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of Ontario



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Mercredi  
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Clerk: Todd Decker

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**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 May 2021

Mercredi 5 mai 2021

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Today is a very beautiful day, and I just thought I wanted to welcome everyone to the House today and remind everyone that May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Just reach out to your community who are affected by the disease, and let's not forget those individuals and make sure that we raise Lyme awareness every day of the month.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you for the member for that intervention. Technically not a point of order, but I appreciate the information notwithstanding.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LA LUTTE  
CONTRE LA TRAITE DES PERSONNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2021, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 251, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various Acts in respect of human trafficking matters / Projet de loi 251, Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les questions de traite des personnes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll give the member a moment to catch her breath.

Further debate? The member for Toronto Centre.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you, Speaker. I was having problems with my printer this morning and I was running to the chamber.

I have a few minutes remaining on the clock from the last time I rose to speak to this bill, and it's certainly a pleasure to do so again today. Before I resume my debate, though, I would like to take a moment and recognize that today is also Red Dress Day. Red Dress Day is the national day of awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada. This day is marked every year on May 5. I'd like to call on all of the members of this House, on all sides of the chamber, but particularly those on the government benches, to join me today in remembering and honouring the Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited people who have been taken from their

families and their communities as a result of colonization and ongoing colonial violence. I ask this House today, on this day, to recommit itself to fully implementing the calls for justice in the national inquiry report on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited people.

As I said the last time we debated this bill, we need to stand with survivors in calling for real, substantive action to help victims of human trafficking to rebuild their lives and to prevent these crimes from ever taking place. As a member of the official opposition and as critic for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, I want to see a comprehensive response from this House to ending human trafficking.

Like other forms of violence, sexual violence against Indigenous women and girls is rooted in colonialism and results from the intergenerational trauma caused by the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop and other harms done by the Canadian state. Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ+ people are significantly more likely to experience violence in their lifetime. Indigenous women are six times more likely to be a victim of homicide than non-Indigenous women, and two-spirited and trans people experience violence nearly five times more often than their cisgender peers.

Indigenous women and girls in Canada continue to go missing and continue to be murdered. Communities and families grieve these losses. They grieve them deeply every single day. This government continues to neglect the systemic nature of gender-based violence, racism and colonialism in our societies. There's so much more that we can and need to be doing to address human trafficking and violence against women in Ontario, but that means responding to issues at a systemic level, including racism, poverty and discrimination and, importantly, implementing—actually implementing—the calls for justice in the national inquiry report on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

The last time we debated this bill, I ended my remarks discussing the ways that racism and discrimination stand in the way of survivors accessing the supports that they need. Survivors experience racism and bias in their interactions with police, with health care workers and with social workers. The discrimination that they experience has made it more difficult for them to access the vital services that they need to ensure their safety and security, and it's made it harder for them to access health care, to access housing, to access justice.

It's disappointing that this government is refusing to confront the racism in our institutions here in Ontario that

clearly impacts the ability of victims of human trafficking to actually receive help. Instead, what have we seen from this government? We've seen them make deep cuts to critical anti-racism work and to reconciliation. If this government wants to stop human trafficking and actually support victims, they need to address the systemic nature of anti-Indigenous violence, racism and colonialism in our society.

I urge this government to invest—actually invest—in the Anti-Racism Directorate; to pass the bill brought forward by my colleague the MPP from Kiiwetinoong, who's here with us today; to fully adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; to respect treaty rights; to reinstate mandatory Indigenous education in Ontario's classroom—which, I'll remind this House, was one of the first things this government did: Days, literally days, after coming into office, one of the first things they did was cancel curriculum writing sessions to incorporate reconciliation into our grade school curriculums, for no purpose.

If this government was serious about addressing the root causes of racism, which is the underlying source of violence against Indigenous women, you could do things like ending boil-water advisories on First Nations and securing clean drinking water, making communities safe and healthy for everyone in this province.

As a downtown Toronto member of this House, I'm particularly concerned by this bill's omission of short-term rentals as places for human trafficking, and this is an oversight that I believe needs to be addressed. The first section of this bill requires hotels to maintain a registry of every guest who checks in, including their name and address. It also allows police officers and First Nations constables to more quickly gain access to a hotel's registry if "there are reasonable grounds to believe information recorded in the register will assist in locating or identifying a person who is currently a victim of human trafficking or is at imminent risk of being trafficked...."

Currently, this section is limited to hotels and does not include Airbnb-style short-term rentals, even though advocates have raised concerns about the sex traffic trade increasing the use of short-term rentals to avoid scrutiny.

**0910**

In my riding in downtown Toronto, like many communities across the province, we've seen a steep increase in the number of Airbnbs in our community. Not only do these Airbnbs take much-needed affordable housing out of our community, but there is a very serious concern about how safe and secure these units are, and how under the radar they are and easily used by human traffickers.

On the issue, Christa Big Canoe, who is the legal advocacy director for Aboriginal Legal Services, said "One of the things that we heard over and over again in the national inquiry [on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls] was the role of hotels or this type of temporary residence or living situations that sees Indigenous women put through sexual exploitation and trafficking at a huge rate." She goes on to say, "If it's not clear on its face when you read the act who is a 'prescribed

class' or what lodging services apply, then it needs to be right in legislation so that everyone knows who it applies to."

Speaker, I see I only have about less than a minute on the clock, but to wrap up my remarks, what I want to say to the government is that there are some gaps in this bill, certainly, that I want to make sure that you're aware of. I think the Airbnb piece is a significant one. But, overall, my message to you is that violence doesn't happen in a vacuum. Violence doesn't happen in a vacuum; violence is a result of generations of unchecked racism and colonial violence that has led to Indigenous women being disproportionately affected by gender-based violence and human trafficking. And if you aren't willing to do the work to address the systemic racism in our system, this bill will never be successful.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It's now time for questions.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** Thank you for your continuation today, this morning. Given the critical nature of the provincial anti-human trafficking strategy, does the member opposite agree regarding the importance of establishing a legislative requirement to review the strategy?

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you to the member for your question. Like I said in my comments, I think the most important piece that can't be missed—whether that happens through legislative reviews or however you want to do it—is that there needs to be a commitment from the government to address the structural, systemic racism in our communities. Like I said, that is really the source of the violence against Indigenous women, who are disproportionately targeted for human trafficking. I'm open to having a conversation about how we do that work, how we work together to address racism and the tools and the mechanisms that we can use to do that. But I might suggest that a good place to start would be adequately funding the Anti-Racism Directorate.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I want to thank the member from Toronto Centre for her words this morning. Not only does this require police enforcement to deal with the pimps and the traffickers that are out there—that's a given. However, we need the supports, the funding and the programs inside to deal with the educational portion. We need the social programs that are going to be required to address a lot of the addictions and mental health issues that are there as well.

Another big part of what is required in this bill that I'm surprised is not in this bill is one where you need to create that environment where a person is going to feel safe. You need to provide them with shelter. You need to provide them with a room where they're going to say, "Here I am safe," and that requires some funding in housing. What would the member suggest that could be part of this bill that may address those security needs for individuals that are caught up in trafficking?

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you so much to the member for that question. You're absolutely right.

Victims, survivors of violence are whole people who have emotional, spiritual, mental and physical needs. When we have bills that only address one aspect of their trauma and violence and isolation, we forget that part of that trauma and isolation is, as you said, a lack of access to housing, a lack of access to clean drinking water and a lack of access to safe, trauma-informed social services. All of those piece are things that we need.

On the housing piece, specifically, I would say we are probably about three decades behind on any substantial investment in safe, culturally appropriate supportive housing in the province of Ontario and, in fact, any affordable housing. The wait-lists are astronomical in almost all of our communities for any sort of affordable housing. Again, we see that these are the types of investments that this government does not want to make.

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Thank you to the member opposite for your debate. I just would like to emphasize and highlight that, usually in the cases of human trafficking we see, we see that the victims find themselves alone. They don't know where to go. Who can protect them? Who can stand beside them in such a situation, and bullying and everything else—sometimes the cases start from as young as the age of 14.

Can the member opposite give us a little bit of an opinion about what you think we could do, other than the bill containing our enforcement partners stepping up and being the trusted entity that can support the victims and get them out of that situation?

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you to the member for the question. I think human trafficking is not something that you can exclusively enforce your way out of. If we only focus on enforcement, it means we are only going to address the issue once it's already happened. We are going to enforce and save survivors, but we're not going to actually prevent them from being victimized.

I think that prevention stream piece is, as I've said, what happens upstream. It's poverty reduction. It's safe drinking water in communities. It's affordable housing. It's eliminating poverty. Those are the things that put targets on young women's and girls' backs that say, "I'm easily targetable. I am at risk." If we aren't addressing those social targets around those women and girls, then we're always going to be chasing the problem downstream and we're not actually going to stop the victimization of women and girls, and particularly Indigenous women and girls from being human-trafficked.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker. Thank you to the member for the presentation and for the words. I know that from an Indigenous perspective, when we talk about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, we have to look at the efforts to truly reduce the vulnerability of Indigenous women and girls to human trafficking. We must also address that.

The issues that we face in the child welfare system, with the lives of young Indigenous mothers and the high rates of apprehension of Indigenous children in our communities—what else can Ontario do to improve, so young mothers don't go into that system?

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you to the member for the question. I think one of the most important things we can be doing is supporting those young mothers to actually live successful, stable lives. The only reason that that's not currently the case is poverty, colonial violence and racism.

A lot of the times, as we see families getting caught up in the CAS system, the problem isn't the family; the problem is the family doesn't have the resources to live. They don't have enough money to put food on the table. They can't keep a roof over their head. The issues are so intricately connected to poverty, systemic oppression and violence, and they can't be untangled.

As a Legislature and as a government, if you're not willing to address the root causes of poverty and violence, we are going to be chasing down these downstream systemic effects forever. We are going to be chasing down and breaking apart families through CAS and not preventing women from being trafficked, if we can't ensure that everyone, particularly Indigenous women and girls in this province, are free from poverty and have clean drinking water.

**0920**

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** We have heard the Ministry of the Attorney General talk about the value of lengthening restraining orders. Speaker, through you, does the member opposite agree that it's important to lengthen restraining orders to keep offenders away from those who have gotten out of trafficking?

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you for the question. I think the piece on restraining orders is a particularly interesting one. I think anyone in the room who has experienced gender-based violence or has ever been in need of a restraining order—I know I have in my family—a restraining order is a piece of paper. Lengthening the time on them—if someone is going to break a restraining order, they're going to break a restraining order. It doesn't matter the length of time on it. I've been in that situation where a restraining order has been broken, and it's difficult.

Again, it doesn't address the upstream causes of why that violence is taking place in the first place. It doesn't change the attitudes of why women, and particularly Indigenous women, are targeted more often. It doesn't address the reasons why women are targeted, like poverty, lack of housing—all of those issues. The restraining order piece is an interesting one, but, at the end of the day, it's a piece of paper that's very, very easily violated. Thank you for the question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Unfortunately, there's not enough time for further questions and responses, but there is time for further debate.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I'm honoured to rise in support of Bill 251, the Combating Human Trafficking Act, introduced by my friend the Solicitor General. I'd like to thank

her, the Attorney General and the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues for all of their work on this important bill. Of course, I want to thank the Minister of Infrastructure for her leadership on this file as well.

Speaker, human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes in the world. Unfortunately, the vast majority, about two thirds, of police-reported incidents of human trafficking in Canada happen right here in Ontario. Yesterday, Stats Canada released new data, and it was disturbing to see that the number of human trafficking incidents reported to police has increased by 44%. The rate of 1.4 incidents per 100,000 people is the highest rate since this data became available more than a decade ago. Of course, these are the only offences that we know of.

Megan Walker, executive director of London Abused Women's Centre, said that it's just "the tip of the iceberg," because "the majority of women or girls who are trafficked or ... exploited do not report to police...." Calls to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline confirm that only a small percentage of incidents are even reported to the police. As other members have said, over 70% of human trafficking victims identified by police are under the age of 25; more than 20% are 17 years or younger. The average age of those who are recruited into sex trafficking is just 13 years old. Many are Indigenous women and girls or from other racialized groups. Many have mental health and addiction challenges.

Last year, a study from Family Services of Peel and the Peel Institute on Violence Prevention concluded that the region of Peel is a hot spot for human trafficking, with a rate of human trafficking much higher than the rest of the province and the rest of Canada. Much like COVID-19, they concluded that the region of Peel is a hot spot in part because of the proximity to the Pearson international airport and easy access to the 400-series highways. We're partnering with our trucking industry and ONroutes to raise awareness of these crimes on Ontario's 400-series highways, and we're partnering with our police and school boards to raise awareness in our schools.

Last year, the associate minister and I spoke at a webinar on human trafficking in Peel. Speaker, almost 600 people attended from across the region of Peel. I just want to take the opportunity to thank Peel Regional Police constable Joy Brown again for her presentation and for her leadership on this issue. From the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, chair Sharon Hobin, trustee Bruno Iannicca, director Marianne Mazzorato and so many others have organized seminars and webinars like this to educate staff and the students about how victims can be lured, signs of what to look for and tips about how you can help.

Soon afterwards, last December, I was proud to announce that the province is providing over \$3.1 million to the region of Peel service hub, which provides low-barrier detection services for victims and survivors ages 12 and up. The hub offers immediate and specialized support, including trauma consultation, mental wellness and substance use consulting, health care and case management; long-term support, including housing, education,

employment and family reunification; and access to the services and support which are specifically designed for victims of sexual exploitation.

The province has also provided over \$97,000 seized from crimes to the Peel Regional Police to Project Haven to support victims of human trafficking and to ensure that those responsible for exploiting them are identified and prosecuted.

Speaker, this is all about the government's \$307-million anti-human trafficking strategy to raise awareness of the issue, protect victims, support survivors and hold offenders accountable. This represents the largest total investment dedicated to anti-trafficking support and services in Canada. If passed, Bill 251 would build on this strength:

- firstly, by providing a long-term provincial strategy to end human trafficking, which emphasizes that all Ontarians have a role to play to fight human trafficking;

- secondly, by strengthening the ability of our children's aid societies and law enforcement to protect exploited children;

- thirdly, by helping survivors to apply for obtaining restraining orders against human traffickers, with specified considerations for Indigenous services; and

- lastly, by collecting non-personal data so that we can better understand the impact of human trafficking in our communities and providing law enforcement with more tools to locate victims quickly.

Speaker, Bill 251 would provide us with many important new tools to fight human trafficking in Ontario. Schedule 1 would enact the Accommodation Sector Registration of Guests Act. Schedule 2 would enact the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy Act. Schedule 3 would amend the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. Schedule 4 would amend the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act. I'd like to take the opportunity to address these.

Speaker, we know that many hotel and motel operators in Peel and across Ontario are unknowingly providing opportunities for human trafficking. Hotels and motels are allowing victims to be moved often to evade detection by police. They can also be used as a base for recruitment and luring. I want to join the Solicitor General in thanking the Hotel Association of Canada for their leadership in raising awareness of human trafficking among their members and supporting education and training to raise awareness of this problem.

The proposed Accommodation Sector Registration of Guests Act included in schedule 1 of Bill 251 is another important step which would discourage human trafficking in hotels, motels and resorts and support police investigation and enforcement. Currently, the Hotel Registration of Guests Act, which was enacted 77 years ago in 1944, requires hotels to collect names and places of residence for their guests. Unfortunately, we know that false names and false addresses are often used. Given the connection between human trafficking and the hotel sector, it is clear that we need more information and more reliable information about hotel guests. We also know that



the human traffickers are exploiting short-term rentals like Airbnb, which are outside the scope of the current Hotel Registration of Guests Act. It is clear that we need to modernize the definition of “hotels” in the legislation.

**0930**

Speaker, we also know that enforcement is the important tool. That’s why section 5 of schedule 1 includes fines of up to \$5,000 for failure to maintain a guest registry or knowingly accepting false information. Taken together, these are important steps toward a more thorough and more accurate hotel guest registry, which can be such a valuable tool in human trafficking investigations.

Speaker, if passed, schedule 2 of Bill 251 would enact the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy Act, the first of its kind in Canada. It would position Ontario as a leader in enforcing against human trafficking across the country. Schedule 2 would require the province to maintain an anti-human trafficking strategy.

Section 3 would require the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services to publish reports on the actions the province is taking as part of this strategy.

Section 4 would require the minister to review and update the strategy regularly, at least every five years, to help the province stay ahead of human trafficking.

Finally, if passed, section 6 would create an enabling authority to require certain organizations to post information about human trafficking, to provide or receive anti-human trafficking training as part of employment, and to report any suspected human trafficking either to the police or to a hotline. Speaker, this would help send a strong signal that everyone in Ontario has the responsibility to help fight human trafficking. Raising awareness is our first line of defence in protecting children and youth. It is also a critical tool in helping victims find the help they need.

I know the Minister of Education has updated the elementary health and physical education curriculum to include mandatory learning about online safety and the dangers of human trafficking.

The Minister of Indigenous Affairs has also developed an Indigenous-focused awareness campaign for Indigenous youth.

Speaker, prevention and early intervention are also key pillars in our government’s strategy to fight human trafficking. If passed, schedule 3 of Bill 251 would make important amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to better protect children and youth from these crimes.

These proposed amendments would, firstly, clarify the role of children’s aid societies to intervene where a child is a victim of sex trafficking or at risk of being trafficked; secondly, authorize child protection workers to remove 16- or 17-year-old victims for a limited period of time to another location, to give them the opportunity to access protective measures and supportive resources. Speaker, this will help to show children and youth there is help for them when they need it the most. This includes community support and culturally appropriate care.

Lastly, if passed, schedule 3 would increase penalties for human traffickers who interfere with or harbour a child

in the care of a children’s aid society for the purposes of sex trafficking.

Together, they are important new measures that would strengthen the authority of our children’s aid societies and law enforcement to intervene in child sex trafficking cases and to discourage traffickers from interfering with children in the care of a children’s aid society.

Speaker, finally, schedule 4 would amend the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act to allow individuals caring for child victims to apply for restraining orders. This responds to the needs of Indigenous communities with their customary care arrangements. Schedule 4 would also allow for restraining orders to be extended for a period longer than three years if the courts believe it is necessary to protect the child. As other members have said, these changes will provide the police and our courts with flexibility to ensure they are able to better protect victims of human trafficking in Ontario.

I also want to thank the Attorney General for his ongoing support enhancing a program that provides free legal supports for human trafficking victims and those at risk of being trafficked so that they can apply for restraining orders. I understand the Ontario Court of Justice has granted 100% of the applications submitted through this program, including 30 on behalf of children, two of whom were only 13 years of age.

I want to conclude by once again thanking the Solicitor General and all the ministries and staff who have contributed to Bill 251, and to our cross-government anti-trafficking strategy, which includes activities from the range of ministries, including the Ministries of Children, Community and Social Services; the Attorney General; Indigenous Affairs; Education; Health; Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; and Transportation.

I also want to thank our partners who are on the front lines in our fight against human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of our children and youth and other vulnerable people. This includes our service providers like Constable Brown at the Peel Regional Police, the team at Armagh House and Embrave in Mississauga–Lakeshore, and the Indigenous organizations across the province who are on the front lines of this fight against human trafficking. It includes Rav Bains and his team at Peel Children’s Aid Society, and Nicole Bonnie and the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, who care for the victims of these horrific crimes. Ms. Bonnie wrote that Bill 251 is “a step forward for raising awareness” and “is a critical piece to a comprehensive anti-human trafficking approach in Ontario.”

I also want to thank the survivors of human trafficking, including the members of the Human Trafficking Lived Experience Roundtable, who have provided their feedback on Bill 251.

In closing, I just want to encourage everyone to take a moment and visit [ontario.ca/humantrafficking](http://ontario.ca/humantrafficking) to learn more about human trafficking and all the services and supports that are available across Ontario. As other members have said, this isn’t a partisan issue. As the Attorney General has said, it is a looking-after-our-children issue.

So I look forward to voting for Bill 251, and I hope that all members will support this important bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Time for questions.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you to the member for his presentation. I think my question to the member—we know that the upstream root causes of violence against women lie in poverty. So I would ask the member today: Will you commit your government to making investments in supportive housing, in affordable housing, in raising the rates for ODSP and OW? These are the types of anti-poverty initiatives that are going to prevent women from becoming victims of human trafficking in the first place, because we really, truly cannot exclusively enforce ourselves out of human trafficking.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member across. I noticed you brought up the affordable housing piece, and I agree, we have to build more affordable housing. I want to thank the minister for building affordable housing in Mississauga–Lakeshore. We’re building 219 units right on Lakeshore in Port Credit, so that is one step forward to doing that. But not only do we need housing, we need education as well as employment for this group of unfortunate people that this has happened to.

So, I agree with you that we do have to continue building affordable homes, and build them quickly, sometimes even using MZO’s like the minister has done in the past, over the last year.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** I’ve heard from the Solicitor General and others about the importance of providing tailored supports for Indigenous youth, who are more vulnerable to being trafficked. Can you provide more detail about those supports offered?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member for Burlington for all of her hard work that she does in her riding of Burlington. I’ve known her for many years, and I know how committed you are to your community.

The Indigenous service access is for culturally relevant and specialist support that they need to recover and rebuild their lives. Indigenous-specific elements are embedded into this bill here today. This includes empathy for Indigenous service and programs, including Indigenous leaders, community-based trauma information, cultural response and anti-human trafficking programs, improving access to victims for certain supports in the court system, and Indigenous leader training and education. This is very important, and I think we’re going to continue doing this moving forward to reduce human trafficking in the province Ontario.

0940

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions? The member from Kiiwetinoong.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker. Thank you for the presentation there, member from Mississauga–Lakeshore. I know that those who work in addressing trafficking of Indigenous women and girls point to the root

causes of exploitation of Indigenous women, including pervasive racist and sexist stereotypes, but also the normalization of colonial violence. I know what I’m talking about because I live it. We live it on a daily basis.

Can you explain further, member, on how this bill addresses those stereotypes and that colonial violence? Meegwetch.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member across for that question. I’ve been working very closely in Mississauga–Lakeshore with my Indigenous community on this issue. This issue has been going on for many years, and we have to put a stop to it. How we’re going to do that is by increasing education in all the communities and the protection of the Indigenous communities that have been taken advantage of in this trade.

Let’s work together to improve it and make it better for all people in the province of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Thanks to the government for bringing such an important piece of legislation. We understand that this legislation addresses hoteling and some aspects of trafficking and trying to protect the victims, but as we see, there is a change in this industry and these activities by getting social media and getting the new short-term accommodations like Airbnb.

Can the member speak a little bit about what aspect of this legislation can help in protecting the victims in this case, and why it was not more specifically mentioned in the bill in regard to some short-term accommodations like Airbnb?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member from Erin Mills, the riding right beside me, for all his hard work that he does in his riding as well.

What we’ve been doing with the hotel and the motel industry—the registry is outdated; it’s 77 years old. It was done in 1944. This has to be updated so that the managers and the hotel owners will properly report the names and the addresses of people who do register in their hotels, so that the police can have more access to that information so we can stop the sex trafficking that occurs, especially in our area of Peel with the airport so close to us and the 400 highways that are very accessible for these people to be transported very quickly from one hotel to the other.

More information has to be given to the police from the hotel industry to help us, and thankfully the hotel industry is helping us with this.

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

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I want to thank the member across very much for creating an opportunity to have an educational moment in the chamber. I noticed in his remarks earlier a comment of “my First Nations,” “my Indigenous community.” I just want to flag for the chamber—for all of us, not just directly directed to the member across—that the language of colonialism is insidious, and we aren’t always aware of how it’s received in communities. When we use possessive language over Indigenous people and communities and nations, it is a reinforcement of the

colonial claim of ownership over those people and communities and nations. I would just kindly ask all members of the House that we all learn and be respectful to Indigenous communities and try our best to refrain from using possessive language.

Again, I just actually want to thank the member for giving me the opportunity through this debate to raise this for all of our colleagues. Thank you.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member for that. I work very closely with our Indigenous community in Mississauga–Lakeshore. I grew up in Mississauga, Port Credit. I have the Credit River that runs down to it. The Indigenous community is part of the community—I'm part of their community, really, because we came here. They didn't come here; we came here. My parents came from Italy and immigrated to Port Credit in 1950. We worked together to build a better community.

