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23 juin 2020

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Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 23 June 2020

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 23 juin 2020

The House met at 0900.

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

ROYAL ASSENT
SANCTION ROYALE

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

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act respecting registration of and access to defibrillators / Loi sur l'accès aux défibrillateurs et leur enregistrement.

An Act to protect Ontario's farms and farm animals from trespassers and other forms of interference and to prevent contamination of Ontario's food supply / Loi visant à protéger les fermes et les animaux d'élevage en Ontario contre les entrées sans autorisation et d'autres actes susceptibles de les déranger et à prévenir la contamination de l'approvisionnement alimentaire en Ontario.

An Act to amend the Commercial Tenancies Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location commerciale.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY
DECLARATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll recognize the Solicitor General to move the motion.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I move:

Whereas an emergency was declared by order in council 518/2020 (O. Reg. 50/20) on March 17, 2020, pursuant to section 7.0.1 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act; and

Whereas the emergency was extended past the end of March 31, 2020, for a period of 14 days by O. Reg. 84/20 on March 30, 2020, pursuant to subsection 7.0.7(2) of the act; and

Whereas the emergency was extended by resolution of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for a period of 28 days on April 14, 2020, pursuant to subsection 7.0.7(3) of the act; and

Whereas the emergency was extended by resolution of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for a period of 21 days on May 12, 2020, pursuant to subsection 7.0.7(3) of the act; and

Whereas the emergency was extended by resolution of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for a period of 28 days on June 2, 2020, pursuant to subsection 7.0.7(3) of the act, ending June 30, 2020; and finally

Whereas the period of the emergency may be further extended only by resolution of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, pursuant to subsection 7.0.7(3) of the act; and

Whereas the Premier has recommended that the period of the emergency be extended for 15 days past the end of June 30, 2020;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario hereby declares that the period of the emergency is extended past the end of June 30, 2020, for a period of 15 days.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Jones has moved government notice of motion number 82. Further debate?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Before I begin, and as I often do when I stand in this House, I want to thank the dedicated assembly staff who are working to ensure that legislators can meet to conduct the business of the province. Democracy, especially in these trying times, is an essential service. People expect us to be working for the health and safety of all Ontarians, and it is thanks to the staff here at Queen's Park that we can do so safely. As such, it is an honour to be in the House to open the debate on the proposed extension of the provincial declaration of emergency.

This will be the third time that our government has sought legislative approval to extend the provincial declaration of emergency. It is a significant trust and responsibility that the Legislature, and indeed all Ontarians, place in the government, and we do not take that responsibility lightly. The declaration is an important tool in our provincial response to this public health crisis, but it is only one tool. Before the declaration started, and after it ends—we have and will continue to consult with medical and health experts and others and will act wherever and whenever necessary to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19.

Every day, more of Ontario is reopening—campgrounds and other recreational areas, daycare facilities, shops and patios. In my own constituency, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health was one of the first to move into stage 2 of reopening. And after some additional work to help flatten the curve in Peel region, I'm pleased

that Peel Public Health will be moving to stage 2 this coming week.

Over the past few months when most of our province was put on pause, many people stepped up for the benefit of all Ontario residents: Ontario farmers, truck drivers, grocery store workers, transit operators, health care workers and first responders, who left their families at home to help and protect ours, and those within my own ministry and across government. Staff in the Ministry of the Solicitor General have been unyielding in their hard work to keep Ontarians safe and to support public safety personnel across Ontario: correctional services staff, probation and parole officers, police officers, coroners and forensic staff, the Office of the Fire Marshal and emergency management, who monitor this crisis 24/7, and those who enforce animal welfare laws to protect our animals and keep them safe from harm. While many of us were able to stay home by avoiding non-essential travel, Ontario's front-line heroes could not, and all Ontarians owe them a debt of gratitude for their work. Ontario is on a firm path to recovery, and these Ontarians and others have paved the way.

On March 17, our government took an essential step to protect Ontarians by declaring a provincial emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and on the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. We took this extraordinary measure because we needed to offer our full support and every power necessary to help front-line workers in health care and other critical sectors to contain the spread of COVID-19. As the Premier has said, the situation was changing day by day, hour by hour.

A provincial declaration of emergency has supported our government's rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis as new fronts in the battle against this deadly virus emerged.

As time has gone on, Ontario has made significant strides in the fight against COVID-19. We've launched a testing strategy that is seeing impressive results, with regularly over 20,000 tests being performed every single day across Ontario. And here, I want to publicly thank Dr. Dirk Huyer, Ontario's chief coroner, who has gone above and beyond to support the province, acting as the executive lead, along with Ontario Health, to make this mobile strategy a reality.

0910

We've also stood up a case management and contact tracing strategy to ensure that we can rapidly and accurately manage new potential outbreaks as they come up.

In response to the ongoing crisis, we launched the Ontario Together portal to encourage businesses, innovators and entrepreneurs to submit proposals to help in the fight against this deadly virus and to retool manufacturing to supply personal protective equipment to protect essential medical staff and other front-line workers.

Today, I'd like to update the House on the success of Ontario Together. As of June 15, over 27,000 submissions have been received. These submissions have generated over \$642 million in purchases of critical equipment and

supplies—everything from protective gloves and masks for health care workers to clip-on hand sanitizers for OPP front-line officers. This has ensured that we are less reliant on other countries for the supply of personal protective equipment and other life-saving equipment during a medical crisis—because protecting Ontarians during times of emergency will always be this government's highest priority.

All of these efforts have helped Ontario stabilize the ongoing crisis, safely and gradually reopen Ontario, and become better equipped should a second wave occur later in the year.

As members know, the Legislature can extend a declaration of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act for periods of no more than 28 days. The current declaration of emergency would terminate on June 30 if it is not extended. The government is now asking the Legislature to consider extending the declaration of emergency to July 15—a two-week extension.

We've come a long way over the past several months. Following our government's road map for reopening Ontario, businesses are getting back into gear, people are reuniting with their loved ones in nursing care, and communities across the province are springing back to life. But we're not there yet. The declaration of emergency needs to remain in place so that we can continue to move forward in a safe and measured manner that doesn't put our hard-earned gains in peril. We can't risk undoing what Ontarians have achieved together through personal sacrifice and looking out for each other's health and well-being.

We must also remember the Ontarians who have lost their lives during COVID-19 and their many loved ones who are still grieving.

We've seen progress go backwards elsewhere, where jurisdictions have opened only to close again because they weren't ready.

Since declaring the initial emergency on March 17, our government has been careful and deliberate in enacting emergency orders. We have acted on the guidance of public health experts and the evidence that continues to be gathered day by day.

Emergency orders have only been implemented whenever and wherever necessary and have been amended or lifted when no longer needed. Many of these orders, as well as other measures that don't directly fall under emergency orders, are in place to help lessen the hardship of COVID-19 on Ontarians and on small businesses. In addition to orders that I've highlighted during past debates, this includes temporarily freezing eviction orders; allowing bars and restaurants to sell alcohol with their takeout and delivery orders; and cutting red tape so municipalities can allow restaurants to extend their patios to accommodate physical distancing.

We can't look away from the pain that COVID-19 has inflicted on the lives of the people of Ontario, but our government can and will continue to take action to ease the impact of this global pandemic. This is the responsible way of managing the crisis and has set the stage for what's

to come: a full reopening of the province, with Canada's economic engine once again firing on all cylinders.

Ontario is a \$700-billion-plus economy. Before the COVID-19 outbreak hit, our economy was growing, job creation was outpacing the rest of Canada and unemployment was at its lowest level since the late 1980s. A return to those days is within our grasp. But we must keep the declaration of emergency in place a bit longer to help steer us on the right path for the journey ahead.

The declaration of emergency has given us needed space to press forward. Under the declaration, Ontario has successfully navigated through the first stage of reopening. We are taking a balanced approach as we consider every step, recognizing, as our government always will, that Ontario is not a one-size-fits-all province.

We can now look forward with more confidence than we have felt in months, thanks as well to the processes we have put in place to stabilize and manage this public health emergency.

Even through the darkest days of COVID-19, the resilience and compassion of Ontarians has shone through. So many people reached out to help the most vulnerable among us during this difficult time. They ensured that nurses, medical staff and other public safety personnel working around the clock had the meals and groceries they needed, and they volunteered for organizations providing critical services within our communities. We're through the worst, but this crisis continues to bring out the best in the people of Ontario.

Ontario is gradually returning to normal. More people are returning to work. We are once again including a trip to the provincial parks and campgrounds in our summer plans. This will be a new normal. Nobody can say for certain what this new normal will look like, except that we will continue to be vigilant to stop the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the risk of a second wave.

When the time is right, remaining workplaces and community spaces will also reopen. At the same time, public health advice and workplace safety guidance will remain in place and large public gatherings will continue to be restricted. This means that some of the emergency orders that have guided us through COVID-19 and the first steps of reopening the province will have to remain in place. Others will be amended or lifted altogether. As we continue to see success in stabilizing this emergency, we can turn our attention to the long-term solutions to ensure the continued health and well-being of all Ontarians.

A continuous state of emergency is neither sustainable nor necessary, which is why staff at my ministry are taking the time necessary to carefully review every emergency order to determine the best next steps should the declaration of emergency end after July 15. Our government has put together a COVID-19 response strategy to support medical staff and other front-line workers, to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place so as not to overwhelm hospitals, to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to reopen the province and create the conditions that will enable the economy to come back strong.

None of it would have been possible without a massive buy-in from the people of Ontario, all 14.5 million of them. Ontarians endured the impacts of COVID-19 and are now embracing the recovery. When the history of COVID-19 is written, Speaker, the resolve and strength of Ontarians will be a significant piece of that story. Ontarians have rallied to the cause.

It is with the 14.5 million Ontarians in mind that I now ask this House to consider extending the declaration of emergency. Extending the declaration will mean the work can continue to take recovery to the next level and to prepare for the post-COVID-19 world that is on the horizon.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the official opposition, it's always an honour to stand in this House—and, today, to continue debate on the extension of an emergency declaration in the province of Ontario. I think it's something that many of us, perhaps all of us, never thought we would have to do again.

I thank the Solicitor General for her remarks. We work together on many issues. We don't always get along. But as you know, we do respect each other, Speaker.

0920

A state of emergency is almost an un-Canadian thing, an un-Ontario thing. And we can't forget why we're here: because COVID-19 has impacted the world. But it's also impacted Ontario, in some ways, more than other parts of the world, and more, sometimes, than other provinces.

What's happened in long-term care, the deaths in long-term care, is something that we are going to have to spend some serious time on, which we should spend serious time on, in a full public inquiry, so we can prepare for not only COVID-19 or another virus, but so we can make sure that our seniors and the people who built this province are treated with the dignity they so deserve.

There have been many people impacted that we don't hear about in the news. Even if we do, it's a passing—I'll give you an example. At one of our committee hearings—and I apologize; I don't have the gentleman's name, but he represented the Airport Taxi Association. Ten of his members have died from COVID-19; 10 people picking up people at the airport. His description of how people were informed doesn't exactly equal what we've heard in the media, and you wouldn't think about it. And right now, through the migrant worker population—they are being hit incredibly hard.

That's why we will be supporting this extension, but not at all because of the government; despite the government. When you are granted emergency powers, you also have a duty to—because in a way, you are suspending the democracy of which the minister spoke. So it's incumbent on the government to be transparent at all costs. The Premier stated that, regarding transparency, the people of Ontario will “know what I know.” But the people of Ontario don't know who's at the command table. The people of Ontario don't really know who's actually advising the government during these emergency measures. That is a

very serious issue, because emergency measures are something that are very serious and people should know.

The minister in her remarks said that they have a comprehensive strategy to manage new outbreaks as they come up. I listened intently, and I have extreme respect for the minister, but what is the strategy? What is the strategy to manage the outbreaks in the migrant worker population? Ontarians have a right to know. The families of those migrant workers have a right to know. So far, the only strategy that they've seen is the Premier in a press conference chiding the farmers. That's not a strategy.

It's incumbent during emergency measures, when you are granted more power than any democratically elected leader should have—but there's a reason: We are dealing with a worldwide epidemic, which demands extraordinary measures. But with those extraordinary measures comes extraordinary responsibility. What I heard at that press conference, the Premier—as an example, if the farm community is part of the problem, then that comprehensive strategy should sit down with the farm community and talk about it and work it out, not chide them in a press conference.

It's the same with when the Premier talked about the landlords. If you know there's an issue and you've got extraordinary measures, it's incumbent on you to work the issue out, as opposed to simply doing politics via press conference. There's no time. This is not the time to do politics. There's a difference. And as we go further into this, it would appear that there are more politics creeping in than actually what should be done. With the minister's words—manage new outbreaks as they come up, the comprehensive strategy—it should be open to all and it doesn't seem to be.

The government is also moving ahead with other legislation or with other powers under the emergency measures act, like changing plans or zoning issues, removing red tape. Well, I'm not sure that they were given the extraordinary powers to push through building projects that, perhaps, wouldn't survive the light of true public scrutiny. I'm not sure that Ontarians would agree with that. I think Ontarians might see that as a slight—"abuse" is too strong a word—use of opportunity.

This also isn't the time to be opportunistic. This is the time to focus on what is important to Ontarians, why you were granted the emergency powers, why we support this extension despite what the government is doing. We understand that there are things that have to be done, but they should all be done openly and transparently.

A few days ago, after my remarks on Bill 156, the farm trespass act, in his remarks to my speech, the government House leader was very pointed. It kind of caught me by surprise, to tell the truth. If he had been a bit more expansive in his remarks, I would have given him a more direct answer. He seemed to be upset that I, as Chair of the government agencies committee, signed a letter asking for the government to let that committee operate and somehow that was partisan. They operate some committees, but asking the government to operate committees that are basically oversight committees—if that's viewed as partisan, I don't understand.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Actually, it was that he sent the letter on NDP letterhead. That's why it seemed to be—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a point of order. I apologize to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane and I allow him to continue.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you for that clarification.

Getting back to my remarks, I don't believe that asking for oversight committees to operate during this time of emergency—if you're going to allow committees that don't provide oversight to operate, then it would appear fair, it would appear democratic that all committees should operate.

In the time that the emergency orders have been in-stated, the government has made over 100 appointments. For those of you who are watching, there is a committee that actually oversees those appointments. The way it works—government has a right to make appointments; that's part of their job. That list is distributed, and the opposition can ask people to come before that committee and they're questioned.

0930

But since the state of emergency, that committee has not been allowed to run. It's the government House leader who has the power to allow those committees to function. Of the 100, the opposition has put forward 35 that we would like to ask questions. But that committee doesn't function.

Public accounts is another committee that actually is very important, right? They work very closely with the Auditor General. The Auditor General is looking at things like long-term care, things that would be very relevant now. Public accounts isn't running.

We fully understand that that is much easier for the government, but in a time when basically—I never thought I'd have to say this. In a time when in many ways democracy in this province has been suspended, it's very, very important that the government take all steps possible to make sure that transparency is maintained. It's good for the government, as well.

It's good for the government, as well, because the more transparency, the more people know, the better the solutions and the answers will be. As soon as sunlight hits something, it's much cleaner. I'm not sure that works for COVID-19. I'm not the president of the United States, so I'm not going to comment on that. But it's really, really important, and I think the government is missing the mark on that. If they're not careful, they will be judged on that as well.

The government's getting very used to holding a press conference and walking away and everything's fine. You know what, Speaker? Everything is not fine. The fact is that the Legislature plays a very, very important role, a role of—and I'm not a great quoter, but you know the owl and the eagle; we're supposed to look down on the government. Well, the only way that works is if you're actually allowed to look down and make comments. With

the government not allowing oversight committees—not allowing—they can talk about transparency all they want, but they really don't want transparency.

There are a few issues that have to be dealt with, pronto. I agree with the minister about what Ontarians from all walks of life have done, how they've united, how they've worked together against the common enemy, and many have been front-line heroes. As we speak, many of those front-line heroes—their front-line hero pay has already been cut, and we're still in a state of emergency. They aren't directly paid by the government. Other front-line heroes who were deserving, who should be getting or are supposed to get this pandemic pay, still haven't got it. I'd say that's an emergency as well. For those people, that's an emergency. And the issue that happened, that some people on the front lines are supposed to get this pay and some people who are equally on the front lines don't get this pay—that's also something that should be discussed here. There are all kinds of issues.

The people of Ontario want us to work together. The government says they want us to work together. But what the government says and what the government does don't always match up.

I like to quote my father. My father never would have thought I would ever stand in this place. My father always taught me, "When you're dealing with people, watch how they do the little things, because if they do the little things right, then you can trust them on the big things."

I'm going to talk about a really little thing right now that, outside these walls, probably doesn't mean anything. I've been here a while—some would say too long, and some people on the other side say they're going to fix that, and some of my own constituents would like to fix that. Anyway, when I first got here, I knew nothing about how this place ran. I still don't know a lot. But the one part I did understand, and I was a whip for five years, so I understood it even more—the opposing parties and the government would get together once a week and would lay out what they were going to discuss for the rest of the week so that everyone would have time to do their homework, to debate intelligently, to ask credible questions in debate, and to make the government, quite frankly, work harder. At the end of the day, you had better legislation. As I sit here today, we don't know the morning of what's going to come up for debate—I'm sure the government does, and that's great. They're saying they don't, but they'd be crazy if they didn't. But for the opposition not to know—that's not actually increasing transparency; that's the exact opposite. It's a little thing, but that wouldn't have passed the smell test with my dad. It likely doesn't really make any difference to Ontarians.

When I hear a minister say, "Oh, transparency" and "We have to protect democracy," and say how important that is to the government—yet when they do the things they do in this House, I have a hard time believing it. I want to believe it, but I have a hard time believing it.

When a minister says they have comprehensive strategies but they don't want to talk about them, I have a hard time believing that too.

We are fighting a common enemy and that enemy doesn't care about party politics—the COVID-19 virus doesn't care—so the more we all know, the better off all Ontarians are.

We are in favour of extending the emergency measures because there are things that need to be done to fight COVID-19—but again, we do it not in favour of the government, but despite this government, because this government has forgotten in many ways why they were given these powers. That is very sobering. I hope that they remember why they were given these powers. I hope that they take the opportunity, actually, to not only talk about transparency, but do transparency.

0940

With that, Speaker—do you want to—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: With that, I would like to share the rest of my time—or no? Okay. I would like to share the rest of my time with the member from London West.

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

I'm pleased to recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise today, as the deputy House leader for the NDP caucus, to participate in this important debate on the extension of the declaration of emergency.

As both the minister and my colleague have pointed out, a declaration of emergency is an extraordinary measure that happens infrequently and must be implemented judiciously and wisely. Basically, when you are declaring a state of emergency in the province or in the country, you are asking citizens to suspend democracy. You're asking citizens to put aside the democratic processes that we value so highly, that are part of the way that we function as a democracy, and entrust the governing party with the ability to exercise exceptional power. Speaker, as you know, our caucus, the official opposition, has supported the government in declaring a state of emergency, and we will support this motion once again. However, we have serious concerns about the exercise of power that has been displayed by this government, having been entrusted with that ability under the declaration of emergency.

A declaration of emergency really relies on citizens feeling that we are all in this together. We have seen that. We have seen amazing stories of collaboration. We have seen manufacturing plants pivot. In London, Labatt stopped making beer and started making hand sanitizer. We've seen manufacturers start producing masks and gowns and other essential PPE for front-line health care workers. There has been a really unprecedented level of stepping up and collaboration to support each other, because we understand that this is an experience that we have never seen before in this province and it is having a significant, significant impact on all of us.

However, the notion of "all in this together"—the danger of that notion is that it can paper over the reality that some people are experiencing the pandemic differently than other people. I think that that is something that this government has not fully recognized, when you look at the

kinds of emergency measures that it has implemented. We know that both the health crisis and the economic crisis, the process of recovery that is going to take months if not years in Ontario, has played out very differently in different regions of the province and among different populations within society. We have seen the devastation of the virus in long-term-care facilities and in retirement homes. Some 80% of the deaths that we have grieved in Ontario have occurred in long-term-care facilities among the most vulnerable seniors in the province. We know that Black and racialized communities are also harder hit by COVID-19 than other communities. In London, the Middlesex-London Health Unit has been collecting race-based data from the beginning of this pandemic and just completed a preliminary analysis last week, and they found that Black and racialized people represent 17% of the population, but account for 27% of COVID-19-positive cases. So it's clear, Speaker, that the pandemic is affecting different groups differently, and we need to understand that. We need to be sensitive to that in terms of the public response to helping people through the pandemic.

We saw a government that resisted the collection of race-based data for weeks and weeks. They said it was not necessary. The Middlesex-London Health Unit analysis shows directly the importance of race-based data in understanding the disproportionate impact of COVID-19, and then coming up with strategies to help mitigate that disproportionate impact.

We know that while all of us were advised to stay at home as much as possible, for certain workers, that was not an option: workers who were declared essential. They worked in grocery stores. They worked in gas stations. They worked in public transit. They worked as cleaners. They worked in low-wage occupations. Those were essential occupations. They didn't have a choice. They didn't have a choice to stay home. They had to go to work every day.

Under this government's emergency powers, it created a pandemic pay program to recognize the risk and sacrifice that so many workers in this province have made to keep us functioning, to keep us going as a province. And yet they excluded thousands. Thousands of essential workers have been excluded from the pandemic pay program. They went to work every day. They got up every day and went into that variety store, went into that grocery store, went in to perform their janitorial duties. The risk that they took has not been recognized or acknowledged by this government. It has not been included in the government's pandemic pay program.

We also know that in particular our front-line health care workers—there are teams of front-line health care workers who work side by side in a hospital facility. There are occupational therapists. There is a physiotherapist. There is a dietitian. There are many, many different health care professionals who come together to become part of the health care team that cares for COVID-19-positive patients. And yet this government decided that its pandemic pay program, the \$4-an-hour wage supplement, would only go to certain health care workers. Only certain

members of that health care team who work alongside each other are being recognized for their sacrifices, for the risks that they took, caring for potentially COVID-19-positive patients and confirmed COVID-19 patients. They took risks by going into work and having to go home to their families.

Many, I know, chose to live apart from their families. In London, we had an RV manufacturer who donated RVs so that health care workers could have an RV in their driveway and they could come home from their shift and could stay in the RV, so they didn't have to worry about taking the virus home to their families.

We've heard about personal support workers. Some personal support workers are included in the government's pandemic pay program, but many are not. If you're a personal support worker who works for a private agency that may be subcontracted by a long-term-care facility, you're not eligible for the pandemic pay because of who your employer is. The program is not recognizing the essential, critical value that these PSWs are performing for their patients and also for us collectively.

0950

We know that persons with disabilities have been particularly hard hit by this pandemic, and yet very, very little has been done by this government in response to those truly extraordinary hardships that persons with disabilities are experiencing. We've seen almost no response in the emergency orders that have been implemented so far. Many of them rely on public transit. The transit routes have all been closed down, or many transit lines have been reduced. They've had to incur extra costs to get food delivered, to get their medications brought in. They may be on the Internet more, so they're spending more on WiFi or cellphones just to maintain some kind of connection, to break the isolation that they have been experiencing. And there has been very little acknowledgement of the financial costs of the pandemic, the financial pain of the pandemic that these vulnerable people are experiencing.

We know that the pressures of the pandemic on parents who have young children, who are either out of work—they don't have an income coming in—or they may be trying to work at home, but with the closure of child care facilities, they've been struggling to try to manage caring for their children, sometimes while supervising online lessons. It has been incredibly challenging, Speaker. Yet there has been, again, a lack of attention from this government in terms of the impact of the pandemic on some of these groups of people.

We have heard in London about the skyrocketing spike in calls for domestic violence assistance. Sexual violence and domestic violence are on the rise, because the pandemic has created all new kinds of stresses. That is manifesting itself in these increased rates of domestic violence and sexual violence.

Speaker, when a government declares a state of emergency, when we collectively give a government the power to respond to a state of emergency, it is absolutely essential that that response take into account the different experiences of every citizen in this province. So we consider,

today, the kind of response that we have seen from this government.

I just want to refer members to a report that was released on May 26 by Samara. Samara is a non-profit institution, and its focus is on strengthening democracy across the country. Samara did an analysis of different provincial and territorial governments and Legislatures' responses to COVID-19. It looked at the changes that were made in terms of the functioning of Legislatures during a state of emergency and the legislative agenda that was brought forward by various governments. In analyzing that data, Samara came up with a number of recommendations. I want to share those recommendations with the government, because I think it's important for them to reflect on how to maintain a robust democracy, even in a state of emergency.

Their first recommendation, number 1 on the list of recommendations, is, "Make oversight an essential service." They state, "Legislatures must scrutinize governments throughout the pandemic to ensure they remain responsive to citizens."

Now, Speaker, what have we seen from this government in terms of oversight? We have seen a government that has refused to allow the three main oversight committees of the Legislature to do their work. We had a letter that was issued by the Chairs of those oversight committees—the Chair of public accounts, the Chair of estimates and the Chair of public appointments—urging the government to allow those committees to move forward and do their critical work of overseeing, scrutinizing, what the government is doing. To date, there has been no response from the government about when those committees will be back in operation, and that is a disservice to the people of this province. It's a disservice to the voters who elected us to come to the Ontario Legislature and do our job as MPPs whose whole focus is on ensuring accountability and responsiveness to the people we represent.

The second recommendation from Samara is that "virtual platforms should be embraced..." I do give the government credit: We moved some committees online. But let's think about which committees were able to move online to hold virtual participations. The only committees that this government decided to move online were those that were dealing with non-COVID-19-related legislation that this government had introduced before—long before, in some cases—the pandemic was declared, but has decided to use the state of emergency to ram through those pieces of legislation with a haste that we have rarely seen before.

If you're going to enable virtual committee hearings—which we should, and I think that has allowed much greater participation from people across the province—we have to prioritize making sure that the committees are dealing with all of the issues that should be addressed; for example, the oversight issues. The public accounts committee would be a perfect committee to bring forward for virtual hearings. The public accounts committee was doing some very in-depth work, looking at long-term-care inspections and emergency management.

The Auditor General had been engaged in a number of other audits that began before the COVID-19 emergency was declared but have particular relevance, given the situation that we are facing. The deliberations of the public accounts committee would be very helpful, I would think, Speaker, to inform the government's response to the COVID-19 emergency.

The third piece of advice from Samara is, "Don't rush." They say, "While governments may want to pass legislation as quickly as possible, there are several examples where this has ... resulted in the passage of legislation with serious issues. Instead of finding ways to pass legislation more quickly, governments should work to enable more thorough consideration of legislation."

Have we seen this government work to enable more thorough consideration? Have we seen them work to give the public lots of lead time as to when a bill is going to be brought forward to committee for review—one of these bills that I mentioned that the government has pushed through under cover of COVID-19? No, we have not. We have not seen that happen. Not only has the public been limited in their ability to participate in consideration of legislation; we have also been limited in our ability to participate in debate.

In particular, my colleague the member for Timiskaming—Cochrane talked about the fact that we never know what legislation is going to come to the House for debate. This morning, we arrived and that was the first we heard from the government that the order of business for this morning was going to be the motion that we are discussing right now.

1000

A couple of weeks ago, I was here in the chamber and, with almost no notice whatsoever, they brought in legislation that they didn't even have the courtesy to let us know about in advance so that we could come prepared with speaking notes, so that we could have touched base with constituents we represent, so that we could bring the voices of the people who elected us to this chamber to participate in debates. That has now become the *modus operandi* of this government.

This government has decided that this is how they're going to be doing business in an ongoing way. The last House leaders' meeting lasted 45 seconds for the official opposition—because the government House leader has shown no interest in consulting with the official opposition on the business that is going to be brought before the House.

We are in a state of emergency. As I started out by saying, in a state of emergency, when the government is entrusted with extraordinary power, it is more incumbent than ever on the government to be collaborative, to be open, to be consultative, to work together with the other parties on what the Legislature is going to be doing.

Another recommendation from Samara: "Co-operate in public." We have not seen that. We have seen a complete lack of transparency. In fact, we have seen the government move forward, under the veil of COVID-19, with some

very egregious changes to environmental laws. They suspended ministerial zoning orders, which allowed the overriding of Planning Act provisions and environmental protections. They did that without any consultation whatsoever. This was just something they decided to slide in. It has nothing to do with the COVID-19 state of emergency. It has nothing to do with an emergency order to protect the citizens of this province. But they have this power, so I guess they figured they may as well use it. Maybe it's not surprising. We also saw majority governments in Alberta and Manitoba that also happen to be Conservative bring in similar measures to circumvent environmental laws. Those kinds of actions are really what undermine public confidence in government, in all of us as politicians—when people see power being used in ways that don't contribute to the public good.

The next recommendation from Samara: “Resume usual business, but not business as usual.” They point out that with many people distracted and many civil society organizations in financial trouble, Legislatures must find new ways to encourage and seek out public input. As I mentioned before, that has not happened. In fact, the exact opposite has happened. The government, with very little notice, set days for public input into its controversial bills, and this is not helpful to engaging the public and encouraging people to participate in business.

Another recommendation: “Reboot committees.” Speaker, I've already talked about the fact that this government has decided to reboot certain committees, but not the committees that are doing the fundamental work of oversight and ensuring accountability from the government.

And finally, the last recommendation is, “Start following the money.” Samara notes that governments must share their assumptions and plans with Legislatures going forward if financial oversight is to continue. If there's one committee that is tasked with following the money, it is public accounts. Public accounts is a vital committee to understand how government dollars are being spent and if the public is getting value for those dollars. The estimates committee is another vital place to follow the money. And yet, both the estimates committee and the public accounts committee have not been rebooted. They are not sitting. That means that MPPs are not able to do that vital work.

What else have we seen from this government during the declaration of emergency? We have seen a very troubling lack of transparency. The Premier has refused to disclose who is sitting at the command table. I think, when we are in the midst of an infectious disease emergency, we want to make sure that all the decisions are being made, and are in accordance with the public health advice and with the opinions of public health experts, under the direction of people who understand infectious diseases and how to respond most effectively. And yet, we don't know who these people are who are sitting at the Premier's command table. Yes, we know the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the province, but we don't know the other members of the command table, so we don't know who has the Premier's ear, what research is being shared, and what advice is being shared to guide government decisions.

We've also seen a lack of transparency around long-term-care homes. The government has indicated that certain long-term-care homes have been flagged as high-risk homes because of problems, certainly very likely with private sector operators. There have been concerns flagged that have led to the province classifying these homes as high risk. We don't know where those homes are. What homes are they? People whose loved ones are in long-term-care homes have a right to know. They want to know: Is their loved one in a long-term-care home that the province has decided is at a much higher risk than other long-term-care homes in the province? We don't have that information.

We also heard from my colleague about the political appointment process. That's another activity that this government has engaged in during the state of emergency. It has continued to move ahead with public appointments, which wouldn't be a problem if the public appointments committee had a chance to review those appointments. But this government has made over 100 appointments, the official opposition has called 35 of those appointees to appear before the committee; none have appeared. That's a problem, Speaker, because people in this province want to have confidence that the persons who are appointed to very important public roles, serving on agencies, boards and commissions—people want to have confidence that those are not partisan appointments, that those appointments were not made in order to reward an insider friend or other kinds of patronage reasons.

That's going back to my earlier comment about the necessity of having those oversight committees, including the public appointments committee, functioning during a state of emergency.

1010

Samara also did another analysis that I wanted to speak to. It looked at four approaches to emergency law-making and scrutiny. This analysis was published on April 21. They reviewed four different countries and looked at how emergency law-making was conducted in those countries and what kind of scrutiny was in place. They looked at New Zealand, Australia, the UK and Canada. Interestingly, what they found was that the most successful country in terms of managing COVID-19, implementing emergency measures to respond to COVID-19 and enabling ongoing scrutiny of government measures related to COVID-19, was New Zealand.

As we all know, New Zealand is a country that operates on a system of proportional representation. It's no surprise that New Zealand, in this analysis, compared to Australia, the UK and Canada, came out on top, because other commentators have noted similar findings. There was an editorial in the Washington Post called “Which Kinds of Democracies Respond More Effectively to a Pandemic?” That editorial found that Germany, South Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Israel have all been championed as countries that implemented an effective response to COVID-19, and of course, what they all have in common is they all operate their democracy on a system of proportional representation.

Why, Speaker, would you think that countries with proportional representation would have a more effective response to COVID-19? It is because proportional representation requires the kind of transparency, accountability, cross-party collaboration, consensus, openness, working together—all of those things that we have seen lacking in the Ontario government.

New Zealand—and this is interesting—created a special committee that was actually chaired by a member of the opposition. That special committee was mandated to review the government's response to COVID-19 in a very comprehensive way. That committee is meeting three times a week, it's hearing testimony from ministers and experts, the public is engaged. That really is the kind of a best practice that we see in countries, like New Zealand, that operate on systems of proportional representation.

Particularly, in a public health emergency, proportional representation is even more important because when you compare health outcomes in countries that operate first past the post versus proportional representation, you find more inclusive and more effective health systems or health outcomes related to the health of the population.

COVID-19 has shown us that we need to ensure that we have capacity in our health care system to respond to the virus. Countries with proportional representation have laid the groundwork. They have a much more solid groundwork to respond to a pandemic like COVID-19 when it happens because of that collaboration that's required to move forward. There appears to have been a greater consensus about the need to invest in public health, the need to—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Sorry to interrupt the member mid-sentence, but it is 10:15 and I'm compelled to now ask the House for members' statements. Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PRIDE MONTH

Ms. Suze Morrison: This month is Pride Month. I sometimes think that I'm the luckiest MPP in this chamber because my riding of Toronto Centre is home to the Church and Wellesley Village, a community that I'm humbled and honoured to represent. It's also a neighbourhood that's home to the largest Pride festival in Canada. This year, Pride might feel different, but it's no less true to its roots. Pride always has been and always will be political. COVID-19 may have changed how we gather physically, but it can't change the heart of Pride, and that's the fight for justice.

Pride started as a riot, led by Black, queer and trans folks demanding not just equal rights but justice. Pride is a time to remember Stonewall, the bathhouse raids and those we lost and those who survived the AIDS crisis. This year more than ever, we have to honour that history and, with the spirit of Stonewall in our hearts, continue to fight

in solidarity with Black and Indigenous members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

If members of this Legislature really want to celebrate Pride this year, I hope that you'll join me in fighting to end police violence and demilitarize police, to ensure queer and trans businesses survive COVID-19, to make PrEP free and accessible, to fund all gender-affirming surgeries and drugs, and to put gender and sexual identity back into our curriculum.

To Black and Indigenous members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community: Your lives matter.

Happy Pride, everyone.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Since COVID-19 burst into our lives earlier this year, we have all seen the remarkable perseverance and determination of our constituents in responding to this virus in our communities. Incredible acts of service, care and sacrifice from our front-line workers, those who work in essential workplaces, and simply everyday Ontarians in Niagara West and beyond have demonstrated the best of what Ontario has to offer the world.

But families, workers and job creators in my riding are hurting. The health, social and financial impacts of COVID-19 have been devastating. So my message to my constituents is clear: I hear you and I will work with the government you have sent to Queen's Park to help you.

To the families who are worried about their loved ones getting sick: We are investing in health care to protect our hospitals, doctors and nurses.

To those who have lost their jobs and are worried about putting food on the table, and to students coming out of school into a tough labour market: We are determined to rebuild Ontario as the economic engine of this country, with a singular focus on creating good-paying, long-term jobs.

To seniors nervous about making end meet: We have your back and will continue moving to cut taxes and make life more affordable.

To every man, woman and child in Niagara West: I hear you and will be working tirelessly with Premier Ford and your PC government to make sure tomorrow is brighter than today and yesterday.

Together, I believe our best days are still ahead. God bless you all, and God bless Niagara West.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm going to make a prediction—a prediction that on June 27, we are going to witness a miracle. And Speaker, I'm not talking about the Leafs winning the cup; that would take more than a miracle. I'm talking about a miracle of love, of community and support for one another. It's going to happen right in my riding, in Windsor and Essex county.

It was originally the brainchild of Wes Thompson and James Rasmussen from Chatham-Kent, who initiated a grassroots effort to raise non-perishable foods for their

community in light of the challenges that all communities are facing during COVID-19. Then, Adam Lally, Josh Lane, Steve Truant and Steve Desjardins had a call with James and Brent to find out how they could put that together for Windsor and Essex county. That has spawned an incredible response from our community. Right now, we have over 10,000 volunteers that have signed up to take part in this grassroots effort.

There are others from Windsor-Essex county: Kerri Zold, Josh Spadafora, Mark Jones, Tracey Bailey and Steve Ilijanich, and 10,000 other people who, on June 27, are going to spread across Essex county to perform a miracle. They're hoping that everyone in Essex county can participate. They're hoping to raise over—well, we think we're going to raise over a million pounds of food, and we hope that that record is broken in other communities.

Speaker, it is going to be amazing. I encourage everyone in Essex county to take part. Go visit the website. Visit the Facebook page. On June 27, we're going to see a miracle in Essex county. I thank everyone from the bottom of my heart who is going to participate for this incredible example and show of love and compassion for our community.

1020

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Speaker, as our communities have battled the COVID-19 pandemic over the last few months, one of the things we have seen is the thousands of people volunteering to help their neighbours and communities. This has happened in my community of Oakville North-Burlington and all across Ontario—volunteers supporting our hospitals and communities, contributing supplies and support.

Yesterday, I was honoured to meet some of these individuals and thank them for their selfless service. The Halton Region Chinese volunteer group and Caps for Care Chinese Community, with more than 200 volunteers, made and donated thousands of masks and other supplies to our health care organizations, including Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Joseph Brant Hospital, long-term-care homes like the Post Inn Village and retirement homes like Palermo Village, the Compassion Society of Halton, and family doctors' offices. It is so often in times of crisis when we see individuals and communities come together caring for one another.

Thank you to the Halton Region Chinese volunteer group and Caps for Care Chinese Community and all your many volunteers for your work. When our community was in need, you took action and assisted those who needed help. You are an inspiration to us all.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. John Vanthof: As I'm sure many other members have done since the lockdown—our office has been busy talking with and calling a lot of our stakeholders. I focused on the tourism sector, because we have a lot of tourism in our area and a lot of small mom-and-pop tourism operators

who seem to have fallen through a lot of the cracks and are in some pretty desperate times right now. Now that the state of emergency has allowed them to operate again, some of them are breathing a sigh of relief. But they're not doing a happy dance yet, because, as the American border is still closed, what they're trying to do is salvage their season.

They're facing some other issues. One of them, Terry Petznick from Moose Haven Lodge, gave me some interesting information. From 2018 to 2019, in that period, his general liability insurance went up by 41%; 2019-20, another 38%. His insurance in that period, from 2018 to the end of 2020—over 100% increase. Even in good times, they can't withstand that, and right now, they're in crisis.

The Ontario government needs to do more than chide insurance companies. It needs to actually work with them to allow businesses like Moose Haven Lodge to continue to serve our great province.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: Happy Pride, everyone.

Mr. Speaker, last week there was a CBC story out of Manitoba that reported, "Current and former employees of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg say its management would sometimes ask staff not to show any gay content on tours at the request of certain guests, including religious schools/groups." This is a shocking story, Mr. Speaker, on so many levels, including that management of an institution that exists to shine a light on human rights would accommodate bigotry, that educators would choose to deny children the opportunity to learn and draw their own conclusions from history, and that in 2020 in Canada, we're still dealing with homophobia and transphobia.

Every year at this time we celebrate Pride. We celebrate, but as one activist said yesterday, as we were raising the flag here at Queen's Park, the seeds of Pride are in protest. And that protest has to continue to be a part of the Pride celebration. The situation in Winnipeg highlights why. And so when we hear the question that we always hear during Pride, "Why do they need a parade?" the answer continues to be, "Because we're not done." The story about the human rights museum makes that clear.

This year, Pride will be very different from last year and the last 20 years, but it is no less important. In fact, it may even be more important, because of the isolation that's been our reality for months. That isolation is even harder on people who are living in a closet of fear, who need the warmth of Pride to feel that they belong, and that at some point they will be able to be open and proud about who they are. Especially to you, I want to say that you are important, you are loved just as you are, and next year let's hope we can get together and dance.

GRADUATIONS

Mr. Mike Harris: Graduation is typically a time when families, friends, mentors and colleagues come together to celebrate the achievements of our students. But for the

class of 2020, their ceremonies will not be the way they imagined them.

I want to congratulate all Kitchener–Conestoga's graduates of this extraordinary year. They have worked hard to get to this point, especially over the last few months. Whether you're graduating from elementary school, middle school, high school, college or university, I hope that you are still able to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The ceremonies at Waterloo region's world-class post-secondary schools are going to be very different this year. The newest alumni from the University of Waterloo are celebrating this year virtually, and Conestoga College and Wilfred Laurier University are making arrangements to honour their graduates in the months to come.

On lawns across my riding, parents have put up signs to show just how proud they are of their children. My house is no exception, Mr. Speaker. Two of my sons are graduating this year: Jaxon is off to high school and Maverick will be starting middle school in September. I know you are watching right now, and I just wanted to say how proud I am of you.

To all the classes of 2020: You are our future leaders, the future members of this House, and while this may be a challenging time, your future is very bright. Congratulations.

EDUCATION FUNDING SUBVENTIONS DESTINÉES À L'ÉDUCATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Students in Nickel Belt are having a very hard time since the schools closed due to COVID-19. Why? Because they cannot participate because the Internet is so, so slow.

Les étudiants et étudiantes sont frustrés. Ils sont isolés. Ils sont assis seuls devant leur écran en attente du téléchargement qui n'arrive jamais. Le conseil scolaire avait organisé une belle prestation avec des chanteurs et des danseurs, mais personne de l'École Notre-Dame à Foleyet n'a pu participer, n'a pu les voir, parce que l'Internet est trop lent.

La même chose avec les graduations en ligne : les enfants, les conseils scolaires et les écoles organisent de belles cérémonies de graduation en ligne. Mais pour les enfants de Foleyet, les enfants de Bisco, les enfants d'Ivanhoe, aucun d'eux autres n'est capable de participer parce que l'Internet est trop lent.

In April of this year, I wrote to the Minister of Education and told him that there are solutions to help the students of Foleyet, of Ivanhoe. We can help these kids get access to what they need online. It has been two months and, so far, radio silence. We have followed up twice with the minister's office and still no answer.

It feels to me like the minister doesn't care about the challenges of northern and rural kids, but I care. It's not only places like Bisco and Foleyet; it is also in and around Sudbury, in Whitefish and Wahnapiatae. The minister has a role to play to make sure those kids learn.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I rise today to pay tribute to the Ontarians who are making a difference in people's lives. In these challenging times, many organizations and individuals in Etobicoke–Lakeshore have gone above and beyond to support our community:

I want to mention my neighbour Jeanette, who, rain or shine, at 7:30 each night, leads our street in banging pots and pans to cheer on our front-line workers; the Pastors, who pitched in to help when it was not safe for volunteers at Haven on the Q, who I had the pleasure to join one afternoon to pack groceries for those in need; Jasmine at LAMP, who I visited with my staff a few weeks ago to bring dry goods for her to hand out to those who need that extra little bit of help at the end of the month; the Downing Street Group, who generously donated empty rental space to GlobalMedic so they can house much-needed supplies; and the amazing people at Humber College, who generously donated their north campus to GlobalMedic so they can set up a place to package food and supplies.

The headquarters for GlobalMedic is also in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and last month, along with my staff, I had the honour to pack thank-you hygiene kits for front-line workers working in hospitals, seniors' homes and long-term-care facilities. The products were generously donated by Procter and Gamble and were also distributed to local food banks and shelters around the province.

These are a few of the many local heroes in Etobicoke–Lakeshore who have exemplified the Ontario spirit.

But I would be remiss if I didn't thank the numerous organizations outside Etobicoke–Lakeshore, such as the Canada India Foundation, who I joined last week to distribute meals to Mississauga Fire Station 101.

Thank you to everyone.

1030

RACISM

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: As the MPP for Markham–Thornhill, I represent one of the most ethnically diverse ridings in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, what I have to say might make some uncomfortable, but we cannot stay silent about things that matter—new racism is to deny that racism exists. I believe that our diversity defines us as Ontarians and as Canadians. However, as we have all seen lately, racial inequality, discrimination and unfair treatment of marginalized communities are very much with us. This is especially true for Indigenous and Black Canadians, people of colour and other minorities.

It is a privilege to learn about racism instead of having experienced it. As a person of colour myself, I have experienced my own fair share of racism and discrimination. I could tell so many stories.

What we need now is action. The solution is not to be colour-blind, but to acknowledge that for many people in this country, racism is a fact of life.

Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that we will overcome these challenges.

I want to say to the people of Markham–Thornhill: I am your voice.

And to the people of Ontario: Our government understands that we must do better.

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning is to the Premier.

This morning, families from across Ontario are gathering here at Queen’s Park. They’re here to honour the memory of loved ones who died in long-term care during the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that there is accountability for a system that so badly failed their parents and grandparents.

That hasn’t happened in Ontario. No minister has been held to account by the Premier. The Premier has not taken responsibility. And last week we learned that the Premier is planning some new legislation to ensure that for-profit long-term-care homes will be freed from legal liability for their actions.

The people who are gathering today on the lawns of Queen’s Park—their question to the Premier is: Will anyone be held accountable for the failures in long-term care?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: We’ve been very clear that the system in Ontario has been broken, and we must act quickly. It has been broken for 15 years, as the opposition leader stood by and did absolutely nothing to support long-term care.

We’ve been very clear that we’ll review the long-term-care system once we get through this pandemic. Mr. Speaker, we announced that we will be launching an independent commission in July. We will get down to the bottom of this. We’ll be finalizing details of the commission, including terms of reference, membership, leadership of the commission, and the reporting timelines.

We aren’t going to wait years, as the previous government did and the present opposition folks did. We’re going to make sure we get answers for the loved ones. There is going to be accountability, and we’ll get down to the bottom of this.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, the only thing the people of Ontario deserve is a true judicial public inquiry. That’s what they’re asking for and that’s what they need—not a government-controlled commission.

Families are very angry that private for-profit care homes did little to protect the lives of their loved ones. Facilities like Orchard Villa have kept their licences even after the Canadian Armed Forces found seniors living amongst cockroaches and mice while they were in soiled

diapers the whole time. Families repeatedly called for the for-profit provider to respond. They called the for-profit provider and the government for help. They were ignored.

Their question today is: Why is the government protecting for-profit long-term-care facilities from legal liability rather than pulling licences from the homes that have so brutally failed our seniors?

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Our top priority has been protecting the safety of the most vulnerable, especially the residents in long-term care. That’s why, in January, we made COVID-19 a reportable disease, implemented our COVID-19 action plan, issued three emergency orders, introduced two packages of amended regulations, announced \$243 million in emergency funding to support 24/7 screening, additional staffing, enhanced cleaning and additional surge capacity. It’s why, last year, we conducted over 2,800 inspections.

Upon receiving the report from the CAF, I announced an immediate investigation into all code red homes—and all of those under way or complete, with orders and notices being issued. Right now, 63 homes are in outbreak out of the 626 homes; 252 homes are resolved. All hands are on deck to stabilize those worst-hit homes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: And, Speaker, if I may—2,003 lives lost. If that was the Premier’s priority, he certainly failed at it.

The people joining us today did everything in their power to protect their loved ones. They called management at facilities like Orchard Villa and Camilla Care, only to be ignored. They wrote the Premier. They even called his office every hour for three days straight in May and never got a reply.

Now they see the Premier springing into action, but not to help them and their families, Speaker—not to help them and their families.

Why is the Premier so eager to help the for-profit long-term-care homes that failed these families?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: To the member opposite: Thank you for the question.

Our government has been committed to the long-term care system, to the reform, to the transformation, ever since we began. It began with a commitment to rebuild, to advance long-term care and to fix the problems that had existed for many, many years under the previous Liberal government, supported by the opposition. That is what we’ve been doing. We’ve been addressing the issues of neglect for many decades—and 15 years. We’ve looked at how we can improve the capacity in our long-term-care homes; how we can improve the staffing. One of the first things we did at the outbreak of the pandemic was call to make sure that homes had the support they needed.

Nobody was prepared for the aggressive, infectious nature of COVID-19, which has wreaked havoc around the world, with no knowledge of how it works, how it spreads or how it moves. That evidence is evolving, and we’re

taking measures every day to advance our long-term-care system and fix the problem left behind by the previous government.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question's also to the Premier.

Last week, the minister said, "New thinking is required" when it comes to fixing problems in the long-term-care system. New thinking should mean seniors shouldn't have to wait a week, or even more, to have a bath. New thinking should mean clean, respectable, comfortable places to live, not homes infested with mice and cockroaches. New thinking should mean that families aren't left protesting on the lawn just to be heard. It shouldn't mean that private, for-profit corporations that failed to protect our seniors should be shielded from legal action.

How can the Premier claim he's protecting seniors when the only people being protected are the ones who helped create this tragedy in the first place?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care to reply.

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again for the question.

The solutions that are required for the long-term-care system that we need for the 21st century are many. There is not one solution; there will be many solutions required. When we try to look at the system across the board, there's no particular type of operation that's at fault. There was a duty to maintain the standard of care in all our long-term-care homes. That was not negotiable, and certainly, with the commission—an independent, non-partisan public commission, with public hearings, public input, a public report—we will get to the bottom of this.

This is a tragedy across the world.

I'm taking measures now, as the Minister of Long-Term Care—preceding the pandemic—to modernize long-term care, to make it ready and responsive to the needs of our aging population, which is rapidly increasing in number. We know what needs to be done: what your government didn't do.

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The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, last week, the Minister of Long-Term Care said, "The duty of care of our long-term-care homes is non-negotiable. They must keep our residents safe." That's what she said. Some 66 long-term-care homes still have an outbreak as of yesterday afternoon. Seven of those facilities lost a quarter or more of their residents to COVID-19. For every four seniors in their care, one senior has died.

If these long-term-care facilities are supposed to be keeping residents safe rather than allowing this horrible virus to spread, why are they allowed to keep their licences? And why is the minister allowed to keep her job?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Again, I appreciate your question.

When we understand the issue, at the crux of the problem is years of neglect that cannot be turned around in a matter of days or weeks. We were a strained system, according to Justice Gillese, who reported in the summer of 2019, exactly the same time when the new Ministry of Long-Term Care was created. COVID-19 broke that system.

When we look across the board, we understand how 70% to 80% of our homes were not in outbreak. And on "outbreak," we reduced that definition to mean one case, even one case of a staff member who is self-isolating at home, with potentially no cases in the home whatsoever.

We need to understand the facts. The truth matters, the facts matter and we will get to the bottom of this with a public, independent, non-partisan commission. We are committed to that. It will be done. We will be announcing more about that in the coming weeks.

I appreciate your concern.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Other provinces did much better in protecting their seniors. For example, we have a province that had only 160-odd deaths because they actually did do the work in advance of COVID-19 hitting long-term care, where our province did not; this minister and this Premier did not. No matter how many times they were saying that they were putting an "iron ring" around long-term care, they were not doing that, notwithstanding the report that the minister talks about that she received last year, from the horrors that happened in the murders that the Wettlaufer case unveiled.

But look, the families who are here at Queen's Park, Speaker, were failed by this government. The Premier, as I said, promised that iron ring and then ignored—literally ignored—their calls for help, as their parents and loved ones were left to suffer in conditions that no one should ever have to live in. Now, once again, he's putting the interests of for-profit providers and political allies ahead of the needs of families.

Will the Premier do the right thing and stop protecting the for-profit homes, stop protecting cabinet ministers, and offer real accountability to families who have endured so much pain because he has failed to protect them in long-term care?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Let's look at the facts. For 15 years, the previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, failed to address the problems that led to the crisis in long-term care with COVID-19. When you refer to other provinces, let's understand the facts. In BC, between 2013 and 2017, with the population of that province one third of Ontario's, they built 900 beds—for one third of the population; in Alberta, since 2014, they've built 1,227. That's the reason why they managed better. They had better capacity, because the previous government took measures during that time to keep up with an aging population.

The previous Liberal government, supported by the NDP, did nothing of the sort. They also neglected a staffing crisis.

I suggest the Leader of the Opposition may want to take her own advice.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier.

Ejaz Choudry was a 62-year-old father of four from Malton. He was experiencing a mental health crisis, so his family called the paramedics for help. Instead, he was shot dead by police in his own home.

Ejaz Choudry, like D'Andre Campbell, like Regis Korchinski-Paquet and like Caleb Tubila Njoko, was loved and valued. They all needed help and should all be alive today. They should have gotten the help and should be alive today.

How many more people in mental health crisis have to die during interactions with the police for this Premier to take responsibility and do something about it?

Hon. Doug Ford: First of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to reassure the family and the loved ones of Ejaz Choudry and the people of Ontario that effective, reasonable and independent police oversight is one of my top priorities. As I mentioned in my press conference yesterday, my prayers, my thoughts, my condolences go out to their family.

The SIU is an independent, arm's-length civilian oversight body, and I do have confidence in the SIU. They investigate deaths, serious injuries and allegations of sexual assault that may occur when police are involved. They have the sole discretion—and I say the sole discretion—to decide whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that a criminal offence has been committed and charges to be laid. All decisions are rendered without interference from the public, the police or the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question, the member for Brampton East.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: My question is to the Premier. Ejaz Choudry was a 62-year-old man from Malton. He was suffering from a mental health crisis, so his family decided to call the paramedics for help. When the police arrived, they used a ladder to break into his apartment, with guns drawn and screaming. They shot and killed Ejaz Choudry in his own home while he was alone. His seven-year-old son is still asking when his father is going to come back from the hospital.

How many more people are going to have to die? How many more people are going to be shot and killed by the police? How many more people who are suffering from mental health crises are going to be shot and killed when all they needed was help?

The family deserves answers. We all deserve answers. Will the Premier commit to an independent public inquiry into the death of Mr. Choudry?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, again, my heart goes out to the family and loved ones, to anyone in these tragic situations. We know that more needs to be done to tackle the mental health crisis in our communities. That's why we've invested over \$3.8 billion, with the co-operation of the federal government.

We recognize that the nature of policing and community safety has changed, especially when it comes to those with complex mental health needs. Last year, our government made a \$174-million commitment to address mental health and addiction challenges. Over \$18 million of that new funding was specifically designated to those affected by mental health and addiction challenges in the justice sector alone. We also invested nearly \$7 million for new mobile crisis teams designated to bring together the police officer with a mental health professional to provide care for the people in crisis.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question today is for the Premier.

Premier, yesterday was an exciting day for the province, with the announcement that Toronto and Peel regions would be entering stage 2 reopening this coming week. I can only imagine the excitement and sense of relief for the people of Toronto and the people in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore in hearing this news. For businesses, both large and small, this is a very welcome announcement as they restart their operations to serve in these communities once again.

Ontarians can be sure that every time our government make a decision, it is always based on the best available medical and scientific advice. This is always done to ensure the betterment of all Ontarians while protecting their health and their safety.

With that in mind, Speaker, can the Premier share with the Legislature more about this next phase of reopening and how it will benefit the residents of Toronto, the people of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Peel and all of Ontario?

Hon. Doug Ford: I want to thank the fantastic, excellent member from the great riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. She's doing a great, great job.

When more regions move into phase 2, it means one thing: We're all doing our part. It's amazing what can get done when you're all pulling in the same direction, no matter what political stripe you're from.

When we all do our part, more people across the province can go back to work, more people are taking home a paycheque, and more people are able to put food on the table. That's why, yesterday, we announced that we are reopening Peel and Toronto. That means that restaurants and bars can reopen their patios. Beauty salons and barbershops can start taking appointments. Shopping malls can open their doors once again.

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But that wouldn't be possible, Mr. Speaker, without the support of the 14.5 million people of this great province.

We're going to continue opening up. I'm not comfortable until all of Ontario opens up—and that includes our great friends in Windsor-Essex.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Premier, for that answer. I know that the people in my riding really do appreciate that.

Although this is welcome news for the people of Toronto and Peel, I know that, along with everyone in our government, we remain committed to ensuring that all of Ontario is allowed to move forward. I know that the situation in Windsor-Essex is of great interest to you.

As the Chief Medical Officer of Health stated yesterday, we are seeing progress, but more oversight is required.

I know that the spread of COVID in our agricultural sector continues to be an issue for you and our government. We're continuing to closely monitor and address the situation.

Speaker, can the Premier share more about the actions our government is taking to ensure that Windsor-Essex is ready to move forward to stage 2 as soon as possible?

Hon. Doug Ford: Well, first of all, Mr. Speaker, I want to assure everyone in this House and the people of Windsor-Essex that we are doing everything in our power to make sure we reopen that region. I was on the phone with the farmers last night, on the phone this morning, on the phone with OMAFRA, our health table, and our Chief Medical Officer of Health. I believe that everyone is coming together, that we'll have an agreement that we can move forward on—a mutually rewarding agreement that will help out the people of Windsor-Essex—the people, the farmers and the workers.

Mr. Speaker, I feel terrible for the people of Windsor Essex—that they're going through this—and I feel terrible for the farmers, along with the workers. But we're coming up with a solution that is going to benefit every single person.

I want to give a shout-out to the farmers. I support them 100%. We're going to get through this together.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: A question to the Premier: The correctional system across Ontario is a factory that produces broken Indigenous people who are sent back to our communities or left to fend for themselves on the streets of big cities, and then back to jail, in a vicious cycle without an end, Mr. Speaker.

These systems dehumanize our young people—young men and young women. But these young people are more than just the charges they face, or their sentences. This includes my nephew Kevin. He died three weeks ago while he was in custody at the Thunder Bay jail. Another young Indigenous man died at the same jail in recent weeks. Nine have died there since 2002. Seven were Indigenous men. Like Kevin, these young people were our sons, our fathers, our nephews.

The Ontario Human Rights Commissioner, coroners' inquests, the Grand Chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and even my brother have all called for this jail to close.

How many more Indigenous people need to die at the Thunder Bay jail before the government takes action to solve this crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Solicitor General.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: As we discussed a number of weeks ago, I committed to you that when the investigation was complete, all information that we are able to share with the family will be shared. I know that these are tragedies and that we must do better. But when deaths occur in our corrections facilities, there are very strict guidelines that must happen. It starts with an internal investigation. It continues with the coroner's investigation and, if necessary, a police investigation.

The commitment that our government has made to announce and re-announce the Thunder Bay Jail is on the table. We made that commitment in 2019. We are working with the community, with the corrections officers and with our justice partners to make sure that the facility we build in Thunder Bay, which we need in Thunder Bay, will be appropriate for the community, for the workers that work there and for the inmates that are serving.

It is important that we do this work now so that we don't re-make mistakes that have happened, where we build quickly but build poorly. We are making the investment up front to consult and to work with the individuals in the justice sector and the corrections side to make sure that we get it right, and we will do that. You have my commitment that we will do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Most of the Indigenous men and women who go through the system do not belong in jails. They've suffered years and even generations of trauma and extreme poverty. They need access to proper education, access to their cultural teachings, access to clean drinking water, houses for them to live in, and health and mental health supports when they need them. They do not belong in jail.

The Thunder Bay jail should close, Mr. Speaker. The problem cannot be fixed by simply creating a bigger jail, a newer jail that will fill with even more Indigenous people. The shift must happen across systems—that address the underlying issues of colonialism that ripped children away from our families and brought us to where we are today. Sometimes, actually, it's called systemic racism.

What does the Premier plan to do so that no more families will see their child's body flown away from home for another autopsy?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I couldn't agree more with the member opposite. It is not an issue that only the Solicitor General ministry is working on; it is an issue that all of our governments, all of our legislators must work together on to resolve. In the meantime, we are doing what we can in the Solicitor General, in corrections, to provide a safe

environment and culturally appropriate services to individuals within our custody.

Indigenous programming and services are provided at all our institutions, including the Thunder Bay jail, that aim to address barriers Indigenous inmates face while honouring their histories, traditions, heritages, beliefs and cultures. Core programs and services are offered and facilitated by elders, native inmate liaison officers, community corrections workers as well as other Indigenous staff and other service providers.

I know that across government we can do better, but we are doing what we can in corrections to make sure that we provide the appropriate services when needed.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: My question is for the Minister of Education.

Last Friday, the minister laid out three options for return to school come September. He told the 72 school boards to prepare for all three: fully open schools, continuation of full online learning, and partly opened schools. Over the weekend, the minister said that in fact, boards had to be ready to implement the least workable option, part-time school, for the beginning of September.

Here's the reaction of a parent who wrote to both the minister and to me—a parent of a JK student and one of many whom I've heard from since the announcement the minister made:

“For families with two working parents, like mine, we cannot sustain part-time in-person schooling. We will need child care for our children when school is not in-person. This means that many children would be in various part-time daycares, with babysitters, and/or grandparents on the days they are not in school, which completely invalidates the logic behind small cohorts.

“Not only is this plan not sustainable for families that financially require parents/caregivers to do paid work (particularly worrisome for single parents), it is not optimal for keeping the children or the community safe via limited contact.”

If the minister's objective was to support children's learning and safety and to support the opening of the economy, why did he choose the model that is absolutely designed to fail on both counts?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you very much to the member opposite for the question.

Indeed, we did unveil last Friday three options for school boards to be ready, because what we have learned from this pandemic is that we must be ready. Students deserve to learn no matter what the circumstance and difficulty that manifests on the horizon. So we've asked boards to be ready for in-class, day-to-day instruction with enhanced protocols—yes, with a remote online option, and a third option of blended.

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What I said on Friday, as I reaffirmed on Saturday and as I will affirm in this House today, is that, based on the modelling and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer,

SickKids Hospital, some of the best pediatric doctors in this country—their advice is today to proceed with an adaptive model. Of course, we know that in this reality it is fluid, which is why we're asking boards to be ready for all circumstances for the reopening.

In addition to that, we've provided enhanced cleaning supports—\$730 million more for school boards to be prepared for a positive start, including in mental health and technology. We'll continue to invest more in our students, in every board in Ontario, to ensure that September is a positive restart for all kids in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the minister's answer.

I have heard the announcements. I have listened very carefully to what he has been saying. My concern is that I do not believe—and this is because of conversations that I've had with leadership of the federations and the unions—that the conversations with the people who are going to be in those classrooms, who understand exactly what needs to happen, are happening.

I think that there are other options. The education unions and federations have all made recommendations to the minister. For example, a fourth option could be developed. But it would take collaboration, real collaboration, with teachers, with support staff, with students, parents and administrators, and it could allow the full opening of schools. But it would take the government working with those partners, providing additional funding to have smaller groupings of students in schools but also in community space, also in commercial space and other public space in the community. It would require funding for outdoor classrooms, but it would allow staff to connect with the community and have more outdoor learning. Other jurisdictions like Denmark have been doing just this.

Can the minister explain why this model, which would require additional funding or some version of it, is not an option for Ontario's children?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: On Friday and in the days preceding, we announced a plan to invest more money into public education than any government in the history of Ontario. We're investing an additional \$10 million. In fact, under the former Liberal government, when the member opposite was Premier, they were investing just shy of \$20 million. I'm proud to report that we're investing over \$40 million in mental health to support the resilience and strength of every child in the province.

In technology—an area of mutual interest, I hope and I would expect—we are investing an additional \$15 million to procure upwards of 35,000 Chromebooks and tablets for at-risk students so that their families have access to technology.

We're investing more money for cleaning. In fact, in our announcement on Friday—over \$730 million more in public education. Every school board in the province of Ontario, including the Toronto public and Catholic, is receiving more money to ensure a safe, positive restart this September.

Yes, it will require investment. It will require co-operation.

Our government will continue to be guided by the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and continue to listen to parents, students and educators, on the best way to—yes—get students in class in September.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Ms. Lindsey Park: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

I know that Ontario has one of the best wildland fire management systems in the world. But we saw earlier this year, when Australia faced a busy wildfire season, and we're seeing now, as Ontario has sent support to Quebec to help combat a fire in Lac-St-Jean region, that we need to be ready and we need to support our communities. In typical Canadian fashion, our government has responded by providing personnel to assist with critical functions to support our neighbours in their firefighting efforts.

Can the minister share how his ministry is preparing and is helping fire personnel be prepared to keep Ontarians safe during this wildland fire season?

Hon. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the amazing member for Durham for that question.

Our government acted quickly—and I am so proud that our firefighting system is recognized as among the best, if not the best, in the entire world. We acted quickly this year to ensure that we could protect people and property and our firefighters under the COVID-19 situation.

First, we enacted an early fire ban, which protected those workers, because they were getting prepared for a very unique season. So we've had an early fire ban that was really, really helpful in keeping those fires out in the early season. We increased the base budget for firefighting this year by \$30 million. To protect our staff, we ensured that they had the preparation and the planning and the training for physical distancing, as well as self-assessment tools that they must do each and every day.

Our aviation forest fire emergency services are among the best in the world, and we are making sure that we will keep it that way. While we're doing that, we will ensure that the protection of people and property in the province of Ontario continues to be our number one priority.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Lindsey Park: I want to thank the minister, on behalf of Ontarians, for these smart, balanced measures to keep our natural resources, people and property safe during this challenging time.

With the first official day of summer just behind us, Ontarians are looking to enjoy the great outdoors, whether that's camping or cottaging, or hunting, fishing and hiking. And of course we all enjoy a good campfire. Ontarians want to be able to relax around a good fire in a way that's safe and enjoyable.

Can the minister please tell us what he is doing to make sure that Ontarians are able to safely enjoy fires?

Hon. John Yakabuski: Thank you again for the question.

As I said, we increased the firefighting budget by \$30 million this year. In addition to the amazing forest fire rangers that we have in this province, we also have a fleet of 30 aircraft—as I say, one of the unique systems in all of the world. We have our water bombers, our Twin Otters and our helicopters.

We employed a different strategy this year because of COVID-19. We wanted to make sure we kept our forest fires small, and hit them early and hit them hard. As a result, as of yesterday, Ontario has had 151 wildland fires this year, burning 892 hectares. This is well below the 10-year average of 285 fires and 56,604 hectares burned as of this date. So our strategy has worked. It is working, but we are now into summer. I want to ensure everybody that our people are ready, including to help our neighbours in Quebec.

We also have a responsibility to be as diligent and vigilant as possible to ensure that we can prevent as many forest fires as possible, to make sure that the great people who work for us in MNR—

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

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is for the Premier.

Three migrant workers have now died of COVID-19 in Ontario. Bonifacio Eugenio Romero and Rogelio Muñoz Santos died while working in Essex county. There are countless others who are sick.

The Premier has sat back and watched while the case numbers have grown among this vulnerable population. Despite pleas from local leaders and public health officials for increased resources and a plan, the province has done nothing but say, "We feel bad." Now the outbreaks have spread, but we still don't know the full scope of the issue.

The Premier spent this week blaming farmers, blaming Ottawa, blaming everyone but himself. It's time that he took a long, hard look in the mirror, because other provinces have avoided the outbreaks that we are seeing in Ontario. This lands squarely on the shoulders of the Premier.

Speaker, people in my riding are understandably angry about how this has been handled.

Why did the Premier allow this to happen, and what metrics did he use when deciding to keep us in stage 1?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member opposite for this question.

I want to begin by saying to all of those workers impacted by COVID-19—our government sends our sincerest sympathies and condolences to all of those families. In fact, Mr. Speaker, to the family of Mr. Romero, to the family of Mr. Chaparro, and to the family of Mr. Santos, I want to send specific regards from me to their families. They're facing, obviously, just a tragedy,

and we're going to be with them every step of the way through this.

Mr. Speaker, I launched a blitz of the farming sector back in April. We've done over 230 investigations, and we've issued 70 orders to improve health and safety for workers on farms across this province.

As the member opposite knows, yesterday I joined the Premier to announce a partnership between the federal government—between us and local health units to begin investigating living quarters for these workers.

I'll talk about more in my supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: To the minister: Respectfully, condolences don't stop people from getting sick or from dying. What our region needs is funding. We need policy and enforcement, and we need to make sure that these workers have appropriate living and working conditions—full stop—not your condolences.

1110

Windsor Regional Hospital recently announced that there was no one with COVID-19 in the ICU or on ventilators or in hospital in Windsor. The field hospital has been shut down. Chatham is closer to the rural areas of Essex county than the city of Windsor, and yet they've been open for weeks. Toronto and Peel have higher numbers, and they're opening.

Speaker, we respect public health direction, but it's very difficult for my constituents to understand this decision without transparency. My constituents are at their wit's end with the prolonged closure. The Windsor-Essex chamber has called for immediate financial relief for our local businesses, saying that it would be “catastrophic” for our region without it. This morning, the FAO reports that Windsor is the hardest-hit city by pandemic-related job losses, at 19%.

To the Premier, I will ask again: What metrics did you use when deciding to keep us in stage 1? What are you going to do to support the people who have so much to lose from this decision?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: As the Premier indicated earlier in question period and yesterday at his press conference, there's no one who wants Windsor-Essex open more than the government of Ontario, to help those small businesses, those families, those workers across that region.

But to the first part of the question—I do want to address the migrant worker issue. The health and safety of every worker, including those in the agricultural sector, is our top priority. The member opposite knows that when it comes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the living quarters for those workers, that's the responsibility of the federal government. But I'm proud that we are working together—the federal government, the provincial government, local health units—to get in there and inspect those living quarters to improve those conditions for workers.

My responsibility, as Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, is to inspect workplaces, and I'm proud to say that we've inspected 231 farms and we've issued 70 orders to improve conditions for those workers and every worker in the agricultural sector.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is for the Minister of Labour.

Seasonal migrant farm workers are essential workers. Tragically now, three workers have died from COVID-19. While I'm sure their families appreciate the minister's condolences, we need to talk about the two-tiered system for worker protections in this province.

Seasonal farm workers are not entitled to many of the protections in the Employment Standards Act. Many of them are afraid to speak out about unsanitary housing conditions, to speak out about unsafe labour conditions and lack of PPE, and of the loss of wages if they test positive. No wonder many of them don't want to be tested.

I realize the Premier keeps saying, “Farmers, get your workers tested. Migrant farm workers, get tested.” But the bottom line is—BC developed a program that paid workers while they were quarantined. Many of these workers are afraid of deportation and loss of wages if they test positive.

Will the minister guarantee that migrant farm workers will not lose their wages if they test positive for COVID-19?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: As the member opposite knows, the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act applies to every single worker in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, further to my earlier answer, our ministry has provided now eight health and safety guidelines for agricultural businesses and farms across the province. I'm proud to say that four of those have been translated into Spanish. We have 500 inspectors going to workplaces right across this province, including farms and agricultural businesses. I've been assured, and I know, that these inspectors also have translators with them, so they're talking to migrant workers who have a Spanish background.

So far, in Ontario, I'm proud to say, during the COVID-19 crisis, we've inspected nearly 12,000 workplaces, we've issued nearly 7,000 orders and have shut down 23 workplaces in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, migrant farm workers need to be assured that they will be protected if they report unsafe work and living conditions.

When this outbreak started, I met with farmers who told me how vital and essential temporary migrant farm workers are to feeding Ontarians. I also talked to many farmers who said, “You know what? We need more support to improve living conditions in bunkhouses. We need support to ensure that our workers have access to PPE.” I've talked to advocates for migrant farm workers

who say that workers are afraid to speak out because they might be deported and they might lose their wages.

The real question is: If we want to solve this problem, we have to protect worker rights, so will the minister guarantee the migrant farm workers that they will not lose their wages if they test positive for COVID-19?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want every worker in the province of Ontario to know that I will stand with them every step of the way. We will not tolerate employers not treating employees properly. The laws are in place through the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

One of the announcements that my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs made a number of weeks ago was an investment of \$15 million to better protect farm workers in the province of Ontario, to buy more PPE, to improve housing and to improve transportation.

I don't need to remind any member in this Legislature that the very first piece of legislation we passed during COVID-19—Bill 186 protects every single worker in this province, including migrant workers. If they're in quarantine, if they're in self-isolation, if they have to stay home and look after a loved one because schools are closed, they will not lose their job. They cannot be fired.

I will stand with every worker in this province.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: My question is for the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries.

Our government's safe and responsible approach of phased reopening throughout the province has meant that, day after day, more and more businesses can begin to open up their communities to visitors and generate much-needed revenues. This is especially important for Ontario's tourism industry, which, as the minister described it, was one of the hardest-hit industries that will take the longest to recover.

I know that the minister has taken a keen interest in visiting all corners of the province as they begin to reopen. In fact, I know that she was proud to begin these visits with her hometown of Ottawa as it opened up for stage 2 earlier this month.

I know that, just this past week, the minister was in Niagara Falls to help reopen Canada's number one tourist destination. Can the minister please update this House on the significance of this reopening and what it means for both Niagara's tourism operators and Ontarians who are looking to visit?

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to thank the member for his question, but mostly for his interest in this industry.

I'd also like to start by just saying thank you to Premier Ford. Just over a year ago, he appointed me to this ministry, and I would like to thank those in my ministry, as well as our 18 agencies and attractions, as well as all of those stakeholders and industry partners, particularly as they've gone through the last four months.

The member opposite is right. I did undertake a province-wide tour, starting in Ottawa, into the 1000 Islands. I went up to Muskoka, over to Blue Mountain, and then, of course, on Friday, I spent some time in the Niagara region.

I often say that this ministry is responsible for a spectacular double bottom line. It looks at improving our cultural fabric in the province of Ontario while driving a \$75-billion economy. However, over the past number of months, we have faced a triple threat: the health care crisis, the economic crisis and the social crisis. As a result of those crises, we are seeing consumer behaviours inhibited, and that has driven a real stake into the heart of this fleet of sectors and industries.

I'll be happy to talk a little bit about what we did in terms of that tour and what we hope to accomplish with our marketing dollars in the supplement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary question?

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: It looks like Ontarians will have plenty of reasons to visit Niagara both this summer and in the future as we anticipate our government's \$25-million commitment to redevelop the Canadian Niagara Power Generating Station.

In keeping with news around the theme of welcoming back visitors across Ontario, I know many of my constituents were thrilled to hear Premier Ford announce that even more of our province will be able to reopen this week. As of June 24, parts of our province, including Peel and Toronto, will be able to open up more of their services and attractions to visitors and residents. This is wonderful news for the region and for Ontario's \$36-billion tourism industry.

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Can the minister please update this House on this good news and please explain how our government plans to visit and promote all of these newly opened regions to—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The Minister of Heritage to reply.

Hon. Lisa MacLeod: Again, thank you for the question.

Our government is committed to ensuring that the economy opens gradually and safely. That said, just because we've flipped the switch does not necessarily mean our visitor economy will return any time soon, which is why our government has invested \$13 million in supporting a hyper-local tourism initiative so we can start to reconnect within our own communities.

I want to make sure that we demonstrate the safety of going to these cultural and tourism attractions, which is why we have embarked on that tour across Ontario—to demonstrate that it's safe to stay at the Holiday Inn Express in Gananoque; it is safe to visit Santa's Village in Bracebridge; it is safe to go on a walking tour with the Haunted Walks in Ottawa; it is safe to take the SkyWheel in Niagara; it will be safe to go through Toronto this week and, God willing, safe to go through Windsor and Essex once it is cleared for phase 2.

Speaker, we have a long road ahead of us, but I think it's important for each member of this assembly to take leadership in their own communities to start getting Ontarians to reconnect in each one of their ridings.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, public health experts have all agreed on measures to flatten the curve: wash your hands, maintain physical distancing and stay home if you are sick.

For many workers without paid sick days staying home was their only option, because their non-essential workplace was shut down. Now as the economy reopens, it will be almost impossible for low-wage workers like those in retail or hospitality to stay home to recover or wait for the results of a COVID-19 test, when that means even more financial hardship.

Speaker, how does the Premier expect to prevent a deadly second wave of the virus if workers can't afford to stay home when they are sick?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Well, thank you very much. Again, I'm proud to say that the very first piece of legislation that we passed during this global pandemic here in Ontario was Bill 186. That piece of legislation amended the Employment Standards Act, and tells people that if they are in self-isolation, if they're in quarantine, if they have to stay home and look after a loved one—for example, a child, because the schools are shut down—then they can't be fired for that. That change will last until COVID-19 is defeated here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to protect the health and safety of every worker in the province, and to help families, help businesses get through this global pandemic and ensure that we come out of this stronger than ever.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary question.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The federal government, pushed by NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, has recognized that there is a vital public interest in providing paid sick days so that workers can stay home when they are sick without giving up their wages—especially in a pandemic. The cost of paid sick days should not just be the responsibility of hard-hit employers; government must come to the table as well. That's why the federal government proposed to work with the provinces on a paid sick leave program.

Speaker, when other provinces and territories have welcomed the federal initiative, can the Premier explain why he doesn't believe in paid sick days, against the advice of almost all public health experts, and why he is refusing to develop a paid sick leave program?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Thank you to the member from London West for that question.

We continue to listen to workers, labour leaders and employers right across this province. Obviously, the global pandemic has disrupted Ontario. In March and

April alone, Mr. Speaker, 1.2 million people were out of work. But we moved quickly and decisively at the beginning of the pandemic to pass Bill 186 to tell those people that they can't be fired because of COVID-19. We're taking every measure necessary to ensure that people have a job coming out of COVID-19 as we enter the recovery phase; that businesses are able to unlock their doors, reopen their places of business and hire people back.

When it comes to protecting health and safety, I think it's worth mentioning that we've invested heavily throughout COVID-19 to double the capacity of the health and safety action centre. If any worker feels unsafe at work, they can call 877-202-0008.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is to the Minister of Education.

Last Friday, I was thrilled to see the minister announce funding for the 2020-21 school year that is \$736 million more than last year. I know that our priorities are in the right place: on student success and well-being.

On the latter, it is more important than ever to make sure that our kids can receive the mental health support that they need. School boards, students and parents in my riding will welcome our government's increased funding for mental health.

Can the minister please outline how these funds will support our students as they prepare to return to school in September?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Allow me to thank the member from Eglinton—Lawrence for her leadership and for her advocacy for more supports for mental health and special education in the province of Ontario.

Indeed, I was proud to join the Premier last week to announce new investments to support mental health and the resiliency of our kids. We know that COVID-19 has had a great impact on their strength and on their ability to continue on in learning. We know that this isolation has an impact on their social-emotional learning. It's why our government more than doubled mental health funding last year. It's why this year, for September, we're adding an ancillary investment of \$10 million. That brings the Mental Health and Well-Being Grant from the province of Ontario to \$75 million. In the member's riding, for Toronto public, for example—that's a \$10-million investment being provided to that board to help them hire more psychologists, more psychotherapists and social workers to help our children, our families and our entire community get through the difficulty of this outbreak.

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I know from speaking with him that many parents of special-needs students are especially concerned for student well-being during this period of uncertainty. We put in place increased supports for special-needs students during distance learning and we continue to invest to support them. The Toronto Catholic District School

Board, which operates in my riding, will receive close to \$128 million in special education funding in 2020-21, an increase over last year.

Can the minister please share further details on how our government is supporting special-needs students in Ontario?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you again to the member opposite for the question.

Speaker, indeed, the government is continuing to invest more in special education. This Progressive Conservative government will increase investments in special ed to the highest levels ever recorded in Ontario history, to \$3.2 billion. We are more than doubling the mental health portfolio. It's over \$40 million.

When you look at the agreements we reached with the union federations and our partners—\$212 million for the new Support for Students Fund. That is a fund that is designed to focus on hiring staff that actually meet the needs of our parents and our kids—more in special ed, more in mental health and STEM education.

Obviously, part of our commitment for September is to make sure that IEPs and IPRCs continue to be followed by school boards and that school boards provide a check-in ahead of the start of the year to ensure families have the resources, the technology and the supports they need so that their child can have dignity, opportunity, and succeed this September.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier.

Last week, the national media exposed the horrific toll on the lives of injured workers that was brought on by the Ontario workers' compensation board. The report documented that the WSIB was forcing injured workers back to work, in some cases within days of injury. It showed that they were paying for opioids to deal with the pain of working while still injured—but only long enough to get them addicted before they cut them off compensation. They were denying recommended treatments and surgery for injured workers. And while the WSIB was doing this to workers, your government was standing by and doing nothing.

Will this government admit that they have failed injured workers, that the WSIB is broken, and finally direct the WSIB to provide proper respect and compensation for injured workers in the province of Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Labour.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to thank the member from Niagara for that question here this morning.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to begin by just telling all those injured workers out there across the province—I want to send them my condolences and sympathies.

We're working every single day to make this system better. As the member opposite knows, the WSIB is currently undergoing an operational review, which I'll be making public very soon, and making some changes to further strengthen the WSIB system and help workers across the province.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things I'm most proud of, serving under Premier Ford and in this government, is the fact that, together, in partnership with the federal government, we're going to be investing \$3.8 billion into mental health and addictions across the province to help workers, to help families, to help every single person dealing with mental health and addictions issues.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: As the president of the United Steelworkers said, these tragedies are not surprising to anyone who has ever advocated for injured workers. People have been trying to tell this government for years that the WSIB is broken and failing injured workers, in many cases—and listen to this, Minister—condemning them to a life of poverty.

Whether it's through deeming, denying COVID-19 claims of our front-line heroes, and now finding out their actions have been fueled by an opioid crisis, the WSIB, under this government, is broken. You can fix some of these wrongdoings today.

Will you commit to support two bills I have tabled before you, one to end deeming, and one to provide every front-line worker—our heroes—who catches COVID-19 with presumptive coverage so they can get the benefits they need and deserve?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Again to the member opposite: Thank you so much for these questions this morning and for the pieces of legislation that he has tabled. We continue to review all options, and we'll obviously consider any legislation that's tabled in this House.

Mr. Speaker, like the member opposite, I, too, want to pay tribute to every single hero in this province who has been working through this pandemic that has impacted Ontario, from the health care workers to the grocery store clerks, to the sales associates at hardware stores, to the pharmacists. There are millions and millions of unsung heroes in this province who have gotten communities and families through this pandemic.

But specifically, as I answered in the first question, the WSIB is undergoing an operational review. It's a system that we inherited, obviously, after 15 years in opposition. I look forward to further strengthening the WSIB system for every worker in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1133 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Mr. Roman Baber: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 161, An Act to enact the Legal Aid Services Act, 2020 and to make various amendments to other Acts dealing with the courts and other justice matters / Projet de loi 161, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2020 sur les services d'aide juridique et apportant diverses modifications à des lois traitant des tribunaux et d'autres questions relatives à la justice.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 2, 2020, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PETITIONS

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government has announced the temporary pandemic pay in recognition of the dedication, long hours and increased risk of working to contain the COVID-19 outbreak;

"Whereas this increase will provide \$4 per hour worked on top of existing hourly wages, regardless of the qualified employee's hourly wage. In addition, employees working over 100 hours per month would receive lump sum payments of \$250 per month for each of the next four months;

"Whereas those eligible to receive the payment will be staff working in long-term-care homes, retirement homes, emergency shelters, supportive housing, social services congregate care settings, correction institutions and youth justice facilities, as well as those providing home and community care and staff in hospitals;

"Whereas staff providing front-line clinical services along with those providing support services will be eligible to receive the pandemic payment;

"Whereas it is vital that front-line health care providers are retained as together we continue our fight to stop the spread of COVID-19; and

"Whereas the Ontario government remains committed to using every resource it has to support the front-line workers as we work to stop the spread of COVID-19;"

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

"Request that the Premier of Ontario, Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health include all front-line health care providers committed to providing front-line clinical services.

"Health care is comprised of many professionals that provide front-line care and support, and all front-line

health care professionals should be included in the temporary pandemic pay program."

I support this petition, affix my name to it and will take it to the Clerk.

STATE OF EMERGENCY

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition that has been signed by over 3,000 people in the last week. It states:

"Whereas the state of emergency in Ontario has resulted in the highest unemployment rates in generations; and

"Whereas countless small and medium-sized businesses have been forced to close or have gone bankrupt as a result of the state of emergency; and

"Whereas the economic devastation of the closure is resulting in more damage than is being prevented; and

"Whereas the shuttering of our health care system has resulted in many preventable deaths or other critical health complications; and

"Whereas the state of emergency contravenes the rights and freedoms of the people as enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

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

"That the state of emergency in Ontario be ended;

"That all health care institutions and business be allowed to open while taking the necessary health precautions to allow for a full economic recovery and to ensure a healthy, prosperous Ontario."

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my name and have it taken to the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here given to me by families, some of whom were out on the front lawns today.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Orchard Villa long-term-care home has the highest amount of deaths among seniors in Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic;

"Whereas we believe the lack of staff, personal protective equipment and lack of staff training at the home during the government-mandated lockdown directly led to the high number of deaths among seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic;

"Whereas COVID-19-negative residents were not isolated from positive residents;

"Whereas the neglect and abuse towards residents at Orchard Villa LTCH directly resulted in their deaths;

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

"We, the families of Orchard Villa long-term care and the Orchard Villa Retirement Community and the public at large, demand a public inquiry, independent of the government of Ontario, into the practices, events and history of Orchard Villa long-term care, Orchard Villa Retirement Home and its owners, Southbridge Care

Homes Inc. for the period of March 14, 2020, up to and including the end of the mandated lockdown, and the five years preceding March 14, 2020.”

Speaker, I wholeheartedly support this, affix my signature and will send it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY DECLARATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 23, 2020, on the motion to extend the period of emergency.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this motion, I had to rudely interrupt the member for London West. I apologize again. She has lots of time on the clock, and she can resume her comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Apology accepted, Speaker. I was enjoying the debate so much that I lost track of time. I appreciate the opportunity to offer some wrap-up comments in the four minutes that I have remaining.

I just want to reiterate some of the issues I raised this morning. The first is that when we are in a state of emergency, when the government has issued a declaration of emergency with the unanimous consent of all MPPs in this Legislature, it comes with a heavy onus of responsibility on the part of the government to exercise the extraordinary powers that are granted under that declaration of emergency in a very judicious fashion. By that I mean, Speaker, with full transparency, full accountability, much more collaboration than we typically see in this Legislature. But through co-operation, negotiation, consultation and discussion across party lines, that is how decisions about moving forward together as a province should be made.

Although we will be supporting the extension of the declaration of emergency, we hope that the government has listened to some of the comments that were made this morning by my colleague the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane and myself and will think carefully about the actions it is taking in response to COVID-19.

A lot of our concerns have to do with issues that have been put on this government’s agenda that have nothing to do with COVID-19 and have been implemented under cover of COVID-19, quite frankly: issues like the suspension of the Environmental Bill of Rights, which has undermined environmental protections in this province; and issues like selectively deciding which committees are going to get under way in virtual fashion and choosing to stack those committees with bills that have nothing to do with COVID-19 and have everything to do with pushing forward a government’s agenda rather than a people’s agenda.

Right now, we should be working together more than ever as a province to help the people who are struggling to deal with the impact of COVID-19, to help the people who are going to continue to struggle for months and

potentially years to come as our economy reopens and we try to prevent a resurgence of the virus. And we know from public health experts that that is looking very, very likely.

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Speaker, I talked of concerns about the oversight committees of the Legislature, the committees that are chaired by the official opposition and perform a vital function in a democracy in monitoring the fiscal decisions of the government and monitoring the public appointments processes of the government. We have seen 100 public appointments move through that process without any oversight by that committee. There are 35 of those public appointments the committee wanted to review, and the government did not provide that opportunity.

We remain troubled by the lack of responsiveness to the concerns that all members have in moving the province forward, getting past this pandemic and helping the people who have been most directly affected and disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to add a few words to this conversation today, especially in light of the fact that I get to speak after the deputy opposition House leader. It’s a good opportunity for me to reference some of the things the member opposite talked about and also share some thoughts with respect to the extension of the state of emergency.

I just want to, first, highlight a couple of things. My community was lucky enough to move to stage 2 this past week, last Friday, and I wanted to congratulate all of the small and medium businesses in my community that have opened up. We understand, of course, there are a number that are still waiting to do so, but Mayor Iain Lovatt and Mayor Frank Scarpitti have done a wonderful job of making sure our main streets are active again. To see the patios open up and see people and life return back to the community has been very gratifying.

I want to also just quickly, before I forget, Mr. Speaker—a number of members have mentioned this. I know that the member for Kitchener–Conestoga talked about his kids graduating. My daughter graduates grade 8, and I want to thank the parent council at St. Brigid Catholic School, who surprised us with a sign for her on the lawn.

These are very unusual circumstances, and we are all doing our best to get through it. People are always surprising you, Mr. Speaker. Honestly, it’s a mixture of both pride in your community and pride in the work that has been done by the people of the province of Ontario.

The Premier has mentioned that 14 million Ontarians have worked very hard to get us to the point where we are doing better than almost any other jurisdiction in the world, but that doesn’t mean people haven’t suffered and haven’t struggled through this. It has been a very challenging time, and as we go forward, it is incumbent on all of us to make sure that we give the people of the province of Ontario all the tools they need to succeed, whether it’s our students, whether it’s our small, medium and large job creators, or whether it’s the towns and cities

and counties across this province who are going to be asked to do extraordinary things to get their local economies moving again.

But with every crisis comes opportunity, and I think we are seeing that right now. There have been a number of things that COVID has pushed onto the government. We've been able to move very quickly. Whether it's on reforms in the justice sector that allowed virtual hearings to take place, these are things that wouldn't have happened, would have taken a lot longer to happen, but COVID forced it on us quicker, and it has proven to really be something positive for the justice sector.

We've seen the changes that have happened in our schools. My daughters have embraced online learning. We've learned a lot of things about that. As we go into September with our students, we will be prepared and we are going to work closely with the boards of education to make sure we're in a better spot to service our children, whether they're in primary, high school or even in post-secondary, Mr. Speaker.

With every crisis comes opportunity, and we should focus on that opportunity. It's the opportunity that comes that we have to then seize upon as government, and we're doing that. We are doing that. We are moving forward legislation in this place. I can appreciate that the opposition might not necessarily be happy about some of that legislation because I can't imagine any opposition wanting a government to fulfill its mandate. The role of an opposition is, in essence, to stop the elected government from fulfilling its mandate, and it's a lot easier for the opposition if they can try and convince the government of the day to stop and to not do things.

The member for Essex is right: We have a majority government, so of course—of course—we are going to continue on that mandate.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I've mentioned so often, colleagues, every time I speak, you see what happens, right? We focus on issues; we focus on what's important to the people of the province of Ontario. The NDP, with so little to offer, do what they do best: They go low. They start to insult. They start to holler and heckle across the floor. But that's okay. When you have so little to offer—that's the best they can do.

We will continue on doing what we think is right for the people of the province of Ontario. Look at the results that we had prior to COVID. We had an economy that had more people working than ever before. That's good. That's good for the people of the province of Ontario. We had a budget deficit that was starting to come back into balance while making important investments in areas like transit and transportation. That's good. That's good for the people of the province of Ontario today, and it's good for future generations.

We were making important investments in our long-term-care sector. We understood that there were problems in a sector that had not been invested in in many, many years. All governments—whether it's Conservative,

Liberal or the one lonely NDP government that existed—none of us put the attention and the focus into long-term care that we should have. But in 2018, when we were elected, we said that we had to move quickly. That's why the Minister of Health was moving quickly to bring in Ontario health teams, which would bring an umbrella of care, and we were making those transitions.

I drive by every day, as I get to my constituency office, a new long-term-care home that will be ready in the fall of 2021—some 600 beds in my community alone. Before I was elected, there was a 118-year waiting list. That is now being reduced. Is it enough? No. There is still more that has to be done, and that's we are going to continue to focus on in government, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to this state of emergency, I'm actually happy that we're now in a position where we can start to wind down the state of emergency and that it's only an extension of another two weeks. I'm happy about that because it shows the progress that we have made in the province of Ontario. We're now in a position where we can move on, where we can start to focus on getting the economy back up and running, and getting people who want to be working again, Mr. Speaker.

I'm under no illusion. This will be very difficult. We all know that when we go to our small towns and to our main streets, there are fewer businesses operating than there were before COVID hit. We're going to have a responsibility—all of us—to make sure that we get as many of those people back to work as possible.

I'm glad that we're in a position where we can wind this down, that we can look forward. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, the government—and we will continue to do this—has to prepare, because while we've made great progress, we haven't defeated COVID yet, and it will take a while. Until we have found a vaccine for this, it will take us a while, and we always have to be cautious, which means we have to make investments in health care. We have to continue to make investments in long-term care. It means we have to make investments in the economy—because if this happens again, governments of all levels, whether it's federal, provincial or municipal, might not have the resources that they need that allowed us to tackle this first wave—and it's our responsibility as a government to make sure that we're in a position to do that.

I want to speak a little bit about what the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane—he earlier highlighted something I had mentioned last time. I had asked him a number of questions with respect to his beliefs or thoughts on the role of committee Chairs in this place. Mr. Speaker, I believe that a committee Chair in the Legislature, a Chair of a standing committee—I believe that, in exercising those duties, they should be non-partisan. When they're exercising those duties as a Chair, I believe it's in the entire Legislature's interest for them to be non-partisan and to behave in a non-partisan fashion all of the time.

1320

I believe that when the members step out of that, they compromise their role as a non-partisan Chair of a committee. That's not to suggest that, when they leave the

chairmanship of a committee, they do not reassume their roles in the House as a partisan member of a political party. They should do that, and we expect that, in the same way that I believe that a Deputy Speaker, whilst in the chair, ought to perform in a non-partisan fashion. I don't believe, though, that a Deputy Speaker should return to their benches, whether it's a government bench or an opposition bench, wearing what identifies them as a Speaker or a Deputy Speaker and then engage in partisan activity. I think that diminishes the role—that could just be me, but I feel that that diminishes the non-partisan nature of the chair. According to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, "The Legislative Assembly needs a neutral, non-partisan MPP to preside over its meetings and enforce its rules."

Why did I take umbrage with the letter that was sent out by the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, the member for, I believe, Waterloo, and the member for Toronto–Danforth? Well, because it was a letter that was put on NDP letterhead, it was partisan in nature and it did not seek the advice of the other members of the committee.

Had that letter come from the committee on committee letterhead and asked the government to do something, fair game. That is fine. But a committee Chair's responsibility is to the committee first and foremost, not to their political party. I would hope that the members would agree on that. If they don't agree on that, then I suggest that that's part of the reason why the people of the province of Ontario have never given them the opportunity or the honour to serve back on the government benches. It is a fundamental principle of our parliamentary system.

What would be the point of having a committee Chair, non-partisan committee Chairs or a non-partisan Speaker if, at every turn, the Chairs of these non-partisan committees were to be partisan in nature? So did I take umbrage with it? You're darn right I did. I think the member should apologize. I think all of those members should apologize to the House for that, but they feel differently.

The deputy House leader talked about the return of committees and that somehow we were avoiding the return of committees that were chaired by the members opposite. She spoke about oversight by the committee of appointments that the government has made during COVID. The member opposite will know, because we have been very clear on this, that all the appointments made during this period, during the time when the House has not been in regular session, will be available for the members opposite to review. They will be able to backdate and call anybody they want from the time that this House adjourned in a non-traditional fashion. I believe that was March 12, Mr. Speaker; if I'm wrong, you'll correct me. But they have been told that any public appointment made during that period could be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

But when we did receive that letter, that partisan letter from the members opposite, we wanted to make sure. We wanted to make sure and we wanted to double-check when and how these committees could return and how quickly it could be done. Mr. Speaker, you will know that we immediately sent a letter to you seeking advice on how these committees could be returned.

I want to be very, very clear: The people who help us do our jobs here have moved mountains in order to allow us to do our work in this place. I think it is an absolute credit that the province of Ontario has led the way at every turn. Whether it's the committees that have been meeting on Zoom—we did it better. We did it first, in some instances, but those people who bring us and allow us to do our jobs, the public service in this place, they did it better and have continued to do it better since.

When we've come back to this place, whether it was through the Sergeant-at-Arms, through advice from the Speaker of the House, we were able to come back to this place and follow guidelines that would keep us all safe in doing so, and I appreciate that all members have given us that opportunity to do that.

But we did send advice out almost immediately after we received that letter. We did send a letter off to the Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope you won't mind my sharing it. It's dated June 17:

"Thank you for your letter dated June 16, 2020. I share gratitude to the staff of the Legislative Assembly for their efforts to ensure the continuity of the legislative process during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In response to your request, after consulting, I can report that the regular committee meeting schedule, as outlined in the order of the House dated August 1, 2018, is currently possible by virtual means.

"Specifically, room 151 is available to broadcast proceedings on the Ontario parliamentary channel and the Legislative Assembly website with French-English interpretation and closed captioning.

"Committee room 1 is available to broadcast within the legislative precinct only, as normal, with French-English interpretation for meeting participants without closed captioning.

"Committee room 2 is available to be broadcast within the legislative precinct only, as normal, with the possibility of French-English interpretation for meeting participants, pending equipment and staff capability, and without closed captioning.

"To be clear, the capacity for committees to meet virtually is currently no different than it was at the start of the Parliament, when committees were conducted in person. As was always the case, an order of the House authorizing a committee to meet on a day or time outside of the regular schedule has the potential to exceed this capacity."

He goes on to say that he hopes that this information is useful. I appreciate the fact that the Speaker provided this clarity.

It's unfortunate—and I truly mean this—that the government House leader had to ask the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly to clarify what the House Leader of the Opposition already knew, because I believe that at no time should the Speaker, table officers or people who work in this place be used as a tool of partisan politics. I don't believe that. What is even more frustrating is that this is something that we agreed upon. We agreed upon this, and we received unanimous consent, not only for the motion

but for what committees would start and when. We have never, at any point, suggested that other committees won't come up. In fact, we said just the opposite.

Colleagues will know that we debated the extension of the House sitting until July 23. It was the NDP that wanted to get out of this place. We said no. We had a Standing Committee on Finance that they wanted to meet for one month. We said no; it will meet for four months because there is a lot of work that has to be done. Look at what has come out of that. All members, regardless of whether they're on the government side or the opposition side, should be proud of the work that that standing committee has done because it has resulted in changes that have been brought forward to this House and passed by this Legislature.

So when you talk about the role of an opposition and should we work together: Absolutely. Should we work together when we can? A hundred per cent. But as I said last week, the opposition should be under no illusion that we're going to set aside the results of the last election and implement their agenda. We have an agenda that was given to us by the people of the province of Ontario, and we are going to fulfill those expectations and the trust that the people of the province of Ontario put in us, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to do their job and not get legislation passed. The people of this province demand more.

We have a lot of work to do. I appreciate that they might not necessarily agree with it; that's their job. It's their job in this place to fight for the things that they don't believe in and to push and to get things done. That's why, when the government brought legislation forward during the pandemic, whether it was the budget, whether it was other pieces of legislation, we went to the opposition, and on numerous occasions, things were taken out. The deputy House leader would know this because she played a role in having things out that she did not appreciate. She should be proud of that. They were things that I probably would have liked to see in, but we knew that we wanted to get things done as best we could in a fashion that respected that not everybody could come back to this place during the height of the crisis.

The leaders of the Liberals and the Greens also made suggestions and made changes to every single piece of legislation. The one thing that's different about them and the opposition is that they never left the table. They never walked away, whereas the NDP—that is their constant. They walk away from the table because, colleagues, if you don't give them everything, they assume that you're not acting in good faith. That's what a negotiation with the NDP is.

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But ultimately, our job as a government and our job as legislators is to make sure that this place works, that we do what's right for the people of the province of Ontario, and we have done that. Whether in government or in opposition, that's what this place is supposed to do. They might think that—and I understand why they think that. I understand why they think that. If they force the government to

abandon its priorities, then that gives them a better opportunity in the next election. But we don't have the luxury of doing that. We have 14 million Ontarians who are depending on us. We have kids who aren't in school who are depending on us to get it right in September, to do better. We have a health care system that is depending on us to do more. We have future generations that are depending on us. We have just borrowed billions of dollars from future generations, and they expect us to do work now.

I'll let the opposition play political games. We will do what big kids do: roll up our sleeves, get to work and do what's right for the people of the province of Ontario. I hope that at some point, the opposition will drop its partisan stupidity and join us at that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the House leader to withdraw that final comment.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I withdraw.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to engage in today's debate on the extension of the state of emergency, which I don't support. Earlier today, I delivered a petition of over 3,000 names of others who are in opposition or don't support a continuation of the state of emergency.

But I will have to say, Speaker: Listening to today's debate from the official opposition and the government has been dizzying—absolutely dizzying. I've heard the NDP explain the long list of abuses, lack of oversight and lack of transparency that the government has been engaged in during the state of emergency—the lack of committees, the lack of knowledge about the COVID command table, a whole laundry list of wrongdoings, in their view, of the government during the state of emergency—but then they say they're going to support and extend that same state of emergency that they have such disagreement with.

Then I also listened to the government House leader, and the government House leader says he's really looking forward that this is the final—that it's winding down, that this state of emergency is only going to be for two weeks. I'll remind the government House leader and every other member in this House that the initial state of emergency nearly four months ago was also “just for two weeks.” That initial state of emergency was for two weeks.

I would say to you, Speaker, and to members that it appears to me that there has been some form of addiction developed between the government and this unaccountable authority and executive power that it has ownership of now. They don't seem to want to give up that unaccountable authority that they have, and it appears that the NDP don't want them to give it up, either.

The central question to this state of emergency in my mind is: Will the state of emergency, will the continuation of the state of emergency, have a net positive benefit on the people of Ontario or not? That's the question that we need to wrestle with. Are the people of Ontario going to be better off with a suspended democracy, with a Legislative Assembly that does not have voice for their concerns

and does not have votes on the policies that impact them? To me, the answer is clear: That is not a benefit for the people of Ontario.

I also have to say that a state of emergency—the very title of it tells us that we must deal with some new emerging crisis. Something is emerging that we're not quite certain of, and we have to have extraordinary authorities to deal with this emerging crisis. Speaker, I ask the members of this House: What is emerging? When I look around the province, when I talk to people, when I hear from my constituents, what is emerging is ever more knowledge and ever more evidence that we have achieved the objectives that were stated; we have achieved them early and significantly.

Let me remind people that the stated objectives, which I think we all were in agreement with, was to flatten the curve and to ensure that our hospital system was not overwhelmed and could not treat the uncertain surge that may have arrived. We met those objectives certainly in late April; certainly, without a question, by May. The objectives had been met.

Throughout this, what has been emerging is knowledge and evidence. No longer are we in those days of such great uncertainty and such great misinformation and lack of knowledge about COVID. I'll remind everyone that I was reading a study by the Kingston Health Sciences Centre a couple of weeks ago. It was done by Dr. Gerald Evans. He's the medical director of infection control. They've done a study, and this is what he said about COVID. This is from a reputable Canadian research institute, not from WHO and not from some other politicized bodies. Speaker, he says that we now know that to get infected with this virus you have to be in close contact with another person, and that contact has to be for a significant amount of time. It's not 10 or 15 minutes; it's hours. It needs to be in a closed environment, within a house, and in that environment there has to be a significant amount of contamination.

The same information was released by the University of British Columbia from their health sciences centre as well.

So we're learning more. We know how to deal with this virus with much greater awareness. Of course, he goes on and says that another home-like setting where COVID-19 can spread like wildfire is long-term-care facilities and retirement homes. We know that to be true as well. The decisions made by this government during this crisis on long-term care, when they're measured and when they are counted, will not look good. Bad decisions were made—decisions that compounded and amplified that tragedy in long-term care.

But he also goes on that this virus does not infect or impact youth. If you're elderly, you are much more susceptible. I would encourage all members—Dr. Gerald Evans, the medical director of infection control at the Kingston Health Sciences Centre.

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The same was done at UBC. And we also we saw, in just the last week or two, another report by SickKids hospital stating, quite clearly, that schools should open this

fall. I'll read just a little bit of that guidance document from SickKids: "Children have suffered anxiety, depression and loneliness and faced greater risk of family discord and abuse during the lockdown."

All experts agree, "Requiring masks could lead to more infection, not less, while separating children as they socialize outside the classroom would have negative psychological effects."

These are statements from SickKids. This is what is emerging, Speaker. It is knowledge. It's evidence. It disturbs me that this government is conducting itself as if it was still March 17, not June 23 or June 22. We've learned a lot, but we have not taken what we've learned and put it into practice. We keep continuing to tell people that we are in this emergent crisis and that we must keep our democracy from functioning. We must keep it suspended. Speaker, if one was somewhat cynical they would say, is this more of a comms strategy than an emergency strategy? Is this more of a PR scheduling than a COVID pandemic crisis?

The experts are telling us what they have found; but we've also seen it with our own eyes. We have seen, a number of weeks ago, when that great number of people were out in Trinity Bellwoods Park in downtown Toronto, and they were referred to as yahoos. Has there been a spike from that congregation? No, there hasn't.

We saw the same thing a few weeks ago as well when public health officials on one hand were saying, "Keep isolated. Keep your social distancing, but go out in the tens of thousands to attend protests"—and they did. Many, many tens of thousands of people in Ontario, in Toronto, Ottawa and other places, went and protested—even the Prime Minister of the country. Has there been a spike? No, there hasn't. The numbers continue to drop and drop.

Another one was this great risk of people going to their cottages and spreading the virus everywhere. You couldn't go to your cottages—except if you snuck out late at night, I guess. But, Speaker, those cottagers have now been going throughout rural Ontario, and still there is no spike.

So both anecdotally—plus scientific research demonstrates that we're gaining knowledge. We have achieved the objectives. I think what COVID has done is it has laid bare for us all to see the great, great significant challenges that this province will have to deal with, and they're great; they're huge. As we look out and see the millions of people who are idled and unemployed, who have no work, that is going to be a challenge. The tens and tens of thousands of businesses that will never reopen again: That is going to be a challenge. It will challenge our municipal governments with a shortage of revenues. It will challenge the provincial government and its revenues. At the same time, we'll be having increasing demands on needs.

The bankruptcies, the foreclosures, the stalled medical treatments—the Thunder Bay hospital announced a couple of weeks ago that they expect it will take over a year to deal with the backlog of essential medical treatments that had been postponed indefinitely. We're going to have to deal with that. We have a significant generation of young people saddled with significant student debt, with few

employment opportunities. We're going to have to deal with that. These are the great challenges that COVID has laid bare. How are we going to assist those many families with autistic children? That has been on the table for a long time.

I say to you, Speaker: This state of emergency is taking our eye off these challenges. This state of emergency is not helping us examine these great problems. This state of emergency is deflecting our important examination of these challenges.

I ask all members: What are we here for? Are we here to represent our constituents, to give voice to their concerns, to be advocates against injustice that they may face, or are we here to do the bidding of others? Are we pieces of furniture or are we advocates for our constituents? I know where I stand. A state of emergency limits, precludes and frustrates every member in this House from discharging their responsibilities.

Once again: We have this COVID-19 command table—we don't know who they are—making the decisions. The Premier refuses to release who's there. There's no transparency and there's no accountability, but they want to continue with this. I brought this up in the last motion, and I'm going to bring it up again. Others have also spoken about it with the NDP.

I move that this motion be amended by adding the following to the end:

“And that, during this extension, the work product of the Ontario COVID-19 command table, including agendas, minutes and communications and excluding correspondence that is protected by cabinet confidentiality, be made available to the public in a timely fashion, with a compendium of this disclosure tabled with the House on a weekly basis;

“That the initial disclosure be of any and all existing work product; and

“That each Monday shall be tabled the compendium from the preceding week.”

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Hillier has moved an amendment to the motion we're debating—that the amendment should be added to the text of the motion we're debating, at the end:

“And that, during this extension, the work product of the Ontario COVID-19 command table, including agendas, minutes and communications and excluding correspondence that is protected by cabinet confidentiality, be made available to the public in a timely fashion, with a compendium of this disclosure tabled with the House on a weekly basis;

“That the initial disclosure be of any and all existing work product; and

“That each Monday shall be tabled the compendium from the preceding week.”

Again, I'll recognize the member to continue his presentation.

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Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. I'll wrap up here.

I do hope that all members consider my perspectives, the perspectives that I'm sharing that I know others have as well, the perspectives of this House and the perspectives of what comes next, because we do have huge problems. If we thought that the problems that we've had in the last four months were big, consider the hurt, the harm and the consequences that are out there.

I think that the sooner we start examining these things with honesty and with forthrightness, the better Ontario will be and the better this Legislative Assembly will be. I do hope that we have a return to a fully functioning representative democracy immediately and as soon as possible.

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

Ms. Jane McKenna: I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of extending Ontario's declaration of emergency. Over the past few weeks, Speaker, I've had a number of emails and calls from residents in Burlington about the state of emergency. Specifically, they have asked (1) more about the state of the emergency and the various emergency orders; (2) how long the state of emergency could last; and (3) whether extending the state of emergency will delay reopening Ontario's economy.

I'll start by answering these questions for those watching on TV or online. All three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—have the ability to issue a state of emergency that enables them to take immediate, temporary and extraordinary measures to ensure safety and security due to a major crisis. The various emergency orders issued are the extraordinary measures that governments at all levels have put in place during COVID-19.

Currently, Ontario has 41 emergency orders in place, with five that have expired. If the motion to extend the declaration of emergency passes today, the government will be able to continue supporting Ontarians through the emergency orders issued to date, including:

- the emergency order that prohibits unfair pricing, known as “price gouging,” for necessary goods;

- the emergency order giving hospitals expanded measures to ensure that doctors and medical staff can rapidly deploy to potential COVID-19 hotspots; and

- the emergency order allowing for work deployment measures for services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services under the violence-against-women support services or anti-human-trafficking community support programs.

This is why the motion before us today to extend the provincial emergency and its subsequent orders is so important, Speaker.

People who have called and emailed my office in Burlington also wanted to know how long we'll be in a state of emergency. Under Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, the initial declaration of emergency on March 17 could only last for 14 days. It could then be renewed by cabinet for another two weeks. After that, the state of emergency must be renewed in 28-day increments through a vote of the Legislature. The Legislature extended the state of emergency for 28 days

on April 14, for 21 days on May 12, and for another 28 days on June 2. The motion we're considering today would extend the state of emergency for, hopefully, the last time.

I want to be clear: By extending the state of emergency, Speaker, we are not—and I repeat, we are not—delaying or slowing down the speed at which we're reopening Ontario's economy. In fact, by extending the state of emergency, we are following expert advice in our mission to stop the spread of COVID-19 while implementing Ontario's framework to reopen our economy.

If you're a big sports fan, you'll have likely imagined your dream team for various sports. In basketball, last year we had the ultimate dream team in the Raptors. If you're a Leafs fan, you have to go just a little bit further. I was seven the last time the Leafs won the Stanley Cup.

During the global pandemic, Ontario has assembled its own dream team in our fight against COVID-19. Our government's plan is formed with the advice and counsel of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams. We are so lucky to benefit from his years of experience.

Minister Elliott is also fortunate to have the valuable guidance and strong advocacy for Ontario's hospitals from the president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association, Anthony Dale. Working together, Ontario has built unprecedented capacity in our hospitals at a pace we have never seen before, Speaker.

Premier Ford, the Deputy Premier and the COVID-19 command team—just to mention a few: Deputy Minister Richard Steele, the Ministry of Long-Term Care; Matt Anderson, the president and CEO of Ontario Health; and Dr. Kevin Smith, president and CEO of University Health Network.

Those who know me well will say that one of my favourite lines is, "Working alone we make progress, but working together we make history." Ontario's COVID dream team continues to provide the expert advice we rely on during these difficult times.

COVID-19 has been a journey like no other. From coast to coast, Canada's provinces and territories have all declared either a state of emergency, a public health emergency or both. Speaker, when I last spoke about extending the state of emergency on June 2, I shared with you details on what's happening in other provinces and territories. As we discuss and debate the extension of Ontario's state of emergency for hopefully the last time, I want to update you on what's happening right now to the provinces west of us.

British Columbia's NDP government declared a provincial state of emergency on March 18. BC's declaration can only last two weeks at a time, so their state of emergency has been extended six times. The most recent extension ends at the end of the day today unless the government of BC extends it. As of yesterday, BC had reported 2,822 cases, including 169 deaths and 182 active cases; 2,471 people in BC have recovered from COVID-19.

Alberta's Conservative government declared a 90-day state of public health emergency on March 17. Alberta's

provincial emergency plan ended on June 15, though emergency ministerial orders will remain in effect until August, Speaker. Last Thursday, the government of Alberta introduced legislation to extend existing emergency health and labour rules tied to COVID-19. If the legislation passes, all existing orders will be extended, with sunset clauses that could be in force until as late as the end of next year. As of yesterday, Alberta had reported 7,736 cases of COVID-19, including 153 deaths and 542 active cases; 7,041 people have recovered.

Saskatchewan's Conservative government declared a provincial state of emergency on March 18. Their orders are good for 14 days, and so their state of emergency has also been extended six times. On June 11, Premier Moe extended the state of emergency until June 24. As of yesterday, Saskatchewan has reported 751 cases, including 13 deaths and 95 active cases; 643 people have recovered.

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Manitoba's Progressive Conservative government declared a provincial state of emergency on March 20. They have extended their state of emergency three times, Speaker. On June 15, it was extended until July 15. As of yesterday, Manitoba had reported 314 cases, including seven deaths and 14 active cases, and 293 people have recovered from COVID-19.

Here in Ontario, based on the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, we took an important step to protect Ontarians by declaring a provincial emergency through the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act on March 17. We led the country in being the first to declare a provincial state of emergency as a result of COVID-19. We also led the country in being the first to outline a plan to reopen our economy. In taking this action, we've made it possible for the government to quickly implement and enforce time-limited orders that provide support for individuals and businesses, help keep our communities safe, and assist our front-line workers as we gradually reopen the economy.

The decision to declare a provincial emergency was not taken lightly. Over the past 14 weeks, the decisions we've made in this place—together—have allowed us to flatten the curve. As of yesterday, the total number of confirmed cases in Ontario stood at 33,637, with 2,609 deaths and 2,095 active cases: a 45.4% improvement from June 1, when Ontario had 3,834 active cases. So far, 28,933 people have recovered from this disease. That's a 31% improvement over June 1, when Ontario had reported that 22,153 people had recovered from COVID-19.

While these numbers are encouraging, Speaker, they also remind us that there is still more to do; that, no matter how much we wish things could go back to normal, we are not quite there yet. That's why, once again, we are considering another extension of the state of emergency in these unprecedented times.

Let's consider what's happening in the provinces to the east of us. Quebec's CAQ government issued a health emergency order on March 13 and has extended this order 12 times. The island of Montreal also has its own state of

emergency, which is in place until at least the end of day on June 23, unless extended. As of yesterday, Quebec had reported 54,835 cases, including 5,417 deaths and 25,912 active cases; 23,506 people have recovered, Speaker.

New Brunswick's Progressive Conservative government declared a state of emergency on March 19 and has extended this order seven times. On June 19, the emergency order was extended again. As of yesterday, New Brunswick had reported 164 cases, two deaths and 27 active cases; 135 people have recovered from COVID-19.

Nova Scotia's Liberal government declared a state of emergency on March 22 and has also extended their order six times. Most recently, on June 12, the order was extended to June 28. As of yesterday, Nova Scotia has reported 1,061 cases, 62 deaths and one active case; 998 people have recovered.

Prince Edward Island's Progressive Conservative government declared a public health emergency on March 16 and a province-wide state of emergency on April 16. PEI has extended their provincial order three times. Most recently, on June 13 the order was extended to June 28. As of yesterday, PEI has reported 27 cases, no deaths and no active cases. In Prince Edward Island, everyone that contracted COVID-19 has now recovered. That's recent and wonderful news.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the Liberal government declared a public health emergency on March 18. Newfoundland's declaration can only last 14 days at a time, so their state of emergency has been extended six times. On June 15, Premier Ball extended the order to June 30. As of yesterday, Newfoundland and Labrador have reported 261 cases, three deaths and no active cases; 258 people have recovered from the disease.

Nunavut's non-partisan government declared a public health emergency on March 18, and extended it six times. Most recently, on June 11, the order was extended to June 25. As of yesterday, since the start of COVID-19, Nunavut has had no reported cases, though 139 people are currently under investigation.

The Northwest Territories's non-partisan government declared a state of emergency on March 24. They have extended it six times, including on June 9, when the state of emergency was extended until the end of the day today, unless it's being extended. As of yesterday, the Northwest Territories had reported five cases, no deaths and no active cases. All five people have fully recovered from COVID-19.

Finally, the Yukon's Liberal government declared a 90-day state of emergency on March 27. It was extended on June 12 until September 10, unless it is ended earlier. As of yesterday, the Yukon had reported 11 confirmed cases, no deaths and no active cases. Everyone in the Yukon territory who contracted COVID-19 has recovered. It's wonderful news.

Since Ontario declared a state of emergency on March 17, this Legislature has sat for 13 days, including today's sitting, and various committees have also met to consider bills and hear from hundreds of delegations. The Ontario Legislature remains open and accountable even during

these unprecedented times. Our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, recognizes that the opposition plays a constitutionally important role in holding government to account. Over the past weeks, this Legislature has come together to pass a number of important pieces of legislation to support individuals, families and businesses impacted by COVID-19.

And Speaker, work is continuing in the city and town halls across this great province. As I mentioned earlier, a number of Ontario's 444 municipalities have declared their own states of emergency, including Mississauga, Toronto, Oakville, Grimsby, Burlington and the regional municipalities of Halton and Niagara, to name a few.

Speaking of Burlington, as a life-long resident of Burlington, I'm always proud to talk about the great people and places in Canada—best place to live in 2019, Burlington, according to Maclean's magazine. This, of course, isn't the first time we've been named the best place to live in Canada. Burlington is a community like no other. In good times and bad, we rally together to make sure that no one—and I'm saying no one—is left behind. Throughout this trying time, it has been inspiring to see the thoughtfulness, generosity and kindness of people in my community. I'm proud of the many local organizations that have stepped up to lend a hand, including the Burlington Food Bank, the Compassion Society, Food for Life, Burlington Salvation Army, Wellington Square United Church, Burlington Together, and the Burlington Dads group.

Whether you prefer Ontario as a place to grow or as yours to discover, in these difficult times, people right across the province are finding new and innovative ways of coming together to support those in need.

I read a news story recently about a shopping centre reopening in Europe that was using the slogan, "Open As Unusual." This slogan certainly captures the new reality people are experiencing around the world as restrictions are lifted. We all experienced this "new normal" with the phase 1 reopening, which began on May 19. It was even more apparent on June 12, when parts of the province entered into stage 2, and it continued this past Friday, when Burlington, Halton region, Hamilton, Niagara and other regions followed suit.

It is thanks to the collective efforts of all Ontarians that we're making progress on this slow and steady road to safely and carefully reducing the restrictions in place, and re-opening Ontario's economy.

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On April 9, my daughter Courtney had her first baby, and there were lots of tears as she wanted her mom to be there with her first baby. Though I felt sad for my daughter and there were many tears—I must say that—for missing that milestone, as we sat there on the phone, we realized that there are others who have faced their last days without any family members by their side.

That's why we must stay the course, because what Ontarians are doing to stop the spread of COVID-19 is working, and it has guided this province's state of emergency and the various emergency orders. Central to these

decisions is the advice of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ontario's framework document for reopening our province, which serves as a road map to a measured reopening of our economy.

As we move through the three-phase plan to reopen our economy, there is a significant body of work being done by the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Health has released guidelines and documents to help business owners develop their reopening plans, with a focus on protecting their workers, customers and the general public.

I'm also proud to work with an incredible team at the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, alongside our health and safety association partners. Together, we've released over 80 sector-specific health and safety guidelines, including guidelines for curbside pick-up and delivery.

In my riding of Burlington, I'm holding several round tables every week, just like every member that is in here. We certainly appreciated having the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries on a Zoom meeting with us yesterday.

I just want to say, Speaker, in ending, that these have been very trying times. People are very stressed and emotional about everything that's going on, but we all rally together. We all work extremely hard to make this province the best province that it is, and I'm proud to stand in this Legislature and thank everybody for all the hard work they've been doing in our province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Is this a protest of silence? Sorry; I couldn't resist. It was floating out there.

Let me start by saying that I'll be supporting this motion—not without some reservations. I do believe that we're still in a pandemic right now—I don't believe; I know we're still in a pandemic. And I believe that the powers that are extended in the emergency order are necessary so the government can respond to those situations that we find ourselves in with this very deadly virus.

We're still in the first wave of the pandemic—maybe we're on the downside of it—and Ontarians have made great progress since the start of the outbreak some three months ago. Our infection rates are decreasing since the start of the outbreak, and that's a good thing. The virus has not disappeared. We're not out of the woods yet, and it can easily spread and get out of control if we don't keep our eye on the ball. Many people are still suffering from the impacts of COVID-19, or continue to suffer, whether it's physically, economically or financially. We've seen that extending the state of emergency orders until July 15 has allowed the government to implement a gradual reopening of our society and economy, moving on a regional basis, depending on infection rates. I think that's a reasonable and prudent approach.

Our number one priority should always be the health of Ontarians, and we need to be ready for the next waves. I have mentioned this before in the Legislature. There are

three things that we all need to do for each other, for our health and for our economy:

(1) Physical distancing. Stay two metres apart wherever possible.

(2) Wash your hands often.

(3) Wear a mask when you can't physically distance, when you're shopping, when you're inside this building, or when you're inside a place other than your home.

I saw a quote this morning that was very interesting. I was from an epidemiologist. He said this: "If people could find a vaccine right now that was as effective as" those three things, "physical distancing, washing your hands and wearing a mask, they would be breaking down the doors to get it."

We have all the tools. What I wish we were debating here today is a plan for the government on universal masking and how they could support communities across Ontario to ensure that people wore a mask in those situations. It's not just good enough to say, "You should wear a mask. I strongly recommend that you wear a mask." We need to lead by example. Many of us wear them here.

We also have to realize that there are many people who can't afford a non-medical mask—and that's what we're talking about here: a cloth mask. So just like other forms of personal protective equipment, the government should be procuring a supply to assist municipalities and communities with ensuring that those people who can't afford a mask and who are vulnerable could indeed have a mask. I think that that's something the government could easily undertake. They are currently doing that with medical-grade personal protective equipment. I strongly recommend that they would do that. It would make it a lot easier for communities, instead of communities having to try and source it themselves.

The other thing that I think the government needs to have a stronger position on, or a stronger plan for, is public service announcements. How do we actually encourage people, remind people, that masking is about protecting the other, that it's a courtesy, that it's actually—maybe "gift" is too strong a word, but that's the thing we do for others? Because we're not there yet. Whenever I'm in a store, I wear a mask, always. I often see many people not wearing masks. We know it works. In terms of our role and responsibility, the government's role and responsibility is to do those things that are going to help Ontarians protect themselves, especially in this situation.

We're here to debate extending the state of emergency. I have said before that I support this. However, there are some things in this three-month-long state of emergency for which the government I don't think has had the right amount of urgency. We've got a state of emergency without some urgency around some really critical things.

I think it's fair to say that the government's response in long-term care has been flat-footed, and they are still struggling to catch up. The government has waited more than a month after Quebec and BC to raise the wages of the lowest-paid workers in long-term care, to stabilize the

workforce and to eliminate workers from working in more than one facility—one month longer.

They also waited too long to give themselves the power to take over those obviously struggling long-term-care homes. The minister's response when first asked was, "We don't do that." Well, we did, and I think we could have seen that coming. We've all seen the results of those delays in making those decisions, what has resulted in a number of long-term-care homes.

Just recently, today or over the last week or so, we've noticed that the government's response to migrant farm workers and COVID-19 has been flat-footed too. Going back to another province: When British Columbia had an outbreak and understood that migrant farm workers were going to be at risk, what did they do? They acted to support migrant workers and farmers with housing and health care, and they even took care of meals, not just because it was the right thing to do to protect the migrant workers, who are literally people here who are putting food on our table; it was also to support farmers and the economy. It was a smart thing to do, and we can see the result of that in British Columbia.

We see the results of that here in Ontario right now, not having made those decisions, not having delivered that kind of support. We're scrambling to catch up. We're behind. It's just like long-term care—just like it. You've got a situation in Windsor now, in southwestern Ontario, that's really tense. It's not good. We didn't need to be there.

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In this emergency situation, in this pandemic, the speed at which you make decisions is the most important factor. You can't wait around to see if you get it exactly right. Sometimes you need to make those investments because they are the right thing to do, and you've got to figure out a way to do it.

Speaker, the other thing I think that's out there now—and I think it will get sorted out, but it hasn't been sorted out yet—is the pandemic pay mess. The Premier likes to say, "The buck stops here." What workers are hearing now is, "The cheque's in the mail."

Mr. Wayne Gates: And Christmas is coming.

Mr. John Fraser: And yes, Christmas is coming soon.

It's not good enough for workers or people on the front lines. You know, we saw last week that whole one-day shemozzle over stat holidays going from nine to three. How is that even in the government ether anywhere at this time? Why was it even considered an option? Here's why. This is the track the government has been on since day one: not allowing the minimum wage to go to \$15; cutting paid sick days; requiring sick notes; not allowing people who are doing the same job, part-time or full-time, to get the same wage; cutting those things back. That's why. It's just part of a pattern. So I'm pleased that it's not going to happen now, but I'm a bit concerned that that's still the direction the government is moving in.

For heaven's sakes, people in the retail trade are taking big risks right now, and they just got whacked with their pandemic bonuses, which are really just about worker

retention, being cut back. It's kind of shocking, actually, that the government would even be considering that. I hope it doesn't pop up again.

There are many questions still left unanswered. What is the government's plan to stabilize those long-term-care homes that are still really struggling? How are we going to address the backlog of elective surgeries that were cancelled for several months? How are we going to solve the problem of essential caregivers?

A lot of people have not been able to see their families in long-term care or in hospitals. I've had a number of constituents who can't get in. They can get their hair cut. They can go to a patio. The government has figured out those things. You can go to a massage therapist, but you can't go and see your mom in a hospital. They are slowly trying to figure that out. It's far more important, though, I think, than some of the things that we've opened up.

This pandemic has had a really devastating impact on families, especially those families that have a frail elderly senior or a family member who's not well. People become isolated. That should be a top priority. Government needs to do more. That's the thing we should be debating. Those are the questions we should be answering.

Right now we're debating Bill 175. We're debating pieces of legislation that we shouldn't be debating right now. We should be talking about COVID-19. We're talking about Bill 175, which is changing home care, and we're asking these people in home care, these organizations who are still struggling to manage the effects of COVID-19 on their workforce and on their type of work, "Do you want to provide some comment on this bill?" Well, here's the number one comment: "Why are you doing this right now?"

It's incredible. I know that the member from London—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Fanshawe.

Mr. John Fraser:—Fanshawe is on the committee, as well as the member from Nickel Belt, and the government is—I'll use it—hell-bent on getting this piece of legislation through during a pandemic. What they simply want to say is, "Look, the stuff that's really important, like a bill of rights"—they're taking out a bill of rights—"we're going to put that in regulations because we're in a hurry."

I don't think the Canadian Charter of Rights is in regulation. That's because they don't want it to change, right? You don't want somebody taking your right of freedom of association or freedom of expression or freedom of religion because they decided to change a regulation inside cabinet. It doesn't come back to this Legislature.

I don't know why we're debating that right now, why we're leaving out the bill of rights. It's incredible. There has been a bill of rights in the home and community care act since 1994 or 1995. For 25 years, it has protected people. That's where it should be.

We shouldn't be debating this right now. We should be making it stronger. I know that my colleagues in the NDP put forward the bill of rights with some amendments. I put forward the bill of rights forward as well, too, with some further rights included. That's what we should be doing. We don't need to be doing that right now.

I'm concerned when we extend the state of emergency. I won't say that the government is hiding behind it, but it's kind of cover for doing some other things. Those are important powers, but it shouldn't be used to push through legislation that we don't have to be doing right now. I know the government said, "We're not going to do private members' bills. There's no capacity inside the ministries to do it." Well, there's capacity inside the ministries to do some legislation—the government's legislation—that we don't need to be doing right now. So that's the concern I have about that. I'm going to support it, but if we're going to be in a state of emergency, let's bring the things that are most important in front of us here. Let's do it here. And we're not doing that.

My colleagues in the NDP brought forward a motion to create a committee, three members of the Legislature, all around COVID-19 and our response. The government's answer was, "No, we can't do that. The Premier's got to report in 120 days. We don't need to do that." But we have the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs that's sitting almost every day this summer for eight hours a day. To all the members that are sitting on that committee, I want to give them a shout-out. That's a lot of work.

So we can discuss that all summer long: our economy. That's really important. But we can't actually talk about what has happened in this pandemic: our response in long-term care, our response in home care, our response in health care, in hospitals, in primary care. We can't talk about that? We can spend all summer long talking about the economy, but as legislators we can't spend all summer long talking about health.

Again, I'm going to support the motion. I think the government should bring those things that are most important in front of us, things that relate to COVID-19, to our response, because it's going to get harder. The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston put forward an amendment; he has concerns. Those concerns are going to keep bubbling up and they're going to undermine confidence.

1430

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I won't say that it is a pleasure to rise in the House today, but it is good to be here, to be talking about these important issues for the people of the province of Ontario. It's difficult to roll over in my mind what we should be talking about as far as the emergency orders go, because it seems that so much has been said and so much time has been spent talking about these things.

I do briefly want to speak about the amendment that was brought by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. It was interesting listening to his speech and talking about that, because he was basically saying that we need to be done with the emergency order at this point. But then his amendment just seemed to add more burdensome regulations to what he's asking this committee to do and to bring here, instead of the important work of fighting COVID-19. So I was just a little bit confused by that, quite frankly. It seems like a make-work project.

The member from Ottawa South was saying that—well, I'll just say that he was talking about whether we're doing the right things and things like that. I just wanted to say that I had a good chat with my hospital administrator and that he said: "Absolutely. Yes." Because he was talking about not being able to visit someone in the hospital, and yet we're allowing these other things. I agree: Those are very, very difficult circumstances, but I think everyone in the House here understands the risks that we face when we see COVID go into our medical facilities, and especially our long-term-care homes. So I completely understand why it would be difficult. Again, my hospital administrator said that we're doing the exact right thing on those things.

On the point of saying that we're using this as a cover to pass legislation, I would say that we were elected to govern the province of Ontario and to get things done. Regardless of what's going on with COVID, there is still legislation that we owe the people of Ontario in order to move things along.

And then, moving on from those things, what do you say about extending the emergency order further? Again, as I said earlier, many words have been spoken in this House about what we're trying to do with the emergency order, why we need to be doing that. I guess I wanted to focus just a little bit on how our communities have really stood up into the gap during this time.

I was struck by it the other day. I went for my first bike ride of the year, I have to confess. I used to be a much more avid cyclist, but I—

Interruption.

Mr. Will Bouma: Excuse me. I'll just move those out of the way, because I think I heard something buzz.

I remember the first time I was at a cyclist fatality with the volunteer fire department, and I kind of lost my nerve for doing that. But I was out early Saturday morning, and I was just struck by the incredible beauty of nature and what was going on, and the incredible people that we have in our riding. If there's one thing that has really, really struck me through this whole COVID-19 crisis, it is the willingness and, indeed, the political will to move these incredible financial mountains in order to save lives in the province of Ontario, and indeed across the entire country.

That just made me think: What is a human life worth? What lengths are we willing to go to to preserve and save human life? And if nothing else, as devastating as this has been—my business as an optometrist was completely shut down for three months. My neighbours across the street from my business, the restaurants, were completely shut down for three months. We've destroyed livelihoods of people with this, and yet the goal of saving human life just came through.

Then I think about the incredible amount of effort that has been expended by companies and individuals in our communities to do great things for our community. I think of local businesses like Apotex in my community that flipped the line around with mostly volunteer, donated time by their staff, to begin making hand sanitizer, even though, as we know, Apotex is a huge company making

pharmaceutical ingredients and generic pharmaceuticals. That's a whole other side issue—how we could save money by having more pharmaceutical uptake in the province of Ontario—but I'll leave that alone. But the fact that these people spent long hours and late nights in order to do this—and they donated thousands of litres of alcohol hand sanitizer to local community businesses.

When I hear about KeepRite Refrigeration, which is a business in my riding that has been making mechanical components for the refrigeration industry for—I think it's 75 years. Their employees led a drive for the food bank that was matched by KeepRite for a total contribution of \$10,000. When you see the best that our communities have to offer, how they rise to fill in the gap, that's why I have hope as we come through this.

That's not to take anything away from anyone who has suffered anything through this COVID-19 crisis, but the fact that we rise above—there's something so, can I say, Canadian about that, that Ontario spirit of pulling together. We have our fights and squabbles in here and we do those things; and yet when we see the spirit of the people of Ontario, what they're willing to give up and do to save the lives of other Ontarians—I am just struck by that.

Adidas is in my riding. They donated 100 pairs of shoes to our local hospitals, to front-line workers. Booster Juice in Brantford gave smoothies to our front-line workers. Walters Group provided lunches to all the people in the hospital more than once. The things that our residents have been doing in the riding: I try to jog, but my knee is getting sore, so now I walk and I try to bike a little bit. But every day, as I make my way around, I take a different route, because I put on my COVID 15 very, very quickly sitting at home. I've been trying to lose it again, so I try to walk or jog five kilometres a day. But every day, as I go through my community in St. George, I see the kids who are at home. They draw things on the sidewalks—rainbows of support, different messages supporting our front-line workers. As I drive through our community here and there, I see these hand-painted signs, some by children and some by adults, supporting our front-line workers; and things hung in windows and blue ribbons tied around trees that signify support for front-line medical workers.

In the evening, residents hit pots and pans. They applaud and they cheer in support of those who are on the front lines. Every day at noon, the church bell at the United Church in St. George is rung by someone—I don't even know who—to support the community. So we hear the bell toll at noon in support for all of those who are in this fight together.

We've seen our numbers go down. My community has done an incredible job of following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, just like our government has. It is easy to be critical and to say, "We should have, we could have done this, done that. We should be doing that," and yet I've been so impressed with the ability of our government to listen to the people we trust to have the knowledge as we move forward through these things.

I reached out proactively to our long-term-care homes and our retirement communities in the riding, just to see

how they were doing. What struck me so much was that we had such a high level of preparation. It's easy to be critical of who owns what and everything else, yet I was so struck that these people were ready. They knew this was coming—and then the responsiveness of our parliamentary assistant to health to be able to get PPE to those places that were short so quickly.

We've seen horrific conditions in our long-term-care homes, and I've heard such criticism of that too. Again, my heart goes out to everyone who has suffered. We had a petition that I heard today, and I have such empathy for those people who have suffered so much. I was chair of our municipally owned long-term care home, John Noble Home, in the city of Brantford, shared between the city of Brantford and the county of Brant, for a year. You have to be able to look at people like God does, so when someone's old and forgetful like my mom is now, just to be able to see them as they were and who they were, and to see the value. That's why, as difficult as it has been—calling out the army and the report that came out, how difficult that was, and so difficult to hear about things that happened here. We have pledged to make that better, and I will do everything I can to make that better, because those people that made our country so great deserve better from us.

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We've enjoyed an incredible working relationship with our community partners. It's amazing to see different community groups, the food banks, the soup kitchens. The city of Brantford Emergency Operations Centre, in conjunction with the health unit and the hospital, worked together to have a solid strategy. There have been some bumps in the road, I know. If you've read the news, we've seen some of those things. Yet my heartfelt thanks goes out to the mayor of Brantford, Kevin Davis, who has spearheaded so many of these things. We speak on an almost daily basis about what's going on and what we can do better and how we can use resources.

Local residents have stepped up to show the Ontario spirit by making face masks. In fact, and I don't mean this as a prop, I have one right here that we got from someone local that just dropped that off. People have found innovative ways of continuing to do fundraisers. I had a meeting yesterday with the Ontario agricultural societies and what it's like for them not to have any rentals in their facilities when 50% of their revenue comes from the fall fair and 50% of the revenue comes from the rentals that they do, and to be completely shut down, and finding innovative ways of moving forward with that and working together in order to do that.

This incredibly difficult time has been such an incredible time of working together too. That's why I also have to say—the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane said this morning that he was supporting this extension of the emergency order despite the government. I can understand that; that's the game. And yet, at the same time, thank you. Thank you for supporting this anyway because, by hook or by crook, we're doing the right thing for the province of Ontario by extending this order. Again, I'm not going to get into the details of why we should and all those things. Those things have all been said.

Also, to the member from Ottawa South, who's not here, so I apologize: I so appreciate the fact that we can see the importance of these things for the people of Ontario and move forward together.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): So I'm just going to remind the members one more time that it's not appropriate to make reference to the absence of another member, unless you've never missed a day or an hour in the House yourself. If that's the case, then maybe you have the opportunity to make that point. Is that clear?

Member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: It was inadvertent. I did not mean that as a—anyway, my apologies.

Our walk for our community hospice, the Stedman Community Hospice, was cancelled, and yet people in the community had a massive bottle drive for them. There have been online concerts for the Brantford food bank. One of my friends, who started the Grandview Theatre—completely different, but in a different industry—actually did online shows that you could support in order to help out the community that way.

When I think of people who aren't included in the pandemic pay, whether they be radiology technicians or so many of our PSWs that haven't seen that come through, who, while the rest of us are staying at home, are out there doing their work—the people at Participation Support Services in the city of Brantford, who work with our most vulnerable, who support them and just take care of them and are there, going towards things and situations where so many of us would go the opposite way. When I think of our supportive housing project on Marlene Avenue in the city of Brantford and all the construction workers that continued to show up day by day—and yes, it was delayed, yet only by a little bit. We got to be there last week for our grand opening ceremonies so that the most vulnerable people in our community, who need so much support in order to stay housed, can have a place to go that's in the city, and find those homes.

I think of my colleagues in the Brant County Fire Department. We've had two COVID VSA calls. If you don't know what VSA is, it's a “vital signs absent” call. I wasn't available for either, but to hear that come across the radio, and to go to the fire hall anyway as a volunteer, to stop what you're doing and get in a truck and respond to the people who need you most, is just stunning. As many of you know, the volunteers are the optometrists and the mechanics and the people in the community who just show up when needed.

Then I consider how the community rallied around the family of Deputy District Fire Chief Rob Phillips, from our airport station, who passed away from cancer very, very quickly. I think about how our whole process of grieving has been so devastatingly impacted by COVID, because we surround people with love when they lose a loved one, and to not be able to have that interaction. I stood on guard out front of his house on his driveway and I saw that there was just his wife and children at home, and no one could be there with them.

Yet we've seen the best in our community—we've seen the best in our community. When migrant workers were brought to my community to be in quarantine after testing positive for COVID, one of our Catholic priests from Burford organized all these care packages for them, to bring them a show of welcome and of support. These are our communities. These are our towns. This is the price that we will pay to support, to preserve, to protect life in our communities.

So while we will continue the debate on the extension of the emergency order, I will be voting in favour of supporting that, because I still see so many vulnerable people who need our support on a daily basis. We need to have this in place so that we can bring the province of Ontario out of this state of emergency safely. I will not be supporting any amendments that would make the job of that committee harder by adding more paperwork to them.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank everyone here for all of the work that you do in your communities, for the fact that you show up and do the job here, even in these difficult circumstances. Again, for everyone who will be supporting the extension of the emergency order, I would like to say thank you.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: Mr. Speaker, I'm standing here today to voice my support on the extension of the state of emergency. On January 22, Ontario made COVID-19 a designated reportable disease under the province's public health legislation. On March 17, our province declared its first state of emergency.

This decision was not made lightly. Immediate action was made to prevent and reduce the serious harm that COVID-19 was having on the lives of Ontarians and our public health system. We declared an emergency because we only had one goal in mind: We, as elected officials, as the provincial government, needed to protect the health, safety and welfare of the 14.5 million people in Ontario.

We also took this extraordinary measure because we thought of our health sector, our front-line and health care professionals, who are risking their lives every day, leaving their families and working long hours in hospitals, senior homes, long-term homes and congregate settings to help Ontarians who are affected by this virus.

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COVID-19 is a ruthless virus that is affecting everyone, particularly our vulnerable populations. We are seeing how long-term homes have been affected by COVID-19. Our province made fast and rapid decisions, and we are gradually seeing outbreaks and situations in long-term homes improving. As of June 22, 66 long-term homes are with an outbreak, and we have 247 long-term homes with resolved outbreaks. From January 15 to June 22, which was yesterday, we have completed well over one million tests. The actual number is 1.2 million. We are ramping up testing, and we are gradually seeing outbreaks and situations in long-term homes improving. But we have to do more, and we must do more.

The extension of the state of emergency will continue to provide health care providers with the ability to ensure

that resources and personnel are directed appropriately throughout the health care system. Our decision to declare the province's state of emergency and the actions to extend it have been acknowledged as the rightful choice.

On April 28, the Financial Accountability Officer published a report on COVID-19 and our province's hospital capacity. The report highlighted that the decisions made by the provincial government had been established based on available data for Ontario, evidence from other jurisdictions, and best practices in public health. The report acknowledges that Ontario has been able to expand hospital capacity, allowing for us to have sufficient resources to support a potential surge of COVID-19 patients requiring critical care.

Furthermore, the report indicated that the early implementation of lockdown measures in our province has contributed to avoiding much worse outcomes; that had these measures to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus been implanted five days later, the number of concurrent critical care patients would have been over 1,000. That is over four times greater than what has occurred as of April 23.

Making the choice to declare our province's state of emergency was not done so easily. But it was, and will continue to be, the right choice, Mr. Speaker. We see communities, families, organizations and businesses complying with the medical advice and emergency orders. Their selfless actions are the reason why Ontario is able to be in the position they are today.

Mr. Speaker, COVID-19 is a ruthless virus. It is affecting our family, our friends, our loved ones. And the health of Ontarians is our top priority. That is why, since day one, Ontario worked with partners in the health care system to implement a robust plan to monitor for, detect and, if needed, isolate any cases of the virus.

We knew transparency was important. Everyone in Ontario deserves to know the current situation of the province. This is why we have held regulated media tech briefings, had daily website updates and offered multiple briefings to members opposite. Knowing that the situation is constantly changing, we continue to provide updates on the website as early as possible.

Our government knew that we must increase testing. As the province is carefully and gradually reopening the economy, our government is implementing the next phase of its COVID-19 testing strategy to detect and quickly contain the spread of the virus. This includes three branches of testing.

We are expanding testing in assessment centres. Individuals with symptoms and asymptomatic individuals concerned about exposure can go to one of the 130 assessment centres across Ontario to get tested. People will no longer need a referral to go get tested.

We are expanding proactive surveillance testing and monitoring. This will allow our province to detect outbreaks and more actively monitor any spread among our most vulnerable populations in hospitals, long-term-care homes, group homes, shelters, emergency child care centres and other shared living spaces. This branch will

include the testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic front-line staff in long-term care and retirement homes, as well as working with high-risk sectors, including first responders, essential workers and other workplaces as the economy gradually reopens. Further proactive surveillance testing will also be conducted in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.

As the economy is slowly and gradually reopening, we know that more proactive testing will give employers and their employees confidence as they return to work. It will fortify our alert system for any potential surge in new cases. This is why the government is working with private sector employers to deploy the appropriate models for each sector and workplace. Workplace testing will leverage private and public resources.

As part of the next phase of the COVID-19 testing strategy, Ontario is also developing agile testing resources. This will include the establishment of mobile testing teams that can rapidly deploy to specific neighbourhoods, regions, institutions or workplaces if there's an outbreak.

To improve our case management and contact tracing, we are in the process of launching a new exposure notification app that will alert Ontarians when they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and that would recommend appropriate actions such as monitoring for symptoms, self-isolation and appropriate next steps to getting a test.

For contact tracing, we are working together with Public Health Ontario, which is working to implement further capacity to ensure effective case management and contact tracing as restrictions are lifted.

We have approximately 1,500 dedicated staff in public health units across the province doing case and contact management. In addition, there are over 500 staff from Health Canada, Ontario Health and other federal and provincial departments who have been trained and reassigned to work on contact tracing and provide surge capacity when required, bringing the total to over 2,000.

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Our government will continue to expand our strategy. This is our best defence against stopping the spread of COVID-19 as we safely reopen the province.

For our loving seniors and elderly who have done so much for our province, you are on our minds every single day, and we are taking steps to protect your health and safety. For our seniors in retirement homes, we are taking additional steps to protect you. Our government has made an amendment to the Retirement Homes Act, 2010, regulation and enabled the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority—RHRA—to better support seniors living in retirement homes during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The regulation change increases the emergency payment the RHRA can pay to eligible retirement home residents, from \$2,000 to \$3,500, in the event of an emergency, such as an outbreak. This funding can be used to support residents to cover costs for transportation, alternative accommodation, or temporary care. The regulation change will also require retirement homes to report infectious disease outbreaks to the RHRA during COVID-19 and beyond.

For residents of long-term-care homes and their families, our government committed to do everything in our power to protect our most vulnerable seniors to ensure they get the care they deserve. Since day one, our government has been clear that all options are on the table. This includes pulling licences, shutting down facilities and whatever else it takes. An incident management system—IMS—structure was established to coordinate operational support to long-term-care homes.

Under IMS leadership, Ontario has seen improvements to long-term-care homes affected by COVID-19 outbreaks. As of May 27, the IMS has deployed 37 hospitals into 59 yellow homes and 19 red homes. As of June 22, 247 long-term-care homes have resolved outbreaks. Testing of long-term care residents and of staff has been completed, with second rounds of testing already under way.

From the outset of this pandemic, we were all asked to make sacrifices, but we know that for those families in congregate care settings, restricting visits has been very difficult. This is why, with collective effort and sacrifice, Ontarians are now able to cautiously restart family visits in congregate care settings without outbreaks.

We will continue to move cautiously with safety and health as our main priority. The improvements in long-term care, senior homes as well as other congregate care settings would not have been made possible without the support of all Ontarians. To all Ontarians, we thank you.

We hear from Ontarians from across the province on how their jobs and businesses have been affected by COVID-19. Some Ontarians have had their hours cut off and some who started their own business are unsure what tomorrow will bring. To all Ontarians, our government is extending the infectious disease emergency leave. To protect jobs, in March following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the government required some businesses to temporarily close. As Ontario starts to reopen, businesses and workers want to be ready to return to work. However, many businesses affected by COVID-19 are facing financial strain and struggling to stay afloat. Based on current regulations, temporary layoffs will turn into permanent layoffs after 13 weeks. With termination and the severance payments being very high, some businesses may be forced to close permanently and leave workers without jobs. This is why we are updating our regulations to ensure that employees will automatically be deemed on infectious disease emergency leave if their employer temporarily reduces or eliminates their hours of work because of COVID-19. This will ensure that as we work together to reopen the economy, workers will have jobs to return to.

In April, we introduced a framework for reopening our economy. This framework outlines the criteria Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will use to advise the government on the loosening of emergency measures, as well as guiding principles for the safe, gradual reopening of businesses, services and public spaces. By opening our economy gradually and through a step-by-step approach, it will allow our province to make

appropriate measures in place so workplaces can safely open. With the step-by-step approach, public health officials will carefully monitor each stage and determine if it is necessary to change course to maintain public health.

To support the next phases of Ontario's action plan, the new Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee and MPPs have been consulting with a wide variety of people across the province to help assess the impact of COVID-19 on the provincial economy and develop a plan to move forward. To assist businesses in the agri-foods sector, the federal government and provincial government are investing up to \$2.5 million to help businesses and organizations quickly expand their marketing channels and grow e-business opportunities.

To all parents: The health and safety of your children is one of our top priorities, and we will do whatever it takes to keep your child safe. On March 14, before the province declared a state of emergency, we closed all publicly funded schools in Ontario. We know that we need to keep students safe, and we took immediate action to close all the schools. To ensure that all the students are able to access Internet, we worked with partners and with the private sector to make home learning more accessible.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard and said it so many times: This is truly an unprecedented time, an uncertain time in our province when we are dealing with a deadly virus that is affecting or has affected our families, our businesses, our friends and our loved ones. Since the beginning, since our province first identified our first positive case, our government has worked tirelessly to ensure that all Ontarians are protected. Everything we have done to date is for the people, and this is why I am standing here today supporting the motion to extend the state of emergency.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House to speak, but before I begin, I want to acknowledge that Sunday, June 21 was National Indigenous Peoples Day, and the land on which my riding of Mississauga–Malton is located is part of the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. For thousands of years, Indigenous people inhabited and cared for this land, and I'm thankful to have the opportunity to work on this land and, by doing so, give my respect to the first inhabitants. As you can see, I'm wearing the tie to acknowledge that.

Mr. Speaker, last week, for the riding of Mississauga–Malton, it was a very tough time. I would also like to take a moment to express my sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Choudry for their loss. The whole community is in grief with you.

1510

Before I talk about the extension of the state of emergency, I want to take another moment to convey my birthday wishes to Mandeep Sing Cheema: Happy Birthday, Mandeep. We tragically lost Mandeep in 2012, and the Mandeep Singh Cheema Charitable Foundation was born in 2013 to raise money to support kids and youth through Peel Children's Aid via a motorcycle ride. This

year, the ride will take place on August 23, 2020. Mandeep, you are and you will always be in our memories.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the extension of the state of emergency. With 1.4 million residents of Peel, where my riding is, it is time that we enter into stage 2 as of midnight. Thank you for your support through this pandemic, and I urge you to keep doing your best to stay safe.

On March 17, in a swift and decisive response to the global coronavirus pandemic, Premier Ford declared a province-wide state of emergency. The action was in step with governments across the world and was a necessary move in our battle against this deadly virus. It was a decision made on the guidance of public health officials, and it is their sound and expert advice that has directed all the decisions taken since. Today, we meet again to discuss extending the state of emergency at the request of our public officials.

Mr. Speaker, before I proceed, I want to talk and give a shout-out to the organizations who have done a wonderful job during this pandemic—I heard the member for Brantford—Brant and many other members talking about it—organizations like My Indians in Canada Association. It's a non-profit organization run by volunteers during this pandemic. MICA is helping fellow Canadians with free cooked food delivered to those who are quarantined right at their doorstep. They have aided in providing free groceries and medicine to people in need along with the distribution of PPEs. I want to sincerely thank MICA for all the work they've done for the community in this tough time.

Humans 4 Harmony: an organization run by Don Patel, Pathik Shukla, Vinayak Patel and Ashok Patel—for spearheading this organization that has helped provide immense support for those in need. Thank you for your contribution. As the Premier has said, tough times are a test time, and the way you all came together—this is the Ontario spirit.

Sai Dham Food Bank has been a leader in community service for the longest time. They continue to shine during this pandemic. They have assisted and stayed open 24/7 to provide delivered food free of cost across the GTHA. They have helped and shared and distributed one million pounds of food to other non-profits and distributed over 5,000 meals in collaboration with other organizations with front-line workers at the Mount Sinai Hospital. Their Fueling Healthy Minds program has enabled them to serve over 16,000 servings of nutritional breakfasts to children who used to rely on their schools' breakfast programs. As they continue to extend these programs, I want to say thank you. Thank you to Vishal Khanna, the leader of Sai Dham, for doing an incredible job.

The Malton Women Council is another not-for-profit organization that has a mandate to mentor, motivate and mobilize women and families with the vision of "Empowered Women, Empowered Communities." Mr. Speaker, to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic, MWC did not stop working. They continued delivering all their programs virtually through GoToMeeting and

Facebook Live. I want to thank them for all their hard work and for always continuing to fight for those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, I know the list is long, but these are the people who have helped during this tough time.

The Seva Food Bank: Since the onset of COVID-19 in March, requests for home deliveries for needy community members have tripled. In their amazing response to this urgent need, Seva Food Bank was able to adapt their model to continue to serve everyone in the community. To minimize physical contact and keep everyone safe, they served the community via a pre-packaged, carry-out hamper model. They are able to provide all those in need with fresh and shelf-stable food while also offering PPEs. I want to thank Seva Food Bank for your commitment to equitably serve the growing need in the community, now and in the future.

I understand that extending the state of emergency means that we can't go back to our normal lives and daily routines. I understand that restricting public gatherings curtails summer family picnics and birthday celebrations. It restricts access to places of worship, to parks, to swimming pools and to restaurants.

Our students have already seen graduation ceremonies and proms cancelled. I want to take a moment to congratulate the graduating class of 2020. As we talk to our parents, they always talk about—every time they have to give an example, they'll give an example of, "Oh, this happened at the time of World War I. This happened in World War II." Our generation always talks about, "This happened before the Internet." The graduating class of 2020: Every time they're going to be talking to their kids, I think they will be talking about, "This happened before the pandemic of 2020."

This is how it has affected people. So many personal milestones have gone by without fulsome celebration. Many workplaces continue to be closed, affecting the livelihood of millions. Working from home and learning from home have not been easy on families. But still there are organizations who are helping and serving the community.

I am proud to acknowledge that during this difficult time, another organization, Malton Masjid, is devoting its full energy and resources to social services in order to best serve the needs of our community. Members have helped serve over 1,500 meals to families within Malton and helped serve over 10,000 meals to various different shelters and health care workers in the GTA. I would like to thank them for their continuous involvement in always putting the residents of Mississauga—Malton first. Thank you for supporting the family of Mr. Ejaz Choudhry during this tough time as well.

Since March, James Nguyen, Quang Nguyen and Le Luong from the Saigon Park Working Group have led a PPE campaign and have collected more than half a million supplies to donate to local hospitals, long-term-care facilities, community organizations, and to the Manitoba Métis Federation. They have also raised more than \$10,000 for the Mississauga Food Bank and \$5,000 for Regeneration

in Brampton. The Vietnamese community continues to pay its way forward through these campaigns and they set a positive example of successful refugee integration in Canada. I would like to recognize their outstanding efforts during this pandemic to help battle COVID-19 and to support the community.

Care4Cause: I would like to appreciate the effort of the Care4Cause Foundation during this pandemic for delivering over 40,000 meals throughout Ontario. Thank you to the directors of Care4Cause: Vikas, Virender, Gurpreet, Harpreet, Rana, Sukraj, Amit and Sarabjit. Thank you for your hard work and for rallying all of your associates to serve those in need.

Punjabi Food Seva: I would like to recognize the Punjabi Food Seva for their increased effort during the COVID pandemic. Their volunteers have helped hand out free food to the elderly, international students and all those in need in the region of Peel and west Toronto. Helping mobilize over 100 individuals and contributing to the cause, they have helped provide healthy and nutritious food services to seniors, those who are quarantined and newcomers to Canada. I'd like to thank the founder, Jagraj Sighu, for their words: "We don't give away food; we serve it with love, compassion and all the kindness." Mr. Speaker, that is Ontario's spirit.

The health and safety of Ontarians is paramount, and when we have a public health crisis, it is the health of all of our 14.5 million residents that comes first. By extending the state of emergency, we're protecting not only the needy section of our population but also those on the front lines who are fighting this epidemic with us. They need the support and help of all of us to continue to do their job and to continue to keep us safe. Our doctors, nurses, paramedics, lab technicians, personal support workers, radiologists, grocery workers, delivery drivers, construction workers and so many more dedicated individuals have risked their lives for the last so many months for us. What they do goes above and beyond just doing the job. They are both warriors and heroes.

In a democracy, our rights as citizens are balanced by our responsibility. Extending the state of emergency temporarily curtails some of our rights because we all have a responsibility to keep each other safe. Staying at home as much as possible has proven to be a simple but effective measure in this current crisis, and we have a responsibility to do our part so that we can all go back to our routines as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

1520

Some of the organizations that are actually helping us to do that—another one is the Yogi Divine Society, which is a non-registered charity who have stepped up to the call during this coronavirus pandemic. They are providing essential grocery kits to the needy, international students and families during the pandemic. Since the onset of COVID-19, they have helped distribute over 1,000 essential grocery kits. With the help of their volunteers, they have been able to prepare and deliver all of those kits while strictly maintaining the health, hygiene and safety protocols. I want to thank them for their resources and for carrying out such a noble cause.

The Muslim Youth Association of Canada has been of great support with their Neighbourhood Helper campaign. They have helped process requests from people who are self-isolating and have provided them with food and protective gear. Their recent initiative for blood donation is incredible, by which the association has been encouraging their youth who are healthy and able to donate blood to fill this void. It is inspiring to see how this group of youngsters have managed to make such an impact in the riding of Mississauga–Malton.

GlobalMedic is another charity that is led by first responders, including police officers, paramedics and firefighters. Their team has delivered over 35,000 kilograms of food to food banks and shelters and, additionally, partnered with Feed the Six to deliver an additional 30,000 kilograms of food for families in need. They have distributed over 30,000 hygiene kits, 50,000 bars of soap and 10,000 litres of hand sanitizer. I want to thank the founder, Rahul Singh, the entire GlobalMedic team and their volunteers for their contribution during this tough time, and the whole family of my good friend Arpan Khanna for their hard work in packaging this food.

The Canada India Foundation is another organization who have stepped up during this pandemic. Thanks for your support in driving awareness for safety during this pandemic and all the work to aid those in need. The foundation has helped front-line workers at hospitals by providing gloves, N95 masks and face shields, and food to thank them. CIF has been able to deliver over 12,000 meals for the front-line workers. I want to thank them for all the truly admirable work that they have done during this tough time.

The Mississauga Kerala Association continues to actively support the needy and has produced over 1,500 masks. Those 1,500 reusable masks were distributed to those in need. MKA also hosted various virtual initiatives to help people navigate through the lockdown period successfully. I want to thank MKA for coming up with such creative solutions and for their continuous help and support in the community.

Mr. Speaker, these things are very important as we progress through the tough times. Our government has put in place many measures to ease the burden of staying at home. From mental health hotlines to a fixed electricity rate, from many online resources for our students to tax breaks for businesses and job protection for our workers, the government understands the impact that staying at home has on everyone and is doing its best to support those who are doing the right thing.

Extending the state of emergency does not mean that planning for reopening the province is not being done. We are already in phase 2 of our reopening for most parts of the province. Over the last week, more workplaces and more retail stores have reopened, following the public health guidelines. More parks and public spaces have also reopened. This cautious approach is the need of the hour, as we want to avoid an increase in cases as we go further.

As we begin to open, we are also focused on economic recovery. We have set up Ontario's jobs and recovery

committee, which is meeting with members of all critical sectors to understand their issues and find ways to aid them. We're leaving no stone unturned to make sure that this great province, which is the economic engine of Canada, is ready to rev up when the time comes, and the time is coming up soon, Mr. Speaker.

In my riding of Mississauga–Malton, we had many virtual consultations with small business owners, faith leaders, parents, students, residents, hospital leadership and industry associations. I am constantly listening and so is this government. We hear the fear and we hear the frustration. We're doing everything in our power to create policies that are mindful of the current situation and the long, hard road that lies ahead.

These past few months have been tough, but through it all, all these have been a shining beacon of hope, and that is something the Premier calls "Ontario spirit." It has remained undimmed and undefeated, and we've seen that through the organizations that I spoke about. We have seen companies step up, retool and innovate in answering the call for critical equipment needed for the front lines. We have seen organizations and individuals donate not just cash but also PPE, food and other supplies. School boards across Ontario collected and donated their inventory of masks and their personal protective equipment. The Peel District School Board donated 860 N95 masks and 61,000 pairs of gloves.

I have been so moved to see retired nurses and doctors and other health professionals come back to work. Restaurants that have been closed to customers due to the provincial order have continued to keep their kitchens open to feed essential workers. Grocery store workers have worked tirelessly restocking shelves and creating a safe place for the people to shop and come.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to take a moment to recognize the co-operation from all political parties and between all levels of the government. Yes, we have had and will continue to have differences, but our commitment to beating this virus has been single-minded. I want to take a moment to highlight the work done by our public servants, ministry staff, constituency staff and all those who work with every level of government. We have seen the efficient and effective rollout of massive new programs, and there are thousands of people who have worked non-stop behind the scenes to make that happen.

It is often said that many are called, but few are chosen. Today, we have all been called, but we all have been chosen, and we all have stepped up. That is why I'm unafraid to ask my fellow Ontarians to understand and accept an extended state of emergency. This province and its people are more than capable of this challenge. I am looking forward to the whole of members here supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I will be splitting my time with the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to conduct my condolences to the families of Ontarians who

lost their lives because of COVID-19 and also commend all the residents of Ontario for complying, for their patience to our closure, to the changes we are imposing every day to protect them, and for staying home to be safe and for the safety of their families.

As such, it is an honour to be here in the House and to debate this legislation to extend the emergency declaration to protect furthermore our Ontario residents. This is going to be the third time our government basically told this Legislature to approve an extension—this third extension. It is a significant trust from the people of Ontario and a big responsibility for our government to get such an honour—to be having this responsibility. Madam Speaker, our government is taking this very, very responsibly. This is not a small responsibility, and our government is doing their best to make sure we are up to this trust from Ontarians.

1530

I also would like to take a moment to thank our medical staff front-liners—doctors, pharmacists, nurses, PSWs, hospital staff—all our front-line and essential service workers, our supply chain, who work day and night to make sure that no one from Ontario feels any shortage in supply on the different levels.

I would also like, when I get into the House and speak, to thank my constituents in Erin Mills who have been in constant communication with us to help us receive their feedback about what's going on. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our government and our Premier, who have been listening on multiple occasions to the people of Mississauga, to the people of Mississauga–Erin Mills, small businesses who have been suffering, and workers who have been thinking that nobody recognizes their efforts. I think our government did a great job in recognizing every effort and trying as much as we can to accommodate everybody.

When we start debating this piece of legislation, we would like to speak about the big sacrifices and the big decisions our government took with the current declaration of emergency to protect our residents, our Ontario people, the 14-million-plus Ontarians who have been taking the hit economically, mentally and emotionally. Their families have been suffering because of what we are trying to do to protect their health. And we are not yet done. We are still about to get out of COVID-19.

We are asking to extend the declaration for our government to have the flexibility to start looking into how we are going to open the economy, how we are going to gain back the businesses and get everything back to its norm—or new norm—after COVID. It is essential for our government to be able, slowly but surely, taking every action needed, to open with the advice of our chief medical officer. We are taking all the measures to start opening the economy while we are watching what's going on around us, so that we don't lose what we really sacrificed for. We took the hit to be able to protect the health of Ontarians, and any hiccup now could cause us to lose that, so we are trying as much to slowly open but, at the same time, protect the gains we got.

The declaration is an important tool to our provincial response to the public health crisis. It's an extraordinary measure we take in crisis situations like the epidemic we now have in hand. It's not something we would be entertaining every other day. Extraordinary circumstances need an extraordinary tool to be able to quickly move on and take hard decisions sometimes.

Before the declaration started, and after it ends, we have to continue consulting with our medical and health experts and other professional advice to make sure that whatever and whenever needed, we take the right measures for the protection of the people of Ontario.

Every day, more businesses are opening and more activities are allowed. In my constituency in Mississauga—Erin Mills in Peel, I'm very glad to hear and to witness that we are moving to stage 2 as of tomorrow, or 12 tonight. This is a huge step forward for Peel and for the people of Mississauga to return to their normal life, to return to their normal activities.

We hear the suffering of the business. We need to start giving them the chance to go back to reopen the businesses so that they can survive. While many of us were able to stay home and avoid non-essential travel, lots of front-line heroes like the police forces, the armed forces and other first responders have been on the front line to help Ontarians who have been having health challenges.

Ontario is on a strong path to go back. Since we declared on March 17, we took many steps to protect Ontarians and declared this emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, on the advice of the Ontario chief medical officer. We're still going to try to extend that under the same advice, the advice of the chief medical officer. As the Premier said, the situation is changing day by day, hour by hour, and it needs our full attention. We are not yet out of this challenge. We are still in the danger of that. We don't want to lose our gains. We're still in the battle.

Since the declaration the first time on the March 17, our government has been carefully and deliberately enacting emergency orders. With those emergency orders, we acted on the guidance of the public health experts and on the evidence that continues to be gathered day by day. I also commend the co-operation of the opposition in this. We are all in the same challenge. We are all in the same danger. We really needed to work together, and I hope we continue working together to further push the cause. The cause is to protect all Ontarians.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, our economy was growing. We had been seeing job creation in outstanding numbers, and the unemployment rate had been at the lowest level since the late 1980s—many decades. We can get those days back very fast. All we need is to work a bit longer to help steer up in the right path and make sure that the journey is safe ahead. The declaration of emergency has given us needed space to press forward.

We are taking a balanced approach as we consider every step, recognizing that our government always will put Ontario first. Our priority is to protect what matters most, and what matters most for us is the health and

protection of Ontarians. Every business, profession, and sector has its own characteristics. We need to work with each group, with each sector to make sure that they are comfortable going back to business.

Speaker, throughout the worst days of COVID, the resilience and compassion of Ontarians have shown through. So many people reached out to help the most vulnerable among us during this difficult time—the Ontario spirit, Madam Speaker; the Ontario spirit. This is the first time we've come across this big of a crisis, but Ontarians got together and crossed it. We crossed the worst, but the crisis continues to bring out the best of the people of Ontario—the real strength of our Canadian values.

1540

Ontario is gradually returning to normal—not the standard normal but a new normal. We have a new normal. We will never be the same. Our way of thinking, our way of behaviour, our priorities have changed. We became much more stronger. We became more alert to challenges. All Ontarians changed. COVID brought out the best in all of us. Every Ontarian now understands the importance of the family to us, the importance of family support to each one of us. This means that some of the emergency orders that have guided us through COVID-19 and the first steps of reopening the province will have to remain in place. We need this piece of legislation to continue further pushing our step-by-step approach.

A continuous state of emergency is neither sustainable nor necessary if we are not in such a situation. That's why we are taking the time necessary to carefully review every emergency order to determine the best next steps should the declaration of emergency end after July 15.

Madam Speaker, I'm very delighted and I'm very supportive of the extension. I wish that we all support that for the safety of our Ontario and the safety of our families. We need to be together in this.

I really appreciate your time, and I would like to give the rest of my time to the MPP from—

Interjection: Hastings.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Hastings.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm just seeking clarification. Indeed, the member is sharing their time, correct?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Yes, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Okay. I recognize the member from Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I guess we'll do a quick little collage of thoughts here. Obviously, I'm honoured to be able to speak on this issue today: to further extend the declaration of emergency first declared on March 17, going back, in response to the deadly COVID-19 epidemic.

People say, "What is an emergency?" The definition of emergency is, of course, "a sudden unforeseen crisis (usually involving danger) that requires immediate" attention and action. That's exactly what we have done, Madam Speaker.

This declaration, of course, is certainly no paper tiger. It has given real powers to government to do the best for the people under circumstances not one of us in here ever contemplated or even gave a consideration.

But really take a look at what this does. The Ontario government took COVID-19 seriously right from the start. They set up a command table that also included Dr. David Williams, and later further expanded it again at the end of March. This command table advises the Premier each and every way, each and every step.

This government, of course, has used this advice from health experts and analysis. For example, on March 17 a broad closure was taken, then revoked on June 12. Limitations were put in on the size of gatherings, from five, then, on the advice of the command table, doubled to 10. We all know that the staged reopening has been implemented in full consultation with the command table. Might I suggest, Madam Speaker, that this motion simply seeks to extend that by another 15 days.

This careful approach has followed the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act that states three particular things that are extremely important:

(1) All actions must be evaluated to limit their intrusiveness—fully understandable;

(2) It should only apply to the areas where necessary, hence the opportunity to account for regional differences; and

(3) It will only be in effect for as long as it is necessary.

That's why we're here today. We didn't throw in a six-month timeline or limitation because, thanks to the good work of the citizens of Ontario, we're making headway. We certainly have not won this war yet, but the collective efforts of everybody are certainly having a positive impact, because success doesn't come merely from words but from actions.

I would just like to pay tribute to all of health care professionals. I know that in my riding, in my area, Dr. Kieran Moore and his team in Kingston-Frontenac, Lennox and Addington have been heralded for their work.

As of this morning, I am advised there have been no COVID-19 cases amongst patients in the 27 retirement and long-term-care facilities—unbelievable. And in Hasting-Prince Edward, with our five hospitals there, literally next to nothing as well. So, this isn't just an accident, Madam Speaker. It's a collective work by so many people who have given so much of their time and effort and are following the instructions of not only the health care professionals but the command table and certainly this government.

Of course, what this really is is just tools in the tool box. We still could not have this—we could call the Legislature back at any given moment to debate and pass each and every action that we have to do. But quite frankly, under the demands and the expectations of the Canadian public to battle COVID, that has not been the case. That's why this is passed: to give the government the capacity to be able to deal effectively while still being held accountable to this Legislature.

I can say it's a wonderful opportunity to move forward, but I've been blessed as well. I have 19 municipalities in my riding. You talk about a team approach. I've had conversations with each and every mayor and council, advising them that we needed them to be part of the solution. Madam Speaker, I can say that they have taken this challenge up, and not only, I suppose, met expectations; in most of our cases, as we can see from what has happened in our particular area that I represent, they've exceeded expectations. It is because of that that we are able to move to stage 2, and hopefully to stage 3, right now.

Our businesses are starting to reopen. Even the tourism sector is starting to recover slightly. But let us certainly not rest on these laurels. That's not the case across this entire province. There are areas where it's still extremely dangerous. We need to be vigilant. Might I suggest that at this time, while we're thankful in certain areas to be able to move forward—blessed to be able to do so—the reality is that that menace is still out there. Until we overcome that by working collectively, in a manner that I think is responsible—and with the support of both sides of this House, I think we're going to outcome this and prosper. Thank you to each and every one of you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Markham-Thornhill. For those who have just joined the Legislative Assembly now, we're debating the amendment to a government notice of motion to do with the extension of the state of emergency.

Three months ago, Speaker, the government made the difficult but necessary decision to enact a provincial declaration of emergency in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, closing down non-essential businesses and limiting organized public events and social gatherings. Speaker, it marked the beginning of one of the darkest periods in our province's history.

The government, joined by thousands of front-line health care workers, volunteers, businesses and the 14.5 million people who call this province home, rallied immediately to stop the spread of COVID-19. The collective call to action was inspiring, but as we all know, it has been a long and difficult road. We're still travelling that road today.

Having said that, I'm proud and grateful for how everyone from every corner of the province, including the great region that we represent together, the region of Durham, has gone above and beyond in the face of this global crisis. However, since the first sign of the outbreak we've been laser-focused, absolutely laser-focused, on supporting our front-line workers and building the capacity that our health care system needed to respond to this threat.

1550

Speaker, within weeks we built a network of over 30 laboratories to ramp up our testing capacity, starting at about 3,000 per day in March, reaching over 20,000 a day in recent weeks, and we exceeded 20,000 this past

weekend, in fact. Now, thanks to our partnership with Spark Ontario, over 4,300 volunteers have signed up to help people affected by COVID-19. Thousands of volunteers, including retired nurses and medical students, put up their hand to manage the phone lines at Telehealth Ontario and assist with case management and contact tracing. And we still need that help. You know that, Speaker, and I know that other members of the Legislative Assembly know that as well.

Through Ontario's Health Workforce Matching Portal, over 24,000 volunteers have asked to be matched with organizations in need of help—and many have. And because of that, Speaker, I want to thank each and every person for their collective efforts during this unprecedented time—but it's not over. The extension that we're discussing this afternoon is for another two weeks. It takes us towards the end of July.

As we gradually reopen our economy, we will continue to support Ontario families and businesses so that they can get back on their feet quickly and get back to work safely. These are the challenges that define the problems going forward. The government motion and the proposed extension would be in effect until the end of July, as I just stated, to ensure that the government, as you would expect, Speaker, and as other legislators in this assembly would expect, and most importantly as the people who we have the privilege of representing expect, continues to have the necessary tools to safely and gradually reopen the province while continuing to support the front-line health care workers and protect vulnerable populations from COVID-19.

Extending the emergency orders gives our front-line health care providers the necessary flexibility to rapidly respond to urgent needs and protect our most vulnerable. I've heard that in the riding I represent, in Whitby, and I'm sure you have in the adjoining municipality of Oshawa. Going forward, even though we've seen decreasing infection rates with increased testing levels, which is good, we can't let our guard down just yet. I don't think we can. I look at the test results in the region of Durham and I look at the results in other parts of the province, and it's clear to me. It's very clear to me that we have more work to do.

We need to keep these emergency measures in place to support our front-line heroes. And, yes, they are heroes. We must all continue following the public health advice, the great public health advice that we've received from our Chief Medical Officer of Health, all the professionals at the command table, and also, in our case, Robert Kyle, the Chief Medical Officer of Health in the region of Durham and his great staff and all the work that they've done to support us over the last three months, so we can reopen more of the province safely and gradually.

But, Speaker, while we continue our fight against COVID-19, we also need to be in a position to take any and all action to continue to fight the virus. That's why the declaration of emergency must remain in place. Doing so will allow us to continue to quickly implement and enforce orders that are in the public interest, and that's the core of what we're doing; isn't it? This is what underpins what

we're doing in supporting residents across Ontario. We must continue to take all steps necessary to protect our families and our communities.

This past weekend, I was with my wife and my children. We just talked about this proposal coming forward and the effect it would have, even though the cases are going down. It reminded me of one of the real requisites of elected officials, and you'll know this and others will know this. As elected officials, our first priority is to keep people safe from harm's way. That's what defines us. That's what we consider in our public service as MPPs. It's about keeping people safe from harm's way. I want to assure everyone listening that our government will continue to do everything within our power to protect you and your families.

Extending the state of emergency will allow us to do just that. With the state of emergency remaining in place, our government can take quick action, should the need arise, to protect the health and well-being of the people of Ontario. We know that the measures put in place affect people in different ways, but they're so terribly important to stop COVID-19 once and for all.

I wanted to transition a bit, Speaker, to the work of the Legislative Assembly. Sometimes people think that the work is not continuing, but we know that it is. We're going to continue to sit Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in July. Standing committees are meeting virtually.

I was sitting in on one standing committee, Speaker, dealing with Bill 175, on home and community care. Earlier today, we heard some discussion about what's important to people whom we have the privilege of representing. In my riding, what's important to people is what health care and supports are in place to support them and their family at this time. Bill 175, in the debate which took place in the standing committee—the robust discussions, both from the opposition as well as government members and the deputations—I think informed the process in bringing forward a bill which is really going to be instrumental in supporting people across Ontario in accessing the home care and community care they deserve, in the right place, at the right time in their municipalities.

I've got 17 seconds left, so I'm just going to close up.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Mr. Lorne Coe: MPP Gates is always such a strong supporter, Speaker.

I want to sum up this way. The Premier stated recently—and I think it's a quote. I'm going to be quick with it: "When the history books are written, it will be said that the people of this great, great province never surrendered to the virus. They didn't quit when the going got tough." That's reflective of the type of people in the province of Ontario. It's reflective of why we need this extension to keep them and their families safe.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague the MPP from Whitby for sharing the time with me to talk about this important emergency bill in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, last week marked three months since enacting the province's declaration of emergency to protect Ontarians and help stop the spread of COVID-19. I believe our government made the right decision. In those three months, we have made incredible progress on expanding our health care capacity, delivering essential personal protective equipment to our front-line health care workers and taking whatever necessary action to protect our seniors and our most vulnerable citizens. Thousands of Ontarians stepped up to the plate during this difficult time to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

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Another thing I have to say is that my hat is off to the front-line medical practitioners. My wife is a front-line medical doctor, and every time she leaves the door, we are concerned. Thank you, thousands and thousands of medical professionals. They are risking their lives to save other people's lives right now. We have to thank them.

I had a small business round table a couple of weeks ago, Madam Speaker, and we heard their cry. They are bleeding. They are challenged and they have concerns. Thank you to the Minister of Finance for joining the Zoom meeting to find out exactly what is happening, not only in my riding of Markham but in Ontario. We have to thank small business people for their courage and their resilience in fighting against COVID-19. I know we are fighting on many fronts, Madam Speaker. There is the economic front, the social front and also the psychological front, as well.

It is thanks to the actions taken by regular, everyday Ontarians and the actions taken by our government that we are now proceeding with reopening the province. It's a good news story for York region, as well, and my riding of Markham-Thornhill, too. Just yesterday, our government announced that it is allowing more businesses and services to open by moving Toronto and Peel region into stage 2. As Toronto and Peel region join the other provincial regions that have already moved into stage 2, we know that people are eager to see life get back to normal. It's not normal, but the new normal, Madam Speaker.

Since issuing the emergency orders, our government has provided over \$17 billion in new funding to support Ontarians during this difficult time: \$3.3 billion to support health care; \$3.7 billion to support working families; and over \$10 billion to support people in small businesses.

We have worked extensively with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other experts to develop workplace safety as we start to reopen to ensure that stage 2 is a success for employees, customers and the general public. We have significantly improved our testing numbers and revamped our strategy to trace, isolate and contain the spread of COVID-19.

As we approach September, we have provided school boards, parents and students with a comprehensive safety plan to ensure the return of classes for the 2020-21 school year this year. Moreover, Madam Speaker, we are taking

extensive action to reform our long-term-care system and ensure a better standard of care for Ontario's elderly. These are just a fraction of the actions our government has taken to help Ontarians and help this province reopen for business.

While the support our government has delivered has eased the burden of COVID-19, we understand that it has not been easy for everyone. It has not been easy for business owners or for workers. Thousands of Ontarians are out of work and struggling to make ends meet. We understand that people are worried about the future. We came together as a community and held off the worst of this disease. But as we look to our economic recovery, we know we still have a long road ahead of us.

In my riding of Markham-Thornhill, I hear from my constituents every day about the struggles they face financially. They tell me that even with the extensive supports they have been provided with by our government and our federal partners, the road ahead is very uncertain. This is true, as we have all heard from the restaurant owners, salons, barbershops, bars and so on.

Despite the challenges we face over the coming months as a province, we know we are not yet over COVID-19. We have not fully beaten this disease. We are still living in a pre-vaccine era, Madam Speaker. And as we have heard from the public health experts and we have seen what is happening around the world, the threat of a second outbreak is very much a possibility. Madam Speaker, we can't allow that to happen. We cannot allow a second outbreak to undo the incredible progress we have made as a government and as a province. I believe it is necessary to keep this emergency order in place to ensure that our government continues to have the necessary tools to safely and gradually reopen the province while continuing to support front-line health care workers and protect vulnerable people from COVID-19.

Madam Speaker, Ontarians have shown their willingness to follow public health guidelines, and our business owners have equally shown that they are willing to follow and implement workplace safety guidelines. It's a challenge even with all safety guidelines, as they have to get the trust and faith of the old employees and make sure the workplace is safe for all Ontarians.

Ontarians accept that we are just not in the clear yet. I believe by extending this emergency order, we'll ensure that as we continue to reopen the province and get back to business, we'll have the tools to continue to protect Ontarians, the well-being of the most vulnerable and to do everything possible to prevent a second outbreak. That's why I'm voting to extend the state of emergency. I know our government did a great job, not only for Ontario compared to other provinces. Our record speaks for itself. This is a wonderful news story, even though we're living in a difficult time and a challenging time. We had to cross too many rivers and eventually come to COVID-19.

We are living in a new, different world. It's a whole new world. Still, we haven't found a vaccine yet. We are still living in a pre-vaccine era, and we have to face a lot of challenges. I have spoken to, almost every day, medical professional colleagues, from PSWs to all the specialists.

They're trying to get the proper PPE and make sure their workplace is safe, and that they put the proper protocols and procedures in place in order to serve the patients. Also, they told me that they are willing to take care of Ontarians and are ready to put their lives to save other people's lives.

That's why I'm supporting this emergency.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair.

Before I talk about the motion on the floor, I just want to wish everybody happy Pride. Yesterday, I had the honour—and I was very proud to stand with members of all parties to raise the flag outside of the Legislature. I understand that it is the first one that has been raised since the pandemic. It was very important for us to stand together to reflect on the progress that we have made to recognize and protect the rights of all LGBTQ2S+ communities and the work that still needs to be done. I just want to thank everyone in the past who has fought so that yesterday we could stand and show our support, listen, be educated, and celebrate the freedom just to be yourself.

It's an honour to be here in the House to join the debate on the proposed extension of the provincial declaration of emergency. This is the third time that our government has sought legislative approval to extend the provincial declaration of emergency. It is a significant trust and responsibility that the Legislature and, indeed, all Ontarians place in this government. We do not take that responsibility lightly.

The declaration is an important tool in our provincial response to this public health crisis, but it is just one tool. Before the declaration started and after it ends, we will continue to consult with medical and health experts and others, and will act wherever and whenever necessary to protect the people of Ontario from COVID-19.

Every day, Ontario is reopening. We've seen marinas opening, golf courses, shops, patios and daycares. In my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, we'll be moving there on Wednesday. We couldn't be any more excited.

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On March 17, our government took an essential step to protect Ontarians by declaring a provincial emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act. That was on the advice of the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health. We took this extraordinary measure because we needed to offer our full support and every power necessary to help front-line workers in health care and other critical sectors to contain the spread of COVID-19.

A provincial declaration of emergency has supported our government's rapid response to the COVID-19 crisis, as new fronts in the battle against this virus emerged. As time goes on, Ontario has made significant strides in the fight against COVID-19. We've launched a testing strategy that sees impressive results, with regularly over 20,000 tests being performed every day.

As the members know, the Legislature can extend a declaration of emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act for a period of no more

than 28 days. The current declaration of emergency would terminate on June 30, if not extended. The government is now asking the Legislature to consider extending the declaration of emergency to July 15, a two-week extension.

Speaker, we have come a long way over the past several months. Following our government's road map for reopening Ontario, businesses are getting back in gear, people are reuniting with their loved ones in nursing care homes and communities across the province. You can see them springing back to life.

When we opened our circles to 10, it was the first time I had my mother over. She lives alone in a very small apartment in downtown Toronto. It was a really great day to have her over at my house, just sitting in the backyard. We had forgotten all the things we think of as normal life. I know she's watching, because she watches this program diligently. So hi, Marlene. It was really nice to have her and extend my circle, so she could have some people to be with. That's what's so important with looking after our mental health. I thank the Premier and the Minister of Health for ensuring that we can open that up to our families.

We talk about getting back to how life was normal—or the new normal. But you know what? We're not there yet. That's why the declaration of emergency needs to remain in place: so that we can continue to move forward in a safe and measured manner that doesn't put our hard-earned gains in peril. We cannot risk undoing what Ontarians have achieved together through personal sacrifice and looking out for each other's health and well-being. We must also remember that there are so many Ontarians who have lost their lives due to COVID-19, and there are so many that are still grieving. We have seen so much progress. But we cannot let that happen again; we don't want to go backwards. That's why we must still remain cautious.

We can't look away from the pain that COVID-19 has inflicted on the lives of the people of Ontario, but our government can and will continue to take actions to ease the impact of this global pandemic. This is the responsible way of managing the crisis that has set the stage of what's to come.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak hit, our economy was growing. Job creation was outpacing the rest of the country, and unemployment was at the lowest level since the late 1980s. A return to those days is within our grasp, but we must keep the declaration of emergency in place a bit longer to help us steer on the right path for the journey ahead. The declaration of emergency has given us the needed space to press forward.

Speaker, even though the darkest days of COVID-19 are still around, the resilience and compassion of Ontario has shone through. We call it the #OntarioSpirit. So many people, so many in our communities, have reached out to help the most vulnerable amongst us during this difficult time. They ensured that nurses and medical staff and other public safety personnel working around the clock had meals and groceries when they needed them. They volunteered, they joined organizations and provided critical service to people in our community.

I would like to share a couple of people in my area and I'd like to thank them for their service. I'd like to thank our grocery store workers. I'd like to thank the people at the Ontario Food Terminal, who continue to go to work every day—the truck drivers, the people who work in the facility; our first responders, our faith leaders who I've been on and off the phone with throughout this pandemic because they want to be there for their congregations and were unable to. We're so pleased when they were able to even reach out through a drive-in service just to give people that sense of safety and security and hope in a desperate time. People from our Stonegate health group, our community LAMP association, Haven on the Q—we also call it Haven on the Queensway—community groups that have just been there to pick up litter when there's garbage on the ground.

I know that the member from Barrie–Innisfil missed her first litter day in Ontario. I just want to share: When you're walking in parks—we all tend to do a little bit more walking these days; my dog Bruce gets a little bit longer walks—you see the litter along the ground. We bring our gloves and we pick it up along the way. I also want to thank the people up in Humber Bay Shores and Marie Curtis Park. They tend to post a lot of photos of the work they're doing. They gather in groups—socially distant—with their garbage bags, protective gloves, and they clean up those parks. I want to thank them for the work they do and to tell anyone who is littering in Etobicoke–Lakeshore that they're watching.

I want to thank people like my neighbour, Jeanette, whom I mentioned this morning. Every day, she is out at 7:30 ringing her pots and pans and making sure we get out of our houses. It is something that has become a point of pride in our neighbourhood, just going out there at 7:30 with pots and pans. When I had my mother over last week, I brought her outside and she rang her pots and pans with us. She thought it was such great community spirit. Sometimes in COVID, in the worst of times, it brings out the best in people.

I want to thank the parents who are working from home, looking after their children. They're calming nerves, they're making dinner, trying to run a small business—trying to save a small business. They're educators; they're trying to figure out how to do this online learning with their children. They become entertainers. In a trying time, they're just trying to bring some normalcy to their home life. So I thank all the parents out there who are working hard.

And the children. Sometimes we forget about our little ones. I know that one of my colleagues had mentioned earlier that you see the chalk drawings of rainbows on the sidewalk, and it really is inspirational. You see some little rocks that are painted with little signs of “hope” and “faith.” I want to thank them all, because that brings us a little bit of hope when we walk down the street and we see those little bits of something normal, something different. It's great to see. So I thank all the little ones out there who are doing that and trying their best during a trying time.

Interjection.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: For the kids.

Now, I always like to talk about my nephew, Max, who is nine. He obviously missed school like everybody else. He said to me, “Chris, I'm bored of COVID.” It was such a solid statement, because what do you do when you're nine and you're stuck at home?

We FaceTime a lot. He normally changes his face to a pizza or whatever it is on FaceTime; I'm still learning the gadgets. But I feel bad for this kid. He doesn't have any siblings, so he doesn't have anyone to play with. We forget about that. If you go back to being seven, eight, and nine, what was the most important thing? A birthday party. For all those kids out there who missed their birthday, happy birthday. I know that next year you'll have a great celebration. Maybe once we all get together again, you'll have that party with your friends.

It is really hard on kids. They're missing the fun things in life that we were all able to celebrate. I'm okay if I miss my birthday; that's really okay. But for kids, it's such an important event.

Yesterday, I toured one of our high schools, Bishop Allen on Royal York, and spent about an hour with their principal and one of the vice-principals, Lisa and Mike. They showed me the school and we dressed up in protective gear when we went in. There were the children—I guess they're not children; they're high school students, so young adults—coming in to clean out their lockers.

I just want to thank all those teachers out there who are providing that support to our young adults, because it is that time. You know, they're missing so much.

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Thank you to Lisa and Mike for your time yesterday. All the kids who are missing grad—they had prepared little baskets so they can have their cap and gown, so if they wanted to take some photos with their family at home, they are able to do so. But being that support for those young people in a time of need—I think it is so important for everybody's mental health that we provide that. I know that they've gone that extra mile for their students, because they also miss those milestones. They miss that prom. They miss the high school graduation.

I just remember when high school was such a big deal: to go and get my dress, and to figure out who were going to be our dates, and all of those things that high school students do that they've missed out on this year. We call them rites of passage. To all those grads out there, happy graduation. I know that Bishop Allen is going to do their graduation in October. I know that some have done them online. But happy graduation to all of those graduates out there.

Applause.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Madam Speaker, as Ontario gradually returns to a new normal—yes, I would say a new normal—and more people are returning to work, we are starting to look at our summer plans and going back to what we thought we may do. We just hope that people will stay cautious, continue to practise social distancing, wear a mask when they can and just remember that we're not out of the woods yet, because we certainly don't want to turn back. We've gone too far.

We want to continue to be diligent, and we want to stop the spread, because we are worried about the risk of a second wave. As Toronto and my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore open this Wednesday, I also want to encourage everybody to shop local. I want you to look at your local businesses and see where you can go and sit on a patio—I can't wait to sit on a patio. Your nail shops or your hair salon—I don't know what my hairdresser is going to do. I don't think my hair has been this long since university. We will all probably need a little bit more time at our hairdressers than we did before. But you know, try to support our local businesses.

Maybe when you're planning an outing this summer, think of a staycation. Stay at home and see the great things that Ontario has to offer, because we have such a beautiful province and things to do: provincial parks, campgrounds, if that's something you like. And hopefully, we'll get some of our places of entertainment opened again so we can all enjoy our summer.

Interjections: Staycation. Staycation.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Staycation; that's right.

As I walk my dog down the road—I live close to the Queensway, so I've already seen some of our patios starting to get ready. I know that Bruno at Mamma Martino's; his patio is looking ready for patrons to sit on it. I know that Dino at Dino's Pizza will be waiting for you to come. And Tom's ice cream—well, there's always a lineup there, so you'll just have to wait a little longer when people feel a little bit more confident to go out.

But again, when you are going out there shopping, I just want to encourage everyone to make sure—it is hot out there. I'll just do a reminder: Don't take your animals with you shopping. Don't leave them in your cars. It's hot. I always like to do a good-deed animal message, so I'm just asking everybody to make sure that if you are going shopping, make sure you leave your pets at home with lots of water so they can remain hydrated.

Madam Speaker, it has been an interesting couple of months. We have all learned a lot about ourselves. We have certainly learned more about our community, and we've certainly learned a lot about our community spirit. We're not out of the woods yet; we still have lots of work to do, but I am very confident. I'm very excited that we are going to see an even better community spirit and a better Ontario once we get through this, through the work of my colleagues, the cabinet colleagues and our Premier, who have been outstanding through all of these challenging times. They are so open to discussion and conversation, so they hear from each one of us what we're hearing from our ridings and what's happening with the people in our communities.

We're all in this together, all of us in this House, so I thank everybody: the workers who come here every day to work, my colleagues who are sharing their concerns and are there if I ever need an ear that will listen—because we all pick up the phone and we listen to these conversations of people who are stressed. They're in crisis, and how do we help them? That's really what we do, and that's why we ran for government. We ran to help people in our

communities. That is what's so important. So I thank all my colleagues for being there for me and for each other throughout this trying time.

Madam Speaker, just to conclude, I just want to say that I am going to be supporting this motion because extending the declaration will mean the work can continue to take recovery to the next level and to prepare for the post-COVID work that's on the horizon. Once again, we're not out of the woods yet. There's still work to do.

I thank everybody for this opportunity to join the debate today. I'm going to pass it over—should I pass it over to you? Can I pass it over? All right.

Interjection: You don't need to.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I don't need to. Okay. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I appreciate hearing the remarks of folks. As I hear folks refer to the motion that they think they're speaking to, a reminder: We are indeed speaking to the amendment to the motion, so if all members will keep that in mind as they craft their remarks. Thank you.

Further debate? I recognize the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Interjections.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you Madame Speaker. You can also refer to it as God's country, if you'd like. That's acceptable in my riding as well.

We're talking about the amendment to the motion today. The heart of the motion is about extending the state of emergency. I've listened to a number of different people talk about it today. I've heard a lot of different conversations on it, and as part of the speech I'd like to take a slightly different approach to it.

We are in a state of emergency. There is no question about it. We're facing the most difficult medical emergency we've seen in a very, very, very long time. We're facing one of the most difficult economic emergencies that the entire world has seen for a very long time, and for a lot of people it has created a lot of stress. For a lot of people, they're struggling with how they are going to deal with this, and I'd like to give a different perspective on it.

I'm going to go back to the Second World War because I'm going to talk about somebody who lives in my riding and some of the things that he went through. His name is Murray Whetung, a great gentleman who is in his mid-nineties now but smart as a whip. He shares his story frequently about what it was like as an Indigenous person in the armed forces during the Second World War. He never talks about the struggles they faced. He never talks about the challenges they faced. He talks about the good times he had with the people he was with. He talks about some of the innovations that they came up with.

One of the things he's most proud of that he talks about all the time—every Remembrance Day he brings up this story: When the Germans were advancing on the Allied troops, there were a number of times where it was infantry that was there to fight against tanks. Now, one of the things he said that was really interesting about wit as, the

grenades they had could actually blow up part of the track and stop the tank, and if they threw it the right way, for some of those tanks it would land in the turret because they kept the top open, but if you got close enough to them to actually throw a grenade, you'd get shot.

The story he tells is the ingenuity of three of his First Nation friends and what they did. They took sticks about five and a half feet long, and they took soup cans and attached them to the end of it. Because they played lacrosse, they would put the grenade in the can and they could hurl it more than 100 yards, and because they were lacrosse players, they were accurate with it and they took out a number of tanks. He was so proud of that.

When you think about what was going on in World War II, the struggles that they were under, the challenges that they faced, all of those things, all of the hardship, that's not what he remembered. What he remembered were the good times. He remembered the camaraderie, the friends he made and the experiences that they shared, and how that would help shape his life as he moved forward in his life when he came back. That's what he talked about during that crisis, that emergency. It wasn't the bad times; it was the good things that came out of it.

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Another veteran friend of mine, Bob Ough, is very proud of his history. Bob lied to get into the air force. He got his helicopter licence at 15 and flew Bell helicopters in the Korean conflict. Bob actually served as one of the consultants for the TV series *M*A*S*H*, because he flew the medivac helicopters. When he talks about the Korean conflict, though, just like the movie *M*A*S*H*, he doesn't talk about the hardship that they faced. He talks about the camaraderie. He talks about the friends he made. He talks about the good times that they had, because that's the perspective that they have on it.

I'm going to share a personal anecdote, and I will try very hard not to tear up during it. But I can't guarantee it won't happen.

Interjection: It's already started.

Mr. Dave Smith: It's already started—that's right.

In 2001, when my daughter was four, she was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. She had 41 weeks of chemotherapy, 15 days of radiation and four surgeries. For five months, we didn't know if she was going to live. I remember all of the stresses from it.

I remember losing my job. I had four weeks' vacation. The company I worked for—actually, I only had two weeks, but I hadn't taken my vacation the year before. I had four weeks' worth of vacation, and when my daughter was diagnosed, I took all four weeks so that I could be at SickKids with her.

My wife worked at Trent University, and she took all of her vacation time. We were there, day in and day out. My youngest got sent to her grandparents because we were trying to isolate her from what was going on. We didn't know if my daughter was going to live. It was the most stressful thing I have ever been through.

After 11 months, after the treatment was over, the Make-A-Wish Foundation sent us to Disney World. We

were supposed to stay in a place called Give Kids the World, but it was full. The owner of Give Kids the World was also the president of the Holiday Inn corporation. Instead, they had us stay at the Holiday Inn and Suites. Every morning, the gift fairy showed up with gifts for all three of my kids—or all two of my kids at that time. We had passes to Disney World. We had passes to MGM. We had passes to Universal. They were treated like royalty.

By September, my daughters were conniving on what disease my second child could get so we could go back down to Disney World through Make-A-Wish, because they had so much fun doing it. Because it's not the stresses that we remember; it's the good times. It's the things that draw us together and that bring us together. It's those great memories that come out of crisis. That's what makes the difference for us.

That's what we will all remember from this. COVID-19 is not just a medical crisis. It's not just what we're doing here. Yes, we're doing all of these things to try and help people, to save lives. Every night, I go to bed and I wonder: Did we make the right decision? Have I saved more people by what we've done? Or have I destroyed more lives because of what has happened with our economy? I go to bed knowing that all of us, whether we're part of the government side or the opposition side or the independents, that we're all here for the same reason: because we want to do more. We want to have Ontario come out of this better.

One of the things I think all of us should take to heart: Twenty years from now, when we talk about this, we will talk about what we did here. We'll talk about some of the decisions that we made. We'll talk about the committee meetings and how we were brought together on it and how, sometimes, the partisan lines were dropped on it.

But let me give you a different perspective. Every person today under the age of about 12 is going to look at this very, very differently. In 20 years, when they're talking about this, they're going to talk about how they spent more time with family members. They're going to talk about how they had meals together that they didn't at other times. Yes, they will talk about how they weren't able to play sports. They're going to talk about how they weren't able to go to school, how they weren't able to do some of those other things, but they're going to talk about a lot of the good things. They're going to talk about Zoom, if Zoom still exists then, and how, "Wow, I got to see grandma and grandpa more," because we did it digitally, because they adapted and changed.

We've changed that whole process. It's no longer, for most people, about me; it's about us. What can we do together? How can we connect? What can we do to keep our community as a community? You're seeing it through-out all of our ridings. Every one of us can stand up and talk about something really good that happened in your riding because of COVID-19, about how an organization expanded and did something and helped more people.

My colleague talked about #OntarioSpirit. It has been a good thing. All of the different businesses that have morphed and changed to try and do things for Ontario—

but it's not just the businesses; it's also those community outreach groups. It's the changes that we've all made for our community. Yes, we have a state of emergency, and yes, it needs to be extended for another couple of weeks. And in a couple of weeks' time, we'll have to review it and possibly make another extension to it, because it gives tools for us in our tool box to make sure that we do what the people of Ontario need us to do. What they need us to do is to stand up and lead. They need us to stand up and demonstrate: This is what can be done.

All around Ontario, outside of our borders, COVID-19 is still a major thing. I was on a conference call this morning. We were talking with a number of different groups from northern Ontario. We've been talking repeatedly in SCOFEA, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, about how to open Ontario back up again for tourism. When can we have the borders open? How do we bring people back in? Should we be focusing on staycations? Should we be focusing on doing things locally? We need some of those international travellers to come back, though, and how do we do it?

We have roughly 30,000 people in Ontario, as of today, who have been infected with COVID-19. We have just over 2,000 people who have passed away as a result of COVID-19. Those are sobering numbers for anyone. But here's what scares me more: If you look at all of the States, just in the US states that border on Ontario, over the last seven days, they've had almost 15,000 infections. We're talking about 160, 190, and 211 over the last couple of days in Ontario. Some 15,000 people just south of us have been infected by COVID-19. If you're sitting at home thinking, "It's not a big deal. Why are we extending it?", some 15,000 people about an hour south of us have been infected with this disease, and 9,000 people in one day in Florida a week ago, because they didn't take those kinds of measures. More than 35,000 people in New York state have died of COVID-19. New York state has four million more people than we do. They didn't take the measures early enough, and they had massive infections. They overwhelmed their health care system. They didn't have enough ventilators. In New York city, they set up tents outside of the hospitals because they didn't have room left in their hospitals.

1640

We've had people who have come to us and said, "COVID-19 is a hoax. We don't need to do this. It's a power grab." Two hundred and eleven countries are dealing with COVID-19 right now. All 211 governments must have conspired together, as well as all the state and provincial governments, so that we could take this extraordinary measure across the entire world. COVID-19 is real and it is affecting people that we love.

But we have an opportunity to change how history will see COVID-19 in Ontario. We have an opportunity to set what history books will say, because we have the opportunity here to do something positive about the infection rate in this province—and we have been doing it. We have had less than 200 people infected on a daily basis, for the most part, for the last week and a half. We have entered

phase 2 in all but one region in Ontario, and we have done that because the people of Ontario have taken this disease, this virus, seriously. They've recognized that, in order for us to get through it, "It's about us. It's not about me. It's not about what I want. It's about what is good for all of us." It's about creating those memories that are going to be with us in 10, 15 or 20 years.

I really hope I have the opportunity in my mid-90s, like Murray Whetung, where I can sit back and I can talk about the cool things that people in Ontario did to help get us through. I can talk about how, at the beginning of March, we didn't have a single company in this province that made medical masks and how we have more than 40 of them now. I can talk about—and it pains me to say the city's name because I'm from Peterborough—but we can talk about Oshawa in a positive light. And we can say that something with the Generals—sorry, General Motors, who the Oshawa Generals hockey team is named after, by the way; that's why I said it. Although the factory closed, they took the initiative to retool and bring back some of their staff, and they're ramping up to produce a million masks a month. GM has never made surgical masks before, but they are doing it because they recognize it's the right thing to do for the people of Ontario, and they are stepping up to do it. I pains me to talk about Oshawa in a positive light that way; it really does. I'm sorry, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I—continue.

Mr. Dave Smith: We have others who have done it. Locally, from my own riding, Kawartha Ethanol produces up to 300,000 litres of ethanol a day, and they have revamped their system, they have changed their protocols now, and they are making almost 90,000 litres of sanitizer and disinfectant a day because they can. We have companies like Harco in Peterborough, which has changed their process and they're now making Health Canada-approved face shields.

These are all things that we didn't do in Ontario prior to COVID-19. But we are doing it because we recognize we need it. And it's not about making money; it's about doing the things you need to do so that we can get to the point where we can do the things we want to do.

We have restaurants that have stayed open just for delivery and take-out. They are very excited about going into phase 2, where they'll be able to open patios. We have people in the farm industries who have stepped up to make sure that our food supply is there and that things that we need in Ontario are readily available for us here in Ontario. Everybody has done their part. Everybody has stepped forward to try and make a positive difference.

What we're going to remember, when this is all said and done, are those positive things. We're going to remember making changes so that you can spend time with your family virtually because you weren't able to go see them at some point. We're going to remember having dinner with your family when you didn't normally do that because maybe you were rushing off to a hockey practice or to a soccer game or to dance or to gymnastics and your

life was so busy that you didn't have time for family. Well, now we do have time, and a lot of people are taking advantage of that.

Those are the things that people will talk about 20, 25 or 40 years from now, when we talk about this crisis. They won't be talking about 41 weeks of chemotherapy, 15 days of radiation and four surgeries. They'll be talking about Disney World. They'll be talking about meeting celebrities. They'll be talking about the good times and the fun they had.

If we keep that approach, if we remember it's a crisis that will pass—and it will pass, because we'll work together and we'll build positive memories together, and we will be a better community because we're doing that.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, I've been listening to some really great stories this afternoon. It reminds me of a story that I'd like to tell about something that happened in our family many years ago.

I'm of a mature enough age to remember back in the late 1940s and 1950s, when polio was a terrible disease that struck many parts of the world—in fact, it is still in many parts of the world. My mother came down with polio—she actually had my sister while she had polio—and the story I want to tell is about how she got through that. It only affected her one leg. Her one leg is about an inch shorter than the other one. I guess she had what they would call a mild case of it. If you can remember, people who got polio back at that time—President Roosevelt had polio and was really affected by it. At that time, exercise was something that they asked the people who were afflicted with this disease—and I can remember my mother going to the YMCA. That's where they went to get their exercise. Swimming was very good for patients with polio. She went with a bunch of people—you migrate to people with the same interests, and she migrated to people with her disease. We got to know quite a few of them. They all went together to the YMCA.

In fact, one lady's son whom I grew up with—he's my age—was in steel braces for a lot of his life and had an awful time. It was terrible to see him be put in these braces, because they hurt and he cried a lot when they put them on. He actually played hockey a little bit. It was quite an experience, because if somebody hit him—at that time, that's what happened—he'd go flying all over the place. But he stayed with it. He built up quite a bit of character, and he stayed with the game because he loved it.

Other than swimming, my mother exercised on a band saw that had pedals on it. She made my brother and me a little wheelbarrow, and we played with that wheelbarrow for—I can still remember that thing. I remember my brother thinking it was a good idea that I stand up in the wheelbarrow, and he took me for a ride, and I ended up with a bunch of stitches in my head when he dumped me out.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Yes, well, I know that.

When we're talking about extending the state of emergency—that was a terrible time for a lot of people back

then. People got together and helped each other with getting to their medical appointments, helping them out with exercising.

1650

Even at home, mom had walked around with a pretty stiff leg, and my grandmother and her mother would help her out with this thing, bending her leg and doing all these kinds of things, plus looking after the kids, because when my mother came down with polio, I was about five years old, I think, and my brother was a year older than I was. We kind of remember this, and what she went through. But the community got together and they all understood they had to get ahead of this thing. They had to get ahead of polio because they didn't have a vaccine at that time—I think they call it a vaccine with polio—until it was invented a few years later. And then we as children got the polio vaccine. At that time, they used to take a little piece of glass, it looked like, with a serum in it, and they would scratch your arm. I don't know if anybody has one of these things, but I still have that scar on my arm from this polio vaccine. It hurt like crazy, and then a big scab would form on it. We'd get playing and knock it off, and another would form. So we had quite a time with this vaccine.

But the community, governments, whoever, got together and wrestled with this disease until they found a cure for it. I think that's probably what's going to happen with COVID-19. I really hope we get to that stage sooner rather than later, because in Ontario, with the efforts our government has taken—all our parties have co-operated with this, and I'm very happy to see that—we've got this thing kind of corralled up.

I feel sorry for what's going on in Windsor-Essex right now with the problems they're having down there, but I think we can get hold of that too if we corral this thing, shut the gate on it and make sure that people are getting tested and being looked after. As I read newspaper articles about it, I think the people in Essex and Windsor are to that state. We've got to get this thing nailed down, we've got to look after who's sick with it and who's getting sick with it, and get this bug settled down in that part of the country.

That's what makes me so proud of the people of Ontario. When it first hit Ontario, people knew that this was not good and we had to take drastic measures in order to try to control it, and we did. I congratulate Premier Ford and his team for what they have done and how they have handled this whole situation. As the previous speaker has said, we're going to look back on this some day, and say, "You know, we went through that. We got hold of it, we grabbed the bull by the horns"—if I can put it that way—"and we tackled it and we worked hard to control it and make this province safe."

If you look at what's going on down in the States where they opened up things up too soon, they allowed events to happen and it got away on them in Florida. It's terrible in Florida. Arizona didn't have a big infection rate for a while; Texas—different states down there are really having an awful time with this thing, and I think it's just because they didn't have the political will or the people

didn't have the will to stay home and get hold of this thing before it got out of control. That's what we see down there.

I just wanted to mention the story of my mother. She got along with that the rest of her life. She wore a bit of a lift on her shoe so she didn't walk with a bit of a wobble. She curled until she was in her eighties. She sang in choir; she loved to sing. She was in all kinds of shows when I was a youngster, and a lot of people didn't know she was sick. If you'd never known her, you'd never know she had polio because she got over that disease, and it was the people around her who helped her through that whole situation. I think that's what we're going to see here in Ontario.

We're fortunate in Perth–Wellington. We haven't had a lot of cases. In Listowel, where I live, I think we had one case, maybe two. It's in control, but the people in the community knew that the government was on the right track. Sure, there were complaints. Nobody likes staying home the way we had to stay home. Nobody likes that. Some of the freedom is taken away from you, but it's something that had to be done. Like things that have happened in the past with different things that have come along, the people of Ontario and indeed this country have gotten together and said, "Let's get a hold of this thing, let's beat it and let's fight it as best we can and get rid of it if we can." I think we can only hope that a vaccine comes along soon or some kind of thing that we can get people protected against this type of thing, and I'm sure that's going to happen.

I did speak to a university in my riding last week. They give me an update every little once in a while to see what they're doing. Some of the brightest minds in this country are working on this right now, and I think that it's going to come. They have all of their supercomputers or whatever you want to call them working on these types of things to work it out.

I think we need to extend the state of emergency. I think that's what we have to do. We don't want to let the horse out of the barn again, because it's very difficult. If anybody has chased a herd of cows or something when the gate has been left open, it's not fun. So we need to keep that gate shut and we need to keep control of the situation as best we can. Hopefully, we will find a cure for this terrible disease, this terrible flu, as we move forward.

Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I'm sharing my time with the member from Niagara Falls—

Interjection: Niagara West.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Niagara West; pardon me.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's always a privilege to be able to rise and stand in this House and represent the good people of Niagara West. It is indeed an honour also to be able to speak today to the extension of the emergency order.

Speaker, just a couple of weeks ago I had the privilege as well of being able to speak to this legislation that was then before the House to extend the emergency orders and also to extend the state of emergency that we currently do

have here in the province of Ontario. At that time, I spoke extensively about the contributions made by the people of my riding, Niagara West, and I know we heard from many members across this province this afternoon from the government benches. Unfortunately, the opposition have not felt fit to bring forward the stories of their constituents and to speak to the importance of this legislation. I know that on this side of the House, we have seen many stories of perseverance, stories of tenacity, stories of determination and of the will of the people to ensure that we are building a stronger tomorrow.

We also heard many stories from colleagues who have gone through not perhaps the same experience but have gone through difficult experiences in the past: stories of sickness, stories of trial, stories of perseverance in those times. I know those stories, those histories, are one of the reasons we are confident we will be able to move through the challenges that we face in COVID-19 today.

Speaker, I know that many people in my riding believe that we are moving in the right direction. I held a telephone town hall last week with the Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips, who is also the chair of the Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee. We held a telephone town hall and had 3,000 people from the riding of Niagara West participate—3,000 of my constituents. We had a question-and-answer period, but I also always believe it's very important to ask questions to hear what the response of my constituents is.

One of the questions that we asked and one of the things that came out of that particular experience was that I asked my constituents—again, 3,000 on the call. I said: "What is your perspective on reopening Ontario? Are we reopening fast enough? Are we reopening too slowly? Are we reopening at the right speed?" Again, recognizing that they're not medical experts, and neither am I, and I don't claim to be—I respect the decisions made by Dr. Williams and the chief medical officer's team at the command table. Of course, that comes first and foremost. But it is important as well to know where the people of your particular riding are on a particular issue. It's good to be able to speak to issues from the perspective of being informed by their lived experience and by their particular thoughts on an issue.

I was very intrigued that when we did hold this particular survey, the results in Niagara West, which, as you know, Speaker, is a rapidly changing riding with a large amount of growth—a lot of new families are moving into the riding, but it's also quite an established riding. The results in that riding were that 64% of people believe that we are moving at a proper speed, that we are reopening at the proper speed; 19% of people believe that we were opening too fast; and 17% of people believe that we were opening too slow. They're very interesting numbers, in that the reopening-too-fast and the reopening-too-slow were fairly comparable on either end of the spectrum, but the vast majority of people in the province believe that we are moving at the right speed.

1700

I believe that is because the people of Niagara West and the people of my riding represent the province as a whole,

because they are very well read. They are keeping up to speed on what is going on. They are very in tune with where the science is and what the public health teams are reporting on this particular issue.

Speaker, the reason I raise that is because I believe that as we move forward, it's important to recognize that people have gone through a great deal. All of us here in this House are not having to worry to the same extent that others do about whether or not we're going to be able to put food on the table for our particular families next week or next month, and that is a position that we are very blessed to not have to be worried about at this moment. But it is a reality for many families in our constituencies, and so we have to listen to those realities and we have to fight for those who are vulnerable. We have to fight for those families who are worried about losing their jobs or who have lost their jobs, and that's exactly what we are going to be doing.

The last time that I spoke, I spoke about the fact that if you told me in January of this year that I would be voting for legislation to shut down my neighbour's place of worship, to shut down my neighbour's place of work, to shut down my neighbour's ability to go out and spend time with family, friends and loved ones, I wouldn't have believed you. Frankly, I wouldn't have guessed that we'd be living in that environment, but the reality is that we are, and that is because we believe in the importance of protecting life.

We know that the importance of human life is something that is fundamental to our identity as Canadians and as Ontarians, and that is why I'm also pleased to speak in support of this legislation: from a philosophical perspective, from an ideological perspective perhaps, to be able to speak in favour of legislation that promotes the value of human life and the sanctity of life, but also from a very practical understanding. That is because, when we look at what has happened south of the border, what has happened in other places—I know it seems to be a bit of a Canadian pastime almost to look at our neighbours to the south and comment on them, and so I don't mean this in any negative way about the experiences of our neighbours in the south; I'm not speaking about a particular individual or his or her actions in a particular position of authority.

What I am speaking to is the numbers that are coming out of the United States of America. What we've seen as recently as yesterday is that, as of Monday, the nation's seven-day average of daily new COVID-19 cases increased more than 30% compared with a week ago, according to an analysis of Johns Hopkins University data. Texas, Arizona and California are among the number of states, mostly across the American south and west, that have seen a dramatic increase in cases over the past few weeks. California, on Monday, saw 6,200 new cases of COVID-19.

Now what we're seeing is, in places as far south as Texas, Texas Governor Greg Abbott said on Monday that "additional measures are going to be necessary" if these metrics continue to climb at current rates into July. He said, "The way hospitalizations are spiking, the way that

daily new cases are spiking—surely the public can understand that if those spikes continue, additional measures are going to be necessary to make sure we maintain the health and safety of the people of the state of Texas." Now, Governor Abbott had previously defended the state's reopening plan, saying there's "no real need to ratchet back the reopening of businesses in the state."

Speaker, what we have seen and are seeing, I believe, in the United States is that when we move too quickly from a public policy perspective, the unintended consequences of that quick reopening have led to a surge in cases. And so I understand the frustration from my constituents in the riding of Niagara West who want things to be opened up faster. Again, 17% in my particular survey—I admit it's not a scientific survey, but it is a survey of my constituents—say that we are opening up too quickly. I understand their frustration, but we have to look at what is happening in other jurisdictions. We have to look at the data.

The last thing we want to see here in Ontario is what is happening now in Texas, in California, in Arizona, in Oklahoma, in parts of the United States where they thought they had peaked. They thought they could reopen everything up instantly without taking necessary precautions, and now they're seeing a huge surge in cases which even the Governor of Texas is saying may lead to them having to take further action to shut things back down.

None of us want to be in a position down the road where we have to shut things back down again. None of us want to be in a position where, in order to protect the lives of our loved ones and our neighbours and family and friends, we have to put in place severe and drastic limitations on our ability to go out and enjoy the realities of the civilization we live in, whether that's going to a patio, whether that's being able to go to a chiropractor, whether that's being able to participate in the many, many activities that we take for granted.

So on the one hand, it very much hurts me to have to speak to this legislation, because I wish that everything was fine. I wish that everything had gone back to normal after two weeks, that we flattened the curve after two weeks, everything was done, we could all go home, and life would go back to normal. That's what I wish had happened, but that's not the reality of what has happened in Ontario. We've seen this draw out longer than we initially expected.

But again, looking at other examples, looking at south of the border and other areas that have lifted their restrictions too quickly, we're seeing now that they're talking about having to put those restrictions back in place. I think that the mental, psychological and social impacts of having to do this twice would be far greater than us taking the time to get it right the first time. That's why I'm speaking in support of this legislation. I'm speaking in support of this not just because it saves lives but also because it ensures that we have a sustainable reopening of our province, one that respects human life as well as our economy and the psycho-social supports that our neighbours depend on.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Harris: It's my pleasure to be, I think, one of the last speakers today on the amendment to the motion that was put forward earlier this afternoon. I just wanted to say that it has been over three months since our Premier took the unprecedented step on March 17 of declaring a state of emergency due to COVID-19. While this decision was not an easy one, I think members on all sides of the House can agree that it was absolutely necessary.

It's an honour today, as I said, to once again be standing here representing my constituents and supporting an extension of our state of emergency. We have made great progress in our fight against COVID-19, thanks to the incredible work of our Premier, Minister of Health and, most importantly, all the people across this province.

Since we last debated the extension of this emergency order, much of our province has entered stage 2, including Kitchener–Conestoga. This past week, almost every day, we've seen new confirmed cases of COVID-19 drop below 200 cases. We're leading the country in the number of tests being processed at our assessment centres every day.

Over the past three months, across the province, we have stayed home, missed family celebrations and been unable to see our friends and loved ones. Like many parents, my wife and I have had to find creative ways to celebrate birthdays and, as I mentioned earlier this morning, the graduation of my two sons. It has been by no means easy for anyone, but we all collectively did what we could to stop the spread of this virus. We are still pushing onwards under the guidance of our public health officials.

Looking back at those difficult days in March, April and May, times were really tough, Madam Speaker. Many families lost some or all of their income. They needed all the relief they could get as soon as possible. Our government was able to act quickly, using an emergency order to lower their hydro bills and suspend time-of-use pricing. As part of our \$7 billion in direct support for our health care system, people and businesses across this province, we also provided six months of relief for recent graduates by pausing payments and interest accrual. GAINS payments to seniors were doubled.

Our Minister of Finance also took immediate action to make it possible for insurance companies to lower premiums for those facing hardships right now. He continues to advocate every day for consumers, urging insurance companies to do the right thing and take advantage of this change.

For those most in need in our province, additional support was provided to our local food banks, homeless shelters and charities. In Waterloo region, that funding totalled over \$3 million.

Our agri-food sector has also been put under extreme pressure during this pandemic. I heard from farmers across my riding that they were facing delays in processing their livestock and costs associated with having to have them on the farm longer. Once again, our government worked to respond to the challenges facing this vital industry. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs worked with the federal government, and \$10 million was invested

in an emergency relief program for our farmers. Our government stands behind our farmers 100%.

1710

Our food system has been stressed during this pandemic, but the resilient workers who are dedicated to keeping our families fed have never stopped. It also seems so long ago that I walked into my local Zehrs only to find empty shelves. Sorry, Zehrs; I'm not singling you out. Our grocery store workers have truly been working around the clock to keep essentials stocked, and our government is helping them to do that through the Municipal Emergency Act. We removed one of the barriers for deliveries by exempting them from municipal noise bylaws so trucks could make deliveries 24/7. Even though we don't see the empty shelves now, the work to restock our grocery stores is still in overdrive. Of course, a regular trip to the grocery store is no longer looking the way it used to. But being able to count on employees working as hard as they can to keep things we need on the shelves will never change.

One thing that was disheartening to see back in March was the rise of price gouging. I heard from one of my constituents that the price of masks and gloves for them had increased by 100% in just a few days. It's shameful that there were people trying to take advantage of this pandemic. We used an emergency order to take action against business owners who were jacking up the prices on disinfectant wipes, masks and other sought-after items. This was and still is just plain wrong. We've got absolutely no tolerance for this, which is why the Premier increased the penalties for those trying to make a quick buck off this pandemic.

But we shouldn't focus on the negatives, because there have been some really great examples of our province coming together during this difficult time. This pandemic really has brought out some of the best in people. One of the things I've really enjoyed about these debates is hearing members share their stories about businesses or volunteer groups going above and beyond to help out. It just goes to show that even in the darkest days, Ontarians will always be there for their neighbours.

Now, I'd argue that Waterloo region has some of the strongest Ontario spirit around. The local community spirit that we have is often the first thing people notice when they come to Kitchener or one of the three townships in my riding. We have an impressive number of volunteers locally who donate so much of their time to causes in our community. Normally, they would be preparing for annual summer events, but many of these events, like the St. Agatha strawberry festival or the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, will have to wait until next year. Some of our volunteers have worked hard to get their events online, like Wilmot Canada Day celebrations, which will include virtual performances and activities for the whole family.

Our spirit of volunteerism and community has not been diminished by distance. Charities like Nutrition for Learning quickly adjusted to be able to continue their work. Typically, they would provide healthy food for children in need at our region's schools so that no student has to go to their classroom hungry. But since schools have

closed, they've had to drastically change the way they deliver their snacks to kids. They now have a truck delivering 500 bags of food daily to families across the region. Over 500,000 food items have been delivered to families across Waterloo region. This is all thanks to the work of our local volunteers.

We've also seen a number of community groups step up to deliver essential supplies to our seniors who are self-isolating. This is in addition to programs like Meals on Wheels and services like Community Care Concepts, who are doing their best to provide our seniors with essential items. Some \$11 million was provided by our government to deliver groceries and medications to our seniors, and I thank the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility for his continued advocacy in ensuring that seniors and those with disabilities have access to the services they need.

A lot of businesses have also joined the fight against COVID-19. Since the state of emergency began, a huge number of local businesses have stepped up to show just how innovative Waterloo region really is. Our declaration of emergency allowed for our province to redeploy resources and personnel within our health care system. But when it came to securing the essential protective equipment our front-line heroes needed, our government couldn't do it alone. We needed a made-in-Ontario solution for masks, face shields, gowns and other equipment. Premier Ford and Minister Fedeli put out the call to Ontario businesses to transition their production towards essential supplies, and in Waterloo region, a number of businesses answered the call and are continuing to make those crucial goods.

In Elmira, Tri-Mach Group has produced a barrier that can be installed in our grocery stores and banks to protect workers and customers. And New Hamburg's 3D printing has developed clips that can turn glasses and a plastic sheet into a face shield. Woodbridge Group began manufacturing masks in their Kitchener facility back in April, along with their Vaughan plant, and are aiming to produce over one million masks a week. Truly made-in-Ontario solutions, Madam Speaker.

While I know I have mentioned them before, the St. Jacobs Quilt Co. is still sewing surgical gowns for health care workers. Hundreds of these gowns have now been shipped across southern Ontario. This business only opened in September and, in March, only after six months of operation, they transitioned their production to these gowns. It's impressive that they can already add personal protective equipment to their list of available services. Owner Phyllis Winfield really put it best when she said, "I think everybody has skills and talents that they can use to help."

We have already seen the ingenuity of people in this province. However, it is not easy on people. Like so many of my colleagues, I've spent hours on Zoom, hosting round tables and making phone calls well into the evening. Each and every one of us has been impacted by this pandemic in one way or another, and I've heard that loud and clear through those consultations. By sticking together as a community, it has brought us this far, and it's by staying

the course and continuing to work together that we will come out on top of this fight.

The work of my constituents in Kitchener–Conestoga and the rest of the residents of Waterloo region was the reason we were able to move into stage 2 on June 12. Let me tell you, Speaker, it was great to finally be able to get my hair cut. But it was even better seeing people out on patios, in parks, and spending time with family that they haven't seen in months while still following public health guidelines—part of our new normal, so to speak.

The patios being open means more hospitality workers are back on the job—an industry that has been heavily impacted by COVID-19. It means more barbers and service workers are heading back to work, and that is great news for their families. Even if it means wearing a mask and sitting at tables that are two metres apart, it is great to see members of the community able to come together in person. I know there are still some people who are self-isolating and not able to go out with their friends and family. So please remember them and pick up the phone to check on them, especially if they are living alone.

I was very happy to see our government move so quickly in investing in virtual mental health services, thanks to our Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Over \$12 million was invested immediately to expand these services. Health and safety has been our number one priority, and it is great to see that this has included mental health.

Our public health officials have done a commendable job guiding us through this pandemic. In Waterloo region, I want to thank the Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Wang. I know that members of our community appreciate her updates alongside chair Karen Redman. Chair Redman and her regional team have been fantastic partners, especially our local mayors, as we have entered into stage 2 of the reopening here in the province. I know they are hearing from eager families looking to be able to get back out to the splash pad—myself being one of them, because I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my five children, as you know—and we are working with their staff to do so as safely as possible.

Since we last debated the extension of this order on June 2, so much has changed, and I am hopeful that, by July 15, we will have seen just as much, if not more, progress, in reopening the province and restarting our economy.

This extension of our declaration of emergency keeps us on a path to getting there. Now is not the time to be lax in our measures. The people of this province do not deserve complacency. This is a collective fight that we all have a role in. It is a historic time to be a representative for our ridings in this chamber. Our constituents need us to be strong for them because it is their health, safety, livelihood and their children's education we are dealing with.

I'd just like to mention that just because we have an emergency order in place doesn't mean the business of the Legislature stops. Since March 17, when we put this order in place, Bill 181, the Supply Act; Bill 186, the Employment Standards Amendment Act; Bill 187, the Municipal

Emergency Act; Bill 188, the Economic and Fiscal Update Act; Bill 189, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Protection Act; Bill 190, the COVID-19 Response and Reforms to Modernize Ontario Act; Bill 141, the Defibrillator Registration and Public Access Act; Bill 156, the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act; and Bill 192, the Protecting Small Business Act, have all received royal assent here in this chamber.

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I also want to commend Premier Ford and Minister Clark for introducing legislation last week, which I just mentioned, that banned commercial evictions for businesses that are eligible for the commercial rent assistance program but whose landlords have chosen not to participate in that program. This is a huge step forward for protecting our local small businesses.

I know the road to recovery will be long, but if we all continue to work together, not only will we come through this, but we will be a stronger province than ever before. When my children learn about this point in history, I hope that's what they'll take away from COVID-19, as many of our colleagues here today have mentioned—that our province rose to the challenge and worked together to defeat this virus.

I know the sacrifices are great, but we are making great progress. We will get to the day when an extension of the emergency declaration is no longer necessary, but that day is not today. It is coming, and we are getting much, much closer.

As I conclude my remarks here today, Madam Speaker, I just want to encourage every member in this House to support the main motion that's before us, because we are nearing the end and there is only one option, and that is to keep going. Anything that sets us back means risking all of the progress we have made so far. I want to see us defeat this virus, get parents back to work, and see this province thrive. I hope you will join me in supporting extending this emergency order—which I assume is probably going to be tomorrow, at this point—so we can continue to work together and become a better, stronger Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Norman Miller: It's a pleasure to have the opportunity to speak in the debate today. We're apparently speaking to the amendment on the main motion to extend the emergency orders by another couple of weeks. The amendment was put forward by the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. He seems to want information about the command table and agendas and minutes and communications etc. I would simply say that I believe the government and the Premier have been pretty transparent—virtually every day at 1 o'clock, pretty much, being out there in front of the press and taking numerous questions on any topic. The Premier has done a great job of communicating, and he has done a great job of putting the health of Ontarians as the first priority and listening to the health professionals' advice very carefully. I think the results have been really positive in terms of the trend we've been on compared to lots of other jurisdictions

Of course, there has been a lot of tragedy in the long-term-care sector. Certainly, my heart goes out to all the families who are affected by the tragedies that have happened in our long-term-care sector. But in the general public—and the wave that we were expecting and preparing for in the hospitals didn't happen the way we were worried it might happen.

It has been great to see the trend, thanks to the 14 million Ontario residents, in the main part, doing the right thing: being physically distant, and wearing a mask if you're not able to keep that distance, and washing your hands etc. We've seen the trend moving in the right direction. I check it almost every day to see what's happening. It's great when it's less than 200 people. A couple of weeks ago, well over 1,000 people were hospitalized; the last time I checked, it was around 300, with fewer people in ICU, fewer people on a ventilator. That's the right trend.

I'd like to point out that just because emergency orders are extended a couple more weeks further, that doesn't mean that everything is locked down. Things change, and it's very fluid under those emergency orders, as it should be. I can tell you that I'm communicating with residents of Parry Sound–Muskoka on a regular basis, and have been in the past—I've lost track of how many weeks it has been now; in these 14 weeks, they've hardly left home. But over that time frame certainly—initially, as we were getting going, we set up teleconference calls with all the various sectors around the riding. We had teleconference calls with people in the retail sector. We had teleconference calls with children's summer camps, because the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka happens to have 40 or 50 summer camps. That's a sector that basically was told that they've lost the season pretty much completely, and I'll come back to that in a few minutes. We had teleconferences with marinas, with the service sector and all the various sectors.

As time has gone on, things have changed for those very sectors. It seems like pretty much every week there's some different and new issue, especially as the rules have changed as we've had better health outcomes and more has been allowed to open. There's always a bit of a grey area, and that tends to be what we hear about. For a while there, I was lobbying to try to get marinas fully open and, eventually, they were able to be fully open, and I'm happy about that. But things have evolved constantly as we've gone through time, and it has been a progressive sort of process. And I think it has been a good one.

Other things that I've been involved with in the riding: Fairly early on, the federal member, Scott Aitchison, and I did a number of Zoom call meetings. Zoom was something I didn't know existed before this all started, and now I seem to spend half my life on Zoom or other various types of similar systems; there's a bunch of them out there. But the federal member, Scott Aitchison, and I, organized by his office and through the chambers of commerce around Parry Sound–Muskoka, did seven and a half hours of Zoom meetings with all the various different chambers, with hundreds and hundreds of businesses coming on the call and trying to learn about the various programs that were coming out day by day, and changing day by day, to

find out what applied to them and who was falling through the cracks. And changes resulted as a consequence of those meetings.

More recently, I have certainly been involved with lots to do with tourism. I personally was involved with doing surveys of tourism businesses up around Parry Sound–Muskoka. I know that many of my colleagues also did surveys to try to get the impact, because tourism is one of the hardest-hit sectors because of COVID-19, so lots of surveying is going on.

More recently, I certainly want to congratulate and thank all the members of SCOFEA, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, because they have been real troopers, is all I can say. They've been hard at work, and most people wouldn't even be aware of what they're doing. But from what I see based on their schedule, it looks like pretty much the whole summer—at least Thursdays and Fridays—are dedicated to holding public hearings on COVID-19 sectors.

The first one that was dealt with was tourism, and I was really pleased to see that because it's so important for Parry Sound–Muskoka. The committee, meeting mainly on Thursdays and Fridays, although it met yesterday as well, held over 40 hours of consultations via Zoom, with over 140 presenters who all had lots of time to present. It was kind of a unique format. Three different presenters would present for seven minutes each and then have an hour of questioning per three presenters. I think that was a really good process to go through. There have been changes that have resulted from that process, so the government has listened and acted as quickly as it possibly could with regard to suggestions from those hearings. I'm sure there are going to be other things that will take place going further along down the line.

With the emergency orders, I would simply say that they've been evolving all along. They're becoming less strict, allowing more businesses to operate. Certainly, that is the goal of the Premier, and I think all the members here want businesses to be able to operate and generate income and employ people in a way that is safe for everyone involved, whether it's the employees or the customers who will be visiting those businesses.

1730

Early on, we saw things like marinas gradually be able to operate. We had garden centres, a business where really the spring is the prime season, allowed to operate, and landscaping was allowed to operate. I know I was getting phone calls from my friend Don MacKay, who owns a golf course, almost every day for a while there, I think in early May, making his case that they could operate safely, that the golf course had a lot of space, that they had rules and protocols. Eventually, they were allowed to operate, and I think the golf courses have been doing a great job of safely operating and providing some mental relief and physical activity for citizens. From what I see, they've been pretty busy. They have, of course, a very special protocol where they sanitize things and you don't touch the pin, and if you do ride a cart, there's one person per cart—all kinds of things to minimize the risk. As I say, I think there's a lot

of benefit, after people have been cooped up for 14 weeks, to get out and get some physical activity and enjoy yourself a bit.

We've seen things changing. A couple of weeks back, I think it was drive-in theatres. We have a drive-in theatre in Gravenhurst. They were allowed, under a limited basis, to start to operate as well, so things have been changing. I think we're getting to the point now for the tourism sector where—certainly, I want to see businesses able to operate safely and do their business, but for the general public, I think they also need some sort of comfort that they can do so safely.

For that reason, our Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Lisa MacLeod, has been doing some trips around the riding as areas are moving into stage 2, to demonstrate that it's safe to go and do some things in a safe way. In many cases, she's wearing a mask most of the time, or for sure being physically distant. I did get to host her in Muskoka, where of course tourism is so important, for a day, and we had a good day. For me, it was partly about demonstrating that it is safe to do some things.

But also, for some of the businesses that aren't quite able to open, I wanted the minister to be very aware of how important they are, so we started our day out at Santa's Village in Bracebridge, which is probably one of the nicest amusement parks around. It's certainly the best setting for an amusement park I've ever been to, which is on the Muskoka River under towering eastern white pines.

There's a young family who have owned Santa's Village for the last number of years, and they have been investing tremendously in Santa's Village, including this year. For them, the season, at this stage of their plans, is July and August, so as we're speaking today, they aren't allowed to open. It's certainly something I would like to see to be able to open by July 1, because their season is July and August, and I'm sure they're working on the protocols so that they can operate safely.

They've invested in a brand new—there's a train that runs through the property. They have a brand new, one-of-a-kind new train there, and there are all sorts of projects which we saw in our tour around that are going on right now. They also have plans for huge expansions to make November and December a whole new season, so they're planning a whole new expansion for that. So I really hope that the orders are able to change shortly, preferably by July 1, so that that attraction, which is so important to Parry Sound–Muskoka, and other attractions around the province will be allowed to operate.

I went on that day with the tourism minister. We then went to Trillium Resort, which is a very private resort that does a lot of business in weddings. I think they said they had 22 weddings booked. Unfortunately, all 22 at this point are cancelled, so it's a tremendous hit on their business. But there we did a tourism announcement of \$350,000 in funding for RTO 12 Explorers' Edge so they can promote the super-hyper-local tourism which is going to be so important this year when we won't have visitors. Visitors from the United States and other parts of the

world are going to be so constrained, so it's going to be upon us all to make sure we see a little bit more of Ontario this year. That funding was intended to promote that, that we could all get around Ontario and see things we haven't seen and enjoy ourselves in our own province and spend our money in our own province.

Also, there was funding of \$100,000 for Resorts of Ontario. I can tell you, in my 30 years as a resort lodge operator, Resorts of Ontario was the most single effective marketing organization for the business, the sort of all-inclusive resort, that I was in. We would buy a full-page ad in what was at that point called the Good Times Guide, and it was our single most—

Laughter.

Mr. Norman Miller: Why is that so funny? That's what it was called.

All I can say is that that was our single most effective means of getting new business in the business I was in. We relied on past referred business, but for that bit of new business we got, the Resorts of Ontario Good Times Guide was the best source of new business. I know they're a very effective organization, and I'm sure they're going to do a great job supporting a lot of resorts around.

As we move through the various stages—we're getting into stage 2, or most of the province is in stage 2. I think for the restaurants to be able to have patios and for the government to hear what they heard in the tourism committee, to allow restaurants very quickly to be able to expand patios—I think that was really important. I know that businesses that came before the committee, like That Little Place by the Lights in Huntsville, were really concerned about how they were going to survive and where they would build a patio. I see on Facebook now that they've got a patio in the back parking lot, right behind their place, that took them literally days to have operational. They have a small restaurant, so even if they were allowed to open inside, it would be challenging for them with physical distancing. Now they have a nice patio out by the river in downtown Huntsville, which is a great spot to visit. I think that was showing how the government was listening to the people coming before the finance committee and reacting very quickly to try to make their businesses survive.

On that day with Minister MacLeod, we also then did visit downtown Huntsville and did a photo op in front of Algonquin Outfitters, who said they've had lots of people renting canoes and getting around. We did eat on a patio at 3 Guys and a Stove and toured Deerhurst Resort, which is one of the largest resorts in the province and a huge employer in the Huntsville area. The minister was just demonstrating that it is safe to start doing some things and encouraging people to start thinking about it.

There are certain areas of the province that are really hard-hit, and I look to the northwest. I was on a phone call with the advisory committee that Minister Rickford has today representing the north, and many of those operators are really facing a huge challenge because when you get to the northwest of Ontario, the tourism operators rely pretty much all on US business. There are places where

90% to 95% of their business is American, and the border is shut. Right now, we don't know when the border is going to be operating or opened or if it's going to be opened. I think the date is July 21 at this point. I think a lot of those operators would like to just know if it's going to be shut for the summer or whether it might actually be opening on that date. I think that the more advance notice we can give, the better.

But those tourism operators right now—they basically lost their spring fishing season and hunting season. They have some unique costs. A lot of places have seaplanes and they have to pay for the insurance and the costs on these seaplanes. There's the uncertainty of not knowing how many people they're going to be allowed to put in the seaplane with physical distancing and what rules might come up. So a lot of challenges that are pretty unique in the north—we're all going to have to think about how we make sure those businesses are still around.

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I would like to bring up another type of business that I would like to see able to operate in the not-too-distant future that's unique to—or not unique to my area, but we have the Island Queen in Parry Sound. It's a large tour boat. It does beautiful tours of the Thirty Thousand Islands out on the coast of Georgian Bay. The Andersons run that business. The boat holds about 300 people. I know I've received emails from Steve Anderson. They've taken half the seats out; they're planning on operating at half business. I think the federal government changes the rules to allow them to operate as of July 1, but currently the restriction of 10 people limits them from being able to operate.

I hope that they are allowed to operate. I'm sure they will be able to do so safely. They have protocols. They've taken half the seats out. I'm not sure what the difference is between having people on that boat as compared to people being on a patio, being in a museum or lots of other places. I'm quite confident that a cruise line like the Island Queen would be able to operate safely.

I know that Steve Clark has the 1000 Islands cruise and Bill Walker has a cruise boat. We have the Lady Muskoka in Bracebridge as well. Their season is basically—July and August are such a huge part of their season that I really hope the rules are able to be changed, as they've been changing all along under the emergency orders, to allow those really important businesses to be able to get back operating.

I can see I'm just about out of time, but I would just like to thank everyone for allowing me to speak. I encourage everyone to support this two-week extension of the emergency orders.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Lindsey Park: I rise this afternoon—almost evening—to debate the amendment to the motion that was filed by our government House leader to extend the emergency order.

I'll just go back to—to remind everyone here and anyone who is tuning in online, watching for the first time today at this late hour in-house proceedings, just to remind

everyone what we're debating. Particularly, an order-in-council was passed on March 17, 2020, pursuant to section 7.0.1 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act.

As many members in the House will know who have been here for the different debates that have happened along the way, that emergency order has been extended a number of times. Initially, the emergency order was extended past the end of March 31, 2020, for a period of 14 days, and there have been a number of subsequent extensions. So this current extension that we're debating this afternoon, just again to clarify for everyone, is because the Premier has recommended that the period of the emergency be extended for 15 days past the end of June 30, 2020. I just want to remind everyone that that's what we're here debating.

Before I get into the substance of why that's so important, Speaker, this is actually my first opportunity to rise in the House since this pandemic broke out in the province of Ontario and around the globe, and so I do have a number of thank yous. As you can imagine, with the community efforts that have been going on through this time, there are many thank yous that I would like to take the time to acknowledge.

First of all, we've all heard it, I think. I've heard it from many of my constituents in the riding of Durham—as have my colleagues. Everyone has been so impressed with how all levels of government have come together at really a time of crisis, is what we've been through. I can definitely speak for the riding of Durham. I have three different municipalities in the area that I represent. I have the municipality of Clarington, the township of Scugog and the city of Oshawa, which I share with the member for Oshawa. So I do want to specifically thank all three of those councils and mayors—in the city of Oshawa, Mayor Dan Carter; in the township of Scugog, Mayor Bobbie Drew; and in the municipality of Clarington, His Worship Adrian Foster. The collaboration has just been incredible, and the many, many conversations—the, at a minimum, weekly conversations with all the mayors as we were all adapting to how things were changing so quickly. All levels of government were responding to an unprecedented situation, and we all acknowledged that when you're moving that quickly and responding to crisis, you're sometimes not going to get it perfect the first time you make a decision. What we saw was, I think, almost a daily adjustment to make sure—“Okay, we've addressed yesterday's crisis. What's the most pressing thing today?”

Ontarians were going through their own day-to-day adjustments. I remember the waves of things that were going out of stock in the grocery stores, which was fascinating, because I don't think you could really predict what was next. Initially, we heard that toilet paper was the thing that people were thinking they needed to stock up on, so it was hard to find that in the grocery stores. Recently, we went through a phase when you couldn't purchase razors, because everyone was worried about making sure they were able to shave, and they obviously couldn't go to get any personal services because of the restrictions in place to protect public health.

So I want to thank the mayors for their collaboration. I think we all make each other look good when we share information about what our community needs.

Of course, I want to thank the federal member of Parliament in the riding of Durham, the Honourable Erin O'Toole, and his constituency staff, who have also been amazing through this period. So many programs were joint federal and provincial efforts, and it took two offices, two constituency staffs on the ground, to make sure the community knew what was happening, to keep them informed and answer the many, many questions that came with each new announcement every day. So I want to thank them for all their hard work during this time.

Truly, I think all of our constituency staff, all members' staff, deserve to be honoured and thanked in a special way for their work during this time. It has been crisis mode for them. If you talk to any constituency staff members who have been answering the phones every day, people are calling through this time in panic—their whole life is in their business and they don't know what's going to happen next, or they may have a loved one—last week, I spoke to a constituent who hadn't seen her husband, who is in long-term care, for months. She was just devastated. She asked, “Lindsey, is there anything you can do?” I kind of looked good when I could call her back a week later and we had changed the restrictions in long-term care. Of course, we know that those restrictions were in place for very important public health reasons for a period of time.

So I also want to thank everyone in the long-term sector who is working such long hours and in such difficult circumstances through this time—and especially now, when they're going above and beyond to make sure loved ones can see each other. It's not easy to follow the public health advice and also make the special arrangements so all the visits can take place that are really so meaningful and give this particular lady I was speaking with—“Lindsey, this finally gave me hope. I've had three months of no hope.” Just seeing the reaction on her significant other's face when she was able to visit for the first time—and she was willing to do whatever she needed to do. I think they're making visitors get tested every two weeks, before their visit, just to make sure all the precautions are in place right now, as we adjust to this new arrangement. She said, “Lindsey, how do I get a test? I'll do as many tests as I need to do. I just want to go and see the love of my life.”

It's calls like that, and it's really moving stories of how people are being affected—I remember speaking to another family, and it was really incredible, the sacrifice they were making, but it was grandparents of two elementary school kids. The mom and dad of the children were both in emergency services. They have been on the front lines through this whole time, but the grandparents had been helping out with child care. They were the ones who, when mom and dad weren't able to be home from work, were taking care of their grandkids.

1750

They made the decision early on that the grandkids would go live with the grandparents and they would not be able to have physical touch with their parents through this

whole time. So their parents, in order to stay in touch, dropped off a letter in their mailbox every morning so that their kids could hear from them every day, even though they couldn't gather and physically be with them.

These are the kinds of real stories of people who are affected, children who are affected by what has been going on. I know that the people of Durham have given so much through this time. They've really taken it all so seriously. They've taken all the public health guidance so seriously and made personal sacrifices. They've sacrificed income in their businesses. They've sacrificed by temporarily closing their businesses so that public health could be maintained, so that health and safety in the province of Ontario could be maintained. It's really a selfless effort—everyone who has been making these sacrifices.

So I just want to thank the whole community and everyone who has come together to make this—something I want to call a success in the province of Ontario, success in a very difficult time in that we've kept the number of cases down lower than many other jurisdictions. While of course every death has been a tragedy—we've had a number of them specifically in long-term-care homes in Durham region, and that has just been heart-wrenching, but I'm so glad there aren't more than what we've seen because Ontarians and the people of Durham took this public health advice so seriously.

With that, just to finish off my thank-yous—I'm spending half the speech giving thank-yous, but it's what's needed right now. I want to give a few examples of some companies that have really risen to the occasion and found a way to serve the community when their regular business operations really couldn't continue.

One example in the Acting Speaker's riding right in Oshawa is All or Nothing brewery. They're one example of a number of breweries across the province that has retooled production to produce hand sanitizer. They specifically came and dropped off a box of hand sanitizer at my office so I could give it out to anyone who needs some in a pinch. The work they have been doing has been incredible.

Ontario Power Generation, who's going to be moving their corporate headquarters to Clarington in the years ahead, collaborated with Ontario Tech University and used 3D printing technology—which is a new, very interesting technology. They used it. They've been experimenting with it for lots of different projects over the last little while, but they decided during this period that they could use that technology to produce face shields.

They have been going about it. I remember that when they had their first few boxes off the production line, they called and they said, "Is there anyone calling your office, Lindsey, who might need these?" Again, I feel privileged to be the connector of people, because I had actually just a few days earlier received a call from a lady who runs a few of the homes for special care in our area, in Bowmanville and in Oshawa.

Homes for special care: It's a technical term, but what it means is, these are homes for people with severe mental health challenges. And they were worried. Sometimes

when you're a smaller organization and you're trying to figure out how to get your hands on PPE, you feel like you don't have all the contacts you need to be able to call someone and get a hold of what you need to get a hold of. So they reached out for help. They were worried about their residents and also the staff serving in the homes. We were able to connect them with Ontario Tech University, and Ontario Tech dropped off boxes of these face shields for them to protect their residents and their workers. So that's another example.

Finally, I just want to give a special shout-out. My mask that I've been wearing around the Legislature during this time comes from a little store in Orono, Terrens Wellness, which is just outside my riding, actually, in the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South's riding. The owner, Karen Lowery, has been quite innovative. She got a Canada fabric with beautiful maple leaves all over it and decided to turn that into masks we could wear around. So I'm excited to wear that on Canada Day.

It do want to give a shout-out: On Canada Day, we have a special virtual celebration going on in Durham region. It's going to be taking place July 1, from 2 to 5 p.m., online. All the municipalities, members of provincial Parliament and MPs will be taking part in it. You can, from the comfort of your own home, take part in the virtual celebrations. So see you there.

Now back to the substance of the emergency order and why this extension is so important: The purpose of the extension is to enable our government to follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health as we gradually and carefully reopen our economy under the plan that was set out by the Premier and the Minister of Finance. If you think back a few weeks—we've had so many announcements, of course—they announced a plan that had three phases, and of course a number of stages within the phases. This extension is really enabling us to keep with that plan and the advice our government continues to get from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the health table.

So why is that important? Why the emergency order? Why is it needed to be able to keep with that plan? Well, for example, one of the things that the emergency order enables us to do is to redeploy staff within the health care sector. We've seen redeployment of some in Durham region. Staff that work for Lakeridge Health have been redeployed to support some of the long-term-care homes that have needed extra help and assistance. I think we can all foresee that that redeployment might look a little bit different in the next stage or phase, particularly as the need for more detailed contact tracing is taking place as businesses are reopening. So that redeployment could look like lots of different things, but you can see why it would be needed through this phase where we're starting to reopen businesses.

Under the emergency order, we also have put particular restrictions in place around price gouging, to ensure that that doesn't happen when there's this demand for PPE, for sanitizer, for all the things these businesses are going to

need as they're starting to reopen. We also know that there are certain parts of the province right now that are still not ready to move to the next stage. I'm thankful that, in Durham region, our farming community, our agricultural community, has been really amazing and we haven't seen some of the outbreaks among migrant workers in our region. We know that other regions of the province have seen that, and they have to be able to take it seriously and they have to have the tools that we're providing them under the emergency order in order to do that effectively.

So this extension—again, back to exactly what it is, 15 days past the end of June 30, 2020—will give our local public health the tools to be able to uphold public health and prevent a second wave and make sure businesses have the support they need as they're reopening.

Finally, in my final few minutes here, I just want to thank everyone, all of the public service that makes this possible in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. You've just gone above and beyond. I'm not exactly sure how it's worked, but we have pages who I think have come back—perhaps former graduates who have come back—to help us through this time. Thank you. I want to thank everyone who's making this possible.

As the Solicitor General, I believe, said earlier today, democracy is an essential service, and that's why we're here. I want to thank all of you for making that possible, because we are really honoured to have a great team like you. Every day, we walk in here and we know it's just going to work. We sort of take it for granted. Especially in times like this, we really see the sacrifice you've made to make this all possible, so I want to thank you for that.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I'm just going to pivot off of the points my colleague had made about democracy being an essential service and what all of us were elected here to do. A lot of that is protecting Ontarians, delivering for them and being accountable. And so, very much, I want to thank all those who help us be accountable and all the folks in this Legislature who help make it possible.

I also want to thank the front-line workers. They go in, day in and day out. They're working 24 hours, and this

emergency order is so important for them. It's so important for them because it allows us to go on our timeline, to remind people what they need to do to socially distance, to wear a mask and, of course, wash their hands. Protecting our front-line workers allows us to ensure that we're limiting long-term-care and retirement homes to one staff, to protect our personal support workers, and of course it also helps our front-line workers to ensure that we can redeploy them where it matters most.

We're here today to protect those front-line workers, to give them the resources they need to protect all Ontarians. We're also there to ensure that businesses can open safely. So I want to thank everyone who has made this possible in my community and really rallied together to show what the Ontario spirit is about.

At the end of the day, we all believe in humanity and we're all humans. We need to help each other out, and we need to really champion what the Ontario spirit is. We need to think about our community residents, like the ones I think of in Barrie–Innisfil; for example, Heather Walker, a Sandycove resident who put together a kindness tree, where she made free masks for anyone who might need a mask to protect themselves. They can just pick it up for free.

I think of the Innisfil community library, a world-renowned library that stepped up to the plate and made face masks. I also think about our “helping neighbours” campaign, where the local Muslim youth community went out and purchased groceries for other people. Mr. Speaker, not only is that an example of the Ontario spirit, but it's an example of why we're all here today, debating what we're debating.

On that note, I did want to move adjournment of the House.

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

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Tonia Grannum, Valerie Quioic Lim, William Short
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associé délégué au dossier des Petites Entreprises et de la Réduction des formalités administratives Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) / Ministre associée des Transports (RGT) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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 Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Associate Minister of Energy / Ministre associé de l'Énergie Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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 the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**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
Lorne Coe, Wayne Gates
Randy Hillier, Andrea Khanjin
Jane McKenna, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Kaleed Rasheed, Peter Tabuns
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Amarjot Sandhu
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeremy Roberts
Ian Arthur, Stephen Blais
Stan Cho, Stephen Crawford
Catherine Fife, Randy Hillier
Mitzie Hunter, Andrea Khanjin
Laura Mae Lindo, Sol Mamakwa
David Piccini
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Daryl Kramp
Robert Bailey, Jessica Bell
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover
Mike Harris, Daryl Kramp
Sheref Sabawy, Amarjot Sandhu
Mike Schreiner, Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Vanthof
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe
Rudy Cuzzetto, Robin Martin
Taras Natyshak, Rick Nicholls
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard
Marit Stiles, Nina Tangri
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Roman Baber
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Roman Baber, Will Bouma
Lucille Collard, Parm Gill
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Kaleed Rasheed
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vijay Thanigasalam
Rima Berns-McGown, Michael Coteau
Faisal Hassan, Logan Kanapathi
Jim McDonell, Christina Maria Mitas
Sam Oosterhoff, Kaleed Rasheed
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
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: France Gélinas
Deepak Anand, Jill Andrew
Toby Barrett, Stan Cho
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
John Fraser, France Gélinas
Christine Hogarth, Norman Miller
Michael Parsa
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: Deepak Anand
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Will Bouma
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Stephen Blais, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Laura Mae Lindo
Gila Martow, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Dave Smith
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Christine Hogarth, Belinda C. Karahalios
Terence Kernaghan, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum