratic and hinders or prevents action or decision-making." I think that's a useful starting point, because we're not talking about all regulation and we're not talking about any regulation. We're talking specifically, and I'll repeat my words from earlier this afternoon, about regulatory requirements that are ineffective, inflexible or out of date, or, as a number of examples we've provided throughout this bill, regulations that duplicate federal or municipal regulations. Again, I'll repeat myself. No one is talking about getting rid of regulations that are necessary for the health and safety of Ontarians. We're not talking about getting rid of regulations that are critical to protecting our valuable environment. We're talking about regulations that are duplicative, that are excessive and that get in the way of efficiency of government and doing business in this province.

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We'll stand here every day for the people of Ontario to make sure their government is efficient, as they expect of us every day in electing us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a privilege to rise in the House to talk about Bill 66.

I wanted to do something a little different as I try to get a couple of issues out here. I talked a little bit about unlicensed child care. We all have kids. We all have grandkids. And I'm going to say it again and again every time I get to rise today—that that has nothing to do with being competitive in the province of Ontario. It should be about the safety of our kids and our grandkids.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, it isn't, when we know that the bill that was put in place was put in place to save kids' lives after four of them died in daycare facilities in the province of Ontario. Think about that. How do you think they felt when they knew that if the proper regulations were in place, their children or their grandchildren would still be here today?

So I'm saying to you, take it out of the bill. It shouldn't be in this bill. It has nothing to do with being competitive.

I talked a little bit about city council in Toronto. Evidently, some people, not necessarily on this side, but on your side, think that less government is better, that you can get more done, that you can control—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I wish my colleagues wouldn't—I'll leave it at that.

I want to say to them, these were PC councillors. They were your supporters that you guys helped put in place, that you canvassed for. They're smart enough to know that section 3 of this bill is terrible, to a point—the vote wasn't close; it was 20 to 2. That meant the NDP, the Liberals and the Conservatives said this doesn't belong in Bill 66.

I'm not going to have enough time to talk about section 9, but I will at some point in time after I get my next two minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'm grateful again to stand up here today because it's always interesting to listen to everybody and their views and what they have to say.

I want to say something about the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. I am absolutely thrilled that he has put Bill 66 together. Do you know why?

Interjections.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Let's all clap for that.

Do you know why? Because small and medium businesses are the engine of our economy—they keep us going—and yet somehow, we haven't listened to one of them in 15 years, which is unfortunate. We have done more consultation, and when you talk about Bill 66 and people aren't having an opportunity—we are the government of the people listening to what they have to say, and to make the changes so the climate for business makes

more sense for businesses. Do we understand that with Bill 66? It's the climate for businesses—making sense for more businesses.

Here's the reality. I think it was Maclean's magazine, last year—don't quote me on it—that said that businesses were so discouraged by what was happening here in Ontario that they were hanging on to \$500 million because they weren't prepared to invest in Ontario, because the government that was here prior to us—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Propped up by the NDP.

Ms. Jane McKenna: Propped up by the NDP; that is 100% correct.

The reality is, though, if we're going to be for the people—and we are for the people—and we're going to make the climate for business better than what it has ever been in 15 years, then we have to make sure that we're listening to the good people. That's exactly what we're doing with Bill 66.

I can tell you this: I'm the PA for labour, and I've had the best opportunity to be able to have round tables and sit down and talk to businesspeople—small and medium—and all they're saying to me is, “Thankfully, someone has our voice. We have never been so thrilled with this government that has put us in a position to thrive again.” They are absolutely, hands up, high-five at our government for what we're doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to thank the member for Timmins for his comments and for highlighting the importance of regulatory policy in enabling the province to achieve some of its goals. Unlike the comments that were made on the other side about this bill, dealing with regulations that are excessive, that are unduly onerous, that are duplicative—we know that what's in this bill are matters of life and death. As my colleague the member for Timmins and others have pointed out, the changes to ratios—the number of infants that can be in a home daycare setting—could lead to the deaths of more children. They were put in place to prevent the deaths of children, as a result of coroners' inquests and an Ombudsman's investigation.

I want to briefly address another change that is included in this bill that may seem on the surface like it's a minor change that won't have much of an impact; that is, in schedule 9, that employers are no longer required to post the Employment Standards Act. Now, Speaker, we have had, on numerous occasions in this House, very lengthy debates about unpaid interns. Today is college day at Queen's Park. How many of us have talked to graduates of post-secondary institutions, colleges and universities who go from their program into the workplace and are told, “We're going to give that you this great opportunity: You can work for us for free to get the experience”? They need to see the Employment Standards Act posted in the workplace so they know that they have rights as employees and that employers cannot offer unpaid internships to young people in this province. Removing that requirement for the ESA to be posted could actually mean the ongoing exploitation of graduates in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Madam Speaker, I'm just going to make this challenge to the government: If you're truly serious about reducing red tape and the "regulatory burden," as you call it, stop delegating the authority of this House and the power to make regulation to cabinet. When I first came here in 1990, bills were drafted and very little was left to regulation, and when it was, it was prescribed in legislation what the outcome of the regulation should be. Now we draft bills—and any of the ministers there will know that you draft a bill, and you say, "I want a bill that makes the sky blue." You don't even say that anymore; you say, "I want a bill that's going to make the sky 'blank'," and then all of a sudden it's up to regulation to decide what it is that you're going to do and what colour it's going to be, how high it's going to be, etc. If you're serious about diminishing the amount of regulation that comes out of this place, stop delegating authority to cabinet. Make this Legislature do what it was intended to do and make it do what it used to, which is that we draft the legislation and you leave very little to regulation. In other words, don't delegate the authority to cabinet. I think you have an opportunity, and it's up to you to take it.

The last point I would make is the point that I started with, which is, the reason that we are in this situation is because over the years the government created the use of regulatory powers by delegation, but also because there have been coroners' inquests on deaths and accidents. So at times, rather than having to bring the bill back in the House, the government changes the regulations, and that's what this is all about. This is not about listening to Ontarians; this is about listening to your stakeholders who have something to gain by the changes to the regulations that you're imposing in this bill. This has nothing to do with the people; this has everything to do with your supporters at the very top of our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I am pleased to once again enter the debate on Bill 66, an act to restore Ontario's competitiveness.

As we all know, today is April Fool's Day. Every April 1, people across the globe celebrate this occasion by plotting practical jokes on their neighbours and friends. For only a short day, they suspend the rules of civil interaction by playing tricks on the unassuming, all in the name of a good laugh. These are lighthearted pranks that, if limited to a single day, can be amusing and fun. Unfortunately, under the previous government, every day felt like April Fool's in Ontario. For 15 years, the previous government made a joke of Ontario's economy. Their policies of overregulation and over-taxation were burdensome to business owners and families across this province.

1700

Nine months ago, I saw the negative effects of this approach on the people in my riding. It left farmers tangled in webs of red tape, business owners struggling to pay suppliers, and parents without a hope for their children's

future. In other words, the economic policies of the previous government left the people of Ontario feeling fooled.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, the people of Simcoe North and of this great province are no fools. In June of last year, they made an important decision to return trust, accountability and growth to Ontario. They decided to elect a government committed to cleaning up this province's regulatory mess, a government committed to bringing economic growth back to Ontario.

Over the past nine months, our government has been delivering on that promise. Bill 66, An Act to restore Ontario's competitiveness, is the next essential step in completing this important task.

Bill 66 acts as a legislative broom meant to sweep away unnecessary and obsolete regulations that have undermined economic growth in Ontario for far too long. These targeted changes will lessen the burden of redundant regulations, and lead to investment and better-paying jobs while also maintaining Ontario's health and safety standards.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the assembly today to say with confidence that the people of Simcoe North and the people of Ontario are championing this change.

Since day one, it has been this government's goal to invest in Ontario's greatest resource, its people and their talent, by allowing them to compete and flourish.

Interjections.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you.

Before we came to power, businesses and farmers in Ontario were unable to properly do so. They were shackled down by more than 380,000 individual pieces of regulation, many of which were out of date and ineffective. Those are 380,000 potential reasons not to invest in your employees' training; 380,000 reasons to not broaden your production; 380,000 reasons to not buy local equipment.

This oppressive regime of regulation, instituted under the previous government, did not facilitate the strength of Ontario's businesses but in fact stifled them.

According to a 2017 study conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the cost of regulatory burden in Ontario was estimated at \$15 billion.

In a recent speech to the Empire Club, the Honourable Minister of Finance illustrated the burden that this debt has placed on our province. He noted that interest payments on Ontario's debt are the fourth-largest item in the budget, following just after health care, education and social services. This is the highest burden of any province, averaging \$33,000 per business.

In addition to overregulation, the Liberal government starved investment by cultivating an undesirable environment of high debt and high tax. When the previous government handed over the reins on June 7, they handed over \$15 billion of debt.

Ontario's overwhelming state of deficit and debt, the largest of any subnational entity, has become a strong repellent to investors. As one of my constituents astutely wrote to me, "Deficit upon deficit is a recipe for disaster, especially for our future generations." Instead of leading

Ontario's business community by setting an example of fiscal responsibility, the Liberal government's mismanagement starved business of desperately needed investment.

Despite languishing under 15 years of overregulation, over-taxation and underinvestment, our businesses and families are still hopeful. When I visit local businesses along Mississaga Street in downtown Orillia or King Street in the centre of Midland, I hear the same message again and again: "Give us the opportunity and we will succeed." They have the expertise, the skilled labour, the proper technology. All these hard-working people need is a fertile environment for growth. Under the current system, they are being strained by high overhead bills, intense international competition and outdated industry practices.

Similarly, outside of cities and towns, our rural communities are eager for change. In particular, farmers in Simcoe North are demanding regulatory relief that will enable them to invest in their workers and communities. When I speak to farmers in Victoria Harbour or Tiny township, they explain how the antiquated process of farm registration is adding unnecessary costs to their business. These regulations are the reason why farmers ranked the cost of their business as the most important factor for the future success of their businesses in a 2018 Simcoe county survey. These businesses of varying sizes and industries all agree on one thing: The solution to this problem is measured, logical and modernized changes to Ontario's regulatory regime. They agree that the solution is legislation like Bill 66.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with Greg Groen and Nadia Fitzgerald of the Oro-Medonte Chamber of Commerce, as well as with Allan Lafontaine of the Orillia District Chamber of Commerce, in addition to many other business leaders at the annual Ontario Chamber of Commerce advocacy day. They applauded the government's commitment to reducing the regulatory burdens on businesses and expressed their appreciation for our legislative solutions, including Bill 66. They also cited our organization's recent 2019 economic report, which found a seven-point increase in business confidence from last year and the highest level of business prosperity in 20 years. Many respondents to the chamber survey reported solid economic policy from the government as a driver of this increased confidence.

I recently spoke to Mark Downing, the owner of Fern Resort in Ramara township, who told me that it was refreshing to finally see a government willing to reach out and include job creators in the broader economic discussions. Farmers, similarly, have expressed to me their renewed optimism now that the era of heavy administration is over. Grain farmers and cattle farmers in my riding of Simcoe North are particularly excited that Bill 66 plans to digitize the farmer registration program. Under the act, the farming registration process will operate under an electronic service delivery. By streamlining this previously laborious process, our government is letting farmers get to work so that they can continue to keep this country fed and healthy.

As the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Keith Curry, said, "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture is pleased with the province of Ontario's actions taken to reduce regulatory burdens for our members. Streamlining the farm business registration process is another way in which ... the Ford government are reducing ... paperwork for our membership."

Our government is responding to the people. Businesses and farmers are asking for the opportunity to grow, invest and succeed. This bill and our government's entire economic plan is finally giving them the chance to.

For my final minute, I would like to turn to one example of deregulation in Bill 66 that is receiving massive support in my riding. My office has received countless emails from constituents declaring their support for Bill 66, specifically schedule 9 of the legislation. Schedule 9 of Bill 66 amends the Labour Relations Act by identifying municipalities and certain other entities as non-construction employers. In other words, this amendment will free public entities from industry-wide collective agreements, a problem that has deterred private bidding on public projects for too long.

This April Fool's Day, I urge all members not to play games with the futures of their constituents and our province. I encourage them to set partisanship aside and support growth, jobs, stronger communities and a stronger Ontario.

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

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank the member from Simcoe North for her comments and talking about April Fool's. It gives me an opportunity to correct my record from this morning: Isaac Gilles Ayotte is not three years old; he's three days old. So April Fool's, Nicole. I fooled you.

1710

It does seem like it's an April Fool's joke, and I'm waiting for the punchline. We heard this morning in question period about vanity plates saying, "Open for Business"—or "hoping for business," because I don't think putting up signs is enough to have business coming and investing; you need a plan.

The loss of the child advocate: When we asked about the loss of the child advocate and who is going to speak for these young children and who is going to represent them, the answer was, "We're going to have a round table discussion." Well, a round table discussion is not going to help. These children need help today. They need advocates today. To have a one-time meeting with the minister and a couple of her friends is not going to help the thousands of children who need an advocate.

The member also talked about the 380,000 regulations. It's a misnomer, because there are a lot of regulations that don't apply to you. Even in safety alone, there are regulations around mining and construction and industrial. If you're in one of those sectors, you don't have to be an expert on all of them. So it's a misnomer that there are too many regulations in all of these different areas, and you inflate a number like that.

When it comes to safety, what burdensome regulation did they cut? They cut training for health and safety. In Ontario, we kill, on average, 250,000 workers a year. The result of this is we decide on less training. Instead of three days of training—

Interjection.

Mr. Jamie West: Sorry, 250 out of 1,000. Thank you, member.

We reduce the training from three days with an instructor to six and a half hours in front of a computer. That's what we say is burdensome, is people understanding how health and safety works. That's wrong. That's an April Fool's joke, Speaker.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: It's good to rise again to speak on Bill 66.

Very quickly, I want to respond to my friend from Sudbury, who is asking who is going to look out for the workers. Well, who is going to look out for the workers who are now precluded from bidding for government work? This government is; our government is. Who is going to watch out for the workers from unions who do not qualify for the tendering process? This government; our government is.

But I also wanted to respond to my friend from Brantford—Brant, who wasn't sure how "subways, subways, subways" is relevant to the debate on Bill 66. First of all, I never forgo an opportunity to use my three favourite words in the English language, which are "subways, subways, subways." Second of all, subway construction is going to be our government's largest infrastructure project. In fact, subway construction in the GTA is going to be the largest infrastructure project in the history of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at some of the previous subway-and transit-related construction in a city of Toronto, and it's an abomination. I look at Union Station, which has been in the works since 2012. In 2015, we were told, "Well, we never told you that we were going to finish it for the Pan Am Games." We're in 2019 and Union Station isn't finished, and won't be finished for another year or a year and a half.

I look at the construction of the University-Spadina subway extension that was in the works for seven years instead of the four or five years that it was scheduled for. Do you know what happens if I take you on that subway line now, Mr. Speaker? We go to York University, and it's leaking all over. It's leaking.

I want to ensure that when we ask for work to be done on behalf of the taxpayers of this province, we don't just get a shop that qualifies by virtue of its union status; we get the best and cheapest shop available to us.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The trouble with omnibus bills is that they might have some things that we can support, and then they have some things that we absolutely can't. In schedule 5 of this bill, when we are talking about

repealing the Toxics Reduction Act and its regulations, that is a problem. It's a problem. I'm of an age where I remember what it looked like in the Wild West when, in northern Ontario, it was a dumping ground. There were no regulations. We have the highest rates of industrial cancers and clusters because of air. In clusters around our paper industry, we're still finding that people are having very, very high rates of cancers, and research is still going on.

The government recognizes that this is problematic because they are putting a little bit of a hold on it, because they say that the federal regulations are good enough.

Well, there are two problems with that. There is no one watching. In northern Ontario, there is no one from Environment Canada that is regulating anything in northern Ontario on toxic substances, and that's a problem. So they are not there. But even now, the policy of the federal government needed to be improved. There was one policy brought in, a plan brought in by the Harper government that was seen as insufficient, and then in April of 2018 the Liberal government put in a plan that, in fact, doesn't go far enough because it doesn't address certain kinds of gases.

So I encourage the government to take a step back when it comes to our environment and seriously consider the harm they could be doing.

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

M^{me} Natalia Kusendova: Je voudrais remercier la députée de Simcoe North pour son discours aujourd'hui. Je suis fière de me lever aujourd'hui en soutien du projet de loi 66, Loi de 2019 visant à rétablir la compétitivité de l'Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, pendant 15 ans, l'Ontario a souffert sous le gouvernement libéral, qui ne se souciait pas de la création d'emplois pour les familles ou des investissements dans la province. Nous avons vu plus de 300 000 emplois manufacturiers quitter l'Ontario sous leur surveillance.

Le NPD est pour les emplois, mais contre les créateurs d'emplois. Ça ne marche pas comme ça, et ça ne fait pas de sens.

Notre gouvernement a écouté les intervenants. Il a présenté un ensemble de modifications réglementaires et législatives qui ciblent des règlements inutiles, redondants et dépassés qui ne font rien pour protéger l'environnement, la santé ou la sécurité. Les municipalités et les créateurs d'emplois nous ont dit clairement qu'il y a trop de paperasserie et que les entreprises peuvent mettre des années à s'orienter dans le processus d'approbation des projets de développement.

Alors, monsieur le Président, we believe that business owners should actually spend more time growing their businesses rather than filling out paperwork. This is why I am so proud to support this bill making Ontario open for business. This is our government's number one priority, because when job creators thrive, our communities thrive and so do our employees.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): And now back to the member from Simcoe North for final comments.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the members from Sudbury, York Centre and Thunder Bay—Atikokan, and merci to the member from Mississauga Centre.

In summary, the businesses, farmers and families of Simcoe North are ready for this change. These business owners in Orillia and Midland and farming families in the township of Tiny and in Victoria Harbour are tired of jumping through endless hoops just to support their communities and families. They are ready to free Ontario from a regulatory rat's nest and return investment and good jobs back to their cities and towns.

Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, they are ready to operate in an economy that champions them. Bill 66 continues the work of Bill 47 and Bill 57 in pursuit of this goal. This act to restore Ontario's competitiveness targets redundant and obsolete regulations that have crippled businesses' ability to innovate and expand.

Today I spoke of two examples of this found in the legislation. First, under the act, the farming registration process will operate under an electronic service delivery. By streamlining this previously laborious process, our government is letting farmers get to work so that they can continue to keep this country fed and healthy.

Secondly, schedule 9 opens the tendering process for construction bidding, allowing for fair competition in the construction of our public institutions. We've heard lots about that this afternoon. This simple change will allow parties to adapt collective agreements to their industry, offer more choice in the bid selection and construct a more efficient bidding system that will save the taxpayers' dollars.

It is basic common sense. Throw away the old, useless and harmful; ensure Ontario's world-class health and safety standards; and return investment and jobs to the hard-working people of this province. I encourage everyone to support this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this important bill.

1720

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure for me to participate in third reading debate on Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, on behalf of the people I represent in London West. Speaker, we are in third reading on this bill. We have gone through second reading. We've gone through committee. Some amendments have been made. The public has had a full five hours to comment on this bill, to bring forward recommendations, suggestions and concerns about the 12 schedules of this bill.

I'm going to begin my remarks today with one of the schedules of the bill that has been removed that, through the process of public input, actually by being removed from this bill, did in fact strengthen this legislation, but nowhere near enough to allow us to support it. Schedule 10 has been removed from this bill. As everyone knows, that schedule would have allowed municipalities to create open-for-business bylaws by overriding important regulatory provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Great

Lakes Protection Act, the Greenbelt Act, the Ontario Planning and Development Act and others.

This is very revealing, Speaker, because it tells us a lot about what this government thinks is the way to restore competitiveness in this province. Basically, they see it as a race to the bottom. They wanted to allow a bidding war between municipalities as they tried to bring in new businesses to see which municipality was willing to cut the most from existing environmental protections. They wanted to see which municipality would be willing to compromise environmental protection, conservation, the protection of wetlands and heritage protection. All of these important regulatory provisions are in place because these are things that we value in this province, but this government was prepared to allow these things to be wiped out by a municipality with a new bylaw. Thank goodness, Speaker, for all the municipalities across this province who said, "We do not want that power. We do not want to override those important provisions of the legislation that's currently in place."

I want to say a big shout-out to the thousands and thousands of Ontarians—I don't think that in my six years in this place I have ever seen that many emails flood my inbox. Kudos to those citizens who said, "Don't do this," and kudos to those municipalities who said, "We don't want this." It does show that public pressure will cause the government to change their mind.

However, Speaker, I have to say that this is not the first time that Ontarians had to come together to express their support for the greenbelt. Basically we have a Premier who is now 0-2 on his efforts to dismantle the Greenbelt Act and allow developers to develop however they want, without regard to environmental protection. Everyone will recall that, before the election, the Premier, at that point a candidate—the leader—was secretly videotaped offering this deal to eliminate the Greenbelt Act if he formed government. Well, he had to backtrack on that. This was their second attempt to try to pay back those favours to the development industry that had previously been worked out. Fortunately, Speaker, that was unsuccessful.

I do want to turn to a schedule of this bill that my colleagues on this side have talked about quite frequently, both during second reading debate and third reading debate, and that is schedule 3. I want to recognize Kim Mitchell from Western Day Care Centre in London and Kara Pihlak from Oak Park Co-operative Children's Centre. These are two child care facilities in London West who met with me and shared some of their concerns about Bill 66 and the changes that have been proposed.

This bill will remove regulatory protections that were put in place following the deaths of children in unlicensed home child care settings. It will increase the number of children under age two who can be allowed within a home daycare setting. It will allow the caregiver's children, aged four and five, to be excluded from the count of children who are being cared for. These changes are highly problematic.

I want to share with you my visit to Western Day Care Centre. I visited the infant room. In that room, they have a number of cribs lined up in the sleeping area for the

infants. There are two cribs right by the door that have big signs on them that say, “Evacuation crib.” Those cribs are outfitted with special, heavy-duty wheels, because they know that if there is a need to evacuate quickly, if there is a fire or other kind of emergency, given the number of infants in the infant room, they need a way to quickly gather those infants. They can place them all in the evacuation cribs and they can evacuate.

Speaker, we now have the prospect of a home child care provider who will have three children under age two. She or he could be the only child care provider in that setting. If there is an emergency, how is that caregiver supposed to gather up three infants, plus the other toddlers, the other preschoolers whom she is caring for—gather up all those children—and safely evacuate from that facility? This change is going to put the lives of children at risk.

The changes that this government is removing were put in place to protect children. Now children’s lives are going to be at risk. That’s why my colleagues who participated in the committee process and those of us who have spoken about this legislation feel so strongly about these changes in this bill. On that basis alone, it would make us stand up strongly in opposition to Bill 66.

I wanted to touch on a couple of other provisions in this bill.

Schedule 5 concerns the Toxics Reduction Act. Earlier today, I heard a member across the way say that Ontario’s Toxics Reduction Act completely duplicates what the federal government is doing; it’s totally unnecessary. Well, I want to thank Environmental Defence and others who presented to the committee that was reviewing this bill and pointed out the erroneous thinking that this government is engaging in. There are significant differences between the toxics reduction legislation in place in Ontario and the federal legislation. Ontario’s Toxics Reduction Act requires facilities to report the use, creation and addition of toxics into consumer goods. This information is absolutely critical for consumers, for citizens in this province to understand the level of exposure. This is quite different from what the federal government requires, which focuses on emissions disposal and recycling at facilities. So there is a very clear separation between the two levels of regulation, and both are vitally important to ensure the protection of citizens.

Finally, I wanted to touch very briefly on schedule 9 and the removal of the requirement for employers to post the Employment Standards Act. I mentioned earlier that this is really important for young people who may be going into the labour market for the first time and don’t know their rights under the Employment Standards Act. Having that posted can really help a young person understand what they are entitled to under legislation in this province, and they can go to their employer and point out if their rights are not being acknowledged.

Speaker, we cannot support this bill. The regulations that are being removed are far too important.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments? The member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Interjections.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for that applause. It’s much deserved. Anyway, thank you.

I’d like to comment on the member from London West’s remarks. It’s an opportunity to speak to Bill 66.

The Toxics Reduction Act is something—I come from Sarnia–Lambton, the Chemical Valley. The chemistry industry there is something that has dealt with toxics reduction over the years. Industry is far safer there today than even when I started there 40 years ago or more.

We’re looking at reducing red tape in Ontario. There are 380,000-some regulations and red tape, which we are committed to reducing by 25%. I used the number “a third” during the election, but I see in the notes here that the government itself is saying 25%. We’ll take 25%.

The cost to operate a small business in Ontario: To comply with all the regulations, it’s estimated, according to the small business sector, that it costs them \$33,000 per business to live by those regulations. It’s estimated at \$25,000 to \$27,000 in other provinces throughout the country.

The government has been hard at work, through its different ministers and their PAs, and their backbenchers as well, over the last seven to nine months since the election, looking for opportunities both in the sectors back home in their own ridings, and with the business community, to reduce red tape.

I think I’m running out of time here, but anyway—

Interjection: It’s a good bill.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It’s a good bill, and I intend to support it. I know it will be well supported in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions or comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am glad to comment on the very thoughtful remarks from the member from London West on Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act.

She highlighted a lot of the pieces of this bill that have nothing to do with competitiveness. I have yet to hear from this government, when it comes to schedule 3, how that is improving competitiveness. How on earth do you put that under the “improving competitiveness” umbrella when you are making changes and loosening those restrictions and protections when it comes to children in child care? How does that make us more competitive? Interestingly, none of them have addressed this, that I have been in the room to hear.

If you’re going to increase the number of children under two, you’re making changes, as we heard so eloquently, that put our children potentially at risk. Appreciating that the member has visited some licensed child care facilities and saw their physical, tangible protections in place, like an evacuation crib—what an interesting thought. Of course. How challenging would it be to evacuate toddlers and infants in the event of an emergency? When we’re talking about our unlicensed spaces and places, we should be ensuring that they are safe. We should not be rolling back protections.

I appreciate the remarks, because there has been a fair bit of not even debate, but just the government saying over

and over that the provincial and federal parts to the Toxics Reduction Act and the responsibilities—that there’s duplication. But as she reminded us, what we heard at committee from the experts who do the work and who are sharing it with the government, is that they’re very separate pieces that are both necessary, and we don’t want to do away with that.

The Employment Standards Act: We will have this conversation on April 28 with the Day of Mourning. We can talk about the importance of the poster that they’re getting rid of.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Billy Pang: It is my opportunity to share my view on Bill 66, which, again, is talking about restoring Ontario’s competitiveness.

What does restoration mean? It means we used to be the engine of Canada, but unfortunately, under the previous Liberal government, we are not that competitive anymore.

One of the Chinese philosophers was Zhuangzi. He talked about how, when one person sitting under a well is looking at the sky and saying that the sky is so small, the sky is not small, but the well of the person looking at it is small. And summer bugs cannot talk about snow because they die in fall—not because there is no snow, but they cannot see the snow.

Sometimes I notice that the opposition cannot understand how to run an effective government with less regulations.

Fifteen years ago, we had way less regulations than today. Unfortunately, because of the previous Liberal government—they kept adding and adding regulations, and therefore our government brought forward a package of regulatory and legislative changes to target—listen—unnecessary, duplicative and outdated regulations. We are not removing the regulations—we are just removing those unnecessary and duplicative and outdated things. So this is about Bill 66. That’s why I support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I’m going to rise again to say: Get rid of schedule 3 in this bill. It’s terrible.

The ESA not being posted in the workplace makes absolutely no sense. This is the month of April. On April 28, we have the Day of Mourning. Why would you not want, in our workplaces across the province of Ontario, to highlight the fact that we’re going to mourn those who died on the job or got injured in the workplace?

Here’s something that’s interesting. All of us here, when I look around the room—except a few who probably have grandkids—are older and you’ve got kids who are entering the workplace for the first time. Wouldn’t you want them to know what their rights are and what the dangers are in that job? You’re saying that is red tape?

Interjection: Because they’ll get it by email.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Get it by email. Yes, that’s kind of where you guys are at.

We’re talking about red tape? We’re talking about two pieces of tape, one that goes across the top of the poster

and one that goes across the bottom, to make sure our young people understand. I don’t get where you guys are at.

Let’s talk about what the bill is about when it comes to section 9. Here’s what the Toronto Star is saying—a very competent paper: “Ontario Government’s Proposed Changes Reduces Employers’ Obligation to Pay Overtime....” That’s what the bill is about.

What did the OFL say? They’re good partners of yours, I’m sure. “This bill is going to do nothing but replace red tape with yellow ... tape.” Do you know what that means? More and more people, young people, are going to get injured on the job. More and more people are going to be killed on the job.

When I do my last two minutes, I’m going to talk about the fair wage act and about what you’re trying to do. We’ve had the fair wage act in Toronto since the early 1900s and it has worked quite regularly. This is nothing more than attacking its workers—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you. Back to the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I appreciate the comments from the member for Sarnia–Lambton, the member for Oshawa, the member for Markham–Unionville and the member for Niagara Falls.

Certainly, I think the member for Oshawa really encapsulated what we have been highlighting here today on this side of the House: that the changes that are included in Bill 66 really have nothing to do with competitiveness.

The members on the government side can say as much as they want that all they’re doing is eliminating unnecessary, duplicative regulations, but you ask one of those parents—Eva Ravikovich’s parent or the parent of Jérémie Audette—whose children were killed because of the lack of regulatory protections in an unlicensed home child care facility if they think that the measures that were put in place as a result of the coroners’ inquests, as a result of the Ombudsman’s investigation, are unnecessary. They are not unnecessary. They are there for a reason, and many of the regulations that we have in place in this province are there for a reason.

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This government likes to equate every regulatory measure with unnecessary red tape, and they’re not the same. They are not the same. There are regulations that were put in place for very good reason. They protect citizens. They protect children. They protect our environment. They protect us from toxic substances. Those are the regulations that are being placed on the chopping block by this government’s complete disregard for the citizens of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Further debate?

Mr. Jamie West: We’re at third reading of Bill 66, the Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act. It’s another omnibus bill. My friends asked me why they call it an omnibus bill; I said that it’s got loopholes so big you could drive a bus through it.

We hear all the time about—we'll speculate that it was developed in a backroom. The reason we say stuff like that is because we don't have consultation. We don't have input with Ontario's workers.

I want to tell you a story about the wire stretcher, Speaker. I was an electrical apprentice, and they sent me down to the van to get the wire stretcher. I spent 15 minutes digging around in the van—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's the oldest trick in the book.

Mr. Jamie West: Absolutely—or the checkered paint. It's a joke that they play on first-year apprentices. It's a reminder that you don't know everything, that you don't know as much as your journeyman does, and to listen to the journeyman who's there with you. I think this government would do well to listen to some experienced workers and some experienced tradespeople, and to learn things.

There was a comment earlier from the member from York-Simcoe, whose constituents were asking, "Why is construction so slow in the winter?" It's slow because it's snowing. It's slow because there's frost on the ground. There are certain types of construction you can't do when there's frost on the ground. There's certain pouring of concrete you can't do. You know that because people working in construction know that. That's why I'm saying: Open the table and have conversations. You get good decisions.

But like everything else, there's no consultation. Father knows best: "Let's time-allocate. Let's rush it as quickly as possible." Because when we have deputations, what's better than just five hours straight of non-stop deputations from as few people as possible? It's because the government seems to be in a hurry to get things wrong.

I'm proud to be here to talk about this, and to speak in opposition—obviously opposition—to it, but not because we're the opposition; it's our role. It's their role—the owl is over here to remind them to make good decisions. In our role in opposition, the eagle reminds us to look for ways it could be improved.

I'm committed to safeguarding our employment standards and occupational safety and the collective bargaining of Ontario's workers, but this government, time and time again, seems to be convinced that workers have it too good. Working families in Ontario are going to pay the price for these cuts to regulations that keep workers safe on the job. If passed, this bill is going to hurt the middle class. It's going to increase precariousness in the workplace. It's going to result in fewer investments in training, it's going to reduce apprenticeship completion rates, and it's going to produce weaker health and safety outcomes.

We talked about the ESA poster. The member from Durham was talking about virtual workers—not virtual workers, but a lot of workers don't have a workplace where they meet every day, so how do you post it? Right now, the employer has to do two things: They have to give a printed copy to the employee and they have to post one on the wall in a conspicuous place, like a lunchroom or a hallway where they're going to see it. Some workplaces

don't have a home base—they work from home; they travel back and forth—but there are many, many that do. We talk about cutting red tape; we're going to cut the red tape of printing a piece of paper? It's literally a piece of paper. It doesn't make sense, about not having to post this.

It's not just the workers, Speaker; it's the supervisors. It's the employers themselves, sometimes, who don't know these rules. I know from almost two decades of experience. Sometimes they don't know what the rules are themselves. It's just about awareness. But again, the government thinks the workers have it too good, so let's get rid of the piece of paper. We don't want people to know too much about their rights, Speaker; we want to hide information from them.

And it's not that the government is saying, "We're going to put posters up everywhere else. They're going to be at the mall, or they're going to be on subways and trains and buses so people will see them anyway. We're going to make commercials. It's going to be on a web page," a boring government web page that they think workers are going to go and find and dig around in. There's important information in these posters that comes up and changes that happen, so giving it to you when you're first hired doesn't matter if it's changed a month or two later. From the time we were here at Christmas until now, they've changed the poster already. The previous poster had all kinds of information about the worker's right to leave if they're experiencing domestic violence. It was right there on the poster; it's gone now.

If I printed it and I gave it to an employee now, they'd have no idea of that right unless they go and search for it. But they should know that. They should know about any changes.

I want to talk about the construction employers. It's a direct threat to the safety of construction workers and the collective bargaining rights of Ontario workers. This is probably, for me, the stickiest area of it. I just want to explain, Speaker. Bill 66 is going to reclassify employers so they can avoid hiring well-trained, unionized workers for public infrastructure projects in municipalities and other public sector entities—school boards, hospitals, colleges, universities and others. Bill 66 is going to say they're not construction employers, and not because the work is not construction. They're just changing the name to make a loophole so that it will be the same construction work that was done in the past but it will change the rules on it. What happens is those trade unions that are holding construction bargaining rights, the ones they negotiated for—we're getting rid of those. They're not going to represent those workers anymore and those organizations aren't going to be bound to collective agreements.

The Premier and the Conservatives, like I keep saying, think workers have it too good so they're finding new ways to rip up collective agreements for construction workers, for unionized workers. They put in an opt-out clause so that municipalities that are already underfunded by the previous Conservative government can opt out of it and say, "We're willing to keep the contracts as they are. We're going to keep them." They have to do it within three

months, and it's a glimmer of hope for these construction organizations, but—

Interjection.

Mr. Jamie West: I know the light is distracting the member, but I'm speaking.

I know that they can opt out if it's three months. It sounds like a glimmer of hope for these construction unions, but the employer can submit that at any time. How can you bargain if the employer across from you at any time can rip your collective agreement in half? That's the thumb on the scale the government is putting on this. They can give workers take-it-or-leave-it deals. They talk about building good-paying jobs. If every opportunity you give is to the employer to reduce wages and attack workers, how are you going to create these magical jobs? I've been waiting for trickle-down economics to work since the 1980s and it hasn't worked yet. We keep racing to the bottom and you guys can't wait to put grease on the rails so we can go even faster.

This is really important for a variety of reasons, but if you're not going to listen to common sense about decency for workers who have fought hard to have rights, let's just talk about the freedom of association that Ontario workers and unions have in the charter. Not only is it going to threaten good-paying jobs, highly trained trade jobs, but it's going to open the province and our public sector to court-based charter challenges. So in order to save money, we're going to be fighting them in court, Speaker. It's the weirdest thing.

I'm just looking at the time. I'm going to change tack for a second. You know, all of us in the government—their side, our side; it doesn't matter—we all know the importance of trades. We know how important it is. It seems like every second day someone is lobbying and talks about how we're facing a shortage. There's an aging workforce. The Canadian building trades say we're going to lose about a quarter of our skilled workers to retirement. If we don't replace them, we're going to be in a crisis and we all agree on this on opposite sides of the House—government and opposition. We talk about young people and getting them into the trades. The member from Simcoe North just said that we're managing to create more and better-paying jobs, and trades are good-paying jobs, decent career jobs. But the Conservative government plan is, "We're going to attack these jobs. We're going to drive these wages down. We're going to make it a less appealing work environment. We're going to make it harder to find good jobs in the trades."

This doesn't make any sense. Young people need to know that by entering the trades, there are going to be good jobs ahead of them that are going to lead to fulfilling careers. But instead, the government has decided to cut down their wages, eliminate opportunities. It's going to open that race to the bottom. You're going to go from an environment where you have a good union job—and let's say "career" instead of "job," because we don't have a jobs crisis; we have a career crisis. We all know people with two or three jobs who can't make ends meet. I want people with careers—good, solid union jobs, union careers—where they have pensions and benefits and decent wages.

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It's incredibly frustrating for me, Speaker. There's so much wrong in here, and what we do is, we sit and we say, "Red tape, red tape, red tape." We're not just going to slice and dice and randomly change stuff—and create jobs. If you want to create good jobs, you sit down with the workers who are involved and you say, "You've had a decent career. You've had a strong career. We want more people to get into it. Let's open the doors and talk."

Let's not shut it down to consultation. Let's not shut down deputations to five hours. Let's have a conversation about how to have more people have successful careers like my friend here has had.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: I've heard from a lot of businesses and constituents in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville, and I can assure you that we are listening to them. Bill 66 will reduce red tape and lower business costs to make Ontario more competitive and open for business. Our government is committed to cleaning up the regulatory mess and paving the way for job creators to ensure Ontario is open for business. Ever since we have introduced Bill 66, Madam Speaker, I have met with so many small business owners who are happy to see that their government is delivering on their promises.

Bill 66 has introduced regulatory and legislative changes targeting the redundant, unnecessary and outdated regulations that were harming businesses in Ontario. The Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act will establish consistency and clarity, with equity for all. It will lead to better-paying jobs and attract more investments. It will also lessen the burden of redundant regulations, thus making Ontario open for business.

Madam Speaker, our government is focused on creating a more transparent and accountable process through this bill. This is why I stand here to support Bill 66. Together we will put Ontario back on track and open for business. And as I said earlier this afternoon, businesses are really looking forward to Bill 66 and making sure that we do eliminate red tape.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to have the opportunity to comment on the remarks from my colleague from Sudbury on Bill 66. I appreciate his perspective. I appreciate the stories of when he was a young, new worker, searching for the wire stretcher—the member from Timmins talked about having to look for the bucket of steam—and the learning curve for new workers.

I remember being a fresh-faced teacher, sitting in a staff room. You look at the board that has notices and you take it all in. You think about things. You read some of the posters, whether they were health and safety or different workshops or different learning opportunities. That was where you sat and you learned some of your rights because you didn't have time to go to a web page.

The member opposite who was hollering at us, "We'll send an email"—what? The reality of a workplace is that

it's a place of work. If you have a poster that gives that information and keeps it up to date, don't pretend that's redundant. Don't mock it and say it's outdated. We still use paper, folks. Every one of us probably has some in our desks.

But the thing is, I've sat in this House and I've listened to the government mock that safety poster: "In this day and age, how can we not digitize it?" We're going to take a different tack, and so will the government members, when we're all talking about the Day of Mourning on April 28 and when we talk about the importance of keeping our workers safe.

We see attacks on workers in this bill. We heard from the member from Sudbury, who talked about reclassifying construction work. It's still construction work, but we're going to call it something else so that we can play games and do things with loopholes and create loopholes.

An attack on the freedom of association—Speaker, Bill 115, you might recall: How did that all turn out?

By the way, I'm here because of that, because the last government picked a fight with our education community. Here I stand, and here we go again.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Mr. Will Bouma: It's one more time, it seems, that I get to stand up and speak about Bill 66 this afternoon.

I wanted to just make mention that I really appreciate the member from Sudbury's comments. I've been struggling ever since the election with these presuppositions that people have about who I am and what I do. I remember, not long after I was elected, that I sat down with someone who said, "Well, you know, you come from a business-and-money background, and you're all about business." I said, "Do you have any idea who I am and what I do for a living?" He looked shocked. I said, "I'm a small-town optometrist. I'm a volunteer firefighter. I care about my community. I serve the people that I live with and work with."

It finally dawned on me that, all afternoon, we've been listening to this back-and-forth, especially from the opposition benches, saying that we're all against the workers, and I finally clued in. On Friday afternoon, I had the opportunity to tour, with the Premier, a facility in Brantford. I get it: It's because the opposition does not know how to pigeonhole us. They're realizing that this is a PC Party that is for the worker, and that Bill 66 is entirely and only for the worker, so that there are good jobs and good opportunity in Ontario, not just for business, obviously—because that's what workers are all about—but it's for the worker.

When I see the Premier go through a facility like Patriot Forge, and when I see him interact with the people who are on the front line, I see someone who understands the needs of the workers of Ontario and who is standing up for the workers of Ontario. That's what we see in Bill 66.

Now I understand why the people on the opposition benches are so afraid of this government. It's because they know that we're pulling that rug out from underneath them, because this government stands for the workers of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Questions and comments?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Make no mistake: We on this side are not afraid, and we're not afraid to speak the truth.

This bill—I wish it was restoring competitiveness, but it isn't. You have pieces in it that are good for some groups that lobbied you for changes they needed. But there are pieces in it that are destructive and dangerous, and that is a problem.

When a government is trying to cater to different groups in one piece of legislation, it causes problems. We can't have a debate about regulations that are actually meaningful. We can't have consultation. You obviously don't want to have public scrutiny, because you're afraid to bring your bills to committees and have public consultation that's meaningful—more than five hours—when there are going to be some huge impacts on folks. That is a problem. We're not afraid of that. We're not afraid of the public scrutiny.

I know what I hear on the streets. I hear that this government is not one that is for working people. It's very clear, when I go door to door, what they're saying about this government.

But we're here to try to convince you, I suppose, or to try to bring forward a warning that you should look at and listen to what we're saying on this side of the House. We're telling you that there are parts of this bill that should be removed.

I encourage you to listen to us and listen to my members, and next time, when you bring forward a piece of legislation, actually have the courage to bring it to committee for meaningful consultation with the public.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Back to the member for Sudbury.

Mr. Jamie West: I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay for talking about the importance of consultation and why it's there.

The member from Brantford—Brant has talked several times about being an optometrist and having a small business. I disagree really strongly with the "for the worker." I almost laughed out loud. I think about the workers in Oshawa at the GM plant. They're struggling with the support they're getting from this government.

The sick days: I think cancelling those paid sick days for workers doesn't help workers.

Minimum wage: They froze it at \$14 an hour for the next four years. That's not going to help many workers.

Autism: There are many workers affected by this. As I read the stories—because I'm online, they're sharing the stories about "wearethe100%.ca." The theme in that is that, typically, it ends up being the mother who quits her job to take care of the child full-time. I don't know how that helps those workers, so I disagree with that.

The member from Mississauga East—Cooksville talked about job creators. I agree with that because my in-laws had a small business and my parents had a small business. They create jobs, but the reality is they create opportunities. What creates the jobs is the people who can actually

afford these businesses. That's why I keep going back to these good-paying trade union jobs. Tradespeople create decent-paying jobs, and that money they have in their pockets that covers more than rent, heat, hydro and food, they go out and they spend that. That's what keeps the business going. That's what gets people to go see the optometrist, because they have the extra money to go see one, and many people who don't have the money don't.

I've got to talk about benefits and careers because the member from Oshawa talked about that GM and Unifor have been creating these good-paying jobs, these careers that drive the economy and have built the whole city. That's when you drive it. Saying that what they're going

to do is, they're going to magically create jobs—that doesn't make any sense.

There's not enough time to talk about the Day of Mourning, but it's near and dear to my heart as well. We had a worker killed where I worked. Paul Rochette was the worker's name.

Speaker, thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Thank you.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Lisa Gretzky): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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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 Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
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, Stephen Crawford
Doug Downey, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini, Kaleed Rasheed
Jeremy Roberts, Sandy Shaw
Donna Skelly
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Timothy Bryan

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Dave Smith
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Jessica Bell, Chris Glover
Christine Hogarth, Logan Kanapathi
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Dave Smith, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Julia Douglas

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
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

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Parm Gill
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Roman Baber, Aris Babikian
Nathalie Des Rosiers, Jill Dunlop
Parm Gill, Lindsey Park
Ross Romano, Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Sara Singh, Monique Taylor
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Jocelyn McCauley

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Jane McKenna
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Robert Bailey, Rima Berns-McGown
Lorne Coe, Michael Coteau
Mike Harris, Faisal Hassan
Jane McKenna, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Gurratan Singh
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Présidente: Catherine Fife
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peggy Sattler
Toby Barrett, Catherine Fife
Goldie Ghamari, Jim McDonell
Norman Miller, Suze Morrison
Michael Parsa, Peggy Sattler
Kinga Surma
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Will Bouma, Paul Calandra
Lorne Coe, Stephen Crawford
Mitzie Hunter, Laura Mae Lindo
Paul Miller, Billy Pang
Kaleed Rasheed, Amarjot Sandhu
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Deepak Anand, Doly Begum
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden
Belinda Karahalios, Robin Martin
Sheref Sabawy, Nina Tangri
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