I work very closely with the Indigenous community, and I'm very grateful for them to be part of Port Credit, just like I'm part of Port Credit and Lakeview. We are even working together to build Turtle Lodge in Lakeview, which will be one of the biggest buildings ever built in Lakeview for the Indigenous community. So thank you for that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions? Member from Burlington, you have 28 seconds.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** I just wonder, will you continue to consult with stakeholders going forward?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Wow, that was fast.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** There you go.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member for a response.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member for that question. Yes, we will continue working with stakeholders on this issue. It's a huge issue. It's our children and other people's children. How can this happen in a province like Ontario? This should never be happening here. Let's continue working and consulting with agencies on how to improve the system.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** There isn't any further time for questions and responses, but there is again time for further debate. I recognize the member from Brampton Centre.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Good morning, Speaker. It's always a pleasure to rise in the House and contribute to the debate. I've been listening to our members on this side of the House and members from Peel on the other side of the House, and I think we're very much on the same page with the importance of addressing human trafficking in our communities. Although we may have different approaches, I think we understand how pervasive this issue is, how insidious it is in our communities and how it's spreading rapidly.

As a member from the region of Peel, we actually have some of the highest numbers of human trafficking happening in our community. The airport and all highway corridors running through the region of Peel, particularly

Brampton, have seen an exponential increase in human trafficking over the last decade. Family Services of Peel highlight that from 2006 to 2016, for example, Peel region alone saw a 50% increase in human trafficking. This is astonishing, especially when you consider that the average age for victims of human trafficking is between 12 years old and 24 years old. These are young women, and sometimes men, who are lured into human trafficking and often do not have ways of getting out of this cycle of violence and trauma.

I understand this bill seeks to address that. The Combating Human Trafficking Act seeks to address the issue of human trafficking by providing police more powers, for example, to access hotel registries. While this might be helpful, there are some glaring loopholes here in this piece of legislation. For example, as my colleague from Toronto Centre points out, Airbnbs were not included in this piece of legislation. I understand the government will be consulting with further stakeholders. I'm hopeful that it will include expanded definitions of where and how we can protect some of those victims.

**0950**

But what we also have been hearing from community and experts is that there needs to be, in tandem, investments in housing, for example. In Peel region, we have some of the longest wait-lists for affordable housing. Some people are waiting 14 years to access affordable housing in our community. When you look at some of the underlying issues here that really prevent victims from exiting human trafficking, it is a lack of affordable housing. But there isn't necessarily a real commitment from the government to address this underlying issue in our community of Peel, but also across the province. That is deeply troubling.

I think of Katarina MacLeod who was a victim of human trafficking in Peel. She actually founded an organization to help other victims after her own experiences. Rising Angels is the name of her organization. They seek to help other victims of human trafficking exit, and also access mental health supports, for example, but those are also not readily available in our community, Speaker.

I don't think anyone in this chamber can fathom the trauma, the abuse, the scars, the psychological impacts of what human trafficking and sex trafficking in particular does to an individual. So, while we can talk about prosecuting the offenders, I think there also needs to be a conversation about how we're going to properly support those victims once they exit, because in Peel region, Speaker, the wait-list for mental health services continues to grow.

For example, for young people in our community, some are waiting 790 days to access mental health services in our community, and that's from Children's Mental Health Ontario. Can you imagine making a courageous decision to exit, but not having the supports you need to actually meaningfully move on with your life, to heal? This is the reality for many people who are experiencing human trafficking and are victims of human trafficking, Speaker.

Victim Services of Peel is doing the best it can, but it truly needs more support in order to be able to help

individuals in our community who have been victims of human trafficking and sex trafficking, but they don't have the support they need.

I recall a conversation I had with members of the Peel District School Board, actually, a principal in my riding. I was shocked to learn that children as young as 12 and younger were being solicited into human trafficking and sex trafficking. The principal detailed for me one particular hotel in our community. For many people in Brampton, this hotel is very well known—it's on the corner of Kennedy and Queen Street, a corridor—as being a place where human trafficking, sex trafficking and prostitution happen on a regular basis. When you drive by this hotel, what you see is broken windows, a dilapidated building.

What I was shocked to learn was that this was also being used as a space for supportive housing, and so there were families, for whatever means, facing homelessness being housed in this hotel—children. There were no kitchenettes. It is most likely a one-bedroom, maximum two-bedroom suite, that someone would be able to live in. But these children, Speaker, were being exposed to this and being preyed on by these perpetrators. I couldn't believe it. But the principal indicated that it wasn't just one family. They were seeing a very disturbing pattern of younger and younger children coming to them and sharing with them those experiences.

Now, for an adult, it's one thing. For a child who may be 10, 11, 12, this will stay with them for their entire life, Speaker. This may lead to mental health, substance abuse, lack of stable employment, inadequate housing issues—all contribute to the situation and further exacerbate a very heartbreaking situation for a young person who may not have any other means to exit. They are stuck in a cycle of abuse, because systems fail them, because the supports they need aren't there. For some young people, suicide might be their only option to escape a very dire situation. It shouldn't have to be that way, Speaker. It truly shouldn't have to be that way for anybody in the province of Ontario, yet this continues to be the reality for so many.

Speaker, in Brampton we also have a very high percentage of international students coming from around the world. Last year, I actually had the opportunity to meet with several of them. They also shared with me these stories of how they were being lured into sex trafficking, taken away from their communities. For many of them, this was one of the only ways that they could generate an income. I find that heartbreaking, because these are students who are coming to our country and coming to our beautiful community of Brampton to seek out better opportunities, to fulfill their hopes, their dreams, their goals and aspirations. But to know that they are being subjected to this type of violence and that they are becoming victims is deeply concerning.

I think of one young woman who shared with me that she just simply didn't know what else she could do. She did not know who she could ask for help. She did not know where to turn for support, because she's an international student. She was afraid of being deported, had she spoken up, had she reached out, had she sounded the alarm bells.

Speaker, it's important to acknowledge that this is very much connected to issues like housing because, as this young woman explained, there are maybe 15 other girls in the home that she lives in who are all experiencing the same thing—15 of them, all living in one rooming house, because that is what affordable housing looks like in our community for students.

Fifteen is actually a relatively low number compared to what we hear. I've spoken to our fire chief, Bill Boyes. What a wonderful chief. He highlighted for me how the lack of affordable housing options for people in our community has contributed to these illegal rooming and boarding houses, where upwards of 30-plus students are living in a home, Speaker. It's shocking—I can see by your reaction—to think of 30-plus people living in a home, inflatable air mattresses lined up in rows in living rooms, in bedroom after bedroom. This is a reality that these international students are being subjected to because there aren't affordable options for them.

**1000**

What Chief Bill Boyes highlighted for me was that not only is it a sad reality for these individuals and young students trying to live out their hopes and dreams here in the land of opportunity, what this meant for many of them and for our first responders was that, should a fire or emergency happen, the fire and emergency services did not know how to respond. They didn't know how many people would be in a home when they showed up. Tragically, Speaker, there have been deaths because of this situation.

I remember driving down the street one day. There must have been 20-plus emergency crews—fire trucks, ambulances—just around the corner from where I live, because I grew up just across the street from Sheridan College, which is now a booming college. The community has changed. I drove by and I saw all of these emergency vehicles and I wondered, “Oh my goodness, what happened?”

It was horrifying to read in the paper that our fire chief had to respond to a home where there were multiple residents, but because they could not locate where this individual was—because of the way it was set up as an illegal rooming house—this individual, tragically, died.

The fire chief explained to me that when they arrived on scene, they did not know how many people they were actually going to be triaging. So they kept knocking on door after door and not finding the victim, until they got into a basement, into a cellar. This is where this individual, sleeping on a cot, passed away.

This isn't the last story. The fire chief explained that they would often go into these homes, and because they were illegally renovated, what would happen is that a door would be there, and what they thought would be stairs were not. So first responders were opening doors and literally falling through a basement because they thought stairs were there.

I know I'm sort of digressing from the topic of the bill, but I think it's important to highlight what the reality of housing looks like in our community, because when we

talk about helping victims of human trafficking and sex trafficking, we need to make sure that appropriate housing options are going to be available for them. That simply isn't the reality in our community of Peel. It isn't the reality for international students and it certainly wasn't the reality for Katarina MacLeod.

I'm going to quote from an article here. These are Katarina's words: "I don't believe it's a choice, I believe it's lack of choice. That's it's things that had happened to somebody before ever entering that leaves them vulnerable."

When you think of that and you think, "What does that mean, 'things that happened' before?" Well, living in poverty, being forced into unsafe housing, not having the supports that you need if you're experiencing mental health issues: These are the factors that Katarina is highlighting that contribute to someone being taken advantage of or becoming prey for a pimp—which we have control over. We have control over this as a province to help ensure that people have a choice, because they had the supports that they needed in their communities, and that they weren't forced into a lack of choice.

I think of organizations like Rising Angels that are working to help heal, help support other victims of human trafficking. I want to thank Katarina MacLeod for taking her own experience and trauma and turning that into something will help other women who are experiencing abuse. But we as a province need to do more to help women like Katarina, to help those young children who are being forced to live in this hotel that I explained, to help our international students gain access to stable housing and employment. We have a role to play in this, Speaker.

While this bill provides enforcement powers, it isn't getting at the heart of the issue. It isn't helping to prevent, to proactively intervene or to support exit out of human trafficking. I think that's where we need to focus our energies: prevention. We need to support people in our community, so they aren't brought into human trafficking and they aren't becoming victims.

There are definitely ways to do that, and it starts by investing in housing. It starts by investing in mental health. It starts by ensuring that when women or men need to exit, they have the supports they need to heal, grow and continue to flourish as human beings in our community.

I understand that my time has expired. Thank you very much, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you very much. Questions?

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** We've heard some commentary from the opposition about the importance of capturing short-term rentals under the new legislation's registry of guests. Frankly, we agree. Given the current hotel registry of guests legislation is unable to capture any type of accommodation other than hotels, does the member opposite not agree that this legislation is an important step forward along with the nature of the sector?

**Ms. Sara Singh:** I think what's important to highlight is that this legislation does provide additional powers to police, but as we've highlighted on this side of the House,

there is absolutely more that needs to be done here. If the intent is to truly protect and prevent human trafficking from occurring in our communities, the government needs to do a lot more. Hopefully, through regulations, we'll see some amendments to the language around what those powers look like.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch to the Brampton Centre member. Today is Red Dress Day and the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. What message would you like to send to the families, individuals, women, girls and grandparents who are affected by this issue?

**Ms. Sara Singh:** I'd like to thank the member from Kiiwetinoong for that question and opportunity to share a few words. I'm actually wearing a red dress today in honour of Red Dress Day to stand in solidarity with First Nations and Indigenous communities across this province that have had to endure the trauma and legacy of colonialism.

**1010**

To the missing and murdered Indigenous women, to their families, to the grandmothers, to the sisters: I want them to know that we are going to continue fighting to ensure that this doesn't continue to happen for further generations to come. It requires education. It requires learning. And it requires a commitment to truth and reconciliation and acknowledging the reality that Indigenous people in this nation have had to endure.

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

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Thanks to the member opposite for your contribution to this debate.

Looking into the situation of the accommodations, different accommodations, which is the main vehicle for the human trafficking, we are trying with this legislation to balance between the protection and also not impeding or affecting the businesses, like the non-traditional rentals like Airbnb and whatever comes in the coming short future, because they're always moving in the technology and online business.

Knowing that accommodations and hospitality is one of the biggest sectors of business, don't you think—because whenever we put some restrictions, the opposition complains about the small businesses affected by that. So can you tell us a little bit about what you think about this legislation's balance between protecting victims and as well making sure that the accommodation small businesses do not get affected by extra restraints?

**Ms. Sara Singh:** I'm having a hard time with the question from the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills, I believe it is. I don't think this is about protecting a business. I think this should be about protecting victims of human trafficking. I find it very troubling that we would want to balance the interests of a business that is maybe engaging in illegal activity. I think that what we need to be doing is prioritizing prevention. We need to be prioritizing investments—

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Excuse me. I recognize the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills on a point of order.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I don't think talking about small business engaging, or putting the whole category of small—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. I appreciate that. That's not a point of order.

I will return for final comment from the member.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** I think at the end of the day, what we need to be doing is prioritizing investments in our communities that are going to protect victims of human trafficking. This bill doesn't go far enough.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you so much to the member for sharing with us those stories, especially the story about that hotel in your riding. It's right there and we know what needs to be done. It's about preventive measures, like addressing poverty and addressing issues of domestic violence.

One of the first things that this government did was they disbanded the expert panel on violence against women and girls. That was an expert panel that was providing advice—the very kind of advice that would have made this bill more effective. So, what do you have to say to a government that has disbanded this expert panel and has put a bill forward that doesn't include the agencies that have been working so hard for so many years to address the issue of human trafficking?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Brampton Centre: You have about 30 seconds.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Thank you so much to the member for Hamilton, Dundas and—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** There we go, okay. Speaker, it's a tough job.

I think, to the member's question, what we want to see from this government is not cuts to services that are going to be supporting victims of human trafficking. We need to see meaningful investments that will allow victims to have the supports that they need and seek out supports—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. *Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I apologize; I had to cut a little bit short. There will be additional time for you, though, at a later point in time, but it is time for members' statements at this point in time.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mr. Joel Harden:** This is Mental Health Week in Ontario, and I want, with this speech, to tip my hat and

offer my sincere thanks to every single mental health worker, every single advocate for mental health in the province of Ontario. Thank you for all you do.

For a minute, Speaker, I actually want people watching this to pause this clip and follow the link that will be embedded in this video to a terrific song that was recently composed to honour the work of street health workers in the city of Ottawa. It's called Rise Up Strong, and I want to quote one verse from the song. It says:

We're working in a system that's bursting at the seams.

The money, the resources: They're so few and far between.

But poor is not on purpose, and illness is not a crime.

There's a lot that's got to change. Rise up, people: It's time.

When I think of that verse in that amazing song, Speaker, I think about a tragedy in our community, because we lost a street health worker. His name was Carl Reinboth. He worked at the Somerset West Community Health Centre. On April 23, Carl lost his life. He was killed by someone in a mental health crisis.

When I think about the legacy Carl and so many other folks at the Somerset West Community Health Centre have to offer to us, I want to make an urgent plea: that we not think about a ramp-up of police resources for mental health issues. As Theresa Tam, Canada's officer for public health, has said, we are not going to police our way out of the mental health crisis. We need resources to the Somerset West Community Health Centre.

Their number for crisis, folks, is 613-447-0029. Call it if you need help.

## BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. Kaleed Rasheed:** I rise today to call on the federal government of Canada to immediately secure our international and interprovincial borders against deadly variants of concern. Just a single person carrying the UK variant of COVID-19 into Canada resulted in hundreds of infections and over 70 deaths at Roberta Place.

Over 12 million people have entered Canada by land or air since March 2020. According to the Toronto Star, over 5,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 on arrival since February of this year, and almost one third of them carried a variant of concern into Canada.

Speaker, some will say that only a small percentage of cases in Ontario can be linked directly to travel, but I firmly believe that the only acceptable number of cases and variants of concern coming through our borders is zero. The federal government needs to start listening and act now to protect Ontarians.

## INDIGENOUS SERVICES

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** In March, the Pikangikum chief and council voted to remove the OPP from the community. They took action over serious allegations of assault

involving the service and community members. The day after the OPP left, Indigenous Services Canada removed nursing staff from Pikangikum, even though Pikangikum has its own First Nations police and peacekeepers.

Speaker, 3,800 people live in Pikangikum. It's almost comparable to the size of Sioux Lookout, a municipality that has its own hospital. Pikangikum did not have 24-hour nursing services because the feds had concerns about their community safety.

Chief Dean Owen said, "The more we talk, the more we are resolved to move as quickly as possible towards running our own stand-alone police service—and due to the negative impacts to the nursing station, we are looking at taking over our own health services. It is evident that these systems are tied to each other at the government level, leaving our community helpless and the solution out of our control."

Can you imagine, Speaker, the government shutting down your hospital in the evening and overnight because police weren't available in the middle of a pandemic? Pulling out essential services in Pikangikum is racism and colonialism in action, and the double standard is no longer acceptable.

We thank the peacekeepers, the rights-holders and the leadership in Pikangikum for your step towards nationhood. Meegwetch.

1020

#### UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO CHAIR IN TAMIL STUDIES

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I'm pleased to rise today to talk about community spirit during these unprecedented times. The Canadian Tamil Congress and the Tamil Chair Inc. spearheaded an extraordinary initiative to create a Chair in Tamil Studies at the University of Toronto. I would like to thank president Sivan Ilangko from CTC, writer Appadurai Muttulingam and all the members and volunteers who worked with the global Tamil community to reach its target. With over 3,800 supporters, they have raised \$3 million for this position. This is the first community-funded chair at the University of Toronto.

The Tamil language is over 3,000 years old. It is the oldest and longest-surviving classical language in the world, spoken by more than 80 million people. This creation of a Tamil chair will leave a mark in our history.

When Tamils fled Sri Lanka due to the war, 300,000 of them escaped to Ontario, Canada, as a safe haven. They fled because embracing their identity as a Tamil wasn't accepted, but here today, we are showcasing that the Tamil community is rebuilding what we lost for half a century. Now, Tamil studies at the University of Toronto will institutionally continue the richness of our culture, language and heritage that was almost systematically lost in Sri Lanka.

#### RED DRESS DAY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Today, normally, I would be in Serpent River or another community on Red Dress Day

with my tobacco in hand. I would like to deliver this message to communities: Red Dress Day is just one way that we can demonstrate that we have not forgotten the mothers, sisters and daughters who have been taken from us before their time.

To those left behind, the loss can be highly traumatic and long-lasting. The effect upon entire communities can be like waves that overwhelm us, if we allow it to do so. That is why it is important to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, as sisters, brothers, parents, elders and youth to ensure the tragic losses we experience are recognized as significant and real. It is essential that we ensure that the issue of the missing and lost Indigenous girls and women receives the national attention and actions that it deserves. We must ensure that we draw the attention of the world to the gendered and racialized nature of violent crimes against Indigenous women. As well, we must ensure that the issue is not seen to be simply a women's issue, but rather an issue for all people of every gender, race and nationality.

By wearing red on this day, we signify that these loved ones are not forgotten, but remain in our hearts for eternity. Support and participation in this movement is essential if we are to build a future in which Indigenous girls and women can focus on their future, rather than looking over their shoulders in fear.

#### MOTHER'S DAY

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** This upcoming Sunday is Mother's Day, and I wanted to take a moment to acknowledge that supporting women and mothers is a tangible benefit for the province. Access to child care, education, counselling or good jobs is essential to making sure women are included in the economic recovery the province needs.

I am lucky not only to be the mother of four wonderful children, but also to have my mother by my side, living with us and being part of our daily life. I owe it to her, in large part, to be here today.

I am certain that all of us in this House know of women and mothers who have made incredible contributions to our families and communities over the last year. Women in sectors such as health care and social services, education, and accommodation and food services have continued to work on the front lines throughout this pandemic. While some continued to put their lives at risk for our sakes, others were forced to leave their job to take on child care and schooling at home, once again putting others ahead of themselves.

This Mother's Day, let us all show extra love and appreciation for the women and mothers in our lives, and let us commit to using the abilities we have here in this House to do better by them. I'm wishing a happy Mother's Day to all the mothers in this House and to all the mothers in Ontario.

#### JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** The month of May is Jewish Heritage Month in Ontario and Canada. Formally

recognized by the Ontario Legislature in February 2012 and by the federal Parliament in March 2018, Jewish Heritage Month provides us with a unique opportunity to learn, share and celebrate the history and culture of Jewish Canadians. Canada is home to the fourth-largest Jewish population in the world, and Jews have played a vital role in every sector of our society, establishing themselves long ago as crucial and vibrant contributors to our multicultural society.

Unfortunately, this community continues to be the target of unwarranted attacks of hatred and anti-Semitism. According to B'nai Brith, there were 2,610 anti-Semitic incidents in Canada last year, an 18.6% increase over 2019, and this translates to the equivalent of seven incidents on an average day, every day, making the Jewish community one of our country's most targeted minority groups.

According to B'nai Brith's annual audit of anti-Semitic incidents for 2020, about one in 10 of them involved the promotion of conspiracy theories, vandalism or violence related to the COVID pandemic. Sadly, some 44% of violent incidents last year were COVID-related, and half of those were against visibly observant Jews who were denied service at various retailers, spat on, assaulted, randomly pelted by items and shot with air pellets.

Last October, Ontario adopted the international Holocaust remembrance working definition of "anti-Semitism," and our government wants to stand with the Jewish community and every other community to defend their rights and their freedoms.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Last week, I held a small business forum with businesses from across Brampton Centre, and many of them raised very troubling concerns about this government's lack of support for small businesses in our community. I heard from businesses that are facing bankruptcy, frankly, because they haven't been able to get any support from this government.

I spoke with driving instructors who are not able to qualify for the small business grant because of the eligibility criteria. I've also spoken with folks in the personal care services who are at their wits' end with lockdown after lockdown that has not provided them the support they need as a small business to continue to sustain their business while keeping their doors closed. The expenses for many of these businesses are piling up, and this government is failing those businesses. I've also connected with independent producers and ethnic media who are wondering why they haven't received any supports from this government through an ethnic media stabilization fund, something that New Democrats have been calling on this government to implement since the start of this pandemic.

It's unfortunate that Brampton businesses are being forced to close their doors and are waiting and waiting weeks and weeks on end to hear even an email reply from this government with respect to their small business grant.

I encourage this government to step up to the plate, help support businesses in Brampton and across Ontario. Get them the supports they need so they don't have to close their doors forever.

#### JOANNA GRATKOWSKA

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** Today, my beautiful and strong grandmother in Poland is turning 90 years young. I miss her very much, as I have not been able to see her in two years now due to travel restrictions and keeping her health and safety in mind. Thankfully, technology is a wonderful thing, and I was able to see her via Zoom to personally wish her a happy birthday, and even toast her with champagne.

Joanna Gratkowska, maiden name Dudek, was born on May 5, 1931. She gave birth to five children, two of whom passed away, unfortunately. Widowed in her thirties, she lived through the Second World War and the communist regime, raising three children as a single mom, including my mom, Anna. To me, she is the embodiment of courage, perseverance, generosity and motherhood. I fondly remember my summer and sometimes winter holidays spent at Babcia's house in Poland playing in the fields, collecting flowers, feeding the rabbits and chickens, watching grandma make perogies and, of course, attending the holy mass religiously every Sunday.

My grandma is a great orator and storyteller. She passed on to me and my brother her memories of war and hardship, but also her wisdom in having faith in God and always helping those less fortunate than us. Even though she struggled as a single mom, she took in an orphan whom she raised as her own.

So today, even though I'm thousands of miles away, my heart and my thoughts are with my Babcia Asia.

*Remarks in Polish.*

Happy birthday.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Springtime typically signifies new beginnings, warm sunshine, gardens growing, yet during the third wave of the pandemic, many of my constituents say they feel stuck inside, yearning for outdoor activities, wishing they could visit their loved ones. They are tired of the restrictions and the sacrifice required to help stop the spread of the virus. Yes, COVID-19 fatigue is real. I understand.

**1030**

However, as doctors and nurses continue to work around the clock on the front lines with COVID-19 patients in hospitals, and especially in the ICUs, they help us overcome the darkest days of this pandemic. The fatigue they experience is overwhelming and exhausting. Our gratitude for their sacrifice and service is endless. We must show them our support. Action always speaks louder than words.

Speaker, I ask all Ontarians to act selflessly and comply with the stay-at-home order, with these health care heroes



in mind. It is our best opportunity to help them save lives. Together, we look forward in hope and courage to better days ahead.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my first question this morning is to the Premier. It's now been six days since the long-term-care commission issued its report outlining the horrifying conditions in long-term care as COVID-19 ripped through, as well as this government's failure to protect seniors. In fact, I quote from the report: They said, "Alarm bells should have been ringing loudly in Ontario," and "There was no plan to protect residents in long-term care."

The Premier and the minister, all summer long, claimed that there was an iron ring around long-term care, and everybody knew that there was no such thing. And yet, nobody on the government side is prepared to take responsibility for the horrifying tragedies that took place in long-term care. When is this Premier going to do the right thing and remove the Minister of Long-Term Care?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I first want to acknowledge the families whose loved ones were impacted by what happened in long-term-care homes. It was a tragedy and it was absolutely terrible.

Our government called the commission to action to provide accountability and justice for the families as soon as possible. It is now all of our responsibilities to fix the system that no government has gotten right—not Bob Rae, not Mike Harris, not Dalton McGuinty, not Kathleen Wynne. The final report shows what we've been saying all along: After years of neglect by governments of all political stripes—red, orange and blue—our long-term-care system was broken.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're the government who will finally fix it. According to the commission's report, "Many of the challenges that had festered in the long-term-care sector for decades—chronic underfunding, severe staffing shortages, outdated infrastructure and poor oversight—contributed to deadly consequences for Ontario's most vulnerable citizens during the pandemic."

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Part of the Premier's problem is that nobody has taken accountability for what happened in long-term care through the first and second waves. There's no denying that decades of Mike Harris and Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne and Steven Del Duca were a big part of the mess in long-term care, but this government—this government—has to take some responsibility for the cuts that it made: in 2018, cancelling the comprehensive inspections and, in 2019, cutting funding for long-term care and for public health.

No single home has lost a licence. There has been no minister who has lost their job. There have been literally

no consequences for the horrors that families lived through, through COVID-19, in long-term care. Why does this Premier continue to protect his minister, instead of showing families that someone will step up and take responsibility? The Premier needs to do that by removing the Minister of Long-Term Care from her portfolio.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I have full confidence in my minister. She's done more as a doctor to serve those most in need than anyone in this chamber—anyone, bar none. For 30 years, she has dedicated her life to protecting the most vulnerable, caring for those who are sick on the front lines. That deserves respect.

Her voice and experience are vital as we correct the decades of inaction in the long-term-care sector caused by many governments. Because of her leadership, we're already seeing success in this sector: for example, thousands of new long-term-care beds are being built, the implementation of four hours of care, and hiring thousands and thousands of new PSWs.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it is absolutely disheartening to hear this Premier defending his Minister of Long-Term Care instead of having spent the last year defending seniors who were losing their lives to COVID-19.

I want to tell the Premier something that I asked his minister on Monday. I want him to hear what I asked her. The commission, of course, had a number of family stories that they outlined, which were just horrifying, but on Monday, here's the one I decided to bring forward: "Of all the pictures I have of my mother over the years ... the one that's burned into my mind forever is her lying there in a wet diaper without even a blanket to cover her, with her arm up, stretched in the air, begging for water and asking God why he had forsaken her." Speaker, this can never happen again in our province.

Front-line workers and family members have no confidence in this government, in this minister or in this Premier to fix long-term care. The very least this Premier should do is show some accountability. Fire that minister from her position, because nobody has any faith in her ability to fix the system.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: What I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition on is it was a tragedy. It's heartbreaking hearing these stories over and over again from decades of neglect.

We saw this happen right across the province. We've looked at—let's use Roberta Place in Barrie. The UK variant got in there; one person wiped out all of Roberta Place. The mortalities were up close to 100, the infections were 200, because the variants got into our country—just one person.

Yesterday, 12 people that we know of—that we know of—just going through the airport came in with COVID. That's 12 people. Multiply that by 10 in a day if they don't stay at home—because they aren't staying at home, by the way, Mr. Speaker.

We need the federal government to stop the leak. It's like there's a hole in the roof and the water is pouring in, and the federal government is just not doing anything about it, and it continues to spread. All front-line health care workers are working hard. Everyone is getting vaccines. We're working around the clock, but there is a gaping hole right now. I'm asking once again for the federal government to tighten up our borders until we don't see this tragedy happen in any long-term care.

### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier, but the people of Ontario deserve more than a Premier who just deflects to another order of government.

Residents and families are desperate for a change in long-term care, but we got a pretty clear signal yesterday that that change is nowhere to be found. For example, top executives at for-profit long-term-care chains collected massive bonuses during 2020 while literally thousands of seniors were dying in long-term care. The CEO of Extendicare was paid \$1.7 million. The outgoing CEO of Sienna: \$4.7 million. Extendicare is the same long-term-care chain that operated Orchard Villa, where some of the most horrifying situations occurred, where people were dying of neglect and dehydration.

How can the Premier continue to defend making profits in long-term care, continue to shovel public dollars at for-profit long-term-care homes in our province? This should stop. Will he make that commitment?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Through you, Mr. Speaker: I know it's easy for the Leader of the Opposition to blame my great minister, but the buck stops with me; that's who it stops with. It stops with me and I'll take responsibility.

Across the province—and I'll tell you what we're doing to correct it. Just think, over 15 years under the NDP and Liberals, and especially the last few years of 2011 to 2018, 611 beds were put together out of all those years. I'll tell you what we're doing to fix it: As a province, the Ontario government is moving forward with 80 new long-term-care projects, which will lead to an additional 7,510 new beds and 4,197 upgraded long-term-care spaces. Ontario is investing over \$933 million in these projects province-wide. On top of that, \$1.75 billion is already earmarked for delivery of 30,000—compare 611 to 30,000—new spaces over 10 years. We're hiring over 27,000 PSWs and nurses. That's 27,000.

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We recognized there was a problem. We recognize there was a massive problem. But guess what—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** There is absolutely no doubt in anyone's mind that the long-term-care system is a broken system, but here's another example of how this government is prepared to carry on: Sienna and Extendicare took \$157 million in COVID funding, and the government continues to shovel more money at those operators.

These are operators whose homes were literally scenes of horror for residents and family members, homes like Orchard Villa. This sector is one in which these bonuses are being paid while senior executives are mocking grieving family members, suggesting that they're launching "blood-sucking lawsuits." These are the buddies of this government. In fact, to add insult to injury, today, the Minister of Energy appointed one of the vice-presidents of for-profit Extendicare to the board of the IESO, a nice cushy appointment by this government.

Will no one on the government side ever step up and stand up for the families and the victims in long-term care, instead of their friends and buddies in the for-profit industry—

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

*Interjections.*

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

I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Doug Ford:** Again, I have no buddies in long-term care. But do you know who my buddies are? They're the front-line PSWs, the nurses who are working their backs off.

Mr. Speaker, we're the first government in Ontario and Canada—and I'm sure probably one of the first in North America—that will direct four hours of care on average to every long-term-care resident. We're mandating air conditioning—and I want to give the reporter from CBC, they deserve the credit—in long-term-care homes, investing over \$100 million to train up 8,200 PSWs. Our government has approved nearly \$2 billion in staffing, as I said earlier, for 27,000 new staff. Over a few short years, we're investing more than \$9.6 billion. The previous government, and the NDP that supported them for years, never, ever invested.

Mr. Speaker, we're exceeding the NDP's own platform target of a 30% increase in spending by 2028. We're exceeding what they were asking for. With our pandemic pay program alone, we hired—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you, Premier. Thank you very much. Please take your seat.

The final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, nearly 4,000 people lost their lives to COVID-19 in long-term care, and thousands of others lost their lives to neglect and dehydration in long-term care. The Minister of Long-Term Care has not taken any responsibility. She has shown no remorse for what happened. The government plan that the Premier likes to talk about is way too late. The commission said clearly that changes have to happen now, not in 2025.

So I ask the Premier again, will he do the right thing and show the families, the survivors, the families of victims of COVID-19 in long-term care that he understands that his minister has no credibility, that families don't trust her, they don't believe in her, and fire her so that they can maybe find somebody to do the job properly?

**Hon. Doug Ford:** You know something, Mr. Speaker? I'll stand up for my minister all day long, because the Leader of the Opposition wasn't on the calls till midnight

that I would be speaking to the minister, day after day after day: the conference calls, her leading the charge, making sure that the appropriate changes that were ignored for decades—for decades, Mr. Speaker. She showed leadership.

It was a terrible, terrible situation. It was an absolute tragedy that happened, not just here in Ontario, but around the world. We saw what happened in the US. We saw what happened across Canada with long-term care. It was a tragedy, but, Mr. Speaker, we're going to fix it. We're going to make sure we fix it.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I will take personal responsibility. We will make sure we fix it. We will make sure that we have rapid builds. We're going to make sure we hit our target of 30,000 new beds over the next 10 years. We're well on our way. This will never happen again.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Ms. Sara Singh:** My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Speaker, the minister has been running from the press gallery. She has been hiding from her record of failure. But do you know who can't run and who can't hide? The thousands of Ontarians who died in long-term care, or the staff who had to watch, painfully, as residents took their last breath, and wept through their face shields and masks. Those folks can't hide, Speaker, and this minister stood by and watched this all unfold. Will she finally show some leadership and apologize to these families and staff, and will she resign?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I certainly understand the upset from the families, and the commission has been very clear with the report. It indicates the long-standing issues, the structural issues, the staffing issues in long-term care.

Absolutely, I've been very clear, and repeated this numerous times, that I do take responsibility for the well-being of residents in long-term care. I do take responsibility for the staff and the families. That's exactly why I came to politics, because I recognized the importance of long-term care. I recognized that for decades, the measures weren't being taken, so long before the pandemic came, I was taking responsibility for this, trying to get to this place, to be able to make the changes necessary, which we've done. We already started with the staffing study; the capacity-building, 15,000 new beds in five years, 30,000 new beds in 10 years; a commitment to four hours of direct care; innovative programs, like community paramedicine, to keep people in their own homes; infection prevention and control; and integration with hospitals and public health.

We will continue to do this, because we are committed to solving the problems in long-term care so that this doesn't—

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

Supplementary question.

**Ms. Sara Singh:** Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, these families are not just upset. They are dealing with trauma, with pain, with mental health impacts that

will last for much longer than I think this minister understands.

Let's recap what we've heard from the minister this week: She said that she "didn't start the fire" in long-term care. She said that the death of 4,000 Ontarians was "overdue," and she said that she has nothing to apologize for. She even said that it's everyday Ontarians who need to do some "soul-searching" about why Conservatives let their loved ones suffer and die from neglect.

Speaker, this minister didn't take action when she was supposed to. They didn't hire PSWs over the summer. They didn't increase infection control measures in our long-term-care homes. They failed to act. The only one who needs to do some soul-searching, Mr. Speaker, is this minister, and she needs to resign. When is she going to do that?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I know very clearly what is true and what is not true. When we look at the response to the outbreaks in our homes, we were working around the clock to address the capacity issues and the overcrowding in long-term care; to address the staffing, making sure that we were taking every measure possible, integrating the acute care sector into long-term care homes; the public health inspections; the public health efforts to support these homes; and training people during this time, to make sure we had the workforce necessary, starting with the staffing plan that we had already undertaken and begun and hiring over 8,600 people into long-term care, with the pandemic pay.

With the efforts in infection prevention and control, we were able to reduce the level of severity of the outbreaks, and I'm so grateful to the hospitals for coming to our aid when it was necessary. We were making sure all these levers were being taken, and we are continuing to advance long-term care, on the staffing, the four hours of care, on the capacity, on the innovation programs, on the infection prevention—

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

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#### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. David Piccini:** Over the past number of months, as I and members in this Legislature have been dealing with the very real conversations with constituents about variants of concern wreaking havoc in our communities, I join members on this side of the House in making the very real and difficult decisions to protect the health and well-being of Ontarians throughout this province. I know that one thing has remained consistent: Since the very beginning, our Premier has led the charge in calling for the federal government to address these variants of concern at the source. I know, in fact, in the last number of weeks our government has written a series of letters to the federal government, asking for stricter measures at both land and air borders.

My question is to the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. My question is: What

was in those letters? And what has the response been since we've sent those letters?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Thank you very much to the member for that question. Our government has done its part by restricting travel by land at both the Manitoba and Quebec borders. Unfortunately, we have heard no official response from the federal government outlining the concerns that we have with our border and the holes in our border.

Mr. Speaker, 90% of cases today are made up of variants of concern. We have three very simple requests to the federal government: ban all non-essential travel into Canada, and specifically Ontario; implement PCR testing for domestic flights; and close the loopholes at our land borders. It is absolutely incredible how individuals are flaunting the fact on social media that they're flying into Buffalo, New York, and walking across the border and putting the health and safety of all Ontarians in jeopardy. We join the Premier in asking the federal government to have stronger measures and to secure our borders.

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

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. Speaker, many of my constituents are making very real sacrifices across our community. We're seeing these sacrifices across Ontario. Ontarians want their lives back. Yet, we continue to see individuals flaunt loopholes at our land border crossings and getting around screening measures at the border that they know are in place to stop variants of concern from entering. We must do more.

Just yesterday, the Prime Minister and health officials were asked about how many people are circumventing these rules at the land border. In response, the Public Health Agency of Canada said they don't know; they don't have a specific number. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not good enough. That's not good enough for the small businesses, for the health care workers and for the people across my riding making sacrifices each and every day so that we can get our lives back.

This is very concerning for Ontarians across this country. I'd like to know, can the minister please respond to these concerns, and what more are we doing to address this?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Since February, over 5,000 people have tested positive for COVID because of air travel. In the past two weeks, we had over 150,000 people crossing our borders by land, and that does not include commercial truck drivers. We know that 90% of cases today in Ontario are variants of concern. We've seen other countries across the world—whether it's Australia, New Zealand—enact stronger measures at their borders to protect people in their own countries. We have now confirmed cases of the B1617 variant in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec.

We are asking and pleading with the federal government to close the loopholes, to secure our borders, so that as we continue to vaccinate hundreds of thousands of people in Ontario, our recovery is not jeopardized. We need the federal government to step up and secure our borders.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. The long-term-care commission has revealed what anyone with a family member in a for-profit long-term-care facility already knew, that decades of neglect left long-term-care residents vulnerable, that this government was not prepared for a pandemic and that this government ignored the warnings of the risk that COVID posed to long-term-care residents.

I heard from a constituent in Welland whose mother was placed into Royal Rose Place, a for-profit long-term-care home. Over the course of only five months she saw her mother's health deteriorate. She had two ulcers, constant urinary tract infections and she was left in soiled diapers for hours. Complaint after complaint to the ministry went unaddressed until her mother passed just a few weeks ago.

When will this minister take responsibility for her government's lack of action and for what is happening to seniors in long-term care under her watch? Apologize and resign.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I certainly want to reiterate the concerns over the long-standing issues in long-term care, the tragedy that this was and that is ongoing as we deal with this collectively in Ontario, across Canada and around the world.

We continue to take measures in long-term care. We initiated these as soon as we became a ministry and even before that as a government to understand the capacity issues, to understand the staffing issues. That's exactly what we've been addressing.

We were in touch with these homes on a regular basis, monitoring what was going on and moving as quickly as we could, using every lever possible. That's why we're committed to the four hours of direct care. That's why we're investing unprecedented amounts in long-term care for staffing, for capacity-building, for infection prevention and control and for integration with the hospital sector and public health.

That's why we are committed, because we've seen the tragedy and we know the neglect of this sector. We are committed to moving forward and taking the measures necessary to address this. We will fix it.

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

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** What is happening today in long-term care rests on the shoulders of this government. For the Minister of Long-Term Care to claim that she holds no responsibility for what's happening in long-term care is not believable.

I was contacted by another constituent whose mother was at Royal Rose Place. Her mother has dementia. She got COVID, along with 77 other residents in the 96-bed long-term-care home. She had great difficulty recovering and has since suffered seven falls, and a few weeks ago broke her neck. They've filed a number of complaints with the ministry, to no avail—no response.

Just this week, five staff and six more residents tested positive for the virus at Royal Rose Place. Will this minister stop shifting the blame, take responsibility and resign?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I have consistently taken responsibility. I have said numerous times I take full responsibility for the well-being of residents in long-term care, staff and families. That is why I came to politics, to address this long-standing issue.

The commissioner's report and the Auditor General's report have been very clear about the long-standing issues, and that's exactly what we're addressing with this staffing crisis that was pre-existing: with hiring over 8,600 people into long-term care after the first wave; with the pandemic pay over the summer; making sure that we understood the issues of capacity, and creating innovative programs to address that; looking at the infection prevention and control and investing in that; making sure that there were leads in the homes and IPAC hubs for this; and making sure that we were integrated with the public health units and the hospital sector.

Again, I want to thank everyone that came to long-term care's aid during this very, very tragic time.

I take full responsibility and our government takes responsibility for fixing the system that was broken. We are committed to doing that, and we will continue to do this. Our actions demonstrate this. Whether it's capacity, staffing, infection prevention and control, innovative programs or integration, we'll continue to work on this.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** My question is for the Premier: 3,771 people died in long-term care, more in the second wave than in the first wave. Instead of blaming others, I think the people of this province want a simple apology from their Premier and from the Minister of Long-Term Care. They want the minister to take the time to answer questions and to commit to a complete overhaul of the long-term-care system, starting with putting care before profits.

I have a simple yes-or-no question for the Premier: Will the Premier commit today to the people of this province that the government will immediately begin to implement all 85 recommendations from the long-term-care commission?

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**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply on behalf of the government, the Minister of Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** In terms of the commission on long-term care's 85 recommendations, they're all very insightful. Some of the recommendations we're well on our way to completing or have completed. Others will take more work and an understanding of how they can be implemented. We're absolutely committed to the insightful recommendations and the report that the commissioners have provided to us. We are tremendously grateful for that insight. So, yes, we acknowledge the importance of the commissioners' recommendations. There's no question about that.

In terms of taking responsibility, we have; in fact, more so than any other previous government in the history of this province, for long-term care. Donna Duncan from the OLTC indicated that publicly. When we look at what the mess was, we are addressing this: the staffing, four hours of direct care, the capacity, the innovative programs—making sure that we never let this happen again. And so we will do that.

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

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Speaker, sadly, for the people who lost loved ones in long-term-care homes, I take it from that response that the answer is no. It's one thing to say, yes, we acknowledge recommendations. It's another thing to say that we will immediately begin to implement recommendations.

I want to quote from the commission report: "The working conditions ... in long-term-care homes must be improved in order to better attract, recruit, develop, and retain staff." This includes guaranteeing PSWs full-time work and living wages. So, Speaker, if the government is not going to commit today to implementing all 85 recommendations in the long-term-care commission report, will the minister at least commit today to extending and making permanent the pandemic pay increase for PSWs which is set to expire on June 30?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I think the member opposite is saying it in a different way. I have said that we will look at all those recommendations. Some of them are already done. Some of them need to be done. Others, we have to understand how to do them. So, absolutely, when we look at the PSWs in our long-term-care system, they are the backbone and, I will say, they're also the heart of our system. We have been very supportive of the PSWs, to understand what we can do to help them with the pandemic pay, with the temporary wage increase, and looking at ways that we can make sure that they are supported and recognized for the important work that they do.

The Premier has been very clear: Everything is on the table. While we work through this process, while we take the insights of the commission and the Auditor General to heart, we are committed to addressing these long-standing issues like no other government in the history of this province.

#### BORDER SECURITY

**Mr. David Piccini:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction. Speaker, I just got an email from a constituent—literally just got an email. They were asking about the leadership that they've seen from the Premier on border measures. But they were confused because they hadn't seen anything from the federal government. I quote, "Thanks, Dave. We are flying into Buffalo in June and walking across the border to avoid the mandatory three-day stay at a hotel." Right here, Mr. Speaker.

We know that these loopholes are being exposed. We know that this is how variants of concern are entering our

country. In fact, 90% of daily cases are variants of concern, and the dominant strain is the UK variant of concern. When we look abroad, we see that the UK has imposed travel restrictions and banned travel from over 40 countries worldwide. We know Australia is limiting travel to domestic nationals only or nationals of New Zealand.

Speaker, I don't understand why certain opposition members and a political party would choose to make light of these very serious issues, these very serious concerns that the Premier of this province is flagging—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. Take your seat.

The Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I agree with the member opposite: Any political party or leader that is against combating new variants that are coming into this province, which are deadlier and are more transmissible, and is making it about racial politics is completely wrong.

Are the Premiers of the Atlantic provinces racist for implementing the Atlantic bubble? Is the Prime Minister of New Zealand racist for calling for and enacting stronger measures at the border? Is the Prime Minister of Australia racist for enacting stronger measures at the border? No, this is about protecting our communities—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** The city of Brampton has put forward a unanimous motion, supported by all members of council to support restricting air travel into this country. This is nothing about race, Mr. Speaker. This is about protecting our province. It's about protecting cities like Brampton. It's about protecting from the deadlier variants of concern, and that's why we need stronger measures at our borders—

*Interjections.*

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

We can start the clock. Supplementary.

**Mr. David Piccini:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. You know, as we heard Liberal members opposite heckle, "Why aren't you doing it?" this really speaks to what we need to see across this province. We've seen our municipalities link arms. I had 10 municipal leaders and two Indigenous leaders in our community write a joint letter calling on the federal government to work with the province to implement stricter border measures. We've seen, as the member mentioned, unanimous motions moved in some of the most diverse communities in this province, because what we all understand is that this isn't a matter of race. This is a matter of working together to protect the health and well-being of the people we have the honour to serve in this place. We have a Premier who continues to stand up, to call on the federal government to fix these loopholes, to call on the federal government to implement mandatory PCR testing.

Speaker, I know that there are a suite of measures we can use, including PCR testing. Can the minister please speak to what more measures we can do to protect the health and well-being of the people we have the honour to serve in this place?

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** We know that, since February, over 5,000 positive cases of COVID-19 have come through travel. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't even account for the thousands, because of that travel, that go across the community. There are holes in our border, and we need those loopholes to be addressed.

The Premier has called. Our ministers have written three letters to the federal government and have received no response. Our ask is simple: Close the loopholes at our land borders. Let's ensure that there is PCR testing for domestic flights, and let's also ensure that non-essential travel into Canada, specifically Ontario, is restricted.

We've done our part at the Manitoba and Quebec borders. We restricted travel by land and by water. We need the federal government to step up and to secure our borders, so we can continue to fight this third wave and so we can continue to vaccinate people, and get back and support our small businesses and get the economy opening. But we need the federal government to act and secure our borders immediately.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Minister of Education. As we confirmed yesterday, the RCMP is investigating the shadowy group Vaughan Working Families for breaking election laws. We know this group has deep ties to the Premier and the Minister of Education. We also know the Premier and the minister happened to attend a Florida hockey game in December 2018 with the group's chair.

Speaker, I'm sure the snacks were wonderful in the box seats. However, Ontarians deserve to know if the Minister of Education has anything to add, but he avoided answering my questions yesterday. Has the Minister of Education met with the RCMP regarding this investigation, and if so, what did he tell them?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** As I said yesterday, it's my understanding that the Chief Electoral Officer conducted an inquiry into this, and it has since been referred off to authorities. I have full confidence that they have all of the resources and whatever they need to conduct a thorough investigation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. The member for Northumberland–Peterborough South will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary.

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**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** To the Premier: The Premier has traded favours behind closed doors with the same people

who are involved in this shadowy group ever since he was elected. The Globe and Mail has revealed that the group uses the Premier's own lawyer, Stephen Thiele, as legal counsel. The Premier gave one of the group's former directors, Quinto Annibale, a plum position as the LCBO's vice-chair. And now, the government has used the pandemic as cover to cut development deals with the chair of this group, Michael DeGasperis, the same developer who hosted the Premier at a Florida hockey game—remember those snacks.

Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario what he knows about this whole mess? Will he ensure his government cuts all ties with the people behind this group while they're under RCMP investigation?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Of course, the honourable member will recall that, I think it was in June of last year, Elections Ontario made it very clear that there was no involvement of any party in this Legislature with respect to this particular group. But having said that, Elections Ontario has referred it, and I'm sure the resources are in place to thoroughly investigate it, to ensure that our elections continue to remain safe and that all of those who participated in it are doing so in the proper fashion.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. Since the release of the long-term-care commission's final report, the government has reminded us of how many new PSWs are being trained and hired to support our long-term-care homes. However, what they didn't address is the shocking staff retention rate, which is central to the issue, and a temporary wage increase won't do it. Recommendations were made by the commissioner of the long-term-care public inquiry and were repeated in the long-term-care commission's final report.

As the Minister has said herself, PSWs are the backbone of long-term-care homes, and I couldn't agree more. So, will the minister commit—and I believe it's worth repeating the ask—to providing PSWs safe and adequate working conditions in conformity with the long-term-care commission's latest recommendations so that we may be effective in attracting and retaining much-needed PSWs?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you very much for that important question. We acted very early in our mandate as a government to address long-term care, and we created the staffing strategy, the staffing plan, and eventually, it emerged as a better place to work and a better place to live. That is exactly why we're working on those four hours of direct care per resident per day, making sure that we are supporting our PSWs in our long-term-care homes, because, as the member opposite has mentioned, it is about retention.

When we look at the 8,600 and more that we were able to hire with the pandemic pay, it needs to be about retaining them as well. We're training over 17,000, right now, in terms of PSWs, and making sure that the staff is there to provide those four hours of direct care. We know, when we see the shortages during this tragic pandemic,

how this impacts the staff that are there, so we're taking the measures to address this. We're taking the measures to support our PSWs. We will continue to take measures to make sure that they are supported and that the environment and conditions they work in are optimum for their safety.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Again to the Minister of Long-Term Care: My colleagues in this House have made it clear that while previous governments took significant steps towards improving long-term care, much more could or should have been done. If my colleagues and I can recognize past shortfalls, the minister should be able to do the same. The loss of nearly 4,000 Ontarians living and working in long-term care is completely heartbreaking, and the minister must admit that the government didn't do enough. The families and workers affected by these losses deserve a government that takes ownership and commits to do better.

According to evidence presented in the report, the government failed to adequately protect long-term-care residents during the pandemic. Can the Minister commit to do better by implementing the recommendations the government itself asked for?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Thank you again. Those recommendations from the commissioners in the commission report are very insightful, and we very much appreciate them. It has to be about making things better. That's what we've said all along.

In terms of our efforts, we began immediately with the staffing, with the capacity issues, making sure that we had the innovative programs to allow people to stay in their homes as long as possible and as long as they could, if they wished to do so. This is part of the staffing plan for those four hours of direct care, making sure that our staff are supported and looked after. This is all part of a complex issue in terms of how we address an aging population and create the staffing necessary for this aging population. These measures were long neglected.

Could we have moved faster as a government? That has been our whole intent. COVID moved faster. Do I regret that we couldn't move faster? Absolutely. I acknowledge the responsibility that we have, each and every one of us here, to make things better in long-term care, particularly myself and particularly our government, which we are tasked to do and which we will do.

#### COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** My question is to the Minister of Health. In my riding and across Ottawa, I hear from many constituents, like child care workers, who cannot work from home. They are anxious to get their vaccines so they can continue to provide high-quality care to our children. Can the minister please tell this House what we are doing to support these important workers?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member for Ottawa West–Nepean for this important question. Starting tomorrow, May 6, at 8 a.m., even more Ontarians who

cannot work from home will be eligible to book their vaccination appointments through the provincial booking system. These include remaining elementary and secondary school workers, workers responding to critical events, food manufacturing and distribution workers, remaining individuals working in licensed child care settings, foster care agency workers, and agriculture and farm workers.

As more vaccine supply becomes available from the federal government, we will continue to expand the list of who is eligible to receive the vaccine, including more critical workers who cannot work from home.

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

**Mr. Jeremy Roberts:** Through you, Speaker: Thank you for that response. Despite an inconsistent vaccine supply to date, our government has continued to build a solid foundation in Ontario's vaccine rollout, with a focus on age and risk, allowing us to reach our most vulnerable populations and have a measurable impact. For example, I was particularly proud when Ontario became the first province in Canada to prioritize individuals with developmental disabilities for vaccines as part of our phase 2 rollout.

Can the Minister of Health please update this House on the status of our vaccination program for the month of May?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you again to the member for that question. I am very pleased to report that last week we achieved our goal of administering first doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 40% of Ontarians 18 years of age and older. As of today, over 5.6 million doses have been administered. In just two days since we opened up booking eligibility to more groups of Ontarians, over 700,000 appointments have been made through the provincial booking system. On Monday alone, 420,000 appointments were made, and the system held up. Importantly, over 91% of Ontarians over age 80 have received at least one dose. Over 25,000 first and second doses have been administered in 31 fly-in First Nations communities and Moosonee, and 95% of long-term-care residents are now fully vaccinated.

I strongly encourage everyone to sign up to receive a vaccine as soon as it's their turn.

#### INDIGENOUS LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** My question is to the Minister of Long-Term Care. I read the report from the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission with great sadness. In our way of life as Indigenous people, it is unimaginable that we ask our elders to leave home on a plane to be looked after by other people, but this is the reality because we have so few long-term-care beds in Kiiwetinoong. We desperately need more long-term-care beds across the region in Far Northern Ontario.

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I hear these numbers being thrown around—15,000, 30,000. Why has the government not taken any action to get the 76 long-term-care beds they promised the Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre in 2018?

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

Our last round of projects—80 projects—included projects for the Indigenous communities, because we believe that this is a very important area, as well as the francophone communities and other groups. We recognize the importance of being able to serve people in their own language, serve people with communities of care that are consistent with their cultural needs. We understand that, as a government, and that's exactly why we've included those in the last round of projects. We'll continue to have this top of mind. Thank you for mentioning it.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Back to the minister: We cannot measure the impact of approximately 4,000 deaths in long-term care from COVID-19 to those families. When I think about that number—the number is nearly the whole municipality of Sioux Lookout, where I come from.

Speaker, the commission's report said the lack of Indigenous long-term-care homes leads to elders, especially those who only speak their language, being cut off from the love and contact of their families and communities. I have said this before: The elders leave and die alone, far away from their families, and they aren't flown home until they have died. How cruel.

When will this government fulfill its promise—the Premier was in Sioux Lookout, actually, in 2018—that was made three years ago and invest in culturally appropriate long-term-care homes for our elders in Kiiwetinoong? Meegwetch.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Again, thank you to the member opposite.

This government is absolutely committed to making sure that we look after the Indigenous communities, the francophone communities and other groups that have specific needs for their cultural respect—and that was also clear in the commission report, as you've mentioned. Our government is endeavouring to make up for lost time from previous decades. We'll continue to keep this at the forefront and address these issues.

#### COVID-19 RESPONSE

**Mr. Roman Baber:** My question is to the Minister of Health. This morning, Ontario Soccer sent a letter to the Premier urging that the social and physical neglect of Ontario's kids must stop. Ontario Soccer stressed that organized and controlled sports are safe for Ontario's youth, and that it's time we take the mental health of three million Ontario children and youth seriously.

Today, I'll be participating with half a million soccer players in the Let Us Play campaign. I encourage everyone to take a picture with #LetUsPlay, post it on social media, and send it to your MPP.

Yesterday, the health minister said that hospitals and ICU numbers have to go down and, most incredibly, that the backlog of surgeries would have to be worked through before the ban on outdoor sports and other restrictions can be lifted.



My question to the Minister of Health: Will she listen to all the experts who unanimously say that being outdoors is safe and, to quote Ontario Soccer, “stop the social and physical neglect of Ontario’s kids and #LetUsPlay”?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Thank you to the member for the question. We certainly encourage people, especially as the weather gets nicer, to be outside, to go for a walk, to go for a run, to walk the dog. But organized sports, right now, are not something that we can encourage, based on the medical advice we’ve received from the experts. The levels of transmission are still too high in our communities. We need to make sure that people stay at home as much as possible. The levels are starting to go down, but it’s still too early to say because of the variants of concern.

We want to make sure that everyone in Ontario stays healthy and protected, even as we increase our vaccination rate.

We really encourage people to please go out, please get your exercise, please let children run and be outside. But right at this moment, organized sports are not something the medical experts have advised that we should allow to have happen because of the high risk of transmission.

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

**Mr. Roman Baber:** Back to the minister: It’s time for another chapter in the “Adventures of Steini Brown in Ontarioland.” During his modelling briefing on April 16, which called for the most recent round of restrictions, Dr. Steini Brown said that under the strictest measures, Ontario will peak around April 28 with 7,000 daily cases. Strictest measures were not implemented because almost every police force in the province thwarted this government’s attempts to impose martial law. But on April 28, despite looser measures, if that’s even possible, Ontario reported under 3,500 daily cases, or less than half than what Dr. Steini Brown predicted. It’s on the basis of Brown’s and the Ontario science table’s faulty modelling that millions of lives are being ruined daily, including those of three million children and youth referenced in the letter by Ontario Soccer.

Why does the minister continue to make far-reaching decisions based on junk modelling instead of firing Steini Brown and the Ontario science table for being wrong time and time again?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Well, I’m not sure why the member is ridiculing the efforts of some of the medical experts who are providing us with advice, but we are receiving advice from a number of people who are epidemiologists who understand the issues here. They are providing us with their best advice with respect to levels of transmission, what we can expect in terms of hospitalization and intensive care units. We have acted on the basis of the advice that we’ve received. We’ve built up our capacity in our hospitals. We’ve started our vaccination program. We’ve extended 50% of our doses from each allocation to go into the hot-spot areas.

We take very seriously the medical advice that we’ve been receiving since the beginning of this pandemic, and we will continue to do so.

## COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Joel Harden:** My question is for the Premier. Recently, the government announced that adults 18 and older living in three Ottawa postal codes will be able to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment. One of the postal codes is K2V in Kanata, which is below the provincial average in terms of COVID incidence rates. Meanwhile, priority neighbourhoods identified by Ottawa Public Health in Ottawa Centre, including Centretown West and Carlington, are nowhere to be found on the government’s priority list.

Local city councillors, our mayor and journalists have all questioned K2V’s inclusion as a priority area, and Ottawa’s medical officer of health, Dr. Vera Etches, confirmed she had no involvement in this decision.

Can the Premier kindly explain why a postal code ranked 11th in Ottawa for COVID cases per capita is being prioritized instead of some of our hardest-hit communities?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Health.

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Yes, I can certainly respond to that question. K2V in Ottawa, since the start of the pandemic to January, had 44% more COVID-19 ICU cases per 100,000 than the provincial average. As well, this postal code saw 25% more COVID-19 deaths. This is combined with postal codes seeing 30% more COVID-19 cases per 10,000 when compared to the provincial average. Over 40% of its population was made up of racialized communities where vaccine hesitancy was a concern.

However, I would also say, in addition to the 114 hot-spot areas that have been identified for us by the medical experts, that the local Ottawa Public Health unit is also able to use their allocation in order to identify their own hot-spot areas and be able to deal with them in the same way. There are significant volumes of vaccines that are being granted, not just the 50% that are going to the hot-spot areas but also to the public health units themselves, and the chief medical officer of health in Ottawa is able to use whatever percentage of that allocation that comes to them in the hot-spot areas that have been identified in Ottawa.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I confess I don’t understand the research basis of that response, because people in Ottawa want to know why a postal code represented by this government’s Minister of Long-Term Care was chosen when it is actually not a COVID hot spot by any objective measure made clear to our office in Ottawa Centre.

Let me demonstrate some of the people asking these questions, people like Karen Secord, who manages the Parkdale Food Centre: Her staff work on a daily basis with many of our city’s most marginalized residents, newcomers, people living in poverty. She wants to know when her staff will be vaccinated, because people are already getting sick as they’re trying to do this important work. She wants to know why K2V, which is low on our COVID hot spots in our city, has been prioritized, and if it’s a coincidence that this riding happens to be represented by a cabinet minister in this government.

When will the government start focusing on getting vaccines to the people who need them most instead of playing politics during a pandemic?

**Hon. Christine Elliott:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would say to the member opposite that any suggestion that these hot spots were identified on any basis other than the medical evidence and what the medical experts have suggested to us is absolutely absurd. This decision was made based on the advice that was obtained from public health. I've already given you the specific data about why K2V was chosen. It was chosen on the basis of hospitalizations and higher levels of COVID. Those were the medical decisions upon which this was based.

That is what we're dealing with, but as I also indicated, it is clear that the medical officer of health in Ottawa could also identify hot spots and be able to allocate doses accordingly. That is what's being done by all 34 public health unit regions across Ontario, and it's certainly available to be used by the chief medical officer in Ottawa as well.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. John Fraser:** About five days ago, the long-term care commission dropped a very sobering report, and the minister and the Premier have failed to accept responsibility for decisions that were made between the first and the second wave. Families are looking for answers.

But perhaps the Premier is distracted. We learned yesterday that the RCMP is now investigating the Vaughan Working Families group's attack ads against teachers, ads that were paid for by his friends. And now we heard yesterday that the Premier's pick for OLG chair has had to step down because there's another police investigation. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

Speaker, Ontario's families deserve better. They deserve a government that is not creating its own chaos so it can't address things like the long-term-care report or listen to the COVID-19 science table. And now we hear that we may not be sitting next week. The government has created this chaos. Speaker, through you: Is the government prepared to lead this province through the third wave, or have they created too much chaos for themselves and want to get out of this place?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I guess it's not unique that the Liberal members would be making up stuff; they did it for 15 years as a government, Mr. Speaker. So let me say very clearly to the member—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I caution the government House leader on his language.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But let me say clearly to the member opposite: What we inherited was a system that was broken, not only in long-term care but in health care. This was a member whose leader sat at a cabinet table for many, many years and left us with an ICU capacity that was one of the lowest in Canada.

The Liberals failed. They left us with a system that hadn't been reformed for years—their failure. Instead of investing the billions of dollars that the then federal government under Stephen Harper was transferring to the province of Ontario for health care, they used only half of that money and transferred the rest to who knows what. They built 600 long-term-care beds under the last 10 years of their mandate.

By every single measure, the Liberals left us in such a situation that we had to play defense for a year. We are now on the offence and we are winning this battle. All Ontarians are winning this battle. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, and it won't be because of the work that the Liberals did; it will be in spite of that work.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.*

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 104, An Act to proclaim Tamil Genocide Education Week / Projet de loi 104, Loi proclamant la Semaine de sensibilisation au génocide des Tamouls.

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

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 208, An Act to proclaim Scottish Heritage Day / Projet de loi 208, Loi proclamant le Jour du patrimoine écossais.

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

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 217, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month / Projet de loi 217, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois du patrimoine philippin.

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

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 271, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Persian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 271, Loi proclamant le mois de mars Mois du patrimoine perse.

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

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

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

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Wong):** Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr48, An Act to revive Darvey Holdings Limited.

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

*Report adopted.*

PETITIONS

WATER EXTRACTION

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition signed by many residents of London. It is entitled "Protect Water as a Public Good.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas groundwater is a public good, not a commodity; and

"Whereas the United Nations recognizes access to clean drinking water as a human right; and

"Whereas local ecosystems must be preserved for the well-being of future generations; and

"Whereas the duty to consult Indigenous communities regarding water-taking within traditional territories is often neglected, resulting in a disproportionate burden on systemically marginalized communities during a period of reconciliation; and

"Whereas a poll commissioned by the Wellington Water Watchers found that two thirds of respondents support phasing out bottled water in Ontario over the course of a decade; and

"Whereas a trend towards prioritizing the expansion of for-profit water bottling corporations over the needs of municipalities will negatively impact Ontario's growing communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to prioritize public ownership and control of water over corporate interests."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table.

INJURED WORKERS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by many residents of London West.

"Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

"Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

"Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

"Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages and protection from discrimination;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

"Eliminate the practice of 'deeming' or 'determining,' which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

"Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

"Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on 'pre-existing conditions' that never affected the worker's ability to function prior to the work injury."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT, 2021

#### LOI DE 2021 SUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LA TRAITE DES PERSONNES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2021, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 251, An Act to enact, amend and repeal various Acts in respect of human trafficking matters / Projet de loi 251, Loi édictant, modifiant et abrogeant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les questions de traite des personnes.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm proud today to stand here to speak on Bill 251, the Combating Human Trafficking Act, 2021.

I want to talk a little bit about what the bill is and what's included in it. There are a few things that it does—and I want to read this out in turn. It amends several acts and creates others as part of the Ford government's strategy to combat human trafficking. It allows police to apply to a justice of the peace to access hotel guest registries when there is a suspicion that there is a victim of human trafficking or the risk of human trafficking. It amends the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to allow police or child protection workers to remove youth up to 16 or 17 years old from environments deemed to be at risk or engaged in human trafficking. That's the essence of the bill.

There is no question that human trafficking is a huge problem in Ontario; it's a huge problem worldwide. It disproportionately impacts children, youths, people of colour and Indigenous people. It is a heinous crime and our Legislature should be doing everything we can to address it.

It's also important to note that Ontario disproportionately has a high incidence of human trafficking. Over the nine years from 2009 to 2018, police services in Canada reported 1,708 instances of human trafficking. Ontario has the highest rate of reported human trafficking, due to population, in Canada. We've got 39% of the population, yet we have 68% of reported incidents. It's a huge problem. We understand that it is critical that we address this issue.

1510

Some of the concerns that stakeholders and constituency members have raised with me are around the overall approach the bill is taking to address this very serious issue of human trafficking. As some stakeholders have said, the general purpose of it is to increase police powers in order to address human trafficking.

There are consequences to increasing police powers, as we've seen recently with this government's decision to attempt to arrest its way out of one of the worst COVID-19 crises that has existed in North America. Instead of looking at some of the reasons why we have such a high rate of COVID-19 transmission in Ontario, this

government's cabinet members sat down and decided, "Well, let's just increase police powers. If we increase police powers, that's going to solve the problem. And while we're at it, let's close playgrounds too." That didn't work. Many police boards across Ontario wisely made the decision to say, "COVID-19 is an utter crisis, but taking away people's rights, which will disproportionately affect people of colour and racialized people, is not the way to go."

That angle of just defaulting to "let's increase police powers" is something that also raises concerns with me here, with this bill.

The Ontario NDP have made a very strong statement. We've been very clear in our desire to end police violence and to invest in Black, Indigenous and racialized people's lives. These are people who are disproportionately incarcerated and disproportionately impacted by all forms of violence, including human trafficking.

It is very important, when we are looking at bills to address issues like human trafficking, that we do outreach to the community, to the people who are most impacted, and ask them, "What is the best way to tackle this very real issue?", so that we are not in a situation where we are doubling down on racism, doubling down on carding, doubling down on discrimination. That's not what any of us want here.

The NDP have been very clear that our demands include a reworking and an overhaul of police oversight, which includes an end to carding, a move towards alternative first responders, and a move towards allowing municipalities and elected officials to have more power over police budgets. I think it's important to say that here, because we know that there are other ways to tackle issues like human trafficking and crime than by simply increasing police powers. I want to spend a bit of time addressing some of those issues.

The first issue that has come up when stakeholders have reached out to our office is around this issue to increase funding—not just to police boards, to increase police powers and boots on the ground, but also to provide support to people who are victims of human trafficking. That would mean providing additional support to rape crisis centres, to agencies that support children who are in protective custody or in foster homes, because a disproportionate number of them are finding themselves in situations where they are trafficked. That is a concern.

My colleagues have asked very genuine questions around where this \$307 million that this government has committed to addressing human trafficking over the next five years is actually going. They are very valid questions. How much of it is going to the community and to social service agencies that provide support to people who are victims? How much of it is going to survivors? How much of it is going to police? We have asked some very real questions about where that money is going, and at this point, we have not been provided with very good answers. Where that money goes is really critical to how we tackle this issue.

Also, based on my stakeholder outreach, it does seem like some of this money was going to go to community

funding programs. As it currently stands, only 27 groups that have applied for funding to tackle the issue of human trafficking have received funding, but over 200 have applied. So out of the 200 that have applied, only 27 have received funding. That is a concern.

The other issue that I raised earlier is around how it's important, when we're looking at this issue of human trafficking—who are we reaching out to to decide that this is the best path forward? The reason I bring this up is because some organizations have reached out to me to express concern about what these new police powers will mean for their daily lives.

The submission that I would like to address is the submission I received from Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network) and HIV Legal Network. I met with Elene Lam. I've met with her a few times to hear about some of the issues that she has raised around decriminalizing and legalizing sex work. When Bill 251 was introduced into the Legislature, she reached out to me again to express her concern. I want to read out some of the submission that she sent here, because I think it's important that you consider this organization's concerns when you're looking at introducing and moving forward on bills like this:

They “have grave concerns about the act's reliance on a law enforcement model that has been proven to be not only effective, but counterproductive to efforts to tackle human trafficking. In particular, we are concerned that the proposed act will continue to reinforce the conflation of trafficking with sex work.” Butterfly represents people who choose to engage in sex work. This act “adopts a problematic law enforcement model that further entrenches the wide-ranging powers of police officers and inspectors to surveil sex workers in numerous settings; and confers broad, excessive investigative powers to inspectors. We urge the government to quash this act and adopt an anti-human trafficking strategy that is rooted in human rights, including labour rights and migrant rights, and addresses the numerous structural barriers including poverty, precarious immigration status, and lack of access to affordable housing, health and social services that contribute to the risks of human trafficking.”

I read this out today because Butterfly gets to a very important point, which is, what are we doing to address some of the root causes that lead to people being vulnerable to human trafficking in the first place, and what are we, as a society, going to do to reach out and help people get out of this situation and let them lead good lives? I don't see a lot of that in here. I see a commitment to increasing funding, but like I said, there is a real lack of clarity around where that funding is going to go and if it is actually going to help people who really need that help.

Understandably, Butterfly is very concerned that their members are going to be targeted by police and unduly harassed. They are not being human-trafficked. They've made a choice. That's very different from being human-trafficked. They're concerned that these increasing police powers will mean that they will get targeted and the root causes that are driving human trafficking won't be truly

addressed. They've got some valid points that I urge you to address.

Butterfly actually did a survey, and what they found when they surveyed their members was quite concerning. They found that anti-trafficking investigations have been found to negatively affect racialized and migrant sex workers who are wrongly perceived as being involved in trafficking.

In a 2018 report produced by Butterfly, many sex workers reported their experiences of human rights violations at the hands of investigators. Migrant sex workers were subject to inhumane and degrading treatment, arbitrary arrest and detention, and false evidence that was used against them to justify their ongoing detention, in some cases for as long as three months. We want to address human trafficking, but maybe we're not targeting the right people. So that is definitely a concern.

#### 1520

I want to also address some of the other issues that have been raised by stakeholders that really get to why we aren't doing more to help victims get out of the situation they're in. One was: Why aren't we doing more to increase funding for mental health? This is especially important now, because mental health challenges that young people are facing right now are at levels that I have never seen in my life and that many of you have never seen in your lives. We are in an utter crisis. People who are coming out of human trafficking need mental health support, as well. But what this government has done over the nearly three years that this government has been in power is that you've cut funding to mental health, which goes against the very purpose of this bill and what you aim to do. That is a concern.

Another issue that has been raised is around the many cuts to social services that this government has engaged in. One that is particularly problematic are the cuts to legal clinics. Funding to legal clinics since 2019 has been cut by about 30%. Many legal clinics in my area and across Toronto—because there has been heavy amalgamation in Toronto—have had to lay off staff, lay off lawyers, because they can't afford to keep staff on anymore. What that means is that these legal clinics have less ability to help people who are really, really poor; who earn very little money and can't access a paralegal or a lawyer through traditional means, usual means, through the market. They're reaching out to legal clinics because they are desperate and they are in very difficult situations. Maybe they've got a tenant issue that they're dealing with. Maybe they need to get out of a domestic violence situation. There are a lot of issues. Having a social safety net, which includes legal clinics, will help people who are trying to get out of human trafficking. Instead of improving our social safety net, this government has chosen to go in the other direction.

Some of my colleagues, including the member for Spadina-Fort York, attempted to improve this bill, make it better, by introducing amendments to once again provide help to people who want to get out of human trafficking, who have gotten out of human trafficking. My colleague

and friend the member from Spadina–Fort York introduced a motion calling for the forgiveness of OSAP debt for survivors of human trafficking. That is a very worthy and wise motion, because it's saying to people who have had a really tough time, "We're going to help you get ahead, we're going to help you get educated, and we're going to make your difficult life so far a little bit easier, so that you can pursue a career that is important to you." Student debt in Ontario is extraordinarily high. This government chose to reject that motion, and I think that's unfortunate, because it addresses some of the root-cause issues that bring about human trafficking in the first place.

Some stakeholders also expressed concern to me around this government's stated enthusiasm that they're there to help victims. One of the stakeholders reached out to me and said, "Jess, you might have forgotten, but I haven't forgotten that this government, shortly after it rose to power, cut funding to victim services and compensation." What that meant—it was called the Victim Quick Response Program, which, essentially, provided funding to people who are victims of crime. This government chose to cut that program. So on the one hand, you're introducing a bill now, moving it forward, saying you want to help victims of crime, but your track record shows that you're cutting programs that are designed to help victims of crime. I think that should be addressed.

If this government was going to introduce a measure to restore funding to legal clinics, restore funding to the Victim Quick Response Program, that would be a very good thing. That would help the people this bill is aiming to support. I encourage you to do that.

The final thing I want to address is around one of the biggest issues that's facing many of my colleagues in downtown ridings: the issue of housing and finding supportive housing for people who need to have a home with social workers, people who can provide them with care so that they can get their lives back on track. The challenge, however, is that there is an utter lack of affordable housing and supportive housing in Toronto and across Ontario. If someone finds themselves in a situation where they want to get out of a situation, where they're being abused and they want to find supportive housing with people who can help them get their life back on track, they're in for a very, very tough ride, because there is very little available for them. The homeless shelters are full. Supportive housing is not being built.

This government is choosing to build market-based condos that are utterly unaffordable for even a middle-income Torontonian, let alone someone who is a victim of crime, and that is a deep concern, especially when that is augmented with rents that keep going up and up and up. Often, the real estate industry likes to come out and say, "Well, rents are going down in these 14 condos in downtown Toronto"—but when you actually look at the CMHC data, what you'll see is that rents aren't actually going down at all. It is still incredibly expensive and difficult to find a home that you can call your own that is affordable—and that affects people who are victims of crime; it affects the people you aim to support in this bill.

Overall, this legislation to address human trafficking—we certainly support victims of human trafficking. It is the honourable and right thing to do. But this bill needs a whole lot more added to it if you want to address some of the root-cause reasons why people find themselves in such a difficult situation. And this bill should do a lot more to address the root-cause solutions that will help people get out of that situation and help them get the supportive housing, the access to education, the good jobs, the supports they need, the mental health support they need to really get their lives back on track.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We'll now have questions to the member for University–Rosedale with respect to the remarks she just made on this bill.

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** Thank you for your comments. I listened intently.

Given the critical nature of a provincial anti-human trafficking strategy, does the member opposite agree—regarding the importance of establishing a legislative requirement to review the strategy?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member opposite for your question.

This side of the House certainly supports measures to address human trafficking; no question. As elected representatives, it is our responsibility to regularly review legislation and action plans that this government is doing. The goal is something we support.

What I said in my 20-minute speech is that I do have some concerns around this government's focus on increasing police powers as a solution to this very systemic, problematic issue, and there seems to be a real reluctance to address some of the root-cause problems and root-cause solutions that we need to really lift everyone up, including victims of the crime.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Any further questions?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciate the chance to ask a question.

There are a number of agencies and organizations in my community that are part of the human trafficking coalition in Durham region—myself included. They put out a survey, which I'll be talking about, and some of the issues that were identified by the agencies supporting survivors of human trafficking—they identified that the pandemic has had an unbelievable impact on their ability to do well after, when they're being supported by an agency. The number one issue is about securing permanent housing, access to emergency shelters—but, really, the roof over their head. The agencies were having difficulties helping these survivors connect with these supports.

**1530**

Can you speak to your understanding of how we can better support these agencies and the survivors of human trafficking?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you for that question. I have a few responses.

You're not the only member who is having social service agencies approach them and say, "We have a fundamental lack of housing available for people who are

in real need and are in crisis.” It ranges not just from survivors of human trafficking—but survivors of domestic violence, people who have just aged out of the foster care system. There is a huge problem there.

There are two things that come to mind. This government needs to put dollars in the game. The government needs to identify properties that can be built or turned over into truly supportive housing, and wraparound supports need to be provided to people who really need that additional care and who aren't in a situation where they can fully live on their own and build their lives up. I don't see that here. I see some funding here, but it's certainly not enough, and there's a lack of clarity as to where that funding is going to go.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question?

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I want to thank the member opposite for her comments today.

I just want to remind the member opposite, in our 2021 budget, which you and your party voted against—our action plan—we announced supports for services for victims of crime, which include the expansion of crisis intervention, sexual violence support services and free legal advice. This is something in the budget that you voted against.

I want to remind the House that over \$307 million has been invested in the anti-human trafficking strategy. We all know that this is a horrible, heinous crime that—this is just the beginning. We all need to do more. This is a non-partisan issue. We need to help these young women and young men, so we really need to continue to have this debate. But we are putting supports in place.

My question to you is around police services and policing to help protect victims. You were talking about policing in smaller communities and maybe different types of communities.

Isn't one of the ways that we can help is with the police forces—that they can build trust by stepping in and protecting these victims of all backgrounds?

I'm wondering if the member agrees that our law enforcement partners play an important role when it comes to stopping trafficking. Does the member support them in their goal?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Police have an important role to play in this issue and many other crime issues; there's no question about that.

I am very concerned about this government's idea that they are increasing funding to some of these critical social service programs, when that is simply not the case.

This government has cut funding to rape crisis centres. If you try to get access to a social worker who is part of a rape crisis centre, you are on a wait-list for at least six months.

**Interjection:** Ridiculous.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Yes, it's ridiculous.

This government cut funding to legal aid. This government cut the child advocate program. And this government cut funding to compensating victims of crime—the Victim Quick Response Program.

So I have a lot of concerns around this idea that this government is increasing funding to these programs. It's quite simply not the case.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The next question?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My good friend from University–Rosedale has raised a number of good points in her presentation.

She talked about a letter from Butterfly. Butterfly has concerns that the bill is slanted heavily towards enhancing law enforcement. Instead, Butterfly suggests that it should be rooted in human rights, poverty, immigration status and other root causes that open the doors to sex trafficking.

I'm wondering if my friend could please expand on Butterfly's concerns and their importance to this debate.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you very much for that question.

Yes, I can clarify. Butterfly sent a lengthy submission to express their concerns around the act. One of the biggest issues they had was that we cannot just solve this problem by increasing policing. There need to be additional measures to address the structural barriers that can lead to human trafficking. Those structural barriers include poverty, precarious immigration status, and lack of access to affordable housing, health and social services that contribute to the risks of human trafficking.

They argue that improving social support systems—that would range from OW to ODSP to supportive housing programs to legal aid clinics—and furnishing people with networks of community support will undercut the precarity and vulnerability that place people in vulnerable situations and make them vulnerable to the risks of human trafficking.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to add that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** To the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member opposite for her comments.

I read a great quote in the newspaper today from a guy named Philip Dick, who is an author in the US. I don't know the author. He said, “Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away”—just to point out that this human trafficking strategy that has been put forward actually does a lot of what you're asking for, in “Supporting survivors,” for example, which is only one of the four arms. The arms are, let me just say: raising awareness of the issue, protecting victims and intervening early, supporting survivors, and holding offenders accountable.

In “Supporting survivors,” it says, for example, “enhancing access and supports for victims of human trafficking in the justice sector by expanding the Victim Quick Response Program+”—which you've mentioned at least twice, saying we're cutting it—“and the Vulnerable Victims and Family Fund” and the victim crisis assistance fund.

Would the member not support us in bringing forward this important legislation? Obviously, it's not going to solve all the problems in human trafficking, but it is a step in the right direction. Wouldn't you agree?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you so much for that question, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

There are a lot of elements of this bill that we do support. It's pretty clear that human trafficking is a heinous crime, that it is on the rise in Ontario, that it targets people who are young, children, women, racialized people. There's no question that we should be taking measures to address it.

My concern is that some of the root-cause problems that lead to people being vulnerable to human trafficking are really not addressed in this bill and there's not enough support to help people who are survivors of human trafficking. That was the point of my speech, and I think I was pretty clear with that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The time for questions and responses is now over.

Further debate?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** It's an honour to rise here in the House today to fully support Bill 251. It's unfortunate that we even have to do a bill like this. Sex trafficking, I think we all agree, is a heinous crime—but unfortunately, it's the world we live in. I believe Bill 251 is a step in the right direction to combatting human trafficking—which takes tougher steps to combat.

Speaker, before I start, there are a few people I want to recognize. I think we owe some gratitude to them for bringing this topic to the forefront.

First, I would like to thank the Solicitor General for bringing this critical bill forward.

I'd also like to thank the Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues for her hard work and advocacy in protecting and supporting the victims of human trafficking and those who are most vulnerable. It's always a pleasure hosting her in my riding to visit organizations that are helping women escape from human trafficking.

I'd also like to recognize and thank the Minister of Heritage, Sports, Tourism and Culture Industries. Thank you for your tireless work over the years to raise the profile of this terrible crime.

And of course, we wouldn't be here speaking to this bill if it wasn't for the important groundwork led by the Minister of Infrastructure, who I have the honour of serving as parliamentary assistant. During her time in opposition, she brought forward and fought for a private member's bill called Saving the Girl Next Door Act. It's thanks to her and her work advocating for our most vulnerable girls and women that we begin this most important discussion around sex trafficking.

1540

Speaker, in my riding of Oakville, there are two great organizations that are helping women overcome their experience with human trafficking. SAVIS of Halton and Halton Women's Place are working tirelessly by providing critical resources and support for survivors of human trafficking. Despite the pandemic, they continue to provide critical services to victims. I recently visited SAVIS and Halton Women's Place. I want to thank them for the amazing work they do in our community in helping so many victims.

Organizations on the front line, such as the two I've just mentioned, are truly changing the lives of countless victims.

It's important that we continue to raise awareness on this issue.

Let me be clear, human trafficking is a disgusting crime. It should not happen here, anywhere in Canada, or anywhere in the world. Those responsible should be held accountable for their actions to the toughest extent of the law.

We all have a role to play in ending human trafficking. This means being aware of the signs, calling for help, and letting others know that support is available.

Human trafficking is not only a physical crime, but it clearly affects victims emotionally, as well. Obviously, extreme trauma is a result of this. Many have experienced sexual and physical assault, emotional and mental abuse, coercion, manipulation, loss of agency, malnutrition, displacement, and witnessed violence against others. I cannot imagine the fear that the victims are living through. Human trafficking robs the safety, livelihood and dignity of those who are being exploited and abused.

Unfortunately, the majority of human trafficking that occurs in Canada happens right here in Ontario. In fact, two thirds of Canada's human trafficking takes place right here in Ontario, even though we only account for about 38% or 39% of the population. Sadly, it happens in my riding, and it probably happens in all of our ridings.

The statistics on human trafficking paint a picture that demonstrates that more decisive action is needed now. The majority of victims are girls and young women, often between 14 and 17 years of age. Of course, there are also cases involving boys and men. Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes worldwide. Over 70% of the victims are under the age of 25. Clearly, this leaves a lifetime of mental trauma.

Indigenous women and girls are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking in Canada.

Speaker, we are talking about the lives of children and young adults—but I do not want to just single this group out. This crime targets women and men, as well, who are older.

The scariest part of human trafficking is that the numbers are under-reported. We do not have a true reality of the extent of this crime and how present it actually is.

Although there is still much work to be done, our government has made important progress on human trafficking.

Last spring, our government introduced a new anti-human trafficking strategy. The strategy provides \$307 million to combat human trafficking. This represented the largest total investment in dedicated anti-human trafficking supports and services in Canada.

Education, awareness and support are of critical importance when fighting this atrocious crime, but more is needed. Law enforcement agencies require new tools and enforcement mechanisms to target criminals to prevent and deter human trafficking.



If this bill passes, the changes would strengthen the efforts to increase awareness of human trafficking, protect victims and intervene early, support survivors, and hold offenders accountable. Early intervention can make all the difference.

Speaker, this proposed bill adds to the previous measures already implemented to help victims and survivors and target those responsible.

The pandemic has not stopped or slowed down the perpetrators of this crime and their networks. It's still an ongoing problem today. In some ways, the pandemic has only made it easier for these criminals to operate behind computer screens and in secret.

To help front-line organizations adapt so they can continue their important work during this pandemic, the government has provided \$1 million to transition to virtual services. I know some of this money flowed directly to organizations in my riding, for which they are very grateful.

If we want to be proactive and make a difference, we need to target the locations where human trafficking is actually occurring. We have heard in consultations that support for police is vital to aid the enforcement and investigations to target, find and stop human traffickers.

In schedule 1, which is the accommodation section, the bill is proposing new measures to safeguard victims by accessing data. Specifically, the schedule requires hotels to keep a register of guests and record their names, residences and other prescribed information. Police officers and First Nations constables can make an application to a justice for an order requiring the production of a specified portion of the register if there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person is currently a victim of human trafficking or at imminent risk of being trafficked. If there is a serious reason to believe that the victim could face bodily harm, then an urgent request can be made. Having this included in the legislation is vital to the health and safety of a potential child being trafficked.

As the Hotel Association of Canada has stated, hotels are on the front lines of human trafficking. Often, human trafficking networks operate through legitimate businesses, such as hotels, to undertake their operations. Specifically, human traffickers use hotel and motel rooms to set up encounters between victims of sex trafficking and their purchasers.

The act also clarifies how and when police services can access information from hotel guest registries to help deter trafficking and identify and locate victims.

As much as we want to go after the perpetrators, we need to help the victims. It is clear that tools and resources need to be at the disposal of law enforcement agencies at places where the action is occurring. We are making it easier to provide that data. Having this data available can identify victims and the criminals.

Similar to targeting the potential locations or the potential avenues for human trafficking to arise, we are taking action to proactively ensure that finding and accessing support and help is transparent and available. Notably, the act provides the Lieutenant Governor in

Council with authority to make certain regulations related to entities that post, publish or otherwise disseminate advertisements for sexual services and to entities that provide platforms for such advertisements. The changes require that businesses that advertise sexual services have a dedicated contact to support investigations into suspected human trafficking.

I've already mentioned our anti-human-trafficking strategy, which provides \$307 million over the next five years. The proactive strategy revolves around (1) raising awareness, (2) protecting victims, (3) supporting survivors and (4) holding offenders accountable. New educational tools, creating new multidisciplinary police and child protection specialized intervention teams, and supporting front-line community organizations are a focus. It's a multi-pronged approach.

Our proposed act encompasses our anti-human trafficking strategy and, if passed, will unleash the full power and intent of this strategy. Specifically, if passed, the act would enact the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy Act, 2021. The act requires the government of Ontario to maintain an anti-human trafficking strategy that aims to end human trafficking in Ontario and support persons who have experienced human trafficking.

The act requires that the strategy be regularly reviewed at least every five years. Having a condition to review the strategy every five years is really important, because it allows for a focused view of what is going on, what is working and what needs to change.

I want to focus a little more on this review because of the conditions that need to be met. The legislation requires transparency for contents and adjustments of the strategy. Upon reviewing this strategy at the end of the specified time period, public input is needed. The government must solicit the views of the public. Moreover, the ministry must ensure that persons who have experienced human trafficking and representatives of communities most adversely affected by human trafficking are consulted as a part of this review. This is important, because crime is dynamic. In five years, a lot can change. Resources and education may need to be shifted elsewhere. Additions to the strategy may be needed. Whatever it is, we need to continue to evolve and be proactive.

#### 1550

Having first-hand accounts and public input will be invaluable in shaping a solid and meaningful strategy. Survivors will be able to build a solid foundation for the strategy by being empowered to share what they believe is necessary to accomplish.

The principle of the review of the strategy is that it is survivor-centred.

At the end of the review, there are three possible outcomes: continue with the strategy, amend the strategy, or replace the strategy. The ministry is then required to post the result of the strategy on the website and any changes that have occurred.

Additionally, the act also provides the Lieutenant Governor in Council with the authority to make regulations relating to the dissemination of information on human

trafficking, training on human trafficking and the reporting of instances of suspected human trafficking, as well as relating to the collection and provision of information for specific purposes. These changes can be found in schedule 2. I believe that including this schedule will make Ontario an adaptive province to find solutions to stop the crime.

Combatting human trafficking takes co-operation and collaboration across governments. The more insights that can be solicited, the better. Experiences are different, and having a broad-based approach will make our strategy more dynamic and robust.

With the average age of recruitment into sex trafficking being 13 years of age, more targeted support is needed to help children who could experience or who are currently experiencing this crime. Frankly, I cannot say how shocking that statistic is. As a parent—the protection of our children is of the utmost importance. Providing further protection and support is vital.

Schedule 3 makes various amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act. I am glad that one of the changes includes increasing penalties for traffickers who interfere with a child in the care of the children's aid society.

This legislation, if passed, would increase fines and the jail time for anyone guilty of an offence and on conviction—to a fine of not more than \$50,000, or to imprisonment for a term of not more than two years, or to both.

The legislation, if passed, would be amended to add that a child protection worker or a peace officer may bring a child who is 16 or 17 to another location for the purposes of offering services and supports to the child, where the worker or peace officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the child has been sexually exploited as a result of being subjected to child sex trafficking and other specified circumstances. This can include substance and alcohol dependence or being financially controlled, among other reasons. This change strengthens the ability of children's aid societies and law enforcement to protect exploited children.

The proposed changes also make it easier for survivors and the people who support them to obtain restraining orders against traffickers, with specific consideration for Indigenous survivors.

We know that a victim may still be followed or contacted by their abuser, and we need to ensure that further protections are in place to keep them from harm and being trafficked. Our change is supporting victims through the length of an existing restraining order. In particular, a restraining order may be made or extended for a period of longer than three years, as specified by the court, if the court is satisfied that the longer period is necessary for the protection of any person the order is intended to protect. Having this provision, if passed, will assist victims with their personal recovery and provide peace of mind that any violation will be dealt with.

At the end of the day, early intervention, supporting victims, and targeting those most responsible are the three fundamental goals of this bill.

I want to highlight some of the work that the police have done to disrupt networks.

Anti-human trafficking teams have been established to actively gather intelligence to identify human trafficking activities and intercept human trafficking networks across Ontario.

The Ontario Provincial Police have also opened a new Cyber Operations Centre. The Internet and dark web are helping traffickers to recruit and exploit their victims. It's another example of how traffickers will use every tool available to perform their heinous crimes. Technology is playing a vital role in targeting these criminals.

Just one last highlight: An Ontario Provincial Police anti-human-trafficking investigation coordination team focuses on investigations and prosecutions, education, and identifying and supporting survivors. The team also collaborates with municipal and First Nations police services in the fight against human trafficking.

The president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Chief McNeely, had this to say about the proposed legislation: "Human trafficking is a heinous crime and a massive and growing threat to community safety across our province and Canada. This legislative effort to strengthen public awareness of human trafficking and protect and deliver justice to human trafficking victims and survivors is welcome and needs to be supported."

Speaker, I want to conclude my statement by thanking the Halton Regional Police Service, under the leadership of Chief Stephen Tanner. The Halton police are working diligently in the community to prevent and stop this crime. They are making progress, they are intervening to end networks, and they are saving lives. Just three weeks ago, the Halton police charged a 29-year-old man with human trafficking. The victim is believed to have been trafficked for a year in the Halton region. In December of last year, the Halton police laid over 40 charges against a trafficker.

Again, I would like to thank SAVIS and Halton Women's Place. Despite the pandemic, I hope they continue their tremendous efforts to help girls and women in my community.

In 2021, we are helping survivors by providing the option to receive free legal advice for up to four hours.

We might think that human trafficking only occurs in another country. But this is not true. It could be happening outside of schools, at the mall, online—and it may be someone you know.

From our actions, it is clear that human trafficking has no place in the province of Ontario. Every member of this House can agree that this is a non-partisan issue. It happens in our neighbourhoods, and we cannot forget that. Ontario, unfortunately, is the centre of human trafficking in Canada. Action is needed to change this. This is why more awareness is needed, especially now that people are less inclined to interact with each other in public.

So I ask that if you are a hotel operator and suspect something, call the police. If you work in a grocery store or another establishment and you hear something, call authorities. You can help. During these times, we all need to continue to be aware, and we need to recognize the signs of human trafficking and get victims the help they need.

This bill is not going to solve this crime, but it's definitely a step in the right direction. That's why I'm supporting Bill 251.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** It's time for questions.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thanks to the member from Oakville.

I listened to your speech about this bill.

I agree that it's an atrocious crime.

I agree that a policing approach is important—but you didn't mention anything but that.

You talked a lot about the young age of these victims—as young as 13. These young people live in families. Most likely, they live in families who are struggling with poverty.

You know that it has almost been 40 years since a Conservative government increased social assistance rates in the province—it was Bill Davis, actually.

Right now, the average social assistance rate is \$731 a month for a single person. In Hamilton, the average rent is \$1,450.

How do you expect that people are not going to be vulnerable to this kind of crime when they're living in such abject poverty?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the member opposite for the question. I don't think you were listening—or maybe you missed that point; I'll give you the benefit of the doubt.

Actually, we are doing a lot for victims. I touched on it a little bit, but I can certainly talk more to it right now.

We're providing more than \$7.5 million over five years in dedicated supports and services for four programs, including the Victim Quick Response Program, that are dedicated to helping victims.

**1600**

We also are supporting free legal advice to victims, which was actually in the budget bill that you voted against. And we've been extending funding to a lot of organizations, like I mentioned—Halton's SAVIS and Halton Women's Place—that need this extra funding through the pandemic. We've provided extra funding so that they can provide supports in their community.

So yes, it's about the police; yes, it's about getting offenders. But it's also about helping survivors and victims.

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

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I was very fortunate to lead some of our government's consultation efforts on the issue of human trafficking. The stories that I heard were both shocking and heartbreaking. As recently as this past Friday, I was fortunate to participate in the Ontario-Québec Parliamentary Association, and actually, interestingly enough, the topic of discussion was the sexual exploitation of minors.

Just to give you a point of comparison of how Ontario is leading the way in Canada, I would like to let this House know that the National Assembly of Quebec has established a Select Committee on the Sexual Exploitation

of Minors. The first report of this committee was tabled in December 2020, and I'm really glad to hear that some of their recommendations are very similar to what Ontario is doing; for example, raising awareness, prevention and training, law enforcement, and breaking the cycle of exploitation.

It's very clear that Ontario is leading the way in Canada, because we already have done our consultations, and now we have proposed legislation in front of the House, which we are debating.

So my question to the member is: Do you think this legislation is going far enough?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you, to the member for Mississauga Centre, for what you did in terms of going around the province.

I think you raise a very good point about the consultations. This is not something that was drawn up here at Queen's Park. This is something that went out to every community in Ontario, led by this member and other members—to go out and talk to stakeholders. Who were the stakeholders? We talked to police forces. We talked to victims. We talked to social service organizations. We talked to sexual assault survivors. We talked to sex workers. We had a diverse pool of people to talk to—to build into this legislation.

You're right: This legislation in itself is leading legislation. In and of itself, it's not going to stop this heinous crime, but I think it's a definite move in the right direction.

I want to thank you for your work in—

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I think we can all agree that human trafficking is a scourge and it must be eliminated here and everywhere across the world. I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this.

I'm sure, as you drafted the legislation and undertook the consultations you did, that you heard a lot from victims on what they've had to go through—and how shocking it must have been to hear what they had to say.

During that time of consultation, did you ever find a time when you, as a government, reflected back to earlier in your mandate, to when you cut funding for victims and survivors of crime? Have you ever reflected on that during this consultation? And is there any possibility or chance that you might reverse those cuts and support all victims of crime, moving forward?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** We agree that this is a heinous crime. So I'm glad that we can actually agree on something. But I will disagree with your commentary in terms of the cuts.

I mentioned the expanded spending. We've spent \$307 million to stop human trafficking—support to organizations, providing free legal advice to those who are victims.

I can tell you that Ontario children's aid societies are certainly very much in support of this. In fact, Nicole Bonnie, the CEO of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, said, "The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) commends the

government's collaborative efforts"—so, remember, collaborative efforts—"to engage child welfare professionals and care providers to strengthen anti-human trafficking community supports in Ontario." She had more to say, but that was the crux of it.

This is certainly great legislation that I'm proud to support.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** I first want to thank the parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General, who is sitting right beside me here, and the Solicitor General for bringing this forward.

I want to say to the member from Oakville: Thank you so much for what you said, especially about the care for victims.

The member across was talking about poverty, and a lot of these men and women get into this because of that.

But I want to say, for myself, I didn't live in poverty, and I was in an abusive situation at 15 and was on the street. I was fortunate enough not to have to be in a situation where I was that vulnerable that somebody took advantage and manipulated that. But I am very well aware of what that is like, and I was fortunate enough not to be in that situation.

We're all here for the same reason: to make sure that we take care of these people. It is our job, it is our responsibility to do that. I don't want to politicize this, because we all believe in this right now—that this is where we need to be.

So I ask you, because I'm thrilled—education and training is a great weapon in our fight against human trafficking. Can you tell me what Ontario is doing to train and educate people about human trafficking?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to my neighbour from Burlington. I certainly appreciate your comments and your personal experience. I appreciate you sharing that with us.

You raise a point about education awareness. I certainly know this in my own experience, having 15-year-old girls—they're on the older side of girls who are being sex trafficked: Education and awareness is critical.

One policy that our government has brought out is called The Trap, which is a human trafficking digital education tool designed to raise awareness about sex trafficking among middle- and high school-aged children and teens. We are also encouraging more information to be transformed through the schools in education—making awareness.

Even businesses can play a part in this today, whether you work in a movie theatre, a grocery store, particularly the ONroute—I'm sure you've been at the ONroute gas stations off the 400-series highways. Unfortunately, a lot of people go through that.

It's critical to raise awareness. Thank you for bringing that up.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I just want to take off where the member from Humber River–Black Creek had talked about.

When I look at the member from Oakville, I look at a man with integrity. I enjoy being in the House when we talk, and I know his passion and how he cares about issues, and I say that in all sincerity.

There have been some significant cuts that have been put forward by this government. The question the member was asking: Is there consideration as far as reversing some of those cuts, particularly when it comes to legal aid and victim services? People don't see this as a northern Ontario issue, but I need to wake up people in northern Ontario. It's happening in Sudbury. It's happening in Sault Ste. Marie. It's happening in Elliot Lake. It's happening in First Nations communities. It's happening everywhere. And we need to have those wraparound services in order to support the victims who are there.

On the wraparound services that are so desperately needed for the mental wellness of individuals, there's a lack in here, and I would have hoped to see something in here.

Can the member provide me with some of that information?

**Mr. Stephen Crawford:** Thank you to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin—a great part of the province, I might add, and I look forward to getting up there at some point. I take your words seriously.

I want to highlight, though, that this bill is focused on the four measures I talked about.

Having said that, as part of the budget which we just passed, we invested \$2.5 million in a new victim support grant to fund partnerships between police and community groups, including a lot of the organizations I mentioned, to help victims of sexual assault.

Thank you for your question.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm very pleased to be able to join this debate on Bill 251, the Combating Human Trafficking Act, 2021.

Speaker, I've had the opportunity many times to stand in this Legislature and—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I want to be focused on this issue—because I have been for a long time, and it is very personal to many of us, in our communities, on both sides of the House.

We're here talking about human trafficking with a bill before us that outlines some changes. We've been having that debate. What I want to do today—and I'll really get into it in a moment—is to present the bones of a human trafficking model as laid out in Durham region by the human trafficking coalition, by the folks at Victim Services of Durham Region. It is a massive document, and I want to get some of those pieces on the record.

1610

But before I do, I want to take this opportunity and connect with the folks at home who are starting to learn about this as an issue. Unfortunately, when parents learn about this issue, it's because there's a police officer at their door or they are starting to maybe hear about it through their children's friends who might have the nerve to flag it for their friend's parents. This is something that is, as we've heard, heinous. It is a scourge across communities.

I'm going to stay focused on human trafficking in the sex trafficking realm. Although I'd love for us to have a conversation around labour trafficking in Ontario and Canada, I'm going to stay in this lane today.

Human trafficking is a heinous crime. It seeks to destroy the lives of its targets. It looks for vulnerabilities. It is a predatory crime, and it seeks to destroy—literally break down the confidence, all of the support networks, and destroy—a human for exploitative reasons, to make money.

You think about guns and drugs and human trafficking—and it's not in that order, necessarily; it depends on the parts of the province.

We've talked about how Ontario has a terrible reputation—it's not a reputation—has the terrible honour—I don't have the right word—of being the worst in the country. The east coast is also problematic. But when you look at Ontario—it has been identified as one of the major hubs of human trafficking within Canada. Major hubs within the province are Thunder Bay, the Far North, Windsor, Ottawa and the GTA.

In 2014, research from Persons Against the Crime of Trafficking in Humans found that Indigenous women and girls are most likely to be victims of trafficking, because they are “disproportionately affected by poverty, racism and marginalization, leaving them increasingly vulnerable.” There are strong links between sex trafficking and child welfare involvement. Indigenous youth are over-represented in child welfare systems, increasing their vulnerability. As we've heard, where you have vulnerable people, you have potential targets.

To the thoughtful comments that I heard earlier from my colleagues around prevention—we need to see more preventive measures. It is very important to prosecute appropriately and effectively. It is very important to support victims. But it is also important—and cannot be left out—to prevent there being victims.

I am going to start from a partisan place. We've heard that this is not a partisan issue. That's where I'm going to start. It will not be where I end.

But I am going to say that, since the election, this government, which we've heard today is onside with this being a priority issue and is seeking to make improvements, which we applaud, has denied funding for sexual assault centres while demand for services continues to rise. They disbanded the expert panel aimed to end violence against women. So to the earlier question of, “Will the government reverse that now that they see how it's interconnected?”—I hope they will.

They cancelled the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act, creating more barriers for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; limited access to contraceptives and reproductive health; and, finally, removed provisions that allowed domestic and sexual violence survivors leave from work, and called that bill a job-killer.

So I'm saying that at the beginning—to say we have so much more to improve and fix. I do take the government at their word on this issue. I have seen members over there through the years, when they were on opposition benches—we have worked together on this issue. But we've got a long way to go.

I want to speak about what I know, and that is local to Durham region, but I think that much of it can be extrapolated across the province.

The referrals received by Victim Services of Durham Region for human trafficking have doubled annually for the past three years. Domestic sex trafficking survivors are over 90% female, but we do know that that is partially due to males being highly unlikely to disclose because of additional stigma associated with male victimization. The average age of recruitment, as we have heard, is now 13; in 2020, it was 14. As we have seen, online luring and exploitation as a result of the pandemic is astronomical. It's terrifying.

Unfortunately, what's being reported to victim services is that there's an increase in brutality, the torment and the torture of those victims, as we're seeing businesses closing—businesses like massage parlours, for example. Now they're being pushed into isolation in motels. I thought that during the pandemic, the hotels and the motels might have slowed. The police have made it very clear to me that that has not slowed.

The human trafficking unit in Durham region is remarkable. I want to take the opportunity to thank them and applaud the work that they are doing; they are doing it right across the street from me. My office is right across from the police station. I can wave to them; they can wave to me.

I have been on a ride-along with the human trafficking unit. I have spoken at length about that experience in this House, and I'm not going to revisit that today, but what I learned then I can never unlearn; what I saw, I could never unsee. We sat in parking lot after parking lot after parking lot outside of the hotels and motels, knowing, because you could follow along on the phones and watch the ads being placed by these pimps for the girls that just—their whole day was being raped after being raped after being raped after being raped. That was their whole day. I wanted to go in and pull them out: Could we not help them? But understanding that there are rules and that that's not—the police have an important job to do, but they were going in with partners.

We were going in with community partners from agencies that day: Bethesda House; Karly Church, who is a human trafficking survivor. She's working with these agencies that go in, and they're the first people to interact with these girls—not the police; the police were there as the follow-up: “Hi. Here's who we are. You're not in trouble. We want to help you. There are resources in the

community.” That’s an oversimplification, but it was remarkably effective. The human trafficking unit has built relationships with all these agencies, the victim services. There’s so much that can be learned there. When the government is consulting with folks like victim services, the human trafficking coalition in Durham region—which I’m very pleased and proud to work with on a regular basis—and our local human trafficking unit, there is so much that can be incorporated into the next piece of legislation.

I’m going to read something from Krista MacNeil, who is the clinical director of Victim Services of Durham Region. She wrote this to me after our last human trafficking coalition meeting—a summary of surveys they have done with the agency partners that work directly with human trafficking survivors. She said, “Primary areas of concern in Durham are lack of affordable safe housing and access to acute detox withdrawal management services. Acute mental health stabilization is also of significant concern, as our hospitals do not have the capacity or knowledge about human trafficking to support this population. At this time, Pinewood Centre remains the only service in Durham region that offers acute detox, and they have only three female beds for the entire region. So needless to say, it was impossible to access this service for our clients prior to the pandemic when they had had six beds, and this has only worsened during the pandemic.” She goes on to say that they have to send clients to detox in Kingston, because that’s the closest availability.

I was going to present some of the survey, but I think you will all find that when you’re connecting with your community partners who do the heavy lifting and the caring work across communities—whether it’s with human trafficking survivors, survivors of domestic violence, those communities at risk—housing is key, access to mental health supports is key, detox and addiction management and support is key. And we’re missing that. We’ve seen reductions in programming or access or challenges. We’ve seen it compounded, obviously, by the pandemic.

I had started to say and then derailed myself, but I would have thought with what I had seen with the human trafficking unit that every hotel, every motel along the 401—and I said this before: They weren’t the seedy motels. No self-respecting businessman wants to stop at a seedy motel and have his car recognized. These are just guys on their way to and from work, on the way to the gym in the morning and on the way home to their kids, by the way—many, many of them. These are hotels. These are reputable. The thing is, it has to be a place that takes cash, again, because people are protecting themselves from using a credit card and having that history. A lot of these hotels have “buy two nights, get the third free,” so a girl will get put up in there by her pimp and is basically stuck there. She doesn’t have a phone. She doesn’t have access to leave. I would have thought that some of that would have slowed during the pandemic, and I am wrong.

1620

Something that I’ll say specific to this bill is that currently the section is limited to hotels defined in the act

as containing “at least six bedrooms or suites.” Advocates who are putting a thoughtful eye on this have highlighted that Airbnb-style short-term rentals aren’t captured by these powers in this bill. We need to ensure, as we’re watching the crimes move—it moves, right? It’s a moving target. It’s predatory. It does not want to be found out. It will go where it can, where it can snake and sneak. So Airbnbs—as I said, it’s a moving target, but this government needs to continue to work with those people who can help legislation keep up as much as it can. It’s not clear why increasingly the main sites of trafficking were left out of this bill. So that’s something that I would flag for this government.

I’m going to take this opportunity to share some of the specifics from Durham region’s human trafficking model. This, I had said—well, I didn’t say it—is a labour of love. These agencies come together on a fairly regular basis, every couple of months, and we share what’s going on, how we can cross-support, and best practices. I joined because I wanted to hear what the agencies are needing so I can echo that when it comes to budget requests for supports and understanding. The model is in response to this alarming number of cases—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Stop the clock, please.

Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue. I will now look to the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Thank you, Speaker. I’m pleased to have it continue.

While I have the floor, I’ll just inform the House that there will be no night sitting today.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. There is good news. Sorry, I digress.

But I will now return back to the member from Oshawa to continue with your debate.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you.

We’ve talked about, I think, the purpose of the model. There’s a need for a plan. This government is talking about the need for a strategy, but there’s a need for a plan in our region and across the province that is thoughtful and addresses all of the pieces.

I’m going to just do my best not to read all of it—it’s a significant read and it is absolutely worth the time—but it’s a plan that is survivor-informed and that is a relational approach. I had started by saying that the targets and victims of this crime are broken down; that they are sought out and they are hurt on purpose; that the people who target them are trying to break them down, destroy them and tear apart their relationships, which is why in order to rebuild those individuals and help them rebuild themselves, it needs to be a relational approach. We need the supports that are interpersonal and build trust, therapeutic techniques—all of that.

An anti-racist and anti-oppression lens is key. Acknowledging the context of patriarchy, systemic racism and

colonialism, it interconnects because, again, speaking to communities that are vulnerable, speaking to strategies of destructive targeting, that has to be factored in to how we guard against and how we support. Harm reduction, a trauma-informed lens, client-centred approach: Those are the guiding principles behind this model.

Various organizations across Durham region have been involved and are probably involved across all of your communities, from Victim Services of Durham Region, the Durham Regional Police Human Trafficking Unit, everyone from OW, children's aid societies, Lakeridge Health, family services, various victim witness programs—everybody has a role to play and has work that they can contribute.

Again, the government has done consultations—ensure that that is not just a check box on your list, that it is an ongoing exercise, that you are building your own relationships.

The components of this model, as we've heard today: The prosecution of traffickers, yes, has to happen, but again, with some of these partnerships, it helps that to be more long-lasting and breaking cycles.

Youth workshops to get the word out and connect with youth: Over 5,000 youths have received human trafficking awareness training through the school system, as a highlight.

Community education: Parents have no idea. I'll tell you something that I remember when the police were pointing out to me on our ride-along: If you see a car and you watch someone get out and lock the girls in the back seat, turn on the actual car alarm with people in the back, it's so that they can't get out. If they open that door, they set off the alarm and then he knows. Once that was pointed out, you'll start to look for things everywhere. That's just a small thing, but it isn't and it's right in front of you. It's right in front of parents, in front of all of us.

Identification of survivors happens everywhere, but only if those organizations know what they're looking for, have the education and have the resources, whether that's the service organizations, OW, ODSP, those where they have caseworkers and relationships. People need to know not just what to look for, but what to do with that information. How do you then walk with someone to an agency to support them if you don't know what that agency is?

Human trafficking unit, again, with community education: Some of the success stories come from those collaborative relationships. So as laid out in this, the collaboration between Ontario Works and victim services has led to an understanding. For a client who had been missing for a long time, was known to victim services, OW helped to reconnect and help forge some of those bridges.

Collaboration between Lakeridge Health, OW and victim services: The hospitals and our health care workers treat who is in front of them. They may not see some of the symptoms and signs that require a different kind of attention. There was a success story of a client who didn't have a safe place to go after her visit to the emergency room, but she was connected to a staff member at the

Ontario Works human trafficking response team and then was able to get connected with resources and services.

Collaboration between Ontario Works, victim services, Lakeridge Health and a local Back Door Mission: Again, there are so many windows and doors in our community where someone can come through or reach in, and they're missed opportunities if we don't have the education, we don't have the funding, we don't have programs that are able to support.

Limitations and opportunities: This is where I'm going to circle back. I'd started out on a partisan footing, and I admit it. I said we need to stop cutting things, we need to fund things, but I'm going to get back to the why.

Our children's aid response protocol: Ontario children's aid does not yet have a provincially standardized code or response protocol to address child sex trafficking.

The recognition of human trafficking in health care: There's a lack of recognition of human trafficking within health care services and a general lack of human-trafficking-specific health services—not just in Durham region but across the province.

Human-trafficking-appropriate housing protocols: If all of the money just goes to putting a young woman in a hotel because that's all there is, well, that's where a lot of the hurt and damage happens. To have portable funding that allows the agencies to help them find appropriate safe housing—we need different and nimble flexibility that accomplishes what it's supposed to, which is to keep people safe and housed. But that's a recommendation.

Human-trafficking-specific mental health and substance-dependent treatment: Many survivors don't qualify for substance-use treatment because they're not mentally well enough to stay in the rehab centres or programs. Who walks with them to support them?

Human-trafficking-specific sexual health clinics and legal support: There's a notable lack of specific legal support available for survivors of human trafficking. There are very few attorneys and judges who are knowledgeable of it, and what the legal system hasn't widely recognized is that such behaviours that they see are a result of clients' coercion by their traffickers. How are we processing—I'm out of time, Speaker. I have so much more to say.

1630

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I thank the member for Oshawa for her presentation. Anti-human trafficking is an issue that the member from Oshawa and I have collaborated on for a number of years.

We talked earlier about the consultation process involved in bringing forward this legislation. It's involved Victim Services of Durham Region; it's involved Catholic family services; it's involved SafeHope Home and many other agencies in the region of Durham that have been instrumental in helping to effect the anti-human trafficking strategy. That consultation is going to continue on the implementation of this legislation, should it be passed, but also on the associated regulations as well.

But there are aspects of this legislation that flow out of the consultation process, one of which is the value of lengthening restraining orders—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. To the member from Oshawa.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Okay. The member from Whitby—I heard him across the room, though maybe not on the record, specifically about restraining orders. Is that correct? Okay.

When I spent time with the police on the ride-along, and this was now a couple of years ago—it seems like only yesterday because it makes such an impression on your soul—they highlighted a number of different challenges, some of which were the hotels and the rules around hotels and registries, the part that allows—sorry, but connected with the hotels specifically. Some of the officers, actually, were flagging other things that they were noticing, and we were trying to figure out what the legal or the legislative fix would be.

I think anything that we're hearing from the agencies that are supporting women in the community and what is needed, I think that is the right thing. But we need to hear from the victims and what would make them feel safe and be safe, and that is what we should see in legislation going forward.

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

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** I really want to thank the member from Oshawa for her presentation. I think it was incredibly well researched and eloquent. You're very well spoken on the issue. In fact, I remember one of the very first conversations we had right after the 2018 election when I first came into this place and we were sitting next to each other in the chamber for the first time, and you spoke about your work around human trafficking in your riding and how passionate you were about it. I remember that was one of the very first conversations we ever had together in this House, and it was very impactful.

I'd just like to ask you if you had any other information you would like to share with this House on how we can ensure this legislation is the most safe for survivors—survivor-led, survivor-focused—and some of the things that you've learned locally in your riding that maybe you didn't get a chance to touch on in your full presentation.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** There's a lot that I could say, but it would be personal and kind of my impression. What I will say is that the agencies that support women and support victims directly do it because they love it and do it because it is so necessary, and they really do need the funding for the programs that are yielding results, that are helping women to be housed, helping them put one foot in front of the next so that they can rebuild.

The member earlier had commented about four hours of legal support. I scoff at nothing if it doesn't exist, but I will say that there are a number of individuals who need far more in terms of whether time or whatnot. And I think that having that flexibility or the ability to provide it on an individual basis—someone may need more than others, it's a longer journey, but ensuring that we don't lose

someone once we have found them, once we have started to support them to get them that fair shot.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I just want to thank the member opposite for her comments. Putting an end to human trafficking will take all of us in this House, across all levels of government, across various sectors and across the country. Human trafficking doesn't stop at the borders. We're all moms and dads and aunts and uncles in here. This is such an emotional topic, because nobody wants to see these young kids suffer. This happens in communities like Wawa, Hamilton, Durham, Windsor and downtown Toronto.

One of the things the member opposite mentioned was about the importance of the short-term rentals, and I want to let you know that we do agree. The Airbnbs are a new element, and that is something that we are looking into. But given that the current hotel registry and guest legislation is unavailable to capture any other type of accommodation other than hotel—we do understand that that is an issue, and it is something that we are going to look at under regulation. Does the member opposite agree that this legislation is an important step forward, to move forward along with the nature of the sector?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** The most important step in any journey is the first one. And to see it in legislation, to see some of the things that have been asked for and requested, is important. My colleagues got on the record some of the concerns or questions from different agencies that want to make sure that we are thoughtful at each step—so all of that be factored in. But of course I stand in this House, and always have, and say that I want to ensure that human trafficking is addressed, is prevented, and I want to say is also dealt with appropriately so that the victims—the victims don't have to become victims, but if they are, that we help and support them.

The member talked about the changing nature of it. Absolutely, and we have to keep up, and we have to continue to be nimble. We have to continue to put money where it needs to go, whether it's expensive or not, because the cost far outweighs the expense.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Oshawa for a very articulate and thoughtful report on how human trafficking is affecting the region, including the region of Durham. I noticed that you were referencing a report that really looked at how human trafficking can be addressed in your region. It comes from organizations that work on this issue on a daily basis. Are there other recommendations that you didn't have the time to raise that you'd like to raise now?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Yes. Thank you. There's never enough time, is there? It was the "limitations and opportunities" section. I really did just top-line with a number of them, and I won't delve into those too much more. But I will say that the life skills for vulnerable youth was an important piece. That was the last one I didn't get



to say. I have met a number of survivors of human trafficking, and some of them were full-time university students while being trafficked, and their friends, colleagues, co-workers didn't know. They were picked up on the weekend, trafficked all weekend, and then taken back to school. Their lives were falling apart, but no one knew. The life skills for vulnerable youth—to keep someone away as much as possible, to forearm them—they say forewarned is forearmed.

The services that are going into the schools: Victims services is doing curriculum work. We need to support that. I've worked with them on looking at what we already have in the curriculum and being thoughtful about that. They're developing curriculum, and every time they give a presentation, they get disclosures. We have to recognize that it's happening. We have to help.

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

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova:** I was listening very intently to the member opposite and her presentation. My question is in a similar vein as the previous member asked. In our consultations, we have heard from the region of Durham. The region of Durham has been a very strong voice in the consultation process and actually gave us a lot of ideas, and specifically Karly—she has been sitting on many of our consultation tables, including in a current working group at the Ministry of Education where we're working collaboratively to develop protocols that could be applied across our school boards so that teachers, educators and parents know what to do once they spot those dangerous signs and symptoms of human trafficking. I was just wondering whether the member wanted to highlight any other things that the region of Durham is doing to combat human trafficking.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciate that she said "Karly," but the thing about Karly is there are two of them. I am assuming that you mean Carly Kalish, but it could be Karly Church. Karly Church is a wonderful advocate, a survivor of human trafficking. I had the opportunity to actually be in a hotel room with her and another service worker from Bethesda House, meeting girls in the moment. I learned a lot from her. Carly Kalish with victims services has been doing remarkable work. She put this model in my hand. But, absolutely, education has to look different across all spectrums, and we have to do it together.

1640

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

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Mr. Speaker, I'm usually a cheerful person. I usually start my debates by saying, "I'm happy to rise and speak in the Legislature today." But I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, today, learning about human trafficking, some of these statistics are heartbreaking.

I'm speaking with mixed emotions, and I'll tell you why: The fact that there has been 1,800 police-reported cases of human trafficking in the last decade nationwide is disgusting. And that 97% of these cases were women and girls, and 45% of the cases were survivors between the

ages of 18 and 25. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine, out of that, a further 28% were below the age of 18 and as young as 13 years old? I do remember when I was about 13 or 15 years old, all I had on my mind was what I was going to do to conquer this world. Thinking about those young kids at the age of 13 who have gone through these heinous crimes—that makes me sad; that makes me angry. I want to remind everybody that these are not numbers; these are humans, these are children—our children—and that makes me feel heartbroken and enraged.

Mr. Speaker, talking about human trafficking, I want to see what is included in the definition, so I want to read it for you and for everybody: Human trafficking is the recruiting, transferring, concealing or exercising control of a person—and I'll repeat the words: exercising control of a person. And it goes beyond sexual exploitation. It includes forced labour and it sometimes includes organ trafficking as well. Survivors do not necessarily need to be moved from one location to another to be trafficked. It happens at their home and in their hometown.

I want to take this time to also raise awareness of some of the signs that a person may be a victim of human trafficking; for example, the person is unfamiliar with their environment, has unrealistic employment offers, is distrustful of authority, shows fear or anxiety when being questioned, and shows signs of being controlled mentally or physically.

When we talk about the children, these signs include having little or no access to parents or guardians, or to friends of their age outside work or school. So I want to tell the community: If you see these signs, please reach out to the authorities, or reach out to those individuals and tell them that help is available—help like Peel Children's Aid Society which has their headquarters in my riding.

I want to share an example of how working together can help overcome challenges like this, Mr. Speaker. Peel CAS has been supporting a 16-year-old girl and their family, and now she is a survivor of trafficking by her boyfriend. Her own boyfriend was grooming the young woman for the sex trade. Mr. Speaker, this is disgusting. After educating the girl on the dangers of her current position, thankfully she was fortunately able to hide herself in the mall bathroom one day, contacted her Peel CAS worker and mall security and Peel police, and got the safety she needed. Thankfully, I'm glad to say that she's fine and she's safe, and she's pursuing a wonderful career today.

We need more education, more control and more collaboration, and I'm happy to say that is why we need to implement the recommendations from Bill 251. I'm happy to be a part of a government that is taking action and that I'm able to contribute on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, the bill is called the Combating Human Trafficking Act, and I found it a little bit interesting. I was thinking in my mind, if we have to give it another name, we could probably call it combating inhumans as well.

This bill is personally relevant and important to the community members in my riding, and I'll tell you the reason for that. But before I do that, I want to thank my

colleague the member from Mississauga Centre, with whom we visited Hope 24/7 last year. It was heartbreaking to talk about and know about the experiences of sexual, interpersonal or intimate partner violence. Hope 24/7 is just one of the many Peel region community partners who are working actively to combat human trafficking in my area. When I reached out to the Peel CAS, Rav Bains said, “Peel CAS works closely with our community partners and the government of Ontario to support survivors and strengthen protections for vulnerable children and youth. We are pleased to see Bill 251 moving this important conversation forward, and we welcome all efforts to tackle this issue and bring an end to human trafficking.”

Mr. Speaker, aside from the great community organizations in my area, the bill is also personally relevant to my community because, as per the region of Peel police, 62% of Canadian human trafficking cases actually originate in the GTA. According to the Peel Institute on Violence Prevention, the per capita rate of police-reported human trafficking in Peel was 44% higher in 2016. We think of Toronto as a big, large city. Well, the issue is very serious there, but if you really look at Peel, it is even more serious and bigger.

I understand one of the reasons could be because we have access to all the highways. We have Pearson International Airport. But thankfully, the GTAA and the CBSA are working actively to curb human trafficking at the airport. I’m glad to state that our partners at the CBSA are fighting human trafficking through many ways, including conducting pre-arrival risk assessments to identify possible victims and traffickers before they arrive, conducting immigration security screening of those claiming temporary or permanent residence, and by sharing intelligence with local and international partners across the world.

Mr. Speaker, when I was writing this speech, my heart cried, not just as an MPP or a community member but as a father, as a human being. It really shook me to my core, and I want to thank everybody who has been involved in this bill for having the courage and doing the right thing.

Bill 251 builds on our five-year strategy to combat human trafficking and child sexual exploitation, backed by an investment of up to \$307 million. This strategy, announced on March 6 last year, takes a comprehensive and proactive approach with action across government to raise awareness of the issue, protect victims, intervene early, support survivors and hold offenders accountable.

In my riding of Mississauga–Malton, I have 20,000 international students, and many of them either lost their jobs, did not qualify for the federal benefits, and do not have a family. Many of them don’t even know English as their first language, and they’re the ones who are facing such challenges. I want to tell those parents of those students who live in my riding that I am going to be at some peace, knowing that they’re safer—and thanks to Bill 251, schedule 1, which requests hotels and other businesses of a prescribed class to record the names, residences and other prescribed information in a register.

I would also like to share with the House and the community that the bill was created, together, from the

experience and expertise of survivors, front-line service providers, Indigenous communities, Indigenous-led organizations, law enforcement and advocates and champions for victims and survivors.

Speaker, I personally want to thank each one of these contributors. Many of you have gone through the intense pain caused by human trafficking yourself. Thank you for your courage in speaking out and providing us with the support so that no one else has to go through similar pain that you have gone through. Thank you so much.

**1650**

Mr. Speaker, I’m quickly going to read some of the quotes from the stakeholders. Nicole Bonnie, the CEO of the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, said, “This legislation is a step forward for raising awareness, and it is a critical piece to a comprehensive anti-human trafficking approach in Ontario.”

These comments and many others were reflected and incorporated in Bill 251. For an example, section 5 of schedule 2 of the bill clearly lays out the principle our AHT strategy as follows: The strategy devised shall be trauma-informed, survivor-centred, culturally responsive, intersectional, informed by evidence and aimed at root causes.

Of course, I also want to give a special shout-out to my colleagues who have worked so hard on this bill: the Associate Minister of Children and Women’s Issues; the Solicitor General; the Attorney General; the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries; and, of course, the member from Mississauga Centre and the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Thank you for your leadership. They led various components of this proposed legislation.

I’m particularly proud of Bill 251’s requirement for all future Ontario governments to maintain an anti-human trafficking strategy and support a sustained, long-term response to combat human trafficking. This requirement would be the first of its kind in Canada and position Ontario as a leader in anti-human trafficking efforts in the country.

Mr. Speaker, issues like this take time to solve, but I am glad to say this: Making sure to have this component will make sure that this will always be on our radar. It would mean that any government, regardless of political stripe, would be required to continue working towards eliminating human trafficking in the province and supporting the victims and the survivors.

Under schedule 3 of Bill 251, we also included proposed amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act to help better protect children and youth from trafficking. These proposed changes are important new measures that would strengthen the authority of children’s aid societies and law enforcement to intervene in child sex trafficking cases, discourage traffickers from interfering with children in the care of a children’s aid society and promote consistent responses across the province.

Our government has actively worked to ensure there are numerous supports to ensure the root causes of human trafficking are also addressed, directly into the community

agencies. This way, young women and children will absolutely not be afraid to step up and report, because they know there will be a strong, loving network to support them at every step of the way. For an example, last year, our Attorney General announced additional funding into the Victim Quick Response Program+ in order to help survivors cover essential expenses such as accommodation, meals, transportation, dental care and mobile phones. There was additional funding into the Vulnerable Victims and Family Fund to cover key court-related expenses for human trafficking survivors. These are comprehensive expenses, including courtroom-appropriate attire, costs associated with meals and travel—and not to mention the 27 hard-working community organizations that have received \$40 million in funding under the anti-human trafficking strategy. I'm proud to say one of these is the region of Peel, which has received over \$3 million to provide an integrated service hub for children and youth named nCourage.

This morning, Councillor Downey, a member of the Peel Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Task Force, informed me that through this community support grant, this hub will offer “primary health care, trauma counselling, addictions support, legal aid, education, and employment services.” This complements their existing work of providing safe and transitional housing for survivors, including a safe emergency house that opened in April 2015 and a transitional house that is scheduled to open in 2021.

Our government has directly invested in community supports under the AHT strategy to ensure that we tackle the root cause, and we will continue to monitor the progress of our efforts to ensure that every dollar is having a maximum impact and we can remove this heinous crime out of our society.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak towards wrapping up my debate, I want to acknowledge that if or when this bill passes, our work is not done. It simply means that we need to continue to stay alert and keep working.

I just want to quickly talk about the snapshot. Over 70% of the victims of human trafficking are identified by the police at age 25. The average age of recruitment is 13 years old. The vast majority of reported cases involve sexual exploitation and labour trafficking. More than 90% of the reported victims of human trafficking in Canada actually come from Canada.

As I said at the beginning of the speech, I mentioned a series of statistics regarding the prominence of human trafficking both in the GTA and in our country. But I want to compare this with an iceberg. If you really look at an iceberg, all you see from a distance is a little part of it, but the majority of that iceberg is under the water. The numbers which I stated, the numbers we talked about, are just like an iceberg. There is a large portion of the crime which is not visible, that is hidden, invisible and unknown, and that's a scary prospect.

We understand that human trafficking is an ever-evolving operation and these criminals will stop at nothing to continue their crimes. That is why schedule 2 of Bill

251 is very clear in ensuring that we have frequent and regular reviews of the Anti-Human Trafficking Strategy. Section 4 and section 3 of this schedule state that the appropriate ministry shall consult community organizations, different levels of government, survivors or victims of trafficking and communities most affected by trafficking when devising this strategy. This will ensure that our government and our provincial strategy will always be ahead of the human traffickers, and then we will never be behind the curve. This heinous crime should be stamped out in the province of Ontario and from this world forever. I'm so glad to be part of the government that is working actively to combat human trafficking, and I thank again all the community partners and everyone who has contributed to this consultative effort.

The growing awareness is a powerful weapon on our side. After years of operating in a shadow, a light—a bright light—is being shone on the traffickers committing these crimes and the victims and survivors who need our help. Now is not the time to let up, but to double down on our efforts to drive this criminal activity from our province and protect more people from falling prey to it.

And so I point to the measures in Bill 251 as a way to ensure that we'll keep the momentum on our side and we will keep our young people safe and secure. So I urge everyone on both sides: Let's work together and let's support Bill 251, as I am going to do.

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton. He and I and you, Mr. Speaker, were actually on a trip to Iqaluit. We were selected from this House to represent Ontario in a legislative trip then, and it was nice to meet him then and I appreciate his comments. I'm going to be the next speaker and I'm going to be asking for some changes to this bill.

**1700**

My question is, to the member from Mississauga–Malton: We all agree human trafficking has to come to an end. If we are going to do this, we need to do it right. Will the member from Mississauga–Malton be willing to champion within his caucus changes to this bill to make it stronger when it gets to committee?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, member opposite, and I do remember the trip that you're talking about. I wish COVID was over and some of us could go back to that.

But you ask a very valid question. To make it stronger, and so that we can have this problem out of this world, not one—I guarantee you, we have over 70 champions, and all of us will work and make sure that this heinous crime is out of our province. Thank you for asking this question. I can assure you that not one but 70-plus will be working to make sure that we will deliver the result for Ontario. Thank you so much.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions? The member from Mississauga–Oakville.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Lakeshore.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Lakeshore. I knew that.

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Malton for his contributions today. It is great to hear that the government is addressing hotels, but it is our modern economy—they make up less of the market share than they did before.

What will he be doing for rental accommodation, such as Airbnb? Can you explain more how our government plans to capture this type of non-traditional and short-term rental in this regulation and why it wasn't done in this legislation?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore for that question. I now move it to over to the member from Mississauga–Malton for a response.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for acknowledging that Mississauga rocks. So I appreciated that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you to the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore for raising this question. He's not the only one who has raised this question. My colleague from Milton, on March 2, actually asked the exact same question.

I'm glad to say this—as our Solicitor General Sylvia Jones said, “As more and more hotels and motels educate their staff, then it does drive the traffickers to other short-term rentals. We are absolutely going to be dealing with this through” strong “regulation, and they will absolutely be included, because we understand that that is where a lot of the activity happens when there becomes a spotlight on the hotels and motels.”

I want to assure that if you look at schedule 1, section 6, it clearly says that the minister may prescribe “additional information” needed to be collected by hotels or to explicitly include Airbnb and other short-term rentals under “businesses in a prescribed class.” So definitely we'll be—

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to ask a question as we're debating the Combating Human Trafficking Act. The member opposite had highlighted that, in his riding, in his area there are a number of international students who would be particularly vulnerable as they are away from home and don't have the supports or the language and whatnot.

An important piece that I will remind the member and all members of is that access to health care is an important piece, and with international students, we know how many barriers they have. So I think an approach that is very specific to the vulnerable nature of their situation and making sure they have access to health care, agency supports and whatnot, is important.

But when it comes to education younger, I know that—I mean, this is a government—no offence; well, I won't word it like that. We had some challenges when it came to curriculum and the sex ed curriculum and conversations around basic consent. So I want to know that all members of this House are committed when it comes to curriculum that is—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Question?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** To combat human trafficking, are we willing to do that community outreach with our communities to make sure they realize this is a threat for everyone, regardless of where they live, and are we all willing to commit to that work?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I'm actually looking for a specific page that I have which I put together so that I can answer about education.

I just want to say about education and training—being a father of a grade 10 student, I know how important education is, and I want to say this: Ontario is a leader in human trafficking education. Ontario's health and physical education, which includes human trafficking, is part of the Ontario curriculum. It is part of the grades 1 to 8 health and physical education curriculum. Since the 2019 update, it has been part of the grades 9 to 12 social science and humanities curriculum as well.

We are also supporting Indigenous-led training and education initiatives. Ontario is doing more at the Ontario Police College to educate police officers as well—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Response.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I just want to say to the member opposite: Absolutely, education is a prime responsibility of our government, and we'll continue to invest in educating our young children. Thank you so much for that.

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

**Ms. Jane McKenna:** I want to, first of all, thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his very heartfelt comments. I listened to it, and thank you so much for all the things that you had to say here today.

I have a quick question for you. I've heard from the Solicitor General and others about the importance of providing tailored supports for Indigenous youth, who are more vulnerable to being trafficked. Can you provide more details about the supports offered?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member from Burlington. I just want to say this: The strategy is providing dedicated investments for Indigenous-specific initiatives to help Indigenous survivors access the culturally relevant and specialized supports they need to recover and rebuild their lives:

—on March 4, \$12.8 million to expand culturally appropriate mental health and addictions services;

—on December 11, an additional \$21 million in pre-apprenticeship training for up to 2,000 people including Indigenous communities;

—on December 10, nine out of 27 community organizations were Indigenous, providing wellness retreats, community integration, peer support and early intervention in their preferred language for underserved Indigenous communities; and

—on September 25, \$1.9 million to help more than 2,000 students, underemployed Indigenous community members and other northern Ontario workers in learning skilled trades programs.

These are some of the many recent investments our government has made to make sure that nobody is left behind.

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** Thank you for the presentation by the member from Mississauga–Malton. An earlier government question to the government, if my memory serves me correctly, said something like, “Could there be more done here?”—something to this effect. Is there room for more to be done here? And now an official opposition question asked: “Would you be willing,” essentially, “to make improvements?”

Now, we have a committee structure where, once this passes second reading—it is a majority government, of course, so we expect it will. When it goes to that stage, if this member puts forth improvements to this legislation, and I’m sure they will be well researched, documented and with the support of experts, does that mean you and the other 70 members you kept talking about who are committed to fighting this and improving it would be supporting changes and amendments in that committee?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member opposite. We are both champions of York University and we were together when we celebrated the 60th year of York University, so I look forward to proudly, post-COVID, going back together on that.

You asked a very important question. Listening is important. Consultation is important. That is why our government, when we put together this bill, made sure we listened to key partners like Indigenous communities and organizations, anti-human trafficking front-line service providers, people with lived experience, regional anti-human trafficking coalitions, police stakeholders, sex workers’ rights advocates, technological platforms and accommodation and hospitality stakeholders. These are some of the stakeholders we worked with.

I want to assure you: Yes, your government will continue to engage key stakeholders as appropriate to further support implementation and inform the development of associated regulations. Absolutely, we will, as we always did. We’ll hear it, we will change it, and we’ll make sure that this is done right.

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It’s always an honour to rise in the House and to talk about this human trafficking bill. I want to first begin by acknowledging that this is Red Dress Day. It’s a day that highlights the epidemic of violence against Indigenous women. Red is the official colour of the murdered and missing Indigenous women campaign. Jaime Black, a member of the Métis who founded Red Dress Day, says that red was chosen as the colour because in various nations it is known to be the only colour that is seen by spirits, and it is hoped that by wearing red we can call back the missing spirits of our women and children so we can lay them to rest.

I think it’s important to acknowledge Red Dress Day as part of this debate because as we heard from the member from Oshawa, Indigenous girls and women are disproportionately affected by human trafficking. So we absolutely need to bring an end to human trafficking and we need to

do it in the context of the disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities.

**1710**

What we usually hear about with human trafficking is the sexual exploitation. There have been numerous articles in the media about how young girls are lured online. Sometimes they expose themselves online, and then the trafficker threatens to release the pictures that he took if she doesn’t start doing what he wants her to do, and that’s how trafficking often begins. And then—I’ll just finish this—that leads to often years of constant sexual abuse, multiple sexual assaults per day. The average age of the girls who are recruited into human trafficking is 13, and the average length of time that they are trafficked is four years. That has absolutely got to stop.

But I want to talk today about a different aspect of the exploitation of people who are trafficked, and that is the financial exploitation of the victims of human trafficking. I’m going to argue that the government of Ontario and the government of Canada both profit off the trafficking, and that the government of Ontario persecutes the survivors of human trafficking for fraudulent debts that were incurred by their traffickers. I ask the member from Mississauga–Malton: Will you support the amendments to strengthen this bill? When this comes to committee, I will be introducing amendments to this bill that will include motions to end financial exploitation of the survivors of human trafficking.

I’ll talk briefly about how this works. My learning about this came from Richard Dunwoody who founded a charity called Project Recover that supports survivors of human trafficking. What I had learned from Project Recover is that the women—mostly women; 90% women—who are trafficked are often taken, when they’re adults, to a bank, and the trafficker will take out a credit card in their name. That credit card they will use for booking the Airbnb and the hotel units, for booking flights—if there’s a concert in Montreal, they will fly the victim of human trafficking to Montreal for the concert. They will use that credit card. They will apply for OSAP loans in the name of the person who is being trafficked.

Sometimes, the victims of trafficking will incur government fines. One example that he gave me was a woman who was being trafficked who was trying to escape. She went to a police officer—the trafficker was nearby—and she created a ruckus, and the officer fined her for creating a disturbance. He didn’t understand what she was trying to do. When she escaped, she went back to the officer, and he apologized for not understanding what she was trying to do. But it was not within his power to remove the fine that had been imposed on her. So the government is still trying to collect that fine that she incurred when she was trying to escape from human trafficking.

When people do escape from human trafficking, they’re often dependent on Ontario Works and ODSP for income, and they’re often stuck in shelters because their credit rating has been destroyed by the traffickers. Richard Dunwoody from Project Recover has been fairly successful with most of the banks and the collection agencies in

having the debts of these survivors of human trafficking forgiven, but not all. There was one woman—the name that we’re using for her is Vanessa, although that’s a pseudonym. She deposited her \$1,367 Ontario Works cheque that was for her and her daughter to survive for the month in the bank. I won’t name the bank, but if there are any members of banks who are listening, this is one of the Big Five, and this Big Five bank is not listening to Project Recover. They’re trying to get that money restored. But a few hours after she deposited her Ontario Works cheque, the bank took it out to pay for a credit card debt that had been incurred by her trafficker when she was being trafficked. This meant she had absolutely no money to survive on and for her child to survive on for the month. This is just one example of why it’s so important to include an end to the financial exploitation of the survivors of human trafficking in this bill.

Another example he gave me was a woman who had been trafficked who got—this is before the government cancelled the victims of violent crimes survivor fund. She received \$8,000. That \$8,000 she deposited into the bank, and it was taken out of the bank by the government of Ontario, or a collection agency working on behalf of the government of Ontario, in order to pay for an \$8,000 OSAP debt. So the financial exploitation of survivors continues after they have escaped, and one of the groups that is pursuing them is the government of Ontario for these fraudulent OSAP debts.

I introduced a motion to the House in December. It’s motion 131 and it reads, “That, in the opinion of this House, the” government of Ontario “should, after consulting with survivors and advocates, amend the Provincial Offences Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act to allow provincial fines and outstanding OSAP debts to be forgiven on compassionate grounds for victims of human trafficking.”

I would like to see this motion introduced as an amendment to this bill, and I would actually change the wording here, because when I wrote this in December I asked the debts to be forgiven on compassionate grounds for victims of human trafficking; now I would say that the government should stop pursuing survivors of human trafficking for fraudulently incurred debts that were incurred by their traffickers. That’s what we need to do in order to help these people to survive and get on with their lives.

I’ll give you a couple of quotes from some of the survivors.

Another survivor named Layla—that’s not her real name—was pulled out of school by her trafficker, and she had an OSAP debt from that time. She cannot return to school because with that debt she cannot get more OSAP loans. She says that every time her phone rings, her first thought is that it’s collections again, and she wonders, “How much will I have to take out of my kids’ mouths this month in order to please the government for a debt that was never my fault?”

Summer, another survivor, describes “drowning in an ocean of debt” because her trafficker held her life and her finances under his complete control.

I’m asking the government to please stop pursuing the survivors of human trafficking for these government fines and for the OSAP debts.

I’ve got just seconds left. There are a number of other amendments that need to be made to this bill. Schedule 1 talks about hotels, and I heard the government say they will include Airbnbs and other short-term rentals. Project Recover can show you credit card debts that show that 50% of the trafficking was occurring in the short-term rentals, as well as in the hotels. That should be built into the legislation, not into regulation. It needs to be part of the bill. So that’s just one of the amendments. Then the other one, of course, is to end the financial persecution of survivors of human trafficking. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Mr. Speaker, this is a very thorny issue and a very important issue. I consider human trafficking one of the scourges of humanity. We have been struggling with it for decades, if not centuries. I have been witness, where I come from, in the Middle East, to how human trafficking is flourishing and devastating at the same time to the families.

1720

I appreciate the member opposite’s comments. I want to ask him a question.

We have heard from the minister—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Question.

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Okay, I have to cut it short, in that case.

Given that the rental accommodation sector is larger than any one business, does the member not agree that it’s important to ensure the definition adequately reflects the evolving nature of the sector as a whole?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I’m not sure which definition—I guess it’s the definition of human trafficking. I think the definition of human trafficking—what I’m arguing today is that it needs to include financial exploitation as well as sexual exploitation and violence.

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

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member from for Spadina–Fort York for sharing the reason why you’re introducing a motion to cancel OSAP debt for survivors of human trafficking. Those stories are compelling.

I know you work on this issue and you follow it quite closely.

Are there other changes or amendments that you would like the Ontario government to make to this human trafficking bill?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Thank you very much for the question.

I mentioned that we need to include Airbnb and short-term rentals as well as hotels in the data collection.

We also need to restore the funding for legal aid, because the survivors of human trafficking need to have lawyers to represent them, to fight, sometimes, against fraudulent debts and other things that they are incurring. Also, they need to be able to restore their credit rating. The

funding for legal aid was cut by 33%, \$130 million. That needs to be restored.

We need to restore the promised mental health funding of \$325 million, because survivors need supports in order to heal and move on with their lives.

We need to restore the child and youth commissioner.

We need to restore the cuts to victim services and compensation, which had offered up to \$25,000 for victims of violent crime. That is absolutely essential. These survivors need some money in order to heal and move on with their lives and get going.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member opposite. I was listening to your comments.

This legislation, or part of it, to deter human trafficking and support law enforcement in identifying and locating victims and bringing offenders to justice includes regulation-making authority to deal with a number of different areas—enhance the information collected in guest registries; establish a length of time that registries may be maintained, because investigations can span a number of days; and enabling regulations to prescribe the requirement to maintain a guest registry for additional accommodation providers, such as short-term rental units, due to the rise of use of these units by traffickers.

We feel that new modalities like technology-based short-term rentals require nimble response. Legislation is not a nimble response, but regulations allow us to add new technologies more easily—and how they can have short-term rental applications. You were saying that it should be in legislation. Don't you think it's a good idea to have it in regulation, where we can respond to the new and evolving technologies that are being used for short-term rentals?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I thank the member for the question.

Right now, we know that, at least for some of the people who are being trafficked, 50% of the exploitation is happening in Airbnb and other short-term rentals. So we could put that in the legislation and still give the minister the regulation power to add additional areas as they come up, as technologies evolve. But right now, we know that this is happening, and that's why the short-term rentals should be part of the legislation.

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

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you to the member opposite for your passion when talking about human trafficking.

I could give a shout-out to all the members—mostly to the members so passionately talking about human trafficking. It's a horrific, heinous issue in Ontario and Canada and across the world. Thank you for your passion.

I know you are critical about so many things about our bill and—the critical nature of the province's anti-human trafficking strategy.

Does the member opposite agree regarding the importance of establishing the legislative requirement to review the strategy?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank the member for the question.

In my comments, I used very strong language. I said that the governments of Ontario and Canada profited from the trafficking. I also said that the government of Ontario actually persecutes the survivors.

I just want to go back to the profiting. It costs, according to Project Recover, \$100,000 a year to traffic one person. That includes hotels and Airbnbs; it includes airlines, air tickets, so if there's a concert in Montreal, they fly the person to a concert in Montreal—all kinds of expenses. On each of those expenses, the government of Canada and Ontario collect 13% HST. So out of that \$100,000, the governments of Ontario and Canada are collecting \$13,000 from this trafficking. That's why I said that the governments are actually profiting from it.

I already talked about how they're persecuting and pursuing these fraudulent debts.

So I think the government should be aware of its role in trafficking and bring an end to its role in trafficking.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions.

**Ms. Suze Morrison:** Thank you so much to my colleague from the neighbouring riding of Spadina–Fort York for your presentation. I think he research and the work that you've done on the financial abuse of human trafficking victims is quite commendable. I want to thank you for the amendments that you're proposing.

Could you share in a little bit more detail what sort of anti-poverty initiatives you'd like to see this government taking—knowing that this financial victimization is predicated on the fact that so many women and girls and trans and two-spirited folks in this province are living in poverty? Could you share a little bit about what anti-poverty initiatives the government could be working on to prevent that poverty in the first place?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to share a story. At the beginning of the pandemic, I started delivering meals to people who are experiencing homelessness, as well as seniors and vulnerable residents. I went to a tent encampment under a bridge, and there was a woman and her daughter living there. They had come from a small town in Ontario. They had a two-bedroom apartment. Their roommate started dating a drug dealer. The drug dealer eventually pushed them out. They didn't have any money. They ended up being moved to a shelter in Toronto. While they were at the shelter, the daughter, who was 20 at the time, was kidnapped by a human trafficker. He hog-tied her and shot her up with fentanyl until she became addicted to fentanyl. This is all in the court records. She actually pursued the trafficker, and he was charged. I'm glad to say he's in prison now. The daughter is still dealing with her addictions. When I met them a year ago, they were still living under a bridge, in a tent, because there was no place for them to go at the beginning of the pandemic. The shelters were full.

My God, there's a connection with poverty and this kind of exploitation. When we make people live in such dire poverty, we open them up to exploitation. That's why

we need to bring an end to poverty in order to bring an end to the kind of exploitation that human trafficking represents.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** One of the four key pillars in this bill is raising the awareness of human trafficking.

At the end of July back in 2019—you were there, as well—at the eastbound 401 ONroute rest stop in Tilbury, #ProjectMapleLeaf, Courage for Freedom, the world day against human trafficking—there must have been close to 100 of us there. Obviously, that was before social distancing and COVID-19. I remember speaking to the OPP inspector for the Essex region, Glenn Miller. He explained how human traffickers travel the 401 corridor on a daily basis. These sexual predators hold young girls and women hostage for their own sexual purposes. He said that it's a modern form of slavery. We were told to take a few moments the next time we travelled the 401 and pull over at a rest stop to see if the female at the corner table, who looked uncomfortable and out of place in the company of one or two men, just may be being held hostage and being trafficked.

1730

Speaker, the media is full of stories about human trafficking and sexual exploitation. I still recall the CBC's Lauren Pelley and her story with the mother of a victim. The woman lived in rural Ontario. Her daughter had survived two stints in the dark world of human sex trafficking. Her daughter was 26, bipolar, and was known, off and on, to be addicted to drugs. Once in Newfoundland, she was held against her will and then trafficked up and down the 400-series highways in Ontario, from Kingston to Barrie and Orillia. Her mother told the CBC that at one time, her daughter was sold from one trafficker to another to settle a drug debt. Another time, she had three guns pointed at her head. Her mother said she was bought and sold, bought and sold, bought and sold. At the time of this story, the victim had been recovering back at home. Her mother thought she was finally coming back to normal, but one day the phone rang, and she took off again.

Experts say it's not unusual for victims to break away but return for any number of reasons, time and time again—maybe as many as five times—before they finally break away for good.

Young people with issues of self-esteem are promised love and acceptance. They're buttered up, they fall in love, and then the abuse begins. Some so-called boyfriends say, "We should buy a house together, but we need extra money. If you love me, prove it. Help me raise money by putting out for men I'll screen and bring to you. It won't mean anything; our love is too strong for that. It's just a way to raise money for the house, and then we'll live happily ever after." Of course, that never happens.

Protecting victims and intervening early is another pillar in this bill.

Down my way, we have Legal Assistance of Windsor. People there had initiated WEFiGHT, Windsor Essex Fights the Growth of Human Trafficking. They usually

have between 70 and 80 open cases at any one time; about five new cases a month come in. WEFiGHT provides direct and indirect services to internationally and domestically trafficked men, women and children experiencing forced labour and sex trafficking, and those trafficked through marriage. They raise awareness of the problem, let people know they care and are there for them. They offer crisis intervention, counselling and assistance to survivors. They help them work with the police, and they support victims all the way through the legal process.

Part of what WEFiGHT does well is their ongoing advocacy for the basic requirements that victims of human trafficking may require, such as getting them signed up for Ontario Works or ODSP, safe and affordable housing, education, training, and even, if required, temporary residency permits and/or other pathways to permanent residency.

WEFiGHT has also offered education and training to law enforcement and other agencies on ways to deal with the victims of human and sex trafficking. They've established service provision protocols to make sure all victims are treated within a seamless pathway.

They raise a good question: If there's money available for this issue, should it all be going to the police, or should some of it be provided instead to local community organizations that provide the training and education in this field?

Speaker, I have a daughter and four beautiful, young granddaughters; the oldest is only 10. So I am absolutely horrified when I read that Indigenous children are groomed for sexual exploitation when they're as young as eight and that the police frequently see 13- to 17-year-olds being sexually exploited.

I read last night that the sex trade is more profitable than running guns or selling drugs. One victim—just one—can bring her pimp as much as between \$250,000 to \$280,000 a year.

I used to think that the deadbeats who scammed senior citizens out of their savings were the lowest of the low. But the slimeballs who groom and exploit young women and girls for sexual purposes are the lowest of the low—the gutter-crawlers who need to be eradicated.

Their victims need our help in so many ways. They need counselling, and they need help to regain their confidence, to feel good about themselves again, to feel that they belong. We need to help them with their education and help them find a job, safe and affordable housing, and citizenship, if they need it. They may need ongoing medical support or to be relocated away from where their nightmare in sex trafficking first began.

We need strong ties within all levels of government to tackle the problem in a coordinated way, and we need the determination to make sure that this is not a temporary conversation. This is an issue that needs a permanent solution.

Speaker, here is a story about Lisa, an Indigenous woman. When she was 19, in Edmonton, she was lured to Ontario by a contact she met on an online dating service. When she got here, this naive woman was taken to a strip



club in Mississauga. Her date kept her hostage at his apartment, sexually assaulted her and forced her to become a dancer. She escaped to a shelter in Toronto and met a counsellor who forced her and another young woman back into stripping—but he added prostitution. On a double date with men and a lot of cocaine, Lisa overdosed in a washroom at a hotel. The police were called, and Lisa was able to eventually get back home safely to Edmonton.

Indigenous women and girls make up just 4% of Canada's population, yet some studies show that they are 50% of the females being trafficked.

This is Red Dress Day, as we've heard. My colleagues the MPP for Toronto Centre, our critic for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls response, and the MPP for Toronto—St. Paul's, our caucus critic for women's issues, have issued a statement:

"Today on the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG), also known as Red Dress Day, we honour and remember lost and stolen Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people...."

"We continue to experience an epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Communities and families grieve these losses daily and are far too often denied justice."

This release goes on to say, "We must all recommit to ending the disproportionate violence, racism and poverty faced by Indigenous women, girls, trans, gender non-conforming, and two-spirit people. It's time for all levels of government in Canada to acknowledge their responsibility for the colonial violence and historical genocide that have targeted Indigenous people for generations."

The release concludes with: "The Ford government must take action to save lives. It's been over a year and half since the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls presented their final report, but we have yet to see significant progress on the implementation of the 231 Calls for Justice."

Premier Ford "still does not fully recognize and respect the rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people and communities.

"The Ontario NDP is committed to fighting for justice for Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people. We will continue to demand that the Ford government address the root causes of gender-based violence, and confront the impacts of racism, misogyny, and historical genocide in our society."

Another story in the Soo: A woman tells a conference about her life in the trade. She came from a dysfunctional family and was abused at home. When she was 14, she was a biker chick. She hung out with sugar daddies. She was busted and sent to jail. She met a woman who told her, "You should meet this guy in Toronto; you'll be soul-mates." Instead, he was a pimp who beat the hell out of her time and time again. He would rape her repeatedly, and she was forced to have sex with other men, sometimes 10, 20 or 30 times a day. She was forced to become a stripper, and her life was hell on earth. She finally got away from it

all and got back to her native roots. She's healing and telling her story to warn others of the dangers.

The police say that Sault Ste. Marie is just another pit stop on the human trafficking highway.

Speaker, there is no place in Ontario that this is not a problem. We all have to get together and find the proper solution.

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

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you for the member opposite's presentation. We have heard a little bit from the member opposite regarding the police when it comes to keeping communities safe from trafficking. One of the ways police forces can build trust is by stepping in to protect victims of all backgrounds.

**1740**

Speaker, my question to the member from Windsor—Tecumseh is, does the member agree that our law enforcement partners play an important role when it comes to stopping trafficking, and does he support them in this goal?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** We're all partners in this law enforcement, the judicial system. The story out of London, where three men were up on charges, about 15 charges involving a 15-year-old girl—it finally got to court years later. The judge dismissed the charges because she had asked for an adjournment because she had the flu. In times of COVID, you don't go out with the flu. The judge dismissed the charges because, earlier, she had an adjournment because she was having a baby. The second time, she was under house arrest on other charges and she couldn't come to court.

People in London are outraged that the judge dismissed the charges against these three men from Toronto. They were raping her. They were making child pornography with her. They had gang-raped her. The charges were dismissed on a technicality because it was taking too long to prosecute.

We're all in this together: the judicial system, police, victims, counsellors. We need a solution for it all.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I really appreciate what you've brought to the House here today. We hear a lot of hard truths and important questions about systemic racism when it comes to Indigenous communities. You brought up the murdered and missing Indigenous women report: 231 calls for action. We had the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: 94 calls for action. We also know that in certain Indigenous communities, like Thunder Bay, there's a broken trust with the police services there.

My question to you is, can an actual effective strategy to address human trafficking in Indigenous communities be effective if it doesn't have the lens, if it doesn't have a specific approach to the very, very specific issues that are faced by that community?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you to my friend from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas for that question. I say to my friends across the aisle, those of you who are going to be on the committee that deals with this at a third and

final reading, or before it gets to the House for the third and final reading, please, after everything you've heard about the problems facing the disproportionate exploitation of people from the Indigenous community, put something in your bill that directs more attention to the resolution of that issue. I mean, all the issues are important, but if it's disproportionately so to one group more than others, put something in the bill that addresses it, be it through funding, be it through training, be it through counselling of all the people involved—but please improve the bill. You have the ability to do that. You have the majority to do that. Please do that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further questions.

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I was going to ask a different question, but just over the last comments, I just want to let the people in the House know that this government is investing \$18.2 million over three years, and that is to address violence against First Nation, Inuit, Métis women and girls. I just want to make sure that you are aware that we are looking at funding these women who are the victims of heinous crimes.

This has gone on for so long. We talked about this before, the Indigenous and missing women and children. My heart goes out to those moms because moms should never have to wonder where their daughter is when they go to bed.

We talked a little bit about Indigenous services. We have a couple of stakeholders that are quite supportive of this legislation: “The Ontario Native Women’s Association ... clearly understands the necessity and the timely importance of the introduction of the Combating Human Trafficking Act as well as amendments to the Child, Youth and Family Services Act ... Indigenous women in Ontario have been telling us what they need for years to address human trafficking and this multi-pronged approach stands to provide meaningful change.”

I just want to hear the comments from the member opposite—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. To the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for a response.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's hard to disagree with my friend from Etobicoke–Lakeshore on the issue she has raised. But I say back to her, the money is a part and parcel of the problem that will be fixed, but is the money going to get to the root causes—not necessarily the counselling at the end of the day, but the root causes? Can you get into the places, the lack of food, the poverty, the clothing, the unattendance in schools? Why are we not, as a society, recognizing the children that we can clearly see are on a path to end up down the road where nobody wants to see them go? We have to get into those issues, and some of that money should be directed to informing and educating the police, educators, counsellors, neighbours on what's going on. How do we fix the problem now before it ends up down the road with the agencies that support the bill?

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

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his comments. And I want to thank him for acknowledging the work of our critic for the murdered and missing Indigenous women, the member for Toronto Centre, and all the excellent work she's doing in making sure that those 200-plus recommendations are front and centre and that we can be pushing for them in this Legislature.

We've heard in the debate today that poverty and indigeneity are tied into the level of exploitation, the disproportionate level of exploitation, of Indigenous women in trafficking. We've also heard that a number of agencies want to see amendments to this. The Butterfly group, Project Recover—there are a number of agencies that want to see amendments to this bill.

Do you think the government should be, in committee, open to amendments? And do you think that you're hearing from this government that they will be open to amendments when it gets to committee?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It is Red Dress Day. Obviously, I don't wear a dress, but I did wear a red tie specifically today in honour of Red Dress Day.

In committee, if there is bill that's being opposed by the opposition and we put up amendments, typically they're knocked down; none of them are ever accepted. In this bill, if all sides are supporting it, if we're all in this together, I would hope that, egos aside, the government members would listen and accept any good amendment to this bill that would improve this bill, that all of us together can leave this chamber knowing full well we made a contribution, we have improved the bill and improved the lives of those who are sexually exploited in Ontario, something that we have to find ways to put an end to.

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

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I want to say thanks to the member opposite. We have heard some commentary from the opposition about the importance of capturing short-term rentals under the new legislation's registry-of-guests requirement. I want to inform the member opposite, yes, we are willing to work with you and we do agree, given that the current registry-of-guests legislation is unable to capture any other type of accommodation other than hotels.

What I want to ask the member opposite is, in his opinion, why this legislation is an important step to move forward, along with the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Question?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** —of the sector?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his final response.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize; you were calling “response” as he was ending his question. I didn't hear the exact part of what he was saying that I should be responding to. But I will thank my friend very much. I think we're on the same page when it comes to improving the bill, and I take you at your word, sir, as I always do. If you say you're going to work with

us to improve the bill, I know you will, and I appreciate that very much.

You mentioned the Airbnbs and that you're willing to look at that. It wasn't looked at initially. Because of all of what we hear in the media about what happens at Airbnbs, we certainly have to do something to get this and the bill somewhere.

1750

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

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** It's an honour to rise and speak to this really important issue today. Today is Red Dress Day. It's a day to raise awareness across Ontario and Canada for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Before I begin my remarks, I wanted to remember and honour all of the Indigenous women, girls and two-spirited people and to recommit to honouring the calls for justice within the national report on the missing and murdered women and girls and two-spirited people.

Human trafficking is a major problem in Ontario. We must do everything we can to eliminate the scourge of human trafficking. Some 70% of all reported cases of human trafficking in Canada were women under the age of 25. According to the Ontario Native Women's Association report on sex trafficking in Ontario, upwards of 50% of all sex trafficking victims in Ontario were Indigenous women. We must do better, and we must commit to implementing the recommendations contained within the report, and we must do more to confront systemic racism.

According to a survey conducted in 2012, more than half of the victims of human trafficking surveyed had spent some time in child and protective services.

As you know, I like to serve as a conduit and amplify the voices of experts. Today, I share the words of Marsha Rampersaud, a PhD candidate in sociology at Queens University whose research explores the compounding effects of the child welfare and criminal justice system on youth and young adults. I would like to quote her:

"Children and youth who are in the child welfare system or who are exiting or leaving the system are a pretty vulnerable population in our society. When young people are in 'care' they experience considerable instability.

"This means there is a lot of movement between places, foster homes and group homes. Most youth have also dealt with some sort of trauma or abuse which led them to be in the child welfare system and this leads to particular vulnerabilities or creates circumstances where these young people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing things like: homelessness, mental illness, substance use dependence, early pregnancy and low-social ties (severed ties with foster families after they turn 18).

"Youth usually have tenuous relationships and connections to their families once they turn 18, so these aren't the strongest bonds and all of these things coming together make this population a particularly vulnerable one to be caught up in human trafficking or become a target for trafficking.

"One of the young people that has come up in my research talked about the instability and vulnerability of her childhood home and trying to go into care. At 16 years old she tried to return to her biological family but was kicked out and then subsequently targeted and brought into trafficking. Over the next couple of years she was trafficked

"Along the way she picked up a serious substance use dependency and struggled with significant mental health issues. Things came to a head with her when she came into conflict with the law at 18 years old. She was fortunate to have professional support that intervened and advocated for her by recognizing that there was significant mental health and substance abuse issues present.

"These professionals stepped in to support her and since then she has been able to turn her life around. However, there have been so many factors that ultimately made her an ideal target, such as not having strong ties to her family or experiencing bouts of homelessness and living in shelters intermittently.

"Being on the streets made her a vulnerable person and an easier target. Something I'd like to say with regard to this, is the importance of having networks and an integrated approach to addressing human trafficking.

"Justice system actors don't always know what to look for when identifying someone as being trafficked. Instead they are written off, in the young woman's words, as 'a prostitute'. For example, during this particular young woman's intake with her lawyer she was asked where she lives. At the time she was homeless and was automatically written off as a homeless sex worker. Because this young woman was afraid to get anyone else in trouble, she kept up this narrative in court.

"When she was asked about how she makes money she said that she engages in sex work by choice. The courts went with this and believed her. It was later on in her life when she received professional help and support that she was able to get out of this environment. The court system did not recognize any of the signs or the vulnerabilities youth caught up in human trafficking experience.

"There are also many long-term lingering effects that this young woman and many who have been in a situation like hers face. She has issues being around men or approached by men because of her trauma.

"She has described an incident of being arrested by two plainclothes officers and resisting arrest because it was so triggering.

"She was also heavily addicted to heroin while she was being trafficked. The long-term effects to this type of addiction include deterioration of the brain's white matter which may affect decision-making abilities, the ability to regulate behaviour, and responses to stressful situations.

"Overall, this young woman is not able to trust easily. I think her story shows us that youth issues don't occur in silos. They cross sectors, and as such, our approach to support them should be multi-sectoral.

"When we think of survivors of human and sex trafficking, the kinds of supports and services they need are

embedded in our communities—mental and physical health supports, trauma counselling, food security, and safe and secure housing. But these services are notoriously underfunded. Shifting funds into more policing ignores the needs of survivors.

“If we truly want to help survivors, we should invest in the community services that will best help them move forward and have a healthy future.”

I’d also like to talk about an organization. StepStones for Youth is an organization that works with youth who age out of the foster care system. StepStones helps youth increase meaningful connections and support networks, increase stable housing, increase support and stability in mental health, and increase educational success. These are all imperative in preventing youth from falling into human trafficking as victims or abusers.

I spoke with an individual who works with StepStones for Youth. He told me that whenever there is a human trafficking call in the Durham region, a human trafficking support worker accompanies police to respond to the call. This support worker meets with the victims, and this program has had a great deal of success in helping many victims to escape human trafficking and the sex trade. Any legislation that combats human trafficking should also ensure that there is adequate funding in place for support workers who can build trust with human trafficking victims and to help them escape.

Many human traffickers target youth in care. Such youth can be particularly vulnerable. The worker told me that many youth in the child welfare system often feel disposable. Group home settings tend to lack the intimacy and support that children and youth need, so they often look for it in other ways. Many human traffickers groom youth by making them feel protected before they are trafficked. The worker with StepStones for Youth told me that there must be more education and services, particularly around the areas of consent, sexual health and Internet safety to help youth in care to avoid being groomed and dragged into human trafficking. He told me that any government response should not be focused on Band-Aid solutions that focus just on policing, but they should also focus on education and resources for children and youth.

Two such organizations that provide ongoing support for victims of human trafficking are the Better Futures for Kids Foundation and Ao Dai Canada. A volunteer working with them told me, “I use [my social media platforms] to raise awareness and speak about child sex slavery.... I get a lot of emails and messages from victims wanting to speak to me about their stories. These people were rescued through awareness such as mine, other information they have been exposed to regarding how they could escape and

have or by other organizations that rescue people from brothels.”

They do amazing work to raise awareness and provide support to victims of human trafficking, child sex slavery and child exploitation. These organizations have helped to rescue victims of all ages and backgrounds.

As the volunteer said, “Human trafficking and child sex slavery happens to all groups of people.” The volunteer is happy to be able to help others: “I believe, as a privileged Vietnamese refugee who came to Canada when I was five years old with my aunt, Canada has given me a new life. Now, I want to give back to my community and help my home Toronto be a safer home for all the children in need. It is my honour and duty to serve my people.”

Every year they run events to help raise money to help victims of human trafficking, including the Taste of Vietnam, which, before the pandemic, attracted 18,000 people to Nathan Phillips Square. When we do awareness, we are not just helping the victims, but also educating the families to take action when their kids say they have been assaulted. Often victims feel alone because no one believes them. Another quote: “It’s a sexual matter so people don’t want anyone to know.”

The organization has over 100 volunteers, as they want to help as many victims as possible. The volunteers put in their own money to run the events, but now, due to the pandemic, many of them were laid off and/or have lost their jobs. They hope to have more future grants from the government so they can continue to run these awareness programs and organize events, virtual if needed, to get youth and families involved.

May 15 will be the fifth anniversary of Ao Dai Canada. On this day, the volunteers and many members of the Vietnamese Canadian community wear a national costume, the “ao dai,” which symbolizes Vietnamese women and their traditional virtues of grace, beauty, gentleness, demureness and unquestionable devotion. Ao Dai Canada aims to modify these perceptions and empower the modern women to become a symbol of strength and kindness, each with their own beautiful and unique way to make a difference in the world. They are urging the government to support the fight against human trafficking and make a formal proclamation to have May 15 be recognized.

The government must work with organizations who are working to end the scourge of human trafficking of youth with resources to help them build healthy connections and skills to avoid human trafficking.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Unfortunately, the time to further debate Bill 251 has expired.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

*Report continues in volume B.*







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<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	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
<b>Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)</b>	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	



<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
<b>French, Jennifer K. (NDP)</b>	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
<b>Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Hatfield, Percy (NDP)</b>	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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteure générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	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	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	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, Rod (PC)	Ajax	
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	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
<b>Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)</b>	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'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	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Walker, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Yakubski, Hon. / L'hon. John (PC)</b>	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
<b>Yurek, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna Skelly  
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett  
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto  
Randy Hillier, Jane McKenna  
Judith Monteith-Farrell, Michael Parsa  
Randy Pettapiece, Donna Skelly  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**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, Stan Cho  
Catherine Fife, Mitzie Hunter  
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa  
David Piccini, Jeremy Roberts  
Amarjot Sandhu, Dave Smith  
Vijay Thanigasalam  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Présidente: Goldie Ghamari  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner  
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey  
Guy Bourgouin, Stephen Crawford  
Goldie Ghamari, Chris Glover  
Mike Harris, Sheref Sabawy  
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner  
Daisy Wai  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian  
Aris Babikian, Gilles Bisson  
Will Bouma, Lorne Coe  
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin  
Norman Miller, Rick Nicholls  
Billy Pang, Amanda Simard  
Marit Stiles  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Julia Douglas

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard  
Will Bouma, Lucille Collard  
Parm Gill, Daryl Kramp  
Natalia Kusendova, Suze Morrison  
Lindsey Park, Gurratan Singh  
Nina Tangri, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Kevin Yarde  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**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  
Michael Mantha, Jim McDonell  
Christina Maria Mitas, Sam Oosterhoff  
Kaleed Rasheed, Donna Skelly  
Vijay Thanigasalam  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett  
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais  
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto  
France Gélinas, Christine Hogarth  
Daryl Kramp, Taras Natyshak  
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: Logan Kanapathi  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser  
Will Bouma, John Fraser  
Logan Kanapathi, Vincent Ke  
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller  
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts  
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai  
Jamie West  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Deepak Anand  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche  
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian  
Jeff Burch, Amy Fee  
Michael Gravelle, Joel Harden  
Mike Harris, Christine Hogarth  
Belinda C. Karahalios, Bhutila Karpoche  
Natalia Kusendova  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /  
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations  
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth  
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin  
Sam Oosterhoff, Lindsey Park  
Tom Rakocevic, Sara Singh  
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell