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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 31 March 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 31 mars 2022

Report continued from volume A.

MORE HOMES
FOR EVERYONE ACT, 2022
LOI DE 2022 POUR PLUS
DE LOGEMENTS POUR TOUS

Continuation of debate on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the various statutes with respect to housing, development and various other matters / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement, l'aménagement et diverses autres questions.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022. I thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the member for Brantford–Brant for their presentation of the bill.

Before I start, I'd also like to thank our fantastic member, the member for University–Rosedale, who is the critic for housing for our caucus. She works with me as the critic of municipal affairs on housing and municipal affairs issues. Unfortunately, she'd love to be here, but she is isolating with her family through COVID-19 protocols. I just want to say that she's been a fantastic advocate, not only for her constituents but for people all across the province of Ontario who are fighting for affordable housing. I just want to wish her and her family a speedy recovery and good health. As many members of this House have done, she's doing the responsible thing, and we thank her for that.

I'm glad to have the opportunity to speak about housing. It's the number one issue that I hear about in my riding, and I'm sure most members in this House feel the same way. I want to talk first about the content of the bill. What's remarkable about this bill is that it is completely unremarkable.

Some of the substantive changes are that the bill sets timelines for municipalities for rezoning applications. And if they fail to make a decision within 90 days, refunds start at 50% and rise to 100%. There are similar consequences for municipalities that fail to approve a site plan application within the stated deadlines.

It also increases the non-resident speculation tax rate from 15% to 20% and expands the tax beyond the greater Golden Horseshoe. It makes some reforms to the timelines

on new home warranties, an issue we've heard a lot about and that I'll be covering later.

It also creates a new tool, the community infrastructure and housing accelerator, which formalizes municipal requests for minister's zoning orders, which this government has used very aggressively to allow well-connected developers to pave over farmland and protected wetlands to build warehouses and unsustainable sprawl.

Substantively, there is nothing in this bill or in the list of proposed policy and regulatory changes in the bill backgrounder that the government intends to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow missing middle housing for up to four storeys everywhere that single detached homes are allowed.

Critics are stating that this bill does not treat the housing issue for what it is, which is a crisis. The analogy I would use is if your house is on fire, you don't slowly walk to the kitchen and get a glass of water, which is what this bill does. Instead, this looks an awful lot like a pre-election package—the same tactic we saw used by the Liberals before the last election after years of failure. Certainly on this issue, it's been four years with very, very little progress, as my friend from St. Catharines earlier pointed out.

Speaker, I always appreciate getting into debate on the issues of housing. Just yesterday, I rose in the House for a member's statement to speak about it. The number one issue in my riding of Niagara Centre is, of course, the severe lack of affordable housing. Wages are stagnant, but the price of gas, groceries and housing continues to rise. A modest one-bedroom in the city of Welland is going for \$1,400 a month. A basement one-bedroom apartment in Port Colborne is \$1,300.

This is consistent across the province. Rents have risen across Ontario over the past 20 years, particularly since 2011—and I'm going to address the long history of neglect on this issue since 2001.

Shortly after this government was elected, they eliminated rent control on new units. Think about that for a moment. This housing crisis had been going on for a long time. The government gets elected in 2018 and they eliminate rent control. There is no legal limit set on how much landlords can charge in rent for new builds that are occupied for the first time after November 2018. How does that possibly make the housing crisis better?

In an article for CBC, they explored why Canada is losing affordable rental housing faster than it's being built. "According to research from Steve Pomeroy, a senior research fellow at Carleton University in Ottawa, rentals that were once considered affordable are seeing significant price increases.

“He estimates that between 2011 and 2016, the number of rental units that would be affordable for households earning less than \$30,000 per year—with rents below \$750—declined by over 322,600 in Canada.

“Because many provinces control how much rents can be raised on tenants who stay in the same unit, most of these increases occur when the unit turns over....”

“However, in the current rental environment, ‘there is a tremendous incentive to remove that sitting tenant....’”

We’ve heard a lot about renovations. My friend from University–Rosedale has risen in this House many times to talk about that issue.

This is what we’re seeing in Ontario. When housing costs more than 30% of a person’s income, that housing is unaffordable, according to the federal government. In Niagara, we’re seeing people spend upwards of 60% of their take-home income on housing.

It’s not just rentals that are unattainable. It is nearly impossible for the people of this province to enter the housing market as a first-time homebuyer without support from friends or family. According to the Niagara Workforce Planning Board, in March 2020, Niagara’s average home price was over \$450,000. In March 2021, this price increased by over 37% to over \$620,000. This annual increase in local housing costs outpaced wage increases of the average worker by five times—clearly unsustainable, Speaker. To put that in perspective, in 2017, the average home price was just under \$330,000. Somehow, in five years, home prices have doubled.

How is this possible? How is this the province our kids are supposed to try to make a life in? How is this the province we’ve left our seniors to try to navigate, as they try to find places to live?

The answer lies in the financialization of housing. The Bank of Canada says that one in five people buying a house is doing so as an investment. As our housing market continues to get hotter and hotter, investors are seeing housing as an investment as opposed to a home, and this mentality is becoming more and more prevalent.

Recent data suggests that people who own more than one property in Ontario make up more than 25% of buyers in the province. That’s one in four people who buy a home in the province of Ontario are investors, not people looking for a home. In contrast, just 10 years ago, investors made up the smallest percentage of residential real estate transactions. They now make up the largest segment.

Speaker, if you’ve spoken with anyone who has tried to buy a house over the past few years, they’ll tell you it’s an incredibly frustrating process. You save up, get all of your money together and get on a hunt to find a home. What you face is a bidding war with a professional housing investor. They come in bidding hundreds of thousands over asking, cash deal, no home inspection. How is an average Ontarian supposed to compete with that? The risk here is that investors continue to push the price higher and higher.

1500

In an interview with CBC, Ron Butler, one of the founders of Butler Mortgage, spoke about his experience

with his clients, and I’ll quote him: “We’ve seen our clients forced to the upper limit of their affordability. But that’s the only option they have is to be at the highest point that they can possibly achieve from a borrowing point of view....”

“That’s not going to have a great ending, in my opinion. It’s just not. It’s either going to result in a generational shift of people leaving the province or it’s going to result in eventually some kind of price deterioration that’s going to catch a lot of people offside.”

Back in 2019, I rose in this House to speak about the minister’s first attempt on the housing issue with Bill 108. Back then, I said the following: “I have deep concerns over what this bill will mean for affordable housing in this province. This bill has no vision for affordable housing. We all seem to agree that we’re in a housing crisis in Ontario. Where I’m from, in Thorold, a community in my riding, whether you’re a senior, single or a household with dependents, you’ll wait anywhere from six to 10 years for an affordable housing unit; in St. Catharines, three to 13 years; in Welland, two to 15 years, depending on your situation; and in Port Colborne, three to 13 years.”

And guess what, Speaker? In Thorold, it is now seven to 13 years. In Welland, you’re waiting anywhere from three to 16 years; same in St. Catharines. In Niagara Falls, you could be looking at an 18-year-long wait. There is no question that in Niagara and across the province of Ontario, the situation has gotten worse, not better. In London, nearly 6,000 people are waiting for subsidized—growing 20% in two years. More than 22,000 Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon households are on the wait-list for affordable housing.

Speaker, I recognize that those are a lot of numbers, but behind each one of those numbers is a real person trying to get by in this province.

I want to talk about one of my constituents. This is the story of Donald. My office helps a lot of people in our community navigate these wait-lists. In December 2021, our office started helping Donald, a sole parent to his 14-year-old son. A former tradesman who helped build the tunnel under the Niagara River, Don’s world collapsed years ago when an arm injury led to six surgeries and a virulent infection that caused kidney failure.

When Donald was in the hospital, his landlord served him notice that she intended to move into the unit. Donald and his son Jesse were suddenly homeless. His son—a quiet, straitlaced high school student, who is also his father’s caretaker—made the football team this year. Despite the hairpin turns Don’s life has taken in the past couple of years through no fault of his own, you could hear the pride in his voice when he speaks about his boy. And, despite the monumental obstacles he’s facing with his need for urgent housing during a housing crisis, you could hear optimism in his voice when he talked about getting a kidney transplant.

Don connected with all the right people. He was devoted to finding a safe place for himself and his son. They were supposed to be housed until March under an arrangement with a local social services agency, but the

building was sold and he was told he had to get out of the unit by the next week. It was December.

Donald's income, like many people's, was \$2,000 a month. The only places Don could find, even ones arranged by a local social services agency, were \$1,500 a month. With gas and car insurance, they wouldn't have had enough to have both a roof over their heads and food on the table. Don was yet again without a place to live. He took dialysis three times per week, was on a kidney transplant wait-list, is diabetic and was facing another arm surgery.

He was on the local affordable housing wait-list, with homelessness status. My office inquired if perhaps there was a rent subsidy Don could access through the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit. The reply was that at the moment, they were out of subsidy funding and even if they received more, their policy was to offer it to the wait-list in chronological order. Speaker, they are currently working on the year 2014.

Under a tremendous amount of stress, Don was struggling. In January, he was admitted to a local hospital for a suspected stroke. Don's doctor submitted three separate letters to Niagara Regional Housing between November and January, requesting that Don be given priority status based on health and safety. It was approved on the third try. The doctor asked for a place without stairs or with an elevator. While Donald was in the hospital, his family moved his belongings to his daughter's apartment, and Jesse went to stay with his older brother.

Donald passed away of a blood clot in February. He spent his last month in the hospital, not knowing whether he and his son would have a home when he got out. He wasn't yet 50 years old.

Speaker, Don and his family did not deserve any of this. One health setback should not condemn you to homelessness. Every single person on our housing wait-list has a story like Donald's. Municipalities are doing their absolute best. Niagara Regional Housing continues to do as much as they can, as do many regional agencies across the province. They continue to find new and creative ways to support those facing homelessness or needing an affordable place to stay, and it's the same with our social service agencies. In my riding, the Hope Centre, Port Cares, Community Care do absolutely incredible work helping people facing this crisis.

What is alarming to me, Speaker, is that we have had four years to do something to help Don and people like him. This bill and its predecessor, Bill 108, have not set any targets. It does not build new social housing. It does not subsidize rents or bring back rent control. Like Bill 108, this bill has no vision for affordable housing. Clearly, Bill 108 did not achieve what this government hoped it would.

Speaker, undoubtedly, there is a housing stock issue. Ontario is the worst offender in Canada when it comes to lack of sufficient housing stock, according to Scotiabank Economics. But clearly, it's not the only issue. We cannot address this crisis by building alone. Yvonne Kelly, co-chair of the Social Planning Council of York Region in Newmarket, said of the report, "We can build more but is

it going to be affordable and what is affordable? I think there's a lot of questions to be asked."

One of the ways that we will understand the questions that need to be asked and the solutions for the future is by understanding the history of the housing crisis. I want to talk about social housing and the history of the housing crisis for a moment. How did we get here? I'd like to provide some history.

By 2001, after six years of our last Conservative Premier, Mike Harris, Ontario was facing an affordable housing deficit of at least 74,000 units, according to estimates made by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. The Harris government cancelled 17,000 units of co-op and non-profit housing just days after being elected in 1995. In a paper by Michael Shapcott in 2001, which 20 years ago accurately predicted the predicament we now find ourselves in, he outlined the Harris housing record. To get the province out of what Harris called the "housing business," they did the following: They cut funding to existing social housing projects. They cut social assistance rates, including shelter allowances, by 21%, from which they've never recovered. They gutted tenant and rental housing protection laws, including rent control. They downloaded the \$905 million in social housing costs to municipalities. They downloaded the administration of social housing to municipalities.

Speaker, we are still suffering the effects of what was done at that time. The Harris government began their task by commissioning what was called the Who Does What advisory panel, which was chaired by David Crombie. This is very important history, Speaker, because it shows how municipalities got into the housing crisis. The persisting sticking point of the Crombie review was the distinction between "hard" and "soft" services. Hard services are what we know as road maintenance, sewers etc. Soft services are services to people, like housing, social assistance, education and public health. Crombie suggested that municipalities should only be responsible for hard services.

In a widely publicized dismissal of those recommendations, the province shifted all social housing, land ambulance, library, and water and sewage plant responsibilities to municipalities. They shifted most public health unit costs to municipalities—something we saw the effects of leading up to the pandemic. They shifted all local public transportation to municipalities.

The point of this history lesson is that we are still in this deficit that was created by the last Conservative government. Wait-lists for social housing continue to boom. In 2016, there were over 171,000 Ontario households waiting for a home they could afford. To put this in perspective, in 2021, nearly 80,000 people were on the wait-list for social housing in Toronto alone. Seniors now account for over 35% of the people waiting for affordable housing in this province.

1510

This brings me to the government's Housing Affordability Task Force. Last year, the government convened a Housing Affordability Task Force to gain recommendations on how to address what is clearly a housing crisis.

The task force came forward with 55 recommendations. Like any report, there are parts we on this side of the House agree with and parts we disagree with. There was some pushback on who was selected to lead the task force. Since we all know the history of Who Does What panel, which I have just described, which is the Conservative downloading of services to municipalities, we know how important municipalities are in the conversation around housing. Unfortunately—and this was absolutely incredible to me, Speaker—there was no municipal representation on the task force. So we had this massive downloading of services to municipalities, and then here, the next Conservative government convenes a task force and there's no municipal representation on the task force.

AMO released a statement following the report, and I want to read directly from that statement. AMO says, "As you know, AMO was disappointed that in December 2021, the province created a Housing Affordability Task Force ... that lacked any municipal representation. Despite this, best efforts were made to provide municipal perspectives in that process, in hopes that our members would have enough time to provide reactions to the ... report before the government proceeded.

"AMO recognized the" report "had a narrower scope for consultation, which is why we focused instead on commenting on the province's housing affordability survey ... and making sure there was AMO participation at the" summit "and the rural housing round table at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference"—so they were not even part of the task force.

"Each of these milestones provided AMO with an opportunity to illustrate how complex the crisis is and the need for an all-of-government approach to truly fix it. Those meetings made it clear that a refresh to our 2019 housing positions was needed. That is why the AMO housing blueprint was developed. The positions were informed by our AMO affordable housing and planning task forces and AMO board of directors who met in January and February.

"Then, the province's Housing Affordability Task Force's ... report was released on February 8, 2022. AMO's planning and affordable housing task forces and the AMO executive met separately to discuss the" report that they were not involved in. "In the end, significant concerns were raised that many premises and recommendations in the ... report do not align with AMO's positions on housing. Therefore, AMO is writing to strongly encourage the ministry to consider the comments below and recommendations made in our housing blueprint as it considers how to move ahead with solving these housing challenges."

So this is AMO—not involved in the process, and then saying afterwards, "We have our recommendations, we have our processes. We're sorry you didn't listen to us, but here, after the fact, is what we think." That's not the way to consult with folks that you consider to be partners.

What's interesting about the bill before us is that this bill does not follow through on the most notable recommendations from the housing task force. On page 29 of the housing affordability report, they stated, "Funding for

affordable housing is the responsibility of all levels of government." This is very important, Speaker, because it directly contradicts something that the minister was saying earlier. "The federal government has committed to large funding transfers to the provinces to support affordable housing. The task force heard, however, that Ontario's share of this funding does not reflect our proportionate affordable housing needs. This, in turn, creates further financial pressure on both the province and municipalities, which further exacerbates the affordable housing shortages in Ontario's communities." So Ontario is not doing its fair share, and this was made very clear. This is making the affordable housing shortage in Ontario communities worse.

Additionally, there is nothing in this bill or in the list of proposed policy and regulatory changes, even in the bill backgrounder, suggesting that the government intends to eliminate exclusionary zoning and allow missing middle housing of up to four stories in places where single detached homes are allowed, both of which were recommendations in the task force report and are absolutely critical to working on this problem.

When municipalities are looking to address the issue of affordable housing in their constituency, zoning bylaws have been one tool. For those people watching at home who may not know, inclusionary zoning is a land use planning tool which permits municipalities to require new development or redevelopment to dedicate or maintain a portion of new residential units as affordable housing. For years, this was a tool that municipalities across Ontario used to include more affordable units in new developments—until this government was elected.

In Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act—another bill I had the opportunity to debate on the floor of this House—the rules were changed. Presently, one can have inclusionary zoning in only certain areas, specifically a protected major transit station area or an area subject to a development permit system, as ordered by the minister.

Speaker, we heard a lot about this change. Every member of this House can speak to the fact that the housing affordability crisis is not one that only exists in large cities. If you live in a smaller community, major transit station areas are few and far between. Functionally this meant it was extremely difficult for municipalities to use the inclusionary zoning tool.

The government's own task force put forward recommendations on inclusionary zoning. They read—this is from the government's own task force:

"Allow cash-in-lieu payments for inclusive zoning units at the discretion of the municipality.

"Require that municipalities utilize density bonusing or other incentives....

"Permit municipalities that have not passed inclusionary zoning policies to offer incentives....

"Encourage government to closely monitor the effectiveness of inclusionary zoning policy in creating new affordable housing...." These are a series of recommendations that this government completely ignored from its own task force.

The repair of inclusionary zoning was also requested by AMO. In their *Fixing the Housing Affordability Crisis* report, AMO urged the government, saying:

“Municipal governments have a range of tools under provincial legislation to facilitate affordable housing development. One promising tool is inclusionary zoning as it requires a share of affordable housing in new developments. However, Bill 108 limits municipal governments’ ability to effectively leverage this tool. Inclusionary zoning is now limited to protected major transit station and development permit system areas.” AMO says, “This means that inclusionary zoning will not be possible in areas that lack major transit stations. There are also barriers to creating development permit systems that will limit the number of units built leveraging inclusionary zoning in these areas.” Speaker, this is evidence that, this government’s Bill 108, not only did it not make the housing affordability crisis better, it actually made it much worse.

Another recommendation from the task force was the importance of adding density and using missing middle housing. We hear about this a lot. We all know that this is a huge part of the solution. We, on this side of the House, have called for zoning changes to allow more missing middle housing, like duplexes, triplexes and townhomes. These family-friendly housing options are crucial for building the pedestrian- and transit-friendly complete communities we need and can be hundreds of thousands of dollars cheaper than single detached homes. Among planning experts, the missing middle is a key piece of the puzzle in addressing housing supply.

Speaker, if you’ve ever visited Montreal, they are known for their beautiful missing middle developments through the use of stacking and outdoor stairs. It’s some of the most desirable housing in Montreal, and it’s filled with families and kids.

In AMO’s 2019 report, one of the recommendations was to promote a mix of housing and missing middle housing. This is what AMO said:

“AMO believes in fostering complete communities with a diverse range and mix of housing options, densities and tenures to meet needs as required by the PPS. This is essential if municipal governments are to meet affordability targets.

“In many areas, there is a lack of what is known as ‘missing middle’ housing. This term means different things to different people. Generally, it refers to a missing range of middle density housing options. This is housing that can adapt to different lifestyles—such as intergenerational living, new families, and seniors aging in place”—exactly what we need, Speaker. “This could include row houses, semi-detached homes, townhouses, or other options. For many, ‘missing middle’ housing can also refer to housing affordable to middle-income earners.”

1520

Speaker, we’ve touched on home warranties and I think we should talk about that a bit. It’s an interesting item in this bill, reform for home warranties. A home is one of the biggest purchases most people will make in their lives.

The NDP has long called for reforms to the Tarion Warranty Corp.—the secretive, industry-controlled private corporation in charge of ensuring the quality of new home construction and not doing it very well.

Since 1976, Tarion Warranty Corp. has been responsible to license home builders and ensure they honour their warranties on new homes. They register about 60,000 new homes every year. At the end of 2018, it was responsible for ensuring builders honoured their warranties on materials and workmanship in about 380,000 homes across the province—a huge task. Warranties run from one to seven years, depending on the components of the house. Most defects are covered for one year, and homeowners are supposed to ask builders to fix the defects before seeking Tarion’s intervention. But when a builder fails to act, Tarion provides only two 30-day windows in which the homeowner can ask for help: one at the beginning and the other at the end of the first year.

In 2019, the Auditor General did a special audit of the Tarion Warranty Corp. and in her report she found, “Applications outside of those 30-day windows are turned down flat....

“Even when Tarion does accept a request for help, it gives builders up to 180 days after each 30-day window to make repairs, meaning that homeowners could conceivably wait up to 18 months for the home defect to be fixed”—18 months.

If this government is going to speed up home building, that building has to be done responsibly. I’ve met several times with volunteer members of Canadians for Properly Built Homes. This was established in 2004 with co-founders Alan Greenberg and Karen Somerville, who are incredible, tireless advocates who know the ins and outs of the home warranty system and its deep flaws. They are known for their well-researched and thoughtful analysis.

In the *Toronto Star* back in 2015, one homeowner, Sydney Walters, shared his family’s story of the broken home warranty system. Sydney and his family had to flee their newly built home when mould spread to missing insulation in the attic. His dream of living in suburban Vaughan in his newly built home became a costly legal battle that brought him to the brink of bankruptcy. After leaving the home, he and his wife and teenage son had to live in a cramped one-bedroom basement apartment. Newly built homes in this province are frequently not built up to code, and the ensuring process to get resolution is tumultuous, to say the least.

I’m hoping this schedule will address an issue identified in the AG report on Tarion, where a notice of completion is issued but there are still unfinished items, but the warranty expiry clock has already started counting down. By the time the builder finishes these last items, the warranty period may be nearly over. Our support for purchasers of new homes cannot end there, Speaker. We must review the building inspection system, strengthen coordination between municipal building inspectors, the regulator and the new home warranty system.

I want to address speculation now, Speaker, which is a huge issue and a huge driver of the housing crisis. Bill 109

would move the non-resident speculation tax to 20% from 15% and would apply it beyond the greater Golden Horseshoe area. Home and land speculation is undoubtedly a huge part of the problem. But experts say this provision of Bill 109 will not actually quell the bidding wars or fix the problem. In other words, it is highly inadequate.

Michelle Gilbert, a Toronto broker with Sage Real Estate Ltd., told the CBC, “Everyone in the industry, myself included, are well aware that this isn’t actually going to affect the market’....

“Gilbert says Statistics Canada data showed non-residents owned only about 3.4% of all residential properties in Toronto five years ago, so the measure affects a small slice of” homebuyers only.

“Foreign investors quickly realized even with a dip, our market is still a safe haven for their money, and they already look at that tax as just the cost of doing business,” she said.

“So adding this additional 5%, I don’t foresee it affecting the amount of foreign buyers that do invest in, let’s say, the greater Toronto area.” So these are the experts saying that this measure will not have any effect whatsoever on the issue of speculation.

Speaker, it is not non-resident speculation that has been the core driver; it is resident speculation. In fact, just recently, we saw an MZO that was used to speculate an increased land valuation.

I’m going to talk for a moment about MZOs. This bill formalizes municipal requests for minister’s zoning orders, which the government has used very aggressively to allow well-connected developers to pave over prime farmland and protected wetlands and build warehouses and unsustainable sprawl. It creates a new tool to do this called the community infrastructure and housing accelerator.

The Ford government has, so far, issued 80 MZOs in three years, which is five times as many MZOs as the previous Liberal government issued during its entire 15 years in power. Most of the beneficiaries of these MZOs have had political or donor ties to the Premier and the PC Party.

I’ve spoken a lot about MZOs in this House because this government finds a way to sneak them into many of their bills.

In Bill 66, Restoring Ontario’s Competitiveness Act, 2018, they got into a bit of trouble with schedule 10. As I’m sure many folks in this Legislature remember, schedule 10 was going to create a new planning tool that would allow municipalities to override protections for drinking water, farmland and natural heritage. After a massive outcry, the government cancelled schedule 10. In 2018, I asked the government if they repealed the schedule because they had suddenly seen the light or if they believed that they were wrong to present these environmental protections as red tape. Or were they doing it because they believed what the member from Niagara West said about Niagara regional council: that the minister can do everything the bill does anyway via a minister’s zoning order.

Every single year, we’ve seen bills expand MZO powers. In 2020, the government used Bill 197, the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, to make MZOs an even more powerful tool. It allows the minister to make enhanced MZOs related to any specified land.

Then they used Bill 229, the Budget Measures Act, to amend the Conservation Authorities Act where conservation authorities must grant permission for lands in MZO areas.

If that wasn’t enough, then we saw Bill 257, Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021—and what this has to do with broadband, the government has not made clear. In that bill, they once again amended the Planning Act, so that now an MZO does not need to be consistent with the provincial policy statement, and then they made it retroactive.

So, at first, MZOs were used as a hammer, and then after people got upset, they said they would require municipal approval if they were on provincial land.

In December 2020, Aurora mayor Tom Mrakas tweeted, “Listening to” the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing “stating that all MZOs have been at the request of the local council.... That is interesting as the MZO in Aurora was done with no consultation of the local council.” What followed was a very public back-and-forth between the mayor and the government.

This is an interesting example. In January 2021, the government doubled down. The Premier said in an interview with the Aurora Banner and the York Region Media Group that the province never issues an MZO without municipal approval. When he was asked about the concern raised by the town of Aurora, the Premier doubled down and said that the MZO would only have been issued if the town approved it, and promised to discuss the issue with the mayor. At a council meeting on February 7, the mayor said he spoke with the Premier and the province was “fully aware that we find it fully unacceptable....

“So, they’re fully aware of that. I’ve talked to the Premier many times about it.

“They strongly know that we disagree with this.”

Speaker, this is one of many examples of the confusion around MZOs as the government continues to put changes into the legislation and forces their will upon municipalities.

1530

In July 2020, this government issued a slew of MZOs, seven in July alone. One of those MZOs facilitated the Mayfield West Phase 2 stage 2 development on farmland, despite the opposition of Peel region and Mississauga mayor Bonnie Crombie.

Another notable MZO from July 2020 was the Stratford Xinyi MZO. This MZO was for a glass factory in the city of Stratford. In 2018, we raised concerns that the Premier was meeting with Xinyi executives behind closed doors, with no record in the lobbyists registry. In December 2020, I wrote the Integrity Commissioner, asking them to investigate whether Xinyi Canada Glass broke lobbyist registration rules during its interactions with this government. In January 2021, Xinyi hired an ex-PC staffer to lobby the

Ford government. On February 16, 2021, after a massive community backlash, Xinyi announced it was suspending its plans for the factory. And on March 10, the minister saw the error of his ways and agreed to revoke the MZO, which occurred on July 2, 2021.

In October 2020, the government issued the now-infamous Duffins Creek MZO. The warehouse development, whose tenant was Amazon, would have paved over a provincially significant wetland and an endangered species habitat. The city of Ajax opposed the MZO, citing the environmental and traffic impacts. In November 2020, Ecojustice, Environmental Defence and Ontario Nature filed a lawsuit against the Ford government for issuing the MZO, which unlawfully contradicted the provincial policy statement and its prohibition against development on provincially significant wetlands. The MZO was also put forward without consultation with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation.

Instead of reconsidering their position, the government decided to change the rules with Bill 257. A leaked provincial document assessing legal risks to the Duffins Creek project stated, “In the absence of the proposed amendments—in particular the proposal for retroactive application—there is a moderately high risk that the MZO would be found to have contravened the Planning Act requirements for consistency with the” provincial policy statement. Speaker, does this sound to you like a government that is using MZOs for affordable housing? I don’t think so.

Like all MZOs, municipally requested MZOs would bypass the due process that is otherwise required under the Planning Act, and do not need to conform with a municipal official plan, a provincial plan or even the provincial policy statement. The provincial policy statement is like the building code for the province. It ensures that development is done safely and responsibly. It ensures that a community’s drinking water supplies are safe, that basements don’t get flooded, that farm operations don’t get disrupted and that infrastructure is planned efficiently and cost-effectively. We do not need expanded MZO powers. Government after government was able to get by without using MZOs, and clearly, they have not been used to address the affordable housing crisis.

I’d like to speak for a moment about municipal approvals. There have been challenges with municipalities and MZOs, many done without municipal consultation. This bill continues the trend of this province treating municipalities as if they are part of the problem instead of part of the solution. It requires municipalities to refund rezoning application fees if they fail to make a decision within 90 days, with refunds starting at 50%, rising to 75% after 150 days, and to 100% after 210 days. There are similar consequences for municipalities that fail to approve a site plan application within the stated guidelines.

These rules ignore evidence that many builders are refusing to build despite having all the municipal approvals and permits that they need to get started. It was interesting to see the Big City Mayors’ Caucus, prior to the housing consultation, knowing that the government, as

they have always done over the last four years, would blame municipalities for everything wrong with the planning process, claims their member cities approved permits for 250,000 units of housing prior to 2019 that have not yet been built. These are developers that went through the approval process, got their approvals, and just sat on them.

A city of Mississauga staff report recently claimed that some developers were deliberately constraining supply in order to extract maximum prices for their new homes. This is what happens when the minister does not include municipalities in his housing task force. The big city mayors have to get together and defend themselves against accusations that everything is their fault, everything is the fault of the municipalities, when actually the problem is much more complicated and sophisticated than that. As we can see, these municipalities have put together a lot of documentation that shows very clearly that developers are part of the problem as well.

While there is nothing wrong, as long as we properly fund municipalities, with requiring time limits—because none of us want to see eight, nine years waiting for a development to be built due to those time limits or due to having no limits—why has this government not simply put a sunset clause on developers as well, so that at least it’s fair, at least it’s balanced? A “use it or lose it” clause. If we are putting time limits on municipalities, why not the same thing for developers? This is part of the issue that municipalities have in not being included in the consultation, not having their voices heard and having everything basically blamed—we heard it today from the minister. Everything was being blamed on municipalities when actually the situation is much more complicated than that, Speaker.

AMO outlined their concerns with the emphasis on municipal approvals being a large part of the problem in their response to the task force report. They said, “Further, it seems to have been guided by the premise that the solutions are primarily at the local level to address barriers caused by municipalities and their councils....

“The report does not recognize the insight into local issues that municipal elected officials and staff have in relation to their communities, including how best to achieve housing targets and intensification. A strengthened and more centralized role for the province in local planning decisions would limit local autonomy and devalue community input.”

The task force “report also focuses too much on municipal planning and development approvals,” according to AMO. “It leaves gaps in areas that were not considered such as the bottleneck at the Ontario Land Tribunal ... which has slowed down housing development and contributed to higher housing and municipal costs. More work is needed to determine how the approval timing creates pressures on municipal planning staff who are pulled away from approval work to focus on OLT cases. We continue to also ask that de novo hearings be removed from the OLT process tool box.

“There is also an assumption that municipal development charges and fees unnecessarily increase housing

costs, and do not respect the principle that growth must pay for growth. There is no guarantee and no mechanism identified that developers would pass on the savings to consumers to decrease the price of the home or rental unit.”

They go on to say, “In our view, many of the recommendations put forward were done so without sufficient municipal engagement or consideration. If implemented, they could erode local decision-making and are often punitive in nature. This is not productive when only working together constructively will result in the outcomes we all seek.”

Speaker, this directly contradicts much of what we’ve heard from the government today, saying that they value the input of municipalities, that they value them as a partner. If we don’t listen to them, if we don’t include them in our deliberations, if we don’t listen to what they have to say—this is the level of government that is closest to the people, closest to the community. I don’t see how we could come up with a strategy to address the affordable housing issue if we are not listening to our municipal partners.

Municipalities and councillors are already coming forward with concerns on the changes. Ontario’s Big City Mayors have raised concerns, and they say, “While the province encouraged municipalities to look in our own backyards for solutions to planning delays, we are encouraging the province ... to do the same.” That comes from Guelph mayor Cam Guthrie.

1540

I was texting with a mayor this morning who mentioned that it’s unfortunate that this government keeps pushing the blame to the municipalities for the delays and enforcing the need to speed up decisions. This mayor pointed out, Speaker, that they don’t have the authority to uphold those decisions because they’re appealed to the OLT anyway if they deny the application. The result can be more cases to the OLT, more delays and less municipal authority over planning decisions.

Toronto–St. Paul’s city councillor Josh Matlow suggested the 90-day timeline to approve developments “will actually have the perverse effect of slowing the development process down as more developments will end up at the Ontario Land Tribunal.” And I’m glad I have enough time left to address the Ontario Land Tribunal issue before I wrap up.

Municipalities across the province are in the process of passing motions regarding the Ontario Land Tribunal. They range from municipalities asking for the OLT to be dissolved, to reform that would mandate the OLT to give significant weight to municipal decisions and local policies in its decisions. And it’s interesting that a lot of municipalities—I believe there are 60 or 70 so far that have passed the motion at their local councils—actually believe that we would be better off without the Ontario Land Tribunal at all. Most of them acknowledge it would leave a vacuum and that other legislation would have to replace it for certain critical things. But many municipalities in Ontario think that the net benefit would be

worthwhile, just getting rid of the Ontario Land Tribunal completely—that’s how broken it is.

Presently, developers, whenever they feel they want to change something, take the municipality to the OLT. That leaves municipalities defending their own planning decisions, often at an exorbitant cost. Defending a case in front of the OLT can run a municipality between \$30,000 and \$100,000, on average. The Ontario Land Tribunal is presently in a backlog of some 1,300 appeals. I fear that the reforms the government has put forward on the OLT once again leave municipalities at a disadvantage. In some cases, the OLT is used by developers as a weapon.

In my area of Niagara, the city of St. Catharines—and my colleague from St. Catharines is here today in the House—adopted an official plan amendment that re-designated lands as employment lands. Timberlee Glen Developments appealed the entire official plan amendment to the Ontario Land Tribunal, according to court documents. The tribunal has scheduled a 15-day video hearing of the appeal for August 2022, and because of the filing, developments all across the city of St. Catharines have been held up for months. This is a developer taking the municipality to the OLT needlessly, and holding up all of the developments in that municipality for months.

Under whatever name, whether it’s the OLT, LPAT or OMB, there have always been serious problems. Having the OLT used as a weapon helps no one. It’s a sad reality that the OLT is so broken and that so many municipalities feel it would be best to get rid of it altogether.

Speaker, we have a quick turnaround on this bill. It was tabled yesterday, and I’m here today delivering the official opposition lead. We’ve heard a few examples of the stakeholder response to this bill. Like many things, this government has not really given stakeholders a chance to take a look at the bill and to make their comments, and as we’ve heard, the consultations were not adequate. Municipalities are stating that this bill, which is aimed at reducing timelines for approvals, will increase the time it takes to get from approval to site build. They’re actually saying that it will increase the time it will take, and they’re raising the alarm over their local autonomy.

Ontario Big City Mayors say, “Municipalities have always offered to be partners who are committed to being part of the solution, and a seat at the table is a step in that direction.

“I also welcome the review promised of the 250,000 units that have been approved and not built, just among the cities represented by the Ontario Big City Mayors caucus.” That’s only those cities. “When developers sit on approvals, it leads to land speculation and cost escalation for homebuyers/renters, and does nothing to advance our goal of helping to increase supply. We all look forward to measures the government might introduce to ensure the housing approved equals housing built.”

Phil Pothen, Ontario environment program manager, commented on this bill. He said, “Bill 109 is at least as grave a disappointment for environmentalists as we know it is for housing advocates. The minister is flatly refusing to tackle exclusionary zoning (& the sprawl it produces)

until AFTER the current land use update has already locked in 30 more years of it.”

More Neighbours Toronto say, “When will Ontario leaders finally start to take the housing crisis seriously?” This is just the initial response to this bill.

In conclusion, Speaker, this bill does nothing to make homes more affordable. That’s the truth. It doesn’t build starter homes or missing middle homes like duplexes and townhomes. The bill does nothing to take on the real issue, which is speculation. It’s a missed opportunity to do the things that folks on this side of the House have been advocating for: build affordable housing; implement rent controls, don’t remove them; revamp planning rules so that they’re reflective of 21st-century cities; address rampant sprawl and loss of farmland; enforce the building code; and protect the purchases of newly built homes.

These are things that we’ve been saying for a long time need to be done. This government passed a bill, Bill 108, that didn’t work. The situation got worse. And now they’ve come forward just before an election with a bill that has no timelines at all, but promises many things that will speculatively happen far into the future, and really accomplishes nothing. It doesn’t even move forward with the main recommendations of their own task force.

I opened this lead today talking about Don, and the real faces behind this housing crisis. I’m very disappointed, Speaker, we missed another opportunity to face the housing crisis head on. I’m disappointed that this government used this opportunity to increase the power of MZO, allowing them to ignore important water and environmental protections, and that they simply created a future for more sprawl and another 30 years of unsustainable policy.

It exemplifies what we already know: To this Conservative government, the housing crisis is an opportunity to ramp up building via urban sprawl, to further favour developers and hinder municipalities. To us, the housing crisis is people like Don, the thousands and thousands of people in this province who are waiting for an affordable place to live; the folks in this province who can’t even dream of owning a home; our seniors not having a place to live, resorting to food banks. I would urge this government to hear the chorus of those voices, and use the gift of governing to help those who continue to be made vulnerable by government policies.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to proclaim the month of May as Armenian Heritage Month / Loi proclamant le mois de mai Mois du patrimoine arménien.

An Act to revive 2492725 Ontario Inc.

An Act respecting Groves Memorial Community Hospital.

An Act to revive Navigation Project Management Inc.

An Act to revive 2704395 Ontario Inc.

An Act to revive Frolander Island Resort (2003) Ltd.

MORE HOMES

FOR EVERYONE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS POUR TOUS

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will continue with questions and comments.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to ask the member of the opposition: You addressed in many areas of the speech affordable housing, social housing, subsidized housing. This is all, yes, the responsibility of the government, but this is not the spirit of this bill. What is the percentage of that specialized housing for a special vertical of the community? What about the 90% of the rest of the housing? We know that sorting the problem of housing is not going to be solved by subsidized housing or affordable housing. We need more supply, so that pricing can get under control.

My question for you is: Why do we always look into the empty half of the cup, not the filled half? How will this legislation help solve some of the issues of getting houses into the market?

1550

Mr. Jeff Burch: I’m trying to understand the question. I think that maybe the member answered it himself in the question.

What we’re saying is that it’s not simply a supply problem. That’s the problem with Bill 108. It approached everything as if, “Well, all we need to do is build more homes and everything will be okay. The invisible hand of the marketplace will fix everything.” What your government fails to realize is that it’s not just a supply problem. It’s a demand issue because the demand is for affordable places to live.

You heard me talk about one out of every four homebuyers are speculating. They’re not even buying the house for a home. They’re buying it as an investment. So your government is ignoring the entire crux of the problem, which is affordable housing. Just building more homes and getting rid of what you call red tape is not going to help the people who are desperately looking for a home.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to my colleague from Niagara Centre. I listened intently. I sat with him at the municipal level, so I know that his roots go very deep in housing and MZOs.

To my colleague: We don’t see anything in this bill that includes the demand side support for housing. It does nothing to immediately support our young families who want to buy homes today—no additional supports; no

promise of this government's support to build affordable housing.

This brings forward the question of why this is the case. Why are there so many gaps for solving the housing crisis? Is this because the task force that was put together by this government included a list of participants that have a stake in housing markets? It was chaired by the CEO of Scotiabank, and I'm not sure if people at home know. It included nine members, PC leader Tim Hudak—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Response?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to my friend from St. Catharines. We spent many years on city council together and dealt with many of these issues.

That's really the problem, as I outlined in my speech. They put together a Housing Affordability Task Force and didn't include municipalities. I have no idea what the government was thinking with that.

You heard in my speech the response from AMO, the incredulation that their input wasn't considered. If we are going to make a difference and tackle the affordability issue, all levels of government have to be included in the conversation. We can't have a task force and include municipalities only after the fact.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I listened intently to the member opposite. I know you talked about some of the cancellations the Harris government made at the time. But you've got to remember, they were taking over from—we might complain about taking over from the Liberal-NDP coalition, but they were taking over from the NDP. At that time, of course, the state of the nation was in terrible shape. We had Rae Days; they closed more hospital beds than any government in history. So, yes, there were some changes.

I sat on council in those days and I remember the discussions between the services and the Who Does What commission that was put together. But there was an agreement with AMO to take over those services and replace them with others that they have taken. I remember that school boards fees were uploaded, which was about 16% of the local taxes.

Your comment on inclusionary zoning: Our problem is, they're not using it. Maybe you should correct your record on that, but how can the member opposite expect the government—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Sorry to interrupt, but that is time.

Response?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member for the question. I didn't quite hear the end, but I will address it. It wasn't my intention in raising what happened with the Harris government to have a tit-for-tat about whose government was worse. I was describing very specifically how we got into this problem, which was very specifically a massive downloading of responsibilities from the province to municipalities. That's what, in a very large part, caused

this problem, and that was done by that government at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: The government's Housing Affordability Task Force already had a narrow mandate of focusing only on private market-oriented supply solutions. The Ford government was heavily criticized because building affordable housing and measures like rent control were outside of the mandate of the task force. Still, the task force made important and long-overdue recommendations, but now the government brings forward a new housing bill that is almost entirely ignoring the recommendations of their own task force.

Can the member please explain to the government side, what does the lack of affordable housing mean for the people of Ontario, particularly young people and their experiences?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Thank you to the member for the question. Obviously, young people especially look at their future as one probably without owning a home, unless they come from a very wealthy family, and that's really sad. A lot of people who are just getting into the housing market, finding a place to live, maybe getting their first job, certainly in Niagara, can't find a place to live. It's really municipal governments who hear those things and see those things because they're the ones that are closest to the people.

That's why it's so confusing as to why the government would have a task force and not include, as AMO said, municipal government partners in those deliberations. It confused me and it left the government—it's not even really politically very smart, because it left the government really open to criticism that they're not bringing everyone to the table, and they're already not pulling their weight in terms of funding for the affordable housing crisis.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member for Niagara Centre for his speech this afternoon. Of course, we've had conversations about housing and conversations about what the best approach looks like. I know we've all heard from similar constituents, young families who are leaving Niagara and other parts of the GTHA because of the cost of housing rising, so I acknowledge that.

But I seem to sense in his speech this afternoon that he thinks everything is fine when it comes to the municipalities, that the municipalities are doing everything just great, that approvals are moving forward, that housing is starting and we don't have to do anything but stop the speculation and everything will be hunky-dory. I'm wondering—to me it sounded like you think the municipalities are doing such a good job—do you really honestly believe that they can't speed up and they shouldn't speed up approvals for new housing to make more housing affordable here in the province of Ontario?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I thank my friend for the question; it's a good question. It's not specifically what I said in my speech. When I talked about, for example, fines for municipalities or having to refund developers, what I said is that

we need a more balanced approach. So it's not all the fault of municipalities. It's a complex problem.

One of the solutions, if you accept that also developers are part of the problem, certain developers who are not acting on approvals, a balanced approach would be to have some time limits for municipalities to make sure that you don't have those five-, six-, seven-year waits for a development, but you also have a sunset clause for developers so that if they're acting on an approval, they actually build what's been approved and they do it in a timely fashion and they don't sit on the land to assemble or to speculate and drive up the cost of those properties.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We do not have time for another question and comment.

Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm more than pleased to speak today in support of our government and our great Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Minister Steve Clark, with respect to Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act. This legislation, if passed, will support a plan to crack down on speculators who are driving up the cost of housing, protect homebuyers from predatory development practices and create more housing options for homeowners and renters by accelerating development timelines to get more homes built faster.

The More Homes for Everyone Act outlines the next suite of concrete actions the province is taking to address Ontario's housing crisis. This plan, built on recommendations from the Housing Affordability Task Force and the first-ever provincial-municipal housing summit, will deliver both near-term solutions and long-term commitments to provide more attainable housing options for Ontario families.

1600

Speaker, one key component within Bill 109 is the goal of making it easier to build more community housing by making better use of provincially owned lands for non-profit housing providers. Also, to preserve the existing stock of community housing and modernize the system for those who depend on it, the government has established a new regulatory framework under the community housing building.

As part of the county's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, under the direction of the county council, the 7 Arthur Street residence in Carleton Place was constructed. The building contains 15 rent-geared-to-income units, with five affordable housing units. It contains four fully accessible units and consists of one- and two-bedroom units to help address the high demand for smaller homes.

Through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative, the province invested nearly \$1.6 million to construct the 7 Arthur Street building. The provincial contribution supported a portion of the construction costs for 10 of the one-bedroom units. The program provides flexible funding for all 47 of Ontario's service managers to address local priorities in the areas of housing supply and affordability, including new affordable rental construction, community housing repair, rental assistance, tenant supports and affordable home ownership.

As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing noted about this particular project, "Community housing—whether it's not-for-profit, co-operative or municipally owned—plays a critical role in providing housing for those who are unable to access the private rental market."

Back in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, I was happy to announce a couple of community housing projects of note as well. Our government is investing \$3.8 million to help build/support 20 units of housing in Cornwall to support people with affordable housing and accessibility needs. These residents will be close to amenities such as public transportation, schools, parks, grocery stores, pharmacies and employment opportunities. The total development will consist of six buildings. Each building will contain up to eight two-bedroom stacked townhouses, of which approximately 20% will be accessible. All units will be constructed with energy efficiencies in mind. Speaker, affordable and accessible housing is necessary to ensure quality of life for our local residents, and I'm proud to say that this project will go a long way to addressing that need.

In January of this year, I was pleased to participate in the sod turning of another project that will feature 77 residential units, as well as a commercial space that will be occupied by the housing services department for the city of Cornwall and the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry counties. The site was identified as a priority location in a recent housing plan for creating healthy, sustainable communities. Construction is now officially under way, and the development is expected to be completed in early 2023. The project is benefiting from a \$4.2-million grant from the social services relief fund and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative of the provincial government.

Our government is committed to ensuring that local communities are able to deliver critical services and resources that will help those residents who need it most. After 15 years of mismanagement by the previous provincial government, we inherited a severe housing deficit in this province, and this issue is not just a minor annoyance that a subsequent government is, as they say, making a mountain out of a molehill. Their inattention to the developing problem, aggravated by months of expensive and time-consuming red tape, allowed the problem to grow to a point where families could not find housing, driving prices out of reach. In fact, a Scotiabank housing report found that Ontario is well below the national average for the supply of homes per capita, with Canada having the lowest amount of housing per capita of any G7 country.

Speaker, the shortage of housing is a serious problem, and our government took immediate action, for this is not the first initiative we have taken to address Ontario's housing concerns. The minister previously presented, and this Legislature passed, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019. In 2021, two years after implementing the More Homes, More Choice Act, Ontario has more than 100,000 new housing starts, the highest level since 1987, and the highest level of new rental starts in 30 years.

I was also reading from a research document, and I'm quoting that paper produced by the Smart Prosperity Institute earlier this year. It says:

“From the middle of 2015 to the beginning of the pandemic, Ontario underwent a population boom, while housing completions rose only marginally. This mismatch between housing demand from demographic change and housing supply contributed to the rise in housing prices and the increase in the number of families moving ... while also creating the conditions for the home price boom experienced during the pandemic.

“In the five-year period between July 1, 2015, and July 1, 2020, Ontario’s population grew by over a million people; in the previous five years, it grew by less than 600,000. This increase was due to a combination of an international student boom, an increased number of immigrants calling Ontario home....

“This accelerated growth was due to federal policy changes, which led to a rapid increase in the number of international students....

“This shortage of family-friendly housing caused young families to scatter across the province in search of housing they could afford, in a process known as drive until you qualify, as over 270,000 people, on net, moved out of Toronto, York, and Peel to other parts of the province. This movement caused the populations in other regions of the province to boom, causing further regional housing shortages and high prices.”

In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, housing prices more than doubled because of the sudden shortage caused by this migration. Thanks to the former government’s inaction, our region’s affordable housing supply evaporated, resulting in significant increases in homelessness.

“Drive until you qualify”—this was the term used when my wife and I went house shopping to raise our family. In 1983, this was not an issue in eastern Ontario. In fact, it was quite the opposite. But for my friends in Toronto renting a townhouse as single graduates, they had to look out to Whitby to find a place where they could afford to live.

But with the current marketplace, young families are no longer relocating because of a new job or a job transfer; they are relocating based on affordability. That’s not right, and that’s why we are acting today with Bill 109.

Speaker, we are living in fascinating times. There’s the pandemic, inflation, rising interest costs, supply chain delays, material shortages leading to cost increases, a trade shortage, an aging population that is living a longer and healthier life than previous generations, and internal and external pressures on our housing supply.

Meanwhile, the official opposition leader this month made a rather demeaning comment through the media to condominium builders and buyers. While discussing inclusionary zoning, she made a reference to oversized “monstrosities” being built by condo developers. It’s clear that the opposition leader is unclear on the demand for housing and the investment of the people of this province who choose to call a condominium home. Clearly, the NDP is unaware that the residential construction industry and buyers don’t deserve to be characterized in that way.

I am pleased to offer some new facts for the leader and the members of the opposition here today. As we here on

this side of the House are aware, the residential construction industry in Ontario creates over 477,000 jobs, pays over \$31 billion in wages to Ontario workers—who may be our family, friends and neighbours, I might add—while also generating over \$55 billion worth of investments in the province’s economy. That’s a lot of people the opposition leader is criticizing for building and buying homes.

We know the projected numbers for housing in this province moving forward. The residential construction industry needs to build one million new homes over the next 10 years to accommodate the estimated 2.2 million more people who will choose to call Ontario home.

What happens should we not build these homes? It means displacing investment, displacing workforces, displacing new immigrants and displacing recent graduates to take opportunities elsewhere, which means creating well-paying and rewarding careers in communities that are not in Ontario.

That is not the future I want for my grandchildren and is why I want to applaud the minister, my friend and neighbour the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, for taking action on this legislation after 15 years of previous inaction. We are going to get this done.

1610

It sounds simple enough. Home ownership comes down to affordability, and affordability is the result of when supply meets demand. Just yesterday, our great Premier made this point: “Ontario is the best place to live, start a business and raise a family, but we can only build on our success if all hard-working Ontarians and their families are able to find the home they need and want. As Ontario’s population and our economy continue to grow, building more homes is another way that we’re keeping costs down for families across the province.”

Currently, we are seeing demand outstripping supply, and that’s why our government is taking action. If passed, Bill 109 will change the environment where we can and will build a supply that meets demand, and we will present affordability that consumers need.

Yesterday, the minister made note of this reality in his remarks when he stated that across Ontario, in every town, city and community, “no matter where you go, one thing is the same—people are looking for housing that meets their needs and their budget.

“Young people are searching for their first home, close to schools, where they can build a life and raise children. Seniors are thinking about downsizing and want homes that meet their needs as they age.” They want to stay in their “neighbourhoods they love.... So many people want to live where they can commute to their jobs easily, and get home to family and friends faster, so that they can enjoy quality of time with them.

“Everyone is looking for something different, and each person has a budget. But the cost of buying a home is now out of reach for many and rentals that are affordable are too hard to find....

“Ontario needs more housing, and we need to take action.” That is why we are here today, and Bill 109, in fact, gets it done.

The proposed More Homes for Everyone Act supports the government's commitment to updating processes and policies on an annual basis to make it easier and less expensive to create housing and improve affordability. In fact, moving forward, we plan to establish a housing supply working group with municipalities and industry experts to annually review the implementation of new housing tools and to recommend updates to Ontario's housing plan. Ontario is also consulting with the public, municipalities and stakeholders to develop recommendations on how to support multi-generational and missing middle housing.

In December of last year, the Toronto Region Board of Trade recently shared a report on this subject, which was titled *Meeting in the Middle*. In that report, they noted, "In Ontario, most residential neighbourhoods are protected from even modest forms of density such as triplexes or small apartment buildings. These building types represent a 'missing middle' of residential housing stock between single dwelling and large apartments. The current policy limitations prevent more of this kind of 'middle' housing development, thereby blocking efforts to house more residents in walkable urban centres."

Speaker, this is not isolated to just urban centres; in multiple delegation meetings that I have participated in as the parliamentary assistant here at municipal affairs and housing, we heard regularly from even people in smaller settings who were finding themselves straddling municipal boundaries in order to increase housing in their growing communities. In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, there's a very limited supply of small homes, townhouses and apartments. A local builder told me back in 2010 about the problems he was having getting approvals to build townhouses. There are always objections and delays. He told me that he could sell every unit tomorrow, as local retiring farmers are selling their farms and looking for a smaller, easy-to-maintain home so they can retire and enjoy their final years.

In another instance, a local builder was looking to construct a small 12-unit apartment in Lancaster, only to be met by over a year of delays as neighbours objected to the project. I overheard one of the more vocal objectors saying that if they build on that lot, then they'll have to cut the trees down. These are some of the issues that are being sent to the Ontario Municipal Board, delaying important projects. If we do not start to realize these missing middle solutions, we are taking a status quo that is simply not sustainable. It also creates environmental impacts, as I referred to earlier in the debate, requiring more people to drive until they qualify.

The Toronto trade report also referred to this, stating, "Increasing missing middle solutions would provide environmental benefits through utilizing existing housing stock, reducing commutes, leveraging existing and future transit investments and living more densely in energy-efficient buildings."

As Ontario's population continues to grow, the province is building the housing, health care and highways they need to build a brighter future for everyone.

Through consultations with the public, municipalities and the housing task force, the government heard that red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving the cost of these homes up.

In yesterday's announcement for Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, the Minister of Municipal Affairs assured Ontarians that they were heard through a series of consultations. The minister noted that through the consultations with the public—the first-ever provincial-municipal housing summit and the Housing Affordability Task Force—we heard that speculative behaviour in the market and long, drawn-out approval processes are making it too difficult for Ontarians to realize the dream of home ownership.

Our government's plan proposes smart, targeted measures to protect consumers, make the process work better and faster, and help Ontarians find a home that's right for them and their families. However, there's no silver bullet to address the housing crisis. It requires a long-term strategy with long-term commitment and coordination at all levels of government. We are committed to introducing an update to Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan every year, in partnership with the municipalities and sector associations, and deliver long-term solutions for Ontarians.

Speaker, I would like to take a moment to touch on the extraordinary consultations the minister undertook in our efforts to address our housing supply. We used a comprehensive, three-pronged approach to engage municipal partners, experts, industry and the public to find new solutions to address Ontario's ongoing housing challenges, including:

- an online public consultation, where we received over 2,000 submissions;

- consultations and discussions with municipalities and municipal associations via: the Ontario-municipal housing summit; the rural housing roundtable, where we consulted with municipalities large and small; the 2022 Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference; meetings with municipal associations, including ROMA, AMO, the Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario and Ontario's Big City Mayors; lean engagement on housing approvals processes, supported by the province's lean office, with nine single-, upper- and lower-tier municipalities; and letters to municipalities to gather further feedback and input; and

- lastly, the Housing Affordability Task Force, which consulted with municipalities, experts and industry.

The More Homes for Everyone Act proposes smart, targeted policies for the immediate term that will make housing fairer for hard-working Ontarians and get all kinds of housing built faster for families who want it and need it.

Addressing the housing crisis is a long-term strategy that requires long-term commitment and partnership at all levels of government. We have heard from municipalities that the housing crisis requires a broad range of measures, and further analysis is needed of the task force's recommendations.

We have already introduced requirements at the provincial level that have not yet been fully implemented at the local level, such as additional residential units and community benefits charges frameworks. The task force's report is the government's long-term housing road map.

Speaker, we have had some tough times in this province for people looking for housing. This government has identified that; we identified that in our last campaign. Immediately upon taking office, we took measures to get it done.

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to the member from the government. I have been listening to his comments very intently. You talked about affordable housing. We know that the crisis has continued for over 30 years. This bill, Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, doesn't address that.

1620

How are we going to solve the affordability issues in housing when young people can't even dream of a place of their own? The waiting list here in Toronto alone—there are over 100,000 people waiting for affordable housing, and this bill doesn't address that. Is there a plan to include that?

Mr. Jim McDonell: As we said, and I think around the House—we've heard it many times on this side—the problem with affordable housing, one of the major problems, is supply. We have not kept up with the increase of population in this province. In the last five years, we have seen a population increase of 100,000 people. Housing supplies just were not keeping pace with that.

Now, upon coming to government, our more housing, more choice legislation we put out had almost immediate results. We've seen levels increasing in rental units and single-family housing and just housing in general that we haven't seen for 30 years. That speaks to the action and what we can do when we get rid of some of the red tape. But we know more has to be done, and that's why we're talking about Bill 109 today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for his passionate comments about affordable housing and about this bill.

Madam Speaker, I had been a councillor for 12 years. I look through my eyes at the housing bureaucratic red tape. It was delaying and delaying and delaying the construction and delaying all the development not only in Markham and York region, it's in Ontario. Through my experience, I know this bill is a game-changer. That's my particular experience as former critic about affordable housing. A lot of residents are seeking affordable basement apartments in Markham. Tens of thousands of basement apartments exist in Markham and York region.

My question to my colleague: Why is this legislation needed to help address the housing affordability crisis in Ontario?

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you to the member. Ontario is the best place to live, start a business and raise a family.

But we can only build our success if all hard-working Ontarians and their families are able to find a home that they can afford. Through our consultations with the public, municipalities and the Housing Affordability Task Force, the message is clear: Red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving up the cost of these homes. That's why our government is introducing this bill, the next phase of our housing supply action plan. Our government is committed to implementing the task force's recommendations with a housing supply action plan every year over the next four years starting in 2022-23 with policies and tools that support multi-generational homes, general density and missing middle housing.

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

Ms. Jill Andrew: My question is to the member across regarding this government bill, More Homes for Everyone Act. I have concerns. One of the main concerns is that this government's own housing task force or "affordability" task force recommendations were not followed. I also recognize that this bill and, frankly, the task force was predominantly made up by real estate industry insiders.

I'm just wondering why this government's bill on more homes doesn't address the vast number of Ontarians who are renters. In St. Paul's, we have approximately 60% or so of those. I'm wondering if the government had any consideration or discussion on bringing back rent control, which is one of the key tools we need to have back in Ontario for real affordable housing to ensure that folks aren't having to run away from the homes they were born in and the communities they love because they cannot afford it.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I guess good news for the member opposite: Maybe she's not aware, but we haven't got rid of rent controls. We only got rid of controls on new housing. Most of those projects have not even been completed yet. Last year, we were looking at a rent increase of 0%. So we have looked at ways of keeping those rent levels down.

I think more importantly, going forward, as the population increases, we're going to need more housing. I think basic economics tells us that supply and demand must meet somewhere in the middle to keep things reasonable. We have not been able to see that. Over the years, the former government ignored the housing crisis that is upon us. This has been bubbling up for years. We've taken action. We've seen big increases, as I mentioned before. We've seen increases in housing supply that we haven't seen in 30 years in this province. Those are record levels, that are not enough—we know that—because the population rate is increasing. This bill will address those issues.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the opportunity to join the debate here this afternoon to ask a question of my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Something that struck me just listening to the debate this afternoon is the depth of municipal experience in our

caucus: a former mayor in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry; a former mayor, the member from Oxford; a former councillor from Markham. It really struck me that that's really informed a lot of our decisions on these things too, that we have that depth of municipal experience. I just had three years on county council in the county of Brant.

But I was curious: I heard mention from a member across—I don't think he quoted a number—that there have been many, many MZOs done by your ministry since we've taken office. I was wondering if you could perhaps just provide a little bit of clarity on how many MZOs have been done without any municipal consultations by the minister.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm happy to say there have been no MZOs issued without a request from a municipal government. I heard during question period this morning the talk about issuing these orders without consultation. Well, we don't issue those orders unless we get a request from local council. It's surprising to hear the local councils wouldn't be agreeing with them if they've actually officially—now, this is not a phone call in the middle of the night. This actually needs to be a resolution passed at council and forwarded to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. It doesn't preclude that there are a number of studies and procedures that need to be done, and they will be done, as required, before the MZO can take effect. I know from my time in municipal government, there are a lot of frivolous delays in projects, and it's just if there are any cases—as I say, the building lot that wasn't built on has some trees and I don't want them cut down.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We have time for a very quick back-and-forth. Next question? No? Okay, then we will move on to further debate.

Further debate? I recognize the member for Brampton South.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you, Speaker. It is the member from Brampton Centre, but it is always an honour to rise here in the House. I know—how can you keep track of 124 ridings? It's a lot to keep up with.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I apologize to the member from Brampton Centre. Please continue.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that.

It's always an honour to rise here in the House and contribute to the debate on behalf of our residents of Brampton Centre and our community of Brampton, one of the fastest-growing cities in North America and in Canada. I'm really excited that I'm able to shed some light on many of the concerns that have been raised by folks in our community when it comes to housing. Today we are here debating what is supposed to be a housing bill to help increase access to homes people can afford, but unfortunately, upon first read of Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, it's not clear that this government's approach will actually help address the housing crisis that we know is impacting people across the province of Ontario.

Speaker, I have on many occasions shared here in the House stories from constituents in my riding of Brampton

Centre who are very worried about housing and having access to affordable housing as well. A few weeks ago, I was actually out in the Knightsbridge community speaking with residents there living in apartment buildings. Many of them are seniors, people on fixed incomes, receiving ODSP supports. They are very worried that the cost of housing is rising far beyond what their fixed incomes will account for. For many of those residents, they are making very difficult choices between paying the rent or making sure that there is going to be food on the table. That isn't a decision people in this province should be forced to make at this point, especially our vulnerable seniors or people with disabilities who want to live with dignity in safe and affordable homes. That's something that the government can deliver on, but, unfortunately, the political will to address the housing crisis has been missing here in the province of Ontario.

1630

We see that governments before this one here, Liberal governments, did not make the investments necessary to build and improve access and supply to affordable housing options.

I think that having a market-driven approach here that really hands keys over to the developers in order to supposedly boost supply is a very troublesome trajectory for this province to be on. We have seen what developers have done to many people in this province—exploit them, unfortunately, and not building the housing supply that we need: mixed-use housing. None of this is being done effectively in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, the More Homes for Everyone Act will not address the underlying problems that we know exist.

The bill has several schedules; perhaps we can chat a little bit about some of the schedules. I will share a bit of a local perspective as well in my remarks here today.

Schedule 1, for example, extends the approval deadline for site plan applications from 30 days to 60 days, which on the surface doesn't seem to be a bad thing. But as we read further into schedule 1, it's very clear that municipalities now may be on the hook if they aren't able to approve the applications within the 60-day deadline. Approximately 50% of the site plan application fee would need to be refunded—so then what happens to the other 50%? At a time when municipalities already have strained budgets, they're not able to run on a deficit. Any further implications to their budget or a loss of revenue-generating tools could have detrimental impacts for not only the municipality, but as we all know, the taxpayers of those communities who are seeing across-the-board increases in their municipal tax rates. I think that the government could step up to the plate here and actually help those municipalities with additional revenue-generating tools and not taking those tools away from them, which upon first read, appears to be what will happen through this bill.

Speaker, I know that in December we actually connected with the region of Peel. They do these quarterly updates with MPPs from the Peel region. The last one was on housing. We had a very lengthy discussion with members from across the Peel region, members from the

NDP and members from the Conservative caucus. We discussed the importance of committing to housing in the Peel region. We discussed the importance of tools like development charges to help the municipality generate the revenue it needs to provide services, something that this government, unfortunately, thinks should be reduced or deferred.

Again, I think at a time when we need to empower municipalities with additional revenue-generating tools, we shouldn't be taking them away. I know that Mayor Bonnie Crombie was very clear as well that those tools are very important for the municipality to ensure that they're able to provide services like our water, police, emergency services and others.

But if those development charges continue to be deferred or reduced in favour of the developers—if I can recall very correctly Mayor Crombie saying that it's not as though those large developers are hurting. Their purse strings are not hurting. Whereas, for municipalities, they don't have any other options. So, by rewarding developers rather than helping municipalities, we're actually exacerbating a pretty serious problem here in the region.

The region was very, very clear that they have the tools they need. They are able to do the work that they need to approve applications. Of course, things can always be done more quickly, but, at the end of the day, that is not what is causing an affordability issue in our community. It is clearly a lack of affordable housing options, even when new construction is taking place.

For example, in Brampton, we see houses that, just a few years ago, were relatively affordable—under the \$500,000 mark, for example. Those same homes are now well above the \$1-million mark, Speaker, and for people in our community and for the next generation as well, it's becoming an unattainable dream to own their first home.

I speak to people in our community who are not only worried about the current cost of housing, but they are worried whether their children are going to be able to stay in our community. Are they going to be able to afford a home in Brampton? I think of a 15-year-old youth council member who was out door-knocking with us and who spoke to me at great length about the concerns he has about staying in his community and whether or not he would ever be able to afford a home in Brampton. He shared with me—and thank you, Rhagav, for sharing these concerns—he and many of us are encouraging our older parents not to sell their homes, to stay in the community, because we may not be able to afford a home in Brampton otherwise.

That shouldn't be the reality here in the province of Ontario. Young people, the next generation—workers that we want to attract to this province should have confidence in the housing, and make sure that it is affordable. This continues to be a concern that is impeding our ability to attract talent to this province, because housing remains unaffordable for the majority of people.

Speaker, in that meeting with the region of Peel, they shared details—this is not the first time that the region has shared the details of their housing master plan. I'll read from the letter that was sent to all the members of the Peel

region from Chair Nando Iannicca on December 22, 2021, where he outlines that further to our discussion, “the region continues to advance our Housing Master Plan, with a \$1-billion allocation approved in principle by regional council in 2019. The” Housing Master Plan “guides the region's ‘new builds’ to create affordable rental and emergency shelters on region of Peel lands and on Peel Housing Corp. sites and, in the initial phase, will support 18 projects” which would include “more than 2,241 affordable rental housing units.” They are still waiting on an answer from the province with respect to the \$319 million that they need to ensure that these critical housing projects will get built.

During their presentation, the region made it very clear that if they are not able to secure these funds, there are several housing projects in our community that would provide access to affordable units and affordable housing for vulnerable populations that would be at risk of not being completed. As they outlined in the presentation, if the funding gap is not addressed—the ask from the province is \$319 million—six projects, including one in Malton, will not happen.

Five of the six projects have a commitment from the CMHC fund only if the region is able to invest its own funds. These are projects like Chamney Court in the riding of Brampton South; Emil Kolb in the riding of Dufferin–Caledon; 1320 Williamsport Drive in Mississauga East–Cooksville; 114 Falconer Drive in the riding of Mississauga–Streetsville; in my own riding of Brampton Centre, at 9996 Kennedy Road, 395 affordable units that are at risk. A total of 860 new affordable housing units for Peel are at risk of not moving forward if the government is not able to provide the support that the region needs to move forward with these projects.

Speaker, the region also made it very clear that it's not just affordable housing for vulnerable populations. For folks who want to purchase their first home in the community of Peel, on average, a two-income, minimum wage household would need to spend 66% of their income on current rental prices. A two-income, minimum wage household would need 51 years to save today's down payment and closing costs—51 years in order for a two-income, minimum wage household to be able to save for a down payment and the closing costs. An average-income household would need 26 years to save for today's down payment and closing costs. It's just a ridiculous amount of time to expect that people are able to purchase a home and enter the market; 51 years for two-income, minimum wage workers just means that they will not have access to purchasing their first home, and will continue to be forced to rent and never be able to realize the dream of owning a home.

1640

People are working hard, Speaker. It's very clear that they are working hard to save for a down payment, but if the average house price is soaring to \$1.2 million or \$1.3 million, we're talking an almost \$200,000-plus down payment cost at 20% down payment rates. That's not a reasonable amount to expect people who earn minimum

wage to be able to save up in a timely manner when, in addition to the rising costs of rental market rates, that has made it even harder to save.

So I encourage this government to think about some of the policy mechanisms that we might need to put in place. For example, a “homes you can afford” plan that helps people out with their down payment might be a solution that we should be looking at. I know it’s something that New Democrats have proposed to the government, and we’ve included it in our housing plan, because we understand that it is getting harder and harder for people to save to purchase their first home—by no fault of their own, because they are working hard and they are trying to save, but with rising costs of living, it’s getting harder and harder to have that dream realized.

Speaker, I know the government believes that this is a supply issue, and there certainly is an element of that, but I think what we need to also consider is the type of supply that is being created in our communities. We have intense density in some parts of our communities that doesn’t actually take into consideration the multiplicity of needs in the community, for example. I think we all, of course, agree that we need to see single-family homes being constructed, but we also need to ensure that we have mixed-use residential buildings going up, and that is currently not the case in much of the development, especially in Brampton, where we see the sprawl happening of large homes that people simply cannot afford.

As the region indicates, 74% of purpose-built rentals were built before 1979 in the region of Peel. It’s kind of shocking when you think about that—well before I was born, all jokes aside—but I think it’s quite a long time, well over 30 years, that real housing was built in our community. The average rents now have soared to as high as \$2,400 in a rental condominium unit in our community. And \$2,400 is a significant amount for someone to pay in rent in Peel region.

This number is quite staggering, and I know that our members from Peel region are aware of the numbers: Close to 23,000 households are on Peel’s centralized wait-list for subsidized housing—that was in 2020. We have nearly a 14-year wait-list for folks to find affordable housing. That is not acceptable. I know that we can work together to make that better, and we should work together to make that better, because people deserve to have housing—especially vulnerable people—that is safe, that is clean, that is dignified. But a lack of purpose-built housing has contributed to a major backlog in affordable housing units, in subsidized housing units and safe spaces for people who need emergency housing in our community.

I want to, just in the few moments that I have left—time certainly flies here in the House, Speaker—highlight some of the changes that the government has proposed here with the new Home Construction Regulatory Authority. I know that the government has put forward changes here through schedule 3 of the bill to increase penalties, for example, to hold developers accountable who do not hold up to their end of the bargain. At face value, this seems like a reasonable move in the right direction, empowering the authority

with the tools it needs. It should have happened long ago. But the concern that we have and I think that many people across Ontario have—at least the 600 people who filed complaints to the regulatory authority over the last year—is that the government is not actually acting on the complaints that are being made to the authority. Doubling the fines but not actually enforcing them does nothing for the people who need to be held accountable and for the people who deserve justice and accountability from the authority.

Of the 600 complaints, only two fines were levied against developers who didn’t hold up their end of their contractual obligations. We’re talking about people who have put thousands, hundreds of thousands of dollars into down payments, into securing a condo, for example. Seniors who may have just sold their home, expecting that they’ll be able to move into a condo unit, downsizing, are having those dreams ripped away from them, their life savings just vanishing, and those condo developers are not being held accountable for those actions. It’s really unfair to those individuals. I think the government should, and can, do much better at actually holding those bad actors accountable.

We acknowledge it’s not everyone in the sector engaging in those unfortunate practices, if we can. So we should hold those bad actors accountable and levy the fines against them, take away their licences. Because what you say is that you have the tools, as a government, to do that, but you’re not actually utilizing the tools to enforce those mechanisms.

I think with schedule 4, with the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act and some of the changes there, as the former housing critic for our caucus, I remember listening to the horrific stories, frankly, of new homeowners when trying to have their claims and complaints heard through Tarion and getting absolutely nowhere with that authority either, and many losing out on hundreds of thousands of dollars or suffering health implications because of, for example, mould in their new units.

Authorities like this should be there to protect the people of the province. Putting these authorities in place and giving them powers is a good step, but making sure they actually act on the powers that they’ve been afforded, as well as holding bad actors accountable, is an important part of the equation. Unfortunately, it doesn’t seem like we have enough teeth in this legislation to actually do the work that the government says it’s going to do.

I encourage the government to think about our housing crisis, to think about the vulnerable people in our communities. Think about the need that needs to be addressed. Understand that providing the keys to developers is not the be-all and end-all of the housing crisis and solving the solution. Simply building more housing will not fix the problem. We need to look at this from a holistic point of view. We need to ensure that people have access to housing, because everyone deserves a place to call home.

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

Mr. Michael Parsa: It’s always great to listen to my colleague. Thank you very much for the presentation.

Speaker, she's right. One thing is not going to change it. After 15 years of neglect and underinvestment, it's going to take a multi-approach, which is why the minister, in question period, talked about the fact that it is a long-term fix. But we also need to make decisions now which will help the housing crisis that we're in now as well.

Madam Speaker, when the housing supply action plan More Homes, More Choice was introduced here, I recall the opposition clearly stating that it's not going to work, it's not going to solve the problem. Well, when we see the housing starts now, we have more housing starts now than we've had in the last three decades. So I'm wondering if my honourable colleague could perhaps talk to the rest of her caucus to support this great bill, so that then we can build more homes for everyone, all kinds of homes in this province.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to my colleague from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill. I think, as we've discussed, the problem is multi-faceted; the solutions also need to be multi-faceted. Building supply, as I said, is an important part of the equation, but as I very clearly articulated, we need to have diversity in the type of supply that's being built. That is not what we are currently seeing here in the province of Ontario. We are seeing more single-family homes being developed than affordable housing units. So I think it's important that we have a comprehensive look at the housing crisis, understand the needs that are there and actually work to address them. We need the government to also play a role in building some of those purpose-built units. A lot of that work has been downloaded to municipalities because of previous Conservative governments. Let's have a conversation about how we can make sure the municipalities have the tools—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Next question?

1650

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for her presentation. I know that she works really closely with her community and understands the need for affordable housing, understands the need for people even envisioning the idea of buying their homes one day.

One of the things we've noticed is that people who have—a lot of homes are just sitting there, purchased by foreign homebuyers who come here and take advantage of the market and just leave it there. Is there something that the government could have done in this bill to help prevent that from happening?

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to my colleague from Scarborough Southwest. We might be on other ends of the city, but we have very similar riding demographics and concerns around housing. I think you raise a really important point when we talk about the commercialization of housing and foreign buyers coming into our communities and purchasing up a lot of the stock that's available. In our community of Brampton, we see a lot of foreign buyers purchasing homes that then are turned into rooming

houses and are not creating options for families to have a place to call home. That's why we have, as New Democrats, proposed time and time again a foreign buyers tax. It's nice to see that the government is taking some of our policies and packaging them as their own. Mechanisms like this have worked in other provinces to help cool the market and help make sure that there's accountability for who is purchasing those homes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for her debate today on this issue. I listened to you very attentively. You were talking about affordable homes. Will you join me today and ask the federal government for the \$490 million that they owe the province to build more affordable homes? Due to the fact that the Liberals and the NDP are part of the government now, will you do that for us?

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to my colleague from Lakeshore–Port Credit. We have some really interesting conversations, and I appreciate the work you do for your riding as well. The concern here that I raised and that Chair Iannicca has raised with us all at several meetings with our Peel MPPs is that the province needs to step up and help the municipality get its fair share. The federal government has made its commitment towards the housing master plan. Unfortunately, the province of Ontario has not. Their ask of \$319 million I think is something that this province needs to commit on, and I won't stop advocating that this government do its job.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The next question.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to our wonderful member from Brampton Centre, who was also a fantastic housing critic as well previously for our official opposition.

I'm thinking of our post-secondary students at George Brown campus in my riding of St. Paul's, the Casa Loma campus. Many post-secondary students are graduating. They want to start living. They want to find a great job, and they'd like to have the dream of home ownership, but in St. Paul's, renting a one-bedroom can be \$2,000. It's just an insurmountable—it's out of reach for most folks. I'm wondering, do you think that this government's bill is going to bring the dream of home ownership any closer to our post-secondary students, to our new families that are struggling, that were without affordable child care for a very long time? Is this working for them? Or what would you offer?

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to the member from Toronto–St. Paul's for the question—an excellent question. Thank you for all of your advocacy for your local community.

We hear from post-secondary students across the province. I know in my riding of Brampton, we actually have international students from around the world calling Brampton home, and they are not able to afford the rental rates in the community. We have a serious concern when it comes to illegal housing units, illegal housing taking place, boarding houses, because those students are forced

into those circumstances because there is not any housing available for them. This not only compounds the problem for them; they're in some very, very unsafe housing, as our fire chief has outlined for us. For those international students and for new immigrants coming, I think that this bill falls very short of addressing the problems that they're facing and making the reality of renting or owning a home even more difficult.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Time for one last question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thanks to the member from Brampton Centre for that presentation. You are a Peel colleague, so we are from the same region. We are all from Mississauga and Brampton. Yes, I understand there are 23,000 people on the waiting list. For the fairness of that, maybe after these statistics, maybe it's gone up to 35,000—maybe; I don't know.

But anyway, irrelevant to that, 35,000 people are looking for housing. What about the rest of the million in Mississauga, which, even including me with one family income, cannot afford to buy a decent home? Is that going to be solved by more affordable housing, more subsidized housing? I don't think so. We need to have more houses. We need to build faster.

My question for you: Look into this bill and please tell us what can we add to it to service the standard average Canadian who is working full time to buy a house.

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to the member for the question. I think that we might have a bit of a different perspective on how to address the housing crisis in our community. I don't think it's fair to discount 23,000-plus people waiting on a wait-list for a house, a place to call home. As I have said multiple times in my remarks here, we need to have diversity in the housing supply. That is an underlying problem, and the approach of this government is not addressing the diversity-in-housing-supply issue. Building homes for people who have a six-figure salary is already happening. Those folks are housed. We're talking about minimum wage workers who are spending 51 years on a two-income, minimum wage household trying to save for a down payment. The current housing supply will not be affordable for those individuals who are working hard. I think we need to be talking about that critically.

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

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is a thrill for me to rise in the House today to talk about housing. The government has given us an opportunity to have this debate by tabling Bill 109, More Homes for Everyone Act. One of the things that strikes me with this government is they're not necessarily considering the majority of Ontarians when they write their legislation. Ontario's housing crisis has reached a breaking point. In just 10 years, home prices have risen over 200% while incomes increased by just 30%, and rapidly increasing prices for ownership are contributing to, of course, rapidly increasing prices for rent. This is trapping many renters in unsuitable housing and stealing prosperity from everyone left behind through lower

disposable incomes at a time when we know that there is rising inflation. So, indeed, something needs to be done.

The cost of housing has become a major barrier for new Ontarians, for young Ontarians, for racialized and those very diverse people like those who live in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, and for those who are economically mobile in establishing their life and their future in Ontario. The cost of rental increases has become a barrier for Ontarians of all ages, including seniors who are on fixed incomes.

1700

I often hear this Ford government crow about record housing starts yet do they ever stop to ask themselves the question: Who is benefiting from these housing starts? How much of that is actually going to having affordable housing for young families? How much of it is affordable rental housing? How much of that new housing will meet the needs of families and individuals in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood? What I say is, not much.

The sad part is that young people are losing their vision and their hope for a future where they see themselves owning a house. I spoke with my niece, Jayda Hunter. She's a student at Queen's University. She said, "I don't see a future in which I will be able to afford to own a home. It's just out of reach." I don't think that this is something that we should allow in Ontario.

I think that one of the major challenges with Bill 109 is that it lacks a vision. It actually doesn't even meet the consulted-on recommendations of the government's own housing panel.

We're supposed to believe that, somehow, there is another plan. Where is it? Why didn't you include it here?

There is no help for first-time homebuyers in Bill 109. There is no investment in affordable housing. There are no rental controls. We remember that it's this PC government that removed the caps on rental housing. There is no zoning reform so that we can fill in density in the missing middle area, and there are no taxes on developers sitting on a lot of available land.

David Crombie and Anne Golden write in an op-ed in the Toronto Star in January that, "We cannot sprawl our way to housing affordability. Optimizing land already approved for development and building in our existing communities is the most economic strategy to provide the housing people need and can afford." Is this government listening? I don't think so.

Ontario Liberals will address this crisis once and for all by acting on these priorities, the things that really need to be solved, including speculation and the financialization of housing, rent controls, inclusionary zoning, government-built affordable housing and support for construction trade education. Ontario Liberals will address this crisis once and for all, Speaker.

While the government says that the task force report gives them a long-term road map, many of its recommendations are not addressed in Bill 109, including changing municipal zoning rules to allow more housing to be built aside from single-family homes, and to really address and arrest that sprawl.

And while high housing prices are nothing new in the greater Toronto area and beyond, the cost of buying a home just about everywhere in Ontario is soaring. In 2021, the average sale price of homes in the province was 44% higher than two years earlier, according to the figures from the Canadian Real Estate Association.

I also want to address some of the specifics around Bill 109, specifically the 90-day window for approvals. It is troubling that this act financially penalizes municipalities for not approving a development within 90 days. This seems like a very arbitrary number that's just been pulled out. This will slow the development process down as more developments will end up in the Ontario Land Tribunal, which we know is already labouring under a backlog. It will smother the voices of local communities.

If a developer is building a subdivision on underdeveloped land, 90 days might seem reasonable. But what about all of the planning considerations and proposals that are needed for a development with more complexity: within, perhaps, a dense urban area, or in a sensitive area, or maybe for historical reasons—areas like the Golden Mile in my community in Scarborough? Ninety days seems arbitrary, and some might even say that it's irresponsible and causing even more noise and hurdles in a system that we know needs to speed up, but doing it in a way that is careful.

David Crombie and Anne Golden also noted that there is, in fact, no shortage of land already designated for development; that municipal plans show that there are approximately 88,000 acres of land within urban boundaries across the region already approved for housing—enough to meet Ontario's provincial growth projections for decades to come. In Bill 109, the Ford government's response to these issues has come well short. Implementing arbitrary timelines like this 90-day turnaround just adds more noise to a system that needs, actually, more response.

In my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood, too many young people from Scarborough say that they have given up hope, just like my niece, Jayda, in living in our community. They just don't see themselves ever owning a home, and some are having trouble even finding affordable rent. This is a housing crisis that we're in, and it requires an urgent and thoughtful response from this government that we just don't see in Bill 109.

One resident in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood noted that in Bendale, a bungalow purchased in 2014 for \$400,000 is now worth over three times that amount. Think about that, Mr. Speaker. That's without an increase in income to cover that. That's without any new supply coming into that system. Residents in my community see it and they know that something needs to be done.

In my constituency office, housing and housing affordability, access to affordable housing—we've already heard from the opposition's debate about the 23,000-person backlog waiting for affordable home ownership. I want to speak to that, because housing affordability means that you're not spending more than 30% of your income just to stay housed. How many people are actually living

within that framework today? When you think about it, people are spending 40%, 50%, maybe even more than half of their income just to stay housed. And where does that leave them? How do they buy food? That leaves them lining up at the food banks.

Food banks are on the rise in Scarborough. We just opened one in our community. In fact, we're expanding them. We're doing that because people don't have enough income and funds to keep themselves housed and fed at the same time. In a province as vast and as wealthy and capable as Ontario, we need to do better.

I would urge the government to take the time—that's what debate is for today. It's to point out what needs to be improved. I would urge the government to take the time. Listen to your own task force's recommendations and look at the ways in which you can boost the supply of housing—not just single-family, very costly housing, but actual affordable housing that families and individuals need in this province and deserve, because housing in Canada is a human right. Every person has the right to have access to a roof over their head.

1710

It is incumbent on us as legislators, as individuals who are responsible for setting the rules, to ensure that that includes everyone, not just the wealthy who can afford to seize and hold those properties and not make them available for so many people who are in desperate need of affordable housing.

I want to thank everyone for this opportunity to talk about one of my passions, which is affordable housing.

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

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for her speech on this bill. I heard her in the midst of the speech talk about what kinds of houses are being built. Of course, the government introduced the More Homes, More Choice Act, and I can say, from experience in my own riding—having the minister up to do a groundbreaking last June—that all types of housing, but particularly purpose-built rental housing, is being built. In the town of Gravenhurst, the minister did the groundbreaking for Talisman Gate: 236 rental units. That's the largest purpose-built rental development in Muskoka in its history. So this is working, and it's building the kinds of housing that are needed.

Why does the opposition want us to stop building this housing that is so much needed across the province?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: There is a housing crisis in Ontario, in Canada, and this government is missing the opportunity. They have not focused on keeping people housed, even during the pandemic. We saw where BC gave renters a \$500 amount that they could use to cover their rent and keep themselves securely housed in the midst of a global pandemic. Ontario did nothing for renters. They did absolutely nothing for renters—and, actually, even those who are small landlords. There's just no acknowledgment that there's a role for the provincial government in building more supply of affordable rental and affordable housing in this province. It's a shame.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood. I appreciate you trying to stand and speak in support of your constituents with regard to social housing. However, I do know that in the previous Liberal government, we saw cuts of approximately \$150 million or so from social housing that were in fact corporate tax cuts. They were to help corporations with tax cuts. I know hindsight is 20/20.

I'm just wondering, this bill put forth by this Conservative government—do you see any inroads in this government's bill for affordability for your residents in Scarborough–Guildwood?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you so much for that question. That's where I believe that this bill falls well short. It does not look at the housing crisis from the lens of affordability and those who are in such desperate need of affordable housing. This is a crisis in Ontario. People are in situations in my community in Scarborough where they just are under-housed. There are larger families and not enough adequate housing, and it's because we don't have the supply.

Under the former Liberal government, we actually built and helped municipalities to build affordable housing and put more units into circulation so that we could address that issue of affordable housing supply. There is nothing here that speaks to that, and it does not do anything to help those families in Scarborough that I mentioned who are choosing between housing and rent and food.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite. It sounds like I think all of us in the Legislature understand there's a housing crisis, so I think that's step one. I think we all acknowledge that. However, as my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka pointed out, you didn't support the previous bill, the More Homes, More Choice Act, which has led to the largest build of rental apartments and units in the province in 30 years.

I'm not sure if you're going to support this bill or not, but you did mention in your speech that there was a backlog with the Ontario Land Tribunal. This bill specifically is investing \$19 million to invest in the Ontario Land Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board, so that we can get through the backlog much quicker. Exactly what we're doing is what you said is a problem in your speech. So will you join us and help reduce that backlog?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: One of the reasons why the Landlord and Tenant Board has such a backlog now is because this government ignored the needs of renters in their previous legislation. You've made it much more precarious for renters, and that's why there has been a rise and an increase in the backlog. As I mentioned, there was no help for renters to stay securely housed during the midst of the global pandemic.

One of the first cuts that you made under your government, under Doug Ford's government, was to cut rent control. The median rent costs have gone up over 11% in

one year after this government lifted rent control. Bill 109 does nothing to address this concern for renters in Scarborough, and there's no help, as I said, for those who are looking for affordable housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for her comments. I know that the city of Toronto spends \$800 million for housing, and this government only spent \$6 million for last year alone. I know that your government, the previous government, also downloaded the responsibility for housing and housing affordability issues.

How can we improve this with your experience now? Both this government and the previous government had let us down and created the housing crisis. How can we now join and support our housing plan?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Well, thank you for asking, member from York South–Weston, because this downloading that occurred under the Mike Harris government is really what destroyed the affordable housing system in Ontario. Specifically, I see that, certainly, when we look at the number of units, when we look at the state of the units. They downloaded the responsibility onto the backs of municipalities under the Harris government, with no funding for maintenance of those units—no funding.

This is what has contributed to the housing crisis in Ontario, and the fact that the Ford government has refused to spend on housing, on building affordable housing, on any sort of program to help to address that is really a shame.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A quick back-and-forth. Next question?

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question to the member opposite: She talked about—of course, you blamed Mike Harris for downloading, and I'm just wondering—

Interjection.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Whoa, whoa. Your party was in there for 15 years, and you went through the Who Does What study. I remember working with then-Minister Watson on it. A couple of promises were made throughout that study that, of course, didn't come through. But after two years—I think it was two and a half years—of conducting that study about what services should be funded from the provincial level and what from the lower level, your party endorsed the changes that Harris made, I'm assuming, because they made no changes. So I'm not sure how you can sit there and talk about the housing issue being a result of a former—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Response?

1720

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: You know, we were busy. We were busy addressing education that, under the former Harris government, the cuts to education—only two thirds of Ontario students were graduating under Harris, so we had to bring that way up. I believe it was close to 90% of students that were graduating when we left office. We also

had to fix issues in Ontario Works and ODSP that Harris also downloaded on the backs of municipalities. We had to re-upload and take that responsibility. So there were a number of systems that were destroyed under the Conservatives, under Harris, and your party continued to do those cuts to critical systems.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today and to speak to this bill.

It's not in my remarks, but I've got to say, the Ontario Liberals were busy. They were very busy. They were building wind turbines all across southwestern Ontario that nobody wanted, and they were also moving gas plants. They were at one place today and somewhere else tomorrow. It was like abracadabra: Now you see it, now you don't. I've got one down in Sarnia-Lambton. We were glad to get it because we like those kinds of jobs. I don't know why they didn't build them in Oakville or where the other spot was—it doesn't matter now. Anyway, they were busy, certainly, running up the debt and everything. But today we're here to talk about this bill.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry to interrupt the member. Stop the clock, please. Could the side conversations stop so that I'm able to hear the member, who is the only one who actually has the floor at this time? We're having some speaker issues today—not this speaker, the actual physical speakers. So you can't hear me when I call order, but I will make sure that you can. But I'll have to stand in order to do so.

I very much apologize to the member. Please continue.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I've got hearing aids in and I can't hear either, so I know what you mean.

Madam Speaker and all the honourable members here today, I'm the parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. I've had some experience with this stuff, some of the administrative authorities we're talking about today. I'm also happy to speak to the bill that Minister Clark from municipal affairs introduced.

The proposed amendments that fall under the jurisdiction of our ministry would bring real and meaningful change to the lives of many Ontarians who dream of owning a home. These proposed amendments would impact the New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017, and the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act; in other words, the warranties act.

My ministry is bringing forward these proposals as part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's bill, the More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022, which was recently introduced into this Legislature. This important housing bill addresses the housing supply shortage, among a number of other related topics, including consumer protection for the purchasers of new homes. In addition, we are currently consulting on proposed regulations that would provide better information and strengthen protections for those buying a residential property in a new or pre-construction condo project.

Our government is cracking down on bad actors and following through on our promise to defend future homeowners from the unethical and egregious practice of unfairly cancelling pre-construction projects. We are responding to Premier Ford's commitment last November to protect condo buyers, when he said, "Nothing burns me up more than some developer trying to make extra money off the backs of hard-working people."

These proposals, if passed, would be subject to government decisions, and we look forward to any feedback arising from the public consultations that are now under way. Like other ministries across government, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services continues to review our existing legislation on an ongoing basis, to help ensure that we continue to maintain consumer trust and confidence, with a view to strengthening protection for all Ontario consumers.

In fact, Speaker, I sat on a couple of committees this week where we looked at the TSSA, the ESA and Ontario One Call—all administrative authorities under the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. We are in a constant state of review, trying to make consumers safer and protect them every day. Protecting consumers is essential for our government, and to be able to do so, a careful review of our existing legislation is required, and in this case to enhance consumer protection. We are proposing amendments to our licensing act and the warranties act. These amendments will address emerging problems in the marketplace more effectively.

Ontarians who desire to enter the housing market will feel more protected, and their investment in a new home will be one of the biggest investments that they are likely to make in their lifetime. Especially if the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's More Homes for Everyone Act is fully implemented, more potential homebuyers will create an even greater need for our province to have stronger legislation in place—legislation that is designed to protect them when they are negotiating with new home builders and vendors.

We know that Ontario is the best place to live, start a business and raise a family, but we can only build on our success if all hard-working Ontarians are able to find a home that they can afford and one that they can count on to be constructed properly, by a builder who acts both ethically and responsibly. While we know that the majority of Ontario businesses are run by hard-working people who genuinely want to provide the public with quality goods and services, there are bad actors mixed into that bunch as well. We have received reports from some industries, such as the new home building sector itself, that they are employing tactics that are not serving consumers well. At this point in today's proceedings, I'd like to spend some time detailing what we intend to do to protect Ontarians in their transactions with new home builders and vendors.

As you may know, Speaker and other honourable members of the House, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, or the HCRA, and Tarion are two of my ministry's key administrative authorities. The Home

Construction Regulatory Authority, or HCRA for short, has just celebrated its first year of operation. It regulates builders and vendors of new homes and holds them to professional standards, including their need to comply with this mandatory code of ethics.

Tarion administers the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, which ensures that when you buy a home, your home is protected with that new home warranty. Our ministry's proposed new amendments to the New Home Construction Licensing Act, if passed, would provide the HCRA with more enforcement tools as well as higher maximum times and clear authority to address any unethical builder and vendor conduct. This will help ensure that new home builders and vendors are held to a very professional standard.

We're doubling fines for corporations and individuals who try to rip off Ontarians by cancelling pre-construction projects just to increase the price of their units, and removing the limits on fines entirely for repeat offenders. Unethical developers that engage in these practices will also face the threat of losing their builders' licence for up to two years. I think that will get their attention.

For the first time, past behaviour offences will also be considered when assessing unethical behaviour and handing out fines and penalties. For Tarion, these changes would provide the ability to create regulations to extend statutory warranties for items in the new home that are not completed when the warranties for the new home actually begin. On top of this, we're protecting consumers by ensuring that deposits they put down are returned with interest at the Bank of Canada rate in case a project is cancelled, ensuring they do not lose any money on their original deposit. With these changes, developers looking to make a quick buck will think twice before they try to take advantage of hard-working Ontarians. We're protecting Ontarians making their biggest investment and supporting access to more affordable housing in our province.

Recent news articles and ongoing consumer concern have drawn attention to certain developers who have cancelled contracts for pre-construction home purchases, often condominiums, and attempted to sell those units back to the original purchasers at higher prices. These bad actors have cited unexpected increases in construction costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain shortages as the reasons for the termination of these agreements. As we all have endured challenging times, our government must protect consumers who are working hard under the same challenging conditions to buy a new home and defend future homeowners from the unethical and malpractice of unfairly cancelling pre-construction projects.

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If approved, our proposed amendments to the New Home Construction Licensing Act would give the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, the HCRA, additional enforcement tools and a clear authority to deter unethical behaviour in some instances of project or contract cancellations or unwarranted price escalations. HCRA will now

be able to launch investigations into condo cancellations and price increases without having to receive a formal complaint from a homeowner, speeding up the process for consumers to get answers to their questions.

Our proposed amendments to the new home construction act, if passed, would:

- allow the Home Construction Regulatory Authority to take certain actions without having to receive a formal complaint from a consumer. The authority would now be able to launch an investigation into condo cancellations and price increases, for example, without having to receive a formal complaint from a purchaser;

- increase the maximum fine for code of ethics violations;

- confirm the discipline committee's ability to consider prior misconduct. For the first time, past misbehaviour and offences will be considered when assessing unethical behaviour and handing out fines and penalties. That was something that's been long called for. I'm glad to see that, and hopefully this will pass;

- increase the maximum administrative penalty that could be imposed;

- give the discipline committee, assessors and the courts the ability to consider monetary benefit when imposing penalties; and

- make other housekeeping amendments as necessary.

Some Ontarians may wonder—if they're watching tonight at this time—if increasing the maximum fines for unethical behaviour, as we have proposed under these amendments, would be a sufficient deterrent to deter builders acting in bad faith. An example of how increased fines could help deter inappropriate behaviour would be that someone who is considering breaking the law and building or selling a home illegally might now think twice before acting. Well, previously, when a successful conviction was obtained against an illegal builder, the builder often faced fines that were not strong enough of a deterrent against even more unethical behaviour by that builder in the next case. In some cases, builders continued to build illegally, despite a conviction, so hopefully, we'll be able to change some of those injustices. As I stated earlier, these proposed amendments, if passed, could ensure a better compliance with the act and its regulations, and give the HCRA a much clearer authority to address unethical builder behaviour.

We expect builders and vendors to treat consumers who purchase new homes with fairness and to act with integrity. As I mentioned before, we continue to hear in the news about developers who have cancelled contracts for pre-construction condominium projects and who turn around and try to resell the units, sometimes to the original purchaser at a higher price. The Premier has said and made it very clear that nothing burns him up more than seeing this. So when the Premier speaks, the government acts.

Should this legislation pass, Speaker and fellow members, maximum fines for bad actors would increase significantly. Not only would we increase those maximum fines imposed by the discipline committee for unethical practices, we are proposing to increase those amounts.

Price gouging is not only unconscionable, but it runs contrary to everything this government stands for and that I hope every member in this House would stand for, which is the little guy and woman, the everyday consumer whose hard-earned money has been put aside to buy a new home and to start an exciting new chapter in their life.

I remember when my kids bought their first home, how we were able to help them and how excited they were to get into their new home. I've got to go back a lot further in my life to remember when I started. It's so far back, I can't quite remember, but I know the prices weren't what they are today. I feel bad for people that are starting out today. I know how difficult it must be.

The HCRA currently has the authority to suspend or revoke a builder's or vendor's licence, at any time, for any reason that would cause a licensee not to be able to build or to apply for a licence. This includes, among other things, not carrying on business with integrity and honesty—developers who are looking to make a quick buck and taking advantage of hard-working Ontarians.

Our government is also consulting on many other proposals to clarify requirements for licensees that are set out in regulations, such requiring compliance with the Condominium Act, 1998, and requiring compliance with all tax laws. In addition, we're also consulting on formalizing the requirement for the HCRA to publicly post its corporate bylaws within 30 days of making them.

But that's not all, Speaker. We're also consulting on proposed regulations to address condo cancellations so we can better protect those consumers. The Ontario Condominium Act: Our proposals would mean increasing the amount of interest payable, in certain circumstances, to purchasers on their deposits for the purchase of a new or pre-construction condo from a developer: for example, when that project is cancelled. For the licensing act, changes there would mean requiring, in regulation, that vendors and purchasers of new and pre-construction condo units must complete the condo information sheet and, once completed, that it forms part of the purchase agreement for the owner. This sheet provides key information to help better inform new condo purchasers about their pre-construction unit.

We're also seeking feedback on potential future regulatory proposals under the licensing act that would, first of all, require vendors to provide information to the HCRA related to price adjustments to purchase agreements and restrict vendors from selling or transferring, or offering to sell or transfer, a new home for a specified period of time after terminating a purchase agreement.

Consultations on these proposed regulatory changes have started, and we encourage interested Ontarians to submit their comments through Ontario's Regulatory Registry before April 22. These proposed changes align with our government's More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022, which the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, addressed earlier this week.

Through the More Homes for Everyone Act and the legislative amendments we have described today, our

government is strengthening consumer protection for purchasers of new homes in Ontario. With these changes, developers looking to make a quick buck will have to think twice about doing business in Ontario.

By holding builders and vendors of new homes to professional standards, increasing the fines to address unethical behaviour and by enabling Tarion to extend warranties on unfinished items in a new home, we will better help protect consumers when they make one of the biggest purchases of their lives.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I wonder if you might be able to—I'm not sure if it's a valid point of order or not—help me understand how much time is left in the current debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): That is not a point of order.

I return to the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay. That gives me time for a drink of water.

Miss Monique Taylor: Well played.

Mr. Robert Bailey: The House leader wanted to get on the record. I think he wanted to get in the Hansard there.

Anyway, Speaker, honourable members—

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, they're so excited about this bill and about these remarks that they all want to be part of it, I guess.

Anyway, I've got a whole lot of stuff here that I'm not going to get in the record here before I'm done. Speaker, fellow colleagues who are here today, I think what today is about and what we've been debating is, how can we make the purchase of—like we said, one of the most important purchases in your life is your home. How can we make it simpler? How can we make it safer? How can we, in as many ways as we can, make it a secure purchase for you and your family, something that people can be proud of and feel they were treated fairly by the builders and the contractors and all the different ministries, the myriad of ministries that we have to go through to get anything done in this province?

We're trying to make it better, but I'll tell you, it takes a lot of work. I know. I've been the member for 15 years, and I can't believe the different—especially under the former governments—hoops we had to jump through to get things done. I know a person I'm working with in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, they're trying to build homes and get properties zoned. They had it for over 30 years. They spent over \$400,000. I know the House leader has heard this speech before. They had to hire a reptologist. They found a certain breed of snake, called Butler's garter snake, on this property. They spent \$400,000 to develop a new habitat to try and get the okay to build these homes that the people need, that the municipality wants to see on this. Some ministry people came back and said, "Oh, the study you've got is too old that you're using." And I said, "No way. We're not doing any more studies." I said,

“We’ve spent 400,000 bucks. That’s it. Somehow we’re going to get that land cleared and we’re going to get those homes built.” But that’s what—most people couldn’t do that. Most people of modest means couldn’t afford to fight the ministries, to fight the government, and so that’s what a lot of this is going to be about, Speaker: to make things better, to make things at least fair for the average man or woman who is trying to build something in this province, trying to succeed.

1740

Like I’ve heard all day today—I’ve been in committee, but I was watching in the background—about building more homes for people, building rental properties. Why would anybody go out and spend their hard-earned money to build homes when you can’t even get the property zoned in the first place to even be able to build the home, let alone all the red tape that goes along with it after?

Anyway, hopefully this bill will pass, with amendments—if it goes to committee, we’ll make it better. I look forward to—I’m sure there’s going to be lots of spirited questions from the opposition, and probably from some of the government members too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to the member for Sarnia–Lambton for his comments. This bill, Bill 109, the More Homes for Everyone Act, doesn’t address it for everyone. You mentioned about the challenges for housing affordability and also the challenges young people have for buying a home. It doesn’t really give any incentives.

We have proposed in our housing plan that folks who are making less than \$200,000 should be given equity loans to put down the down payment. Is that something you’re planning to include in this so that more people could have access to buying homes?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member from York South–Weston. I’m not sure; I don’t think there’s anything about equity loans. What we want to do is create the conditions in this province, which the Premier and this government has created—they’ve created more employment. I think I heard the Minister of Economic Development this morning say that over 500,000 jobs have been created by the free market: industry, cars, the service industry. Having most people having a good job, a paycheque that they can take home, more people in the skilled trades—those young people, those young men and women, will be able to go out and buy those homes and get the kind of assistance they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: The member from Sarnia–Lambton is such a strong advocate in his riding for affordable housing and access across it, and he has a long, distinguished record. I want to congratulate him for all of that work that he’s done.

We’ve heard a fair amount of discussion about affordability, and I think it’s also worthwhile talking about the record investments that we’ve made as a government in several areas. For example, the Community Housing

Renewal Strategy is one. Recently, I was with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Whitby announcing additional money related to the social services relief fund, Speaker. So I’d like my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton to talk about how this new framework complements those record investments, billions and billions of dollars in several areas, to help people across our province.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member from Whitby, who has got a long and distinguished career, I know, in municipal politics and has done a great job here as our chief government whip and a great advocate for his community.

Yes, I think that what we’ve tried to do as a government is create the atmosphere and create the environment. Governments don’t create jobs, but the business community and the people out there that are going to put their hard-earned money—I remember a former colleague of ours, who is not here now but he was, and he said, “Do you know what the 4 o’clock sweats are?” Everybody looked at him in committee, and he said, “That’s when you wake up in the night and wonder if you’re going to be able to make payroll in the morning.” He said, “When you’ve been in the small business sector”—or large or whatever it is—“when you have gone through that, you’ll know what it’s like.”

We’ve tried to create that kind of environment here in this province, whether it’s investments in social housing or whether it’s investments in the automotive sector, the life sciences that was announced earlier today, and that will allow people to have those types of jobs; the skilled trades work that Minister McNaughton has worked on, also, to get young people and middle-aged people who want to get a new career, to get those young men and women working so that they can afford to buy a home. I always say the best social program is a job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member for his presentation. I noticed that in the bill, it does not really go close enough to the affordability task force’s recommendations. There are quite a few recommendations made to how we address the crisis that we’re facing right now. Would the member like to talk about why the government is yet again failing to address the main crisis when it comes to housing?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you to the member. I think what we’ve tried to do is create the social atmosphere. There have been more housing starts, apparently, in this last decade than we’ve seen since early in the 1990s, the early 2000s. I know in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton—I live in Petrolia; it’s a hard oil town, Petrolia—the homes are going up there. I can’t believe it. I remember the town CAO told me there’s a subdivision there. When the developer came about 30 years ago, they said, “How much land do you want us to zone?” He said, “I’ll take it all. I intend to build 200 homes,” and they all laughed at him. This was about 30 years ago. But that subdivision is built and he’s started another one.

The atmosphere is out there and the faith in the community. People are building homes. They’re building

rental homes; they're building single-family homes. So if you create that environment and you give people faith that they're able to work at a job, faith for that home, people will come.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): The member from Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: Thank you for my colleague's presentation. We expect developers to treat consumers who purchase new homes, including pre-construction condominium units, with fairness and to act with integrity. How would this proposed legislation help to protect new homebuyers from predatory development practices?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, I'm glad we got on to that. I had some notes, but I didn't get time to read them. I ran out of time.

Anyway, we're going to crack down on those bad actors. We're going to double the fines for corporations and individuals who try to rip off consumers. Unethical developers that engage in these practices will also have the threat of losing their builder's licence for up to two years, and for the first time, we're going to take a look at past behaviour. They always say that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, so we'll look at that when we're considering whether we're going to assess a fine or even give them a licence.

It should be a privilege to do business in this province and do business with people who are going to build a home—the biggest investment in their life. There should be a lot of responsibility on the part of the builder, I think. They will also be able to launch investigations into those condo cancellations and price increases without a formal complaint.

On top of this, we're also protecting consumers by ensuring that any deposits that are put down are returned with interest at the Bank of Canada rate, in case a project is cancelled or delayed. With these changes, we think that developers that are out to make a fast buck will think twice—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Thank you.

Questions?

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton for his presentation.

I've listened intently, and I think there are some concerns that have been raised here by the member. He says that the best social program is folks getting a job. As I've shared a few times here in the House, there are people who are working two minimum wage jobs. A two minimum wage household will take 51 years to save for a down payment.

Can you please help us understand how those folks who are working will be addressed in this bill? Because there's nothing in this bill that actually helps those people who do have a job, who are working hard to save for a down payment, enter the market.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I hope some of you didn't take me the wrong way. What I was getting at was the Minister of Labour is putting the programs in place for people who are underemployed. Lots of people are underemployed. Those people you're speaking about, we're going to pay them up

to \$28,000 to go back to school and learn a trade—maybe in the skilled trades, maybe in other sectors, like with IT. Those young men and women, even middle-aged, will be able to go back out, go to work and make the kind of money that can afford to buy those kinds of homes. I think that in the right environment that we've created here in Ontario there are lots of opportunities. All the ministers are working on that. I know the Minister of Labour especially—on his skills trades training to try and get young people and people who are already in the workforce and help them retrain to get a better job.

1750

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Question?

Mr. Will Bouma: Speaker, very quickly, through you, I defer to the member's wisdom because he's been here a lot longer than I have and he's got a few years on me too. I always appreciate that.

I'm a little confused because what I've heard from the opposition today is that the problem is not supply, and their plan is to build more affordable housing. Those sound like opposites to me. I'm wondering if the member—because he's a little bit wiser on that stuff—can make sense of saying that the problem is not supply but we just need to build more, which is what we're doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): The member has time for a short answer.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay, very short, eh? It takes me that long to clear my throat.

But, anyway, I do want to thank the member for that question. I think, as you've said, to get the proper environment, we're going to build them homes, and people with good jobs will be able to afford to pay for that home, whether it's rent or a mortgage payment. Thank you for that input.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate? The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Speaker, and you look great in the chair there.

I rise to speak to Bill 109, the More Homes for Every-one Act. It is an honour to rise on behalf of the good people of my riding of Scarborough Southwest, especially when I'm able to share some of the stories and concerns of the people of my riding, and housing is one of the most important issues that I hear about all the time.

I'll start with this, Speaker: This morning, one of the first calls I had, and a difficult call, was with Ilham. Ilham is a young high school student; I believe he's in grade 11. He's the one who is actually helping us with this case we're working on for his mom and for his younger siblings. I spoke with Ilham and his mom, Sabina. I do have permission from the family to share their names and their story. This morning, when I talked to Ilham, it was probably the fourth or fifth time I have had to tell the family, "You have to wait a little bit more because there's a lot of people on the wait-list."

I want to rewind a little bit as to why this family is one of the difficult ones that we're working with. In late 2020 we did a press conference on housing. A gentleman named Mr. Yunus Miah, Brother Yunus, joined us at that press

conference to talk about housing because he was on the wait-list for quite a few years—I believe it was almost seven years at that time—when he shared about the difficult situation he’s facing and how little space they have.

Just a few months ago, Yunus Miah passed away. We lost Brother Yunus to COVID, I believe, and he has left young children with his wife. Unfortunately, they do not have the ability to purchase a home or keep up with their rent. So, what they have been doing is calling our office and we’ve met multiple times. We have spoken about this, and one of the biggest hurdle they’re facing right now is keeping up with the cost of just keeping a roof on top of their heads—these young children and this young mother who has lost her husband.

There are so many stories like this that we hear from across Scarborough Southwest, across Scarborough and across Ontario when it comes to the issue we’re facing for affordable housing. Right now, there are about over 80,000 families who are still waiting to access social housing in Toronto—not anywhere else, just in Toronto. When I talk to them when they come to our office, sometimes they look at me: “Just do something. Maybe you can help us.” And here is a situation, and it will be the most heart-breaking situation, whether they are terminally ill, whether they have three children who are crammed in this one-bedroom, elder parents who are struggling to get through and they just don’t have enough to keep up with their rent but that’s what they’re doing. Or they’re in social housing in a one-bedroom or two-bedroom apartment, but they have grown out of it and they are stuck in that situation. That is the reality we face right now across this province.

Whenever I see a bill proposed from anyone in this House, I feel hopeful, because I know that it is difficult and I know that we have to fix this. There are times that we have brought forward bills—in fact, the Homes You Can Afford proposal is on the table. It’s there for the government to take all the suggestions that we are giving you to act on it. When I look at this bill, it does not address any of those concerns.

One of the first things that I noticed is looking at the way the government is trying to, for lack of a better word, really infringe upon the rights of municipalities in making sure that they’re able to protect in the way they provide permission for housing. There are a few things that I thought would be possible with this bill, and one of them was listening to the recommendations that are proposed by the task force that this government actually put forward—which is very interesting, because the task force was something that the government actually came forward with and had people that a lot of people were concerned about, and yet they didn’t even go close enough to listen to those recommendations within that task force.

In fact, when we look at this bill, they are putting a deadline for municipalities to give permission for developers, without really adding onto the details that are necessary to be able to—and I believe I’m just close to ending my time.

Miss Monique Taylor: No, keep going.

Ms. Doly Begum: All right. I do have two more minutes left. All right.

When I look at this bill, Speaker, it does not have the teeth for a real timeline for expediting the need for affordable housing, or to make sure that we’re able to support families like Ilham’s family that I spoke about.

The other thing that it does not do: It actually doesn’t address any of the issues when it comes to zoning in areas where the permissions, for example—where we do have land that is ready to be built on. Instead, it actually gives the ministerial zoning powers to be able to do that and pave over farmland and things that we’ve talked about in the past as well.

One of the things I would give the government credit for is that it does put a little bit of restraint, finally, in terms of the previous bills and what the previous bills did with MZOs, but, unfortunately, I am a little bit lost when I look at this bill and I don’t see a real timeline for how you’re going to address the schedules, and then there’s a timeline for when it will be implemented.

It’s the same thing with schedule 3, the New Home Construction Licensing Act. You’re putting fines on municipalities for not meeting the deadline, but without giving them the ability to do what they need to do for making sure that we’re protecting our land across the province.

One of the things the minister talked about, I believe just yesterday—it was really interesting. Mayors across the province were unanimous in talking about the need for housing, but also making sure that we have the ability to ensure that they have that power to zone within their areas. In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, it’s very different from what we see in Beaches–East York, for example, because we hit the Victoria Park line and then things change. People don’t have the ability to do the same thing that they are able to do in the other parts of the city, which makes it difficult for people who want to be able to have multi-generational homes, for example.

It’s really interesting, because this is a concept I’ve had to explain during COVID a lot, multi-generational homes. The way I grew up—and I know many of us who have come from different countries have lived in multi-generational homes—it’s a really common thing. You have your grandparents, your parents and your siblings who take care of each other. You live together. During COVID, for example, a lot of people found out for the first time that they have grandparents in their homes—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I’m sorry to interrupt the member. It’s now time for private members’ business.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

1800

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

SENIORS’ HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should commit to a

strategy to improve accountability and care for aging Ontarians in long-term-care and retirement homes, including but not limited to: involving family councils in care decisions; incorporating individualized care plans that consider the cognitive, behavioural, cultural, psychological, nutritional and physical needs of residents; ensuring that payments of fines and penalties incurred by for-profit providers cannot come from funds transferred to agencies by the province; and ensure that the proactive inspection criteria will at least meet the criteria of the cancelled resident quality inspections (RQI) and clearly outline the protocols for such inspections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Ms. French has moved private member's notice of motion number 36. Pursuant to standing order 101, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Families and seniors deserve accountability in long-term care, and residents and families have long been calling for proactive measures to keep their loved ones safe and cared for.

Nearly 4,000 seniors died of COVID-19 in long-term care in Ontario and lessons have not been learned. This motion today is another chance for this PC government to listen to families and folks in the province and improve accountability and care for aging Ontarians.

The loss in my area is still fresh. It seems like only yesterday that I began hearing from families of seniors who died at Orchard Villa long-term-care home in Pickering. I met families and learned about the 78 vibrant lives and the terrible deaths of so many beloved family members there. I was honoured to be included in the candlelight vigil and in the memorial events and rallies to keep others safe and to call for accountability. It has been a long road, and, unfortunately, much of the healing has yet to happen for families still fighting the powerful money-making machine that is for-profit long-term care—and now they have to fight this government.

June Morrison is a grieving daughter who shared this with me: "My dad George Wm Morrison was a prior resident at Orchard Villa" long-term-care home. "He died May 3, 2020 with me holding a phone and saying I love you before my final goodbye.

"I as a member of the public and Ontario citizen and taxpayer, I want the Premier held accountable for letting my dad, myself and others down ... as he and his ministers failed all elders and the disadvantaged living in" long-term-care homes "in 2020 and onward."

After such loss, it is mind-bending to think that we had to call for a public inquiry for the home to lose its licence, for the minister to resign or to be fired, for minimum standards of care and for the families to have justice. Instead, however, the Premier called a commission. Orchard Villa is likely to be given a 30-year licence extension by this government and a bigger building with more beds. The minister was eventually replaced—twice—but the situation hasn't improved. The better standards of care won't happen for a long time, and the families are embroiled in a lawsuit and are still seeking justice after this government made it harder to sue long-term-care homes.

Cathy Parkes's father, Paul Parkes, died at Orchard Villa. She and the families of Orchard Villa wrote to the MPP for Pickering about the terrible priority of this government to protect long-term-care homes from litigation. She wrote:

"I could write a very lengthy email about incident reports that are never followed up on, failures to comply that are issued with no repercussions, but I know you are aware of all these faults in" long-term care. "Instead, I would like to send you a quote that was spoken last week by a senior executive of Chartwell homes to its investors:

"The new legislation from the Ford government mitigates the risk from lawsuits against the company, and makes the threshold for proving damages very high."

Speaker, instead of building that "iron ring" around long-term-care residents, this Premier built it around the profit margins of private operators. Not too long ago, the government introduced another long-term-care homes act, which moved some words around, but in no way overhauled the system.

For the folks at home, please find and read the NDP plan called Aging Ontarians Deserve the Best: A New Public and Non-Profit Home Care and Long-Term Care System. I am making that plug today because our plan will overhaul the system. This government has locked in for-profit care agreements for a whole generation of seniors, with bad operators that we read about in the papers. The damage that Mike Harris did in this sector will pale in comparison to the harm that is coming because of these for-profit deals and the lack of accountability for residents and families.

There are so many needs in the long-term-care system. I want to thank my colleagues in the opposition who have been bringing forward long-term-care initiatives to make the system and life better for aging Ontarians. Today, my motion calls for this government to commit to a strategy to improve care and accountability for aging Ontarians in long-term-care and retirement homes.

The four main priorities for the strategy are to: consult with family councils regarding care and safety of residents in a home; incorporate individualized care plans that meet residents' individual needs; protect provincial transfer funds from penalties so that the for-profit folks have to find it elsewhere; and make sure inspections will at least meet the criteria of the cancelled resident quality inspections.

Residents and families feel left out. We want the minister to consult with residents and family councils of long-term-care homes when it comes to the safety and quality of care in the home.

Sam Peck, the executive director of Family Councils Ontario, offered this to me: "Families of Ontario's long-term-care residents deserve to be meaningfully engaged in improving the quality of the care and experience of people living in long-term-care homes. Through using the powers given to them in the current and proposed legislation governing long-term care, council members can help improve quality of care and ensure that homes are held accountable for failures to comply with the legislation." She reminded

us at committee: “It’s a place people call home. The culture of aging needs to be dignified, humane and person-centred.” We should all agree about person-centred care.

Residents are unique, and their care plans should consider their cognitive, behavioural, cultural, psychological, nutritional and physical needs. There is existing language in regulation about care plans, but there are gaps and often those care plans aren’t carried out, which we could better identify if inspections were unannounced and mandatory. It keeps coming back to that accountability.

When residents change during their time in long-term care, so should their care plans. Physical needs often take centre stage, but their behavioural and psychological needs may also need special consideration. These needs should not be left to chance. Rather, they need to be planned, written and available to care providers and responsible family to ensure care meets the needs of the individual.

In September 2020, I received a seven-page letter that must have been very difficult to write and it was very difficult to read. It began:

“My name is JP Tibensky and I would like to advocate for my mother Sharen Tibensky. My mother’s story has been difficult within the Ontario health care system. I have had to watch her decline faster than what could be, frustrated to be an advocate observing this and that has left me feeling tired.

“I have been disappointed to an extent where I cannot imagine remaining silent does well for my own health. I feel a need to advocate for transparency, accountability and responsibility.”

JP has been a tireless—though extremely disheartened—advocate for his mother, Sharen, and JP knows the importance of care plans very well. He wrote to me:

“Your motion is necessary. True accountability is necessary.

“Everything is not always made for everyone in mind. There’s always going to be gaps. Long-term care in Ontario has those gaps. The way people fall into and out from those gaps in LTC in Ontario can be hard. A care plan can help cushion a system for all, can help fill gaps for all, can be the open and fair forum that all issues to life in senior care can be addressed, and allow for a transparent means of accountability.”

He words it well, but it is simple: Residents and caregivers need to be engaged.

We also need financial accountability. Money for care should not line the pockets of business or shareholders. And I wonder why fines haven’t been levied. Well, Speaker, as it stands today, penalties and financial deterrents would be deducted from the money given to homes by the province. This part of my motion asserts that penalties cannot be allowed to come from the money that homes get from the province. The for-profit folks should have to find the money for their penalties from somewhere other than provincial transfer funds. The goal is to take all the profits out of care, and that is what the NDP is aiming for with our plan. However, while we still have bad actors and folks raking in the profits, penalties should not be able to further eat into care.

Dr. Vivian Stamatopoulos is a professor and long-term-care advocate and researcher in Ontario. She has been a brilliant and clear voice for seniors and their families throughout this pandemic. She asks: “Where is the accountability? You have fines—when are you actually going to use them? There are many families talking to inspectors about negligence and ongoing negligence. Why aren’t the inspectors levying penalties at their disposal? What constitutes a first offence? What exactly is offensive to the Ford government? Penalties should not come from public funds. They should come from the owners.”

For-profit long-term-care homes are making money hand over fist. They are making profits, and yet they’re understaffed. How is that possible? They are paid by public tax dollars and, really, partly by seniors’ pensions, yet they answer to no one. The government writes the cheque and the investors make their money, which is wild. Taxpayers are paying for this. We are paying these homes to run them into the ground and still turn a profit. Also wild? To realize that penalties or fines would be deducted from the money they get from the government. That’s where the money, as it stands in law now, would come from.

This part of the motion says that fines and penalties wouldn’t be allowed to come from those transfer payments, but must be found elsewhere—maybe Mike Harris’s back pocket. But investing in long-term care should not be the most lucrative game in town. The profitability of the home is protected by the law and by deals made with the previous Conservative government and now bubble-wrapped by this one.

Melissa Miller, partner at Howie, Sacks and Henry LLP, is a lawyer practising nursing home negligence cases on behalf of families and residents. She reminded me that the language around fines never changed in the new legislation, only the fine amounts. The power to levy them is the same, but that power isn’t being used.

1810

What the new long-term-care homes act doesn’t address is mandatory unannounced inspections. There are no unannounced resident quality inspections. This government has been talking about inspections, but families and residents of long-term-care and retirement homes deserve to know more about them. Will these so-called proactive inspections at least meet the criteria of the cancelled resident quality inspections? Why aren’t they mandatory and unannounced?

The Ontario Health Coalition and the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly have been advocating for transparency, accountability and systemic improvement in long-term care for years. They have been sounding alarm bells for years. Inspections, accountability, proper staffing, transparency and publicly delivered care would save lives and prevent suffering.

Natalie Mehra, the executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition has a suggestion:

“You might ask the Premier to report to the Legislature what single act of accountability has been taken—what single fine, charge, licence suspension, licence revocation—has happened since he promised after the military

report was leaked that ‘no stone would be left unturned,’ that ‘everything is on the table’ and when he vowed that there would be accountability and change. The truth is they have done nothing.”

As I am reflecting back on these past few years and the heavy work it has been to walk alongside grieving families, fearful seniors and determined advocates, I am thinking of this hope from Cathy Parkes, whose father Paul William Russel Parkes died on April 15, 2020, at Orchard Villa. She says:

“For a father who is dearly loved and incredibly missed there is one final favour that can be given, the one final act of caring that we can show to him and all those who are gone, to know that the tragedy of their deaths will help others, to know that even in death my father can continue to care for those who need it.”

Let’s decide today to support accountability in long-term care. This motion calls on us to commit to a strategy to improve accountability and care for aging Ontarians in long-term-care and retirement homes. Today I have outlined some important priorities, but, Speaker, as we all know, there are others. So, today let’s make the commitment and do the work to make long-term care accountable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: It’s an honour to rise in the House and speak to the private member’s motion put forward by the member from Oshawa.

Speaker, when our government took office in 2018, we saw the state that long-term care had been left in by the neglect of the previous government, the same government that was propped up and supported by the NDP for the latter years of their term. That is why we got to work immediately on fixing long-term care.

As the parliamentary assistant to the then Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I started meeting with stakeholders in the long-term-care sector and listening to their suggestions on what we could do to address the long-standing issues that faced the sector. In those meetings, I heard many of the same things: We need to improve staffing and care. We need to protect residents through better accountability, enforcement and transparency. And we need to build modern, safe and comfortable homes for seniors.

Speaker, that is exactly what we have been doing. For years, the previous government heard about the need to increase direct care for residents in long-term care to a standard of four hours for each resident each day, including from the Sharkey report they had commissioned and which they chose to ignore. From 2009 to 2018, they managed to increase direct care to residents by only 21 minutes. That is an increase of 12%, or slightly more than two minutes per year over nine years that they were in government.

Our government listened to stakeholders, we listened to the Auditor General, we listened to the long-term-care commission and we listened to Ontarians across the province. We put a plan in place to achieve this standard of an average of four hours of direct care per resident per

day. Our plan will see an investment of \$4.9 billion over four years to hire 27,000 new care staff. This is an increase of 42% over four years.

Recently, we announced an investment of \$673 million to long-term-care homes to hire and retain up to 10,000 long-term-care staff across the province. This is on top of the \$270 million we invested last year.

I would like to remind the members opposite that when they were given the chance to support our Fixing Long-Term Care Act, which put into legislation the yearly targets of staffing increases until we reach an average of four hours of care, they said no. After years of introducing the Time to Care Act and calling for an average of four hours of care for residents, when given the opportunity to enshrine that commitment into legislation, the NDP voted no. Now the member is introducing a motion with the stated goal to improve accountability and care for aging Ontarians in long-term-care and retirement homes. Speaker, that is exactly what our government is already doing.

People need to have confidence and trust that the vulnerable residents in long-term care will be safe and enjoy the quality of life they deserve, and inspections play a critical role in holding homes accountable. That is why our government invested \$20 million to hire 193 new inspection staff by the fall of this year. This will more than double the number of on-the-ground inspectors and give Ontario more than one inspector for every two homes in the province. This will give Ontario the best inspector-to-home ratio in the country.

When the Liberals were in government, propped up by the NDP, they froze funding for inspections from 2014 onwards. This led to a backlog of over 8,000 complaints and critical incidents that required inspections. That is 8,000 residents, caregivers and staff who were left to languish. They promised comprehensive inspections of every home. Three years after that promise, they had only been to 123 homes. Five years after that, they still had not finished. Once they had been to every home, the complaints and critical incidents backlog grew.

Our government’s investments will change that. Our investment will allow us to do three things: It will allow us to introduce a proactive inspections program to allow inspectors to identify problems in our long-term-care homes and resolve them earlier; it will allow us to promptly address complaints and critical incidents through unannounced inspections; and it will include a team of inspectors that have an investigative background with the skills and certification needed to investigate more complex cases and lay provincial offence charges when necessary.

The Fixing Long-Term Care Act further strengthens our inspection regime by doubling fines for those convicted of offences. Speaker, this means any individual convicted of an offence will be fined \$200,000 for the first offence and \$400,000 for a second offence. For corporations, they will see fines of \$500,000 for a first offence and \$1 million for a second offence. These fines will act as financial deterrents for non-compliance and will align or exceed the enforcement rules in other provinces.

The new inspections program adds to the current risk-based program of responding to complaints and critical incidents, and will help both the ministry as well as long-term-care homes to identify and resolve problems to improve the quality of care provided to residents. The program takes a resident-centred approach by allowing for more direct discussions with residents to focus on their care needs as well as the home's programs and services. The results from proactive inspections will help the government determine where the sector can benefit from extra resources, including guidance material and best practices.

The new proactive inspections program focuses on key areas such as residents' rights; infection prevention and control; plans of care; abuse and neglect; nutrition and hydration; medication management; policies and directives; dining observations; dignity choice and privacy; quality improvement; residents' and family councils; skin and wound care; falls prevention and management; pain management; personal support services; and cooling and air temperature requirements.

1820

Speaker, when I look at the motion put forward by the member opposite, I cannot see how we as the government can support it without cutting back on what our inspections program already does.

And, Speaker, if they don't want to take my word for it, how about that of OPSEU president Smokey Thomas who said, "We are pleased to see proactive inspections back on the province's priority list. Comprehensive and unannounced inspections are the only way to ensure these homes are operating at the highest standards of resident care. It's what our union has demanded for years, and I am pleased to see this government is listening and responding."

Our plan puts in place the resources and legislative teeth necessary to protect residents through better accountability, enforcement and transparency measures.

Speaker, the last pillar of our government's plan to fix long-term care is our commitment to building modern, safe and comfortable homes for our seniors. From 2011 to 2018, the previous Liberal government only managed to increase the number of beds in Ontario by 611 net new beds. This is a record of ineptitude that can never be repeated. As soon as our government was elected, we got to work to fulfill our commitment of building 30,000 new net long-term-care beds and redeveloping thousands more. We invested a total of \$6.4 billion into the development of new homes, and currently have over 26,000 new beds and more than 21,000 upgraded beds in the pipeline.

This includes the 640 new beds to be built in my own riding of Oakville North–Burlington, right next to the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. When I joined the minister to announce those new beds, the mayor of Oakville, Rob Burton, said, "For 15 years I have been asking Ontario to deal with the deficit of long-term-care beds in our town. And in one fell swoop, man, are you delivering."

Speaker, our government saw the problems in long-term care caused by the years of neglect from the previous

government. Our government listened to Ontarians, listened to the long-term-care residents, listened to families and essential care workers and put forth a real plan to fix long-term care in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: I'm proud today to stand in full support of my colleague from Oshawa's motion, improving protections and accountability for seniors in care.

Across the province, we saw thousands of seniors die in for-profit, long-term-care homes, which this government and the previous Liberal government have propped up for many years—and frankly even received donations from for-profit, long-term-care operators.

I want to say for seniors, for people with disabilities and for those with eating disorders who have found themselves in long-term care, they need to be cared for. There needs to be a level of accountability in these long-term-care homes so that residents, workers, families, members of family council and front-line health care workers can feel secure in these homes, which are part of our community.

In St. Paul's, I want to give a shout-out to Stephanie who is a family council member in one of our long-term-care homes, who organized and spoke with other members and always kept people as up to date as they could with information. She was also just a breath of fresh air for people's mental health at a time when there was so much sadness.

I also want to thank LeZlie and Angel, who are part of our 2SLGBTQIA+ community in St. Paul's. Not only are they part of it, but they are stalwarts. They are advocating through the "diversity is our strength" tool kit to ensure that all workers in long-term-care homes are equipped and trained in order to care for 2SLGBTQIA+ residents so they don't have to go back into the closet. LeZlie sits on the advisory committee, where they fervently work against homophobia and transphobia to build a better St. Paul's, to build a better province, quite frankly, where our seniors do not have to go back into the closet.

I want to say this: The Premier of this province had a chance to put an iron ring around our seniors and around their families, and he didn't. He absolutely didn't. Our priorities on Aging Ontarians Deserve the Best, our priorities on this motion, our demands for an independent seniors' advocate: These are all tools, along with the fantastic work of Stephanie and LeZlie and Angel, that will actually create long-term-care homes that are care-based, that are resident-centred and that, frankly, are accountable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, four years ago, I think it was just a few months after we were elected to this House and we began the session, one of the stories I shared after I visited a long-term-care home was what a resident told me. After listening to many people and staff members, he said, "Why don't I tell you? Because I live here. I can tell you what happens if I fall down one day or if my roommate falls down. There won't be anyone coming here for the

next 10, 15 minutes at least. I might be screaming, crying, bleeding. If I'm in the washroom, well, tough luck, because no one might even know that I fell down." That's the reality of so many long-term-care homes, Speaker.

I want to thank the member from Oshawa for bringing this forward. We have been fighting for this and the member knows the stories, the member personally feels it when she takes care of her own grandmother and understands the realities that we face across this province with so many of our seniors. When we talk about bed sores, lack of nutrition and the fact that people were dehydrated—COVID didn't kill so many of the seniors during the past two years; loneliness, lack of food, lack of care killed them. The fact that we're still here after four years debating this—and this issue has been going on for so long—is unbelievable. All this bill is asking for is accountability—the bare minimum that we need—and we still haven't gotten that.

The fact that we don't have unannounced quality inspections is a problem that we need to fix yesterday. We should have done that before COVID hit. If this government cared about the failure of the Liberals, they should have taken care of it before COVID hit. Then we wouldn't have faced the reality that we did. But, unfortunately, we're still here after two years of this pandemic and we still don't have unannounced quality inspections. We need to have that done.

I'm calling on the government to vote for this to make sure that families are consulted, make sure there's accountability and make sure that seniors are safe in these homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm really proud to be able to stand today in my place on behalf of the residents of Hamilton Mountain and to thank the member from Oshawa for bringing this very important motion before us in the House today.

This really, truly gives the government another opportunity to do the right thing. When the government's bill, Bill 37, was at committee, there were amendments brought forward by New Democrats doing this exact measure, ensuring that there is quality inspection, ensuring that family council voices were heard. They turned those amendments down. Now, today, they have another opportunity, and I'm really disheartened to hear the PA to the minister say that they will not be voting for this bill.

We need to ensure that the seniors in our province are given the dignity and respect that they deserve. When they're in for-profit homes, for-profit homes that are putting, literally, real estate over the quality of our seniors' lives, that is absolutely horrifying. We have a government that continues to invest in for-profit models. We know that the for-profit homes were where the worst outbreaks that we've seen across this province, and our seniors paid the price for it.

1830

To the other positions that were on here within this motion, fines and penalties incurred by for-profit providers could not come from provincial dollars. That is

absolutely critical. The government needs to ensure that that is in place, that when they are given fines and penalties, that it comes out of the for-profit, that it comes from their profits, that it doesn't come on behalf of the seniors, that it doesn't come on behalf of the government dollars that are supporting those homes. Those are really important issues.

I know the minister is here, and I hope that he's listening and he does see that these measures are so important. This isn't a political football; this is about the seniors who have built our province, who have raised us, who have built our communities. Ensuring that they have dignity and a quality of life is the least that this government can do.

So I implore the government: Please reconsider your vote on this motion. Please reconsider your priorities when it comes to our seniors and how we care for them, and ensure that those—I'm at a loss for words—that the unannounced quality inspections are in place.

I appreciate the opportunity. Again, I thank my colleague for bringing this forward. I'm really proud of the NDP platform, that we will change how seniors are taken care of in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Ms. Sara Singh: It's always an honour to rise here in the House. I want to thank my colleague from Oshawa for bringing this important motion forward to strengthen accountability and provide justice for families across the province. I know that in her community, in Orchard Villa, there were several horrific events that have led to a call from their local community to see accountability, to have justice for those families who lost their loved ones in long-term care.

Speaker, as the critic for long-term care, home care and seniors' care, I have raised with this government several concerns when it comes to inspections and the lack of resident quality inspections being completed. In committee—when the bill was brought forward to committee, we presented a number of amendments to help strengthen accountability measures.

As Natalie Mehra, the executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition, says, "You might ask the Premier to report to the Legislature what single act of accountability has been taken—what single fine, charge, licence suspension, licence revocation—has happened since he promised after the military report was leaked that 'no stone would be left unturned,' that 'everything is on the table' and when he vowed that there would be accountability and changed. The truth is they have done nothing."

Instead of actually holding those homes accountable, fining them—anyone can go to the Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care's website and find inspection report after inspection report that details the horrors that are happening in long-term care. Residents who fall and have no support, do not have access to their alarm bells, who do not have access to their assistive devices: This is happening in long-term care. These reports date back to when this government took office, and they have not acted on those reports.

They have not fined those homes. They have not held them accountable. What this motion seeks to do is actually put in place the accountability measures to provide families reassurances.

Instead of holding those homes accountable, what this government has done is give them even more contracts— for-profit providers getting even more public dollars despite the horrors that happened in the homes: homes like Chartwell that are now selling off parts of their retirement residences in order to bank \$277 million net proceeds that will go to Chartwell with the sale that they're about to undertake. These homes don't deserve more money if they can't provide accountability and justice to the families and residents in long-term care, something this government has failed to make sure will happen.

That's why we're happy to support this motion as New Democrats, and we're going to keep fighting to transition our long-term-care system to one that isn't based on providing profit to private shareholders, but ensuring that care is provided with dignity and respect to vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities, and we are going to make sure we take care of the workers who work in those long-term-care homes as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's always an honour to rise in the House and especially to speak in favour of the member from Oshawa's motion today. Our elders deserve better. They deserve better care than they received prior to the pandemic, and if the pandemic has shown anything to the people of this province, it's the massive cracks in our long-term-care system. The bottom line is, the operators of those systems need to be held accountable, because elders deserve justice, they deserve a guarantee of quality of care and they deserve a government that is going to invest in that quality of care.

Speaker, let's be clear. We need to repeal Bill 218, which shields private long-term-care owners and operators from liability for their negligence. We need to reinstate annual comprehensive inspections of long-term-care homes without advance notice, and ensure that homes with infractions face legislative consequences. We need to create a system that's going to provide the care that our elders need, and that's four hours of care now—not four years from now; now—qualities of care where we have the right kind of ratios, like what the RNO and others have outlined in terms of nurses and PSWs and RPNs, to make sure we have the proper ratios in our homes. We need to ensure that our elders have access to allied health care practitioners such as dietitians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and others.

Speaker, if anyone has taken the time to read the submissions to the long-term-care commission, the stories of the horrific conditions people lived in, the food they were forced to eat—I remember, before I came into politics, I was promoting local food and trying to get healthy local food into long-term-care homes. Everyone told me it couldn't be done because the budgets were too low. Well, I think our elders deserve quality food. They deserve

quality programming. They deserve to know that the investments are going to be made to make that happen. This motion is a step in that direction, calling on the government to bring accountability into the system, and that's exactly why I'll be voting in favour of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know I only have a very short time so I'll respond very quickly, because I think the PA did a wonderful job of doing this. This is, obviously, a motion. It is not backed by any legislation. I know that some of the members thought that that was the case, but it is not. In fact, we are voting against the motion because it would move us backwards. The members know full well that we have committed to four hours of care; this government has committed to four hours of care. We have put significant resources behind getting us to four hours of care, including paying for the salaries of PSWs.

The member for Guelph asked for allied health care workers. Our four hours of care includes allied health care workers. It is a North America-leading standard of care that this government has put in place. The member opposite said that we should do it in one year. Our partners have said that they are unable to do that, that they need the time in order to do that, private, non-profit and in the public sector.

We have the highest inspector-to-home ratio in the country. We just posted and have finally concluded with the regulations in support of the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, which will enhance enforcement even more. We are building 30,000 new beds in homes. We're eliminating ward rooms by upgrading 28,000 beds in homes across this province. We are making the largest investment in home care, in new homes, in rebuilding homes, in staffing and inspections in the history of this country. Ontario will be North America's leading jurisdiction for home care because of the work of this government.

1840

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I return to the member. She has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I don't think the word "accountability" means the same thing to all of the people in this room.

Just to reiterate, my motion states that the "government of Ontario should commit to a strategy to improve accountability and care for aging Ontarians in long-term-care and retirement homes" and gives some ideas. It doesn't say that it should replace the entire act or something else; I don't know. It was to commit to a strategy to put our heads together and listen to folks—but maybe another day.

I will say, though, that while the long-term-care minister's PA gave us a laundry list of government initiatives, here are a few more that perhaps you could add to the list.

You could require the minister to provide a timeline as to when he'll levy fines against the operators who let thousands of their residents die while taking tens of millions of dollars in profit each month, since none of them have been fined.

You could require a timeline for the minister to report back to the Legislature about how many long-term-care homes have had comprehensive inspections since the former minister did a round of media claiming they were being reintroduced last fall. They've only done a handful. They've delayed the rest for two years.

You could require the minister to provide a report to the Legislature about what it has done to investigate revoking licences for the homes with the most egregious records for deaths and squalid conditions during the pandemic. It's been a year and a half and nothing has happened.

Those are some good ideas from the Ontario Health Coalition and other advocates.

I will read one last thing from Cathy Parkes after her father's death:

"We at no time agreed to place our loved one in another's care with the understanding that we would receive no communication about their health, safety and well-being. To add to that, we at no time agreed to have them locked away from us, allowing them to suffer abuse and neglect. We don't need to be told how horrible it is because we know, we have been living with that knowledge."

We owe them accountability. We owe all seniors accountability.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. French moved private member's notice of motion number 36. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the nays have it.

A recorded division being required, the vote on this item of private members' public business will be deferred until the next proceeding of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MORE HOMES FOR EVERYONE ACT, 2022 LOI DE 2022 POUR PLUS DE LOGEMENTS POUR TOUS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 31, 2022, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the various statutes with respect to housing, development and various other matters / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement, l'aménagement et diverses autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, earlier this evening, I started this debate with a story from Ilham, who called this

morning with his mom, Sabina. They asked about their housing application and what the current situation was. I talked a little bit about the situation with Ilham's family and how we met with Brother Yunus. Brother Yunus was one of our advocates who fought for affordable housing with us. Unfortunately, we lost him just a couple of months ago.

Every time I talk to Ilham, Sabina and the young kids in that household, it's heartbreaking, because I've had multiple conversations where I've had to give the bad news of: "Unfortunately, I don't have any update yet. There are over 80,000 people on that list, and even though you're a single mother with young kids and taking care of the kids, and whose husband just passed away, you're not a priority." That's just the reality of so many across our province.

There are people who applied for housing and have waited for so long. Ilham's family has now waited for about eight years. There are others who have applied for housing as adults and then have moved on and are now seniors and are still waiting. There are people who are now trying to find seniors' housing or even long-term-care homes because they have moved on and their situation has changed, and yet they're on the list.

I want to share another story as well about another family that I met with just a couple of days ago—just last week, actually. I want to read a letter that one of the advocates the family is working with wrote about the current situation. This is Brother Ephraim—I want to make sure I get his name right—Ephraim Assavia. Ephraim shared about the struggle that he is facing. Mr. Ephraim has two children who are now going to Oak Ridge junior school. His family is struggling with housing as well. They share a small space and are dealing with a huge rodent problem within their apartment. Mr. Ephraim even shared videos of the mice running around the apartment.

The issue that he mentioned about his space and all of those things is one thing, but then he talked about his five-year-old. He's got a seven-year-old and he's got a five-year-old, and the five-year-old has recently been diagnosed with autism. He's got a higher case of autism. He's on the spectrum. Unfortunately, he's a runner. He can be violent sometimes, even though he's five years old. That means that when the kids sleep in the same room, sometimes one of the parents takes shifts, staying up to make sure that the five-year-old does not hurt the other ones.

Unfortunately, they don't have enough space in their home to be able to separate the kids so that they could take turns in a different way or make sure that the kids are safe. What he does is he rolls up a blanket and makes a little bit of a wall between the kids, just so the kid who is on the spectrum does not hurt the other sibling. When he was telling me this, when we were talking about housing and trying to figure out what to do, once again, they're not on the top of the list.

One of the biggest struggles we face with housing is that there isn't enough housing, or the ones we have are

not managed in a way where we can make sure that people who have grown and need only one bedroom are now being moved to the one-bedroom, so they're not occupying a three-bedroom household, and the ones who are living in a one-bedroom, like Mr. Ephraim, for example, with his little ones and his wife, need an extra bedroom. Unfortunately, they're not able to get through. That organizational fixture that's necessary is not being done right now.

The need for supply, for more housing to be built: This bill does not address that either. To make sure that we have enough units that are actually allocated for people like Ilham and his family, or Ephraim's family, we don't have that in this bill. Unfortunately, when we talk about the way we're providing supply and making sure that there is enough housing availability, we look at the way housing is built and how we're allocating the amount of apartments, for example. In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, I have attended multiple rallies where tenants are worried about being evicted once the renovations in the building take place. Once it's rebuilt there might be only a few that are allocated for affordable rental units and that means the rest of them will have to go and find homes elsewhere. Unfortunately, this bill does not address any of that.

One of the other issues that I was hoping this bill would address—and the government hinted they were going to work on it—was that they were going to increase the tax. Unfortunately, when we look at speculation—and we're talking about providing supply—there are a lot of foreign buyers who are coming to this province and buying homes and then leaving them empty or increasing the price of homes, but they're not helping people in this province. Housing prices are going up, but unfortunately the people in this province don't have access. They're not able to find an affordable basement, even, to live in.

Speaking of basements: My colleague talked about domestic students, international students, students in general who want to be able to have an affordable rental space, which is almost impossible to find.

1850

The other thing that I really wish that this bill addressed, which our proposal for Homes You Can Afford does, is looking at how first-time homebuyers and people who have grown up in neighbourhoods like Scarborough—like anywhere across the province where you have your roots. You want to make sure that you're able to one day move out of your parents' and that you're able to own your own home. This is something I hear from so many parents, where they just look at me and they say, "I don't think my kids will ever be able to afford or even think about buying a home in this province. It's impossible."

The ability to do that, it's multi-faceted. It's not just about building a bunch of buildings; there's a lot more to it. It's making sure that these people have an income, are able to actually go about getting a mortgage, and are able to afford these homes. Some of the homes we had about two, three years ago, at maybe the average price of

\$600,000, \$700,000, those have gone to \$1.3 million, \$1.5 million, \$2 million. A family with both of the partners making an income doesn't even have the ability to purchase that and keep up with their mortgage, Speaker.

During the pandemic, we talked about how many people across our province were having difficulties not just with rent but also with keeping up with their mortgages as well, and those were the previous rates and the previous mortgages they had signed up for. Right now, with the market the way it is, it's impossible for them to buy. Then who is buying? We have people who are coming from across the world who want to purchase a home, but don't want to rent it, for example. Or if they're doing it, they're not making it affordable for people who are actually living in this province. That is a problem because we're driving people out of our province, actually.

I want to talk a little bit about the rebates as well. I know that I've now come to three minutes of my time as well.

One of the bills that we proposed—which was done by myself, the member from Parkdale—High Park and the member from Toronto Centre—was to make sure that we can actually prevent the speculation and what happens with money laundering, what happens with the way people are taking advantage of the loopholes that we have in our province. People who are Ontarians, who are hard-working people, are not able to live in this province. I really thought that the government would actually consider maybe including that, because I don't think it matters to us whether this bill is under our name or your name as long as it gets passed and it gets royal assent. To be able to have that support and the service to the people, that's all that matters. But, unfortunately, that's missing from this bill as well.

When we talk about community benefits, for example, and I recently heard from community members and the struggle they're facing with Metrolinx taking away the ability for them to have enough spots for people who want to have the community benefits framework. Unfortunately, this policy here that talks about introducing policies such as community benefits so that we can have people with different skill sets getting jobs, I do not see the timeline to actually trust the government in providing the necessary tools that will make that happen. And just seeing the example of Metrolinx and how community benefits have been dealt with, and I see this—I'm just going to expedite through my list now—unfortunately I'm not hopeful that there will be anything to that effect as well.

This bill also touches on—there's a whole bunch of stuff about municipal timelines and the fines that will be imposed on municipalities. One of the biggest concerns I have, and I wish that some of the government members talked about it, is making sure that you are also providing real guidelines when units are built. Because you cannot just put up four walls and have that ready. And right now, because housing is so unaffordable and it's almost impossible to find places to rent, that's what's happening. People are finding any sorts of spaces and making do with it. But, unfortunately, if you were providing those guidelines, it would have helped people have those homes instead of a room that they were renting, for example.

There is a lot more I wish I could get into. Unfortunately, I've run out of time, so what I'll end with is that I hope that the government will actually see the task force's recommendations, as well as what we're hearing from the real stories across our province, Speaker, and make sure that when we look at affordable housing and our possibility of actually buying homes, we're not just focusing on building buildings, but rather providing real homes for people across the province. I've run out of my time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Part of the legislation that we're debating tonight—within the body of it is the government's committing to a housing supply action plan, which is an important feature, because every year for the next four years it's going to help unlock housing supply.

The member from Scarborough Southwest spoke at the very beginning of her remarks about the waiting lists. At the basis of developing this legislation was a broad consultation with municipalities, with 39 of the largest municipalities, including the city of Toronto. A feature of that was to unlock more homes, and one aspect was the Streamline Development Approval Fund that you might be familiar with. It was enabled by an investment of \$45 million. What it was intended to do, in part, was to mitigate the waiting lists that you referred to, to shorten the time, whether it's the city of Toronto or whether it's the region of Durham, approving housing applications. What you're asking for is here in the legislation, for that action plan. That action plan is the direct response to the recommendations that we've received from the task force.

Could the member from Scarborough Southwest speak to that part, stand up in your spot and approve it?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member for the question, because I know he wanted to go into a little more detail as well. This is something that we hear about all the time, with the timeline and how people have waited and waited. Honestly, I love the fact that we want to expedite the timeline and we want to make sure that we have homes built faster. But the issue is that these changes you're proposing right now, as it is—and please let me know if I've missed something. The way it's proposed, it doesn't actually support the middle class, the townhomes and what we're trying to do—the apartment buildings, for example, and the way it would be that the small apartment buildings that would be affordable. So what you're doing is actually not going to make it more affordable for the people who are struggling the most right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Ms. Sara Singh: Thank you to the member from Scarborough Southwest for her presentation on this bill. I think she highlights a number of different concerns that members of the opposition have raised. When we talk about the middle—the missing middle; there we go; it's been a long day here today—the middle class and the housing for them, as well as the housing for vulnerable community members like, for example, single parents, nothing in this bill really speaks to addressing those gaps.

As I said in my remarks, we need to see diversity in the housing supply. That's how we're going to get to the root of the problem and make sure that everyone who wants a home has access to it. Can the member elaborate on why it is so important that we are making those investments and ensuring that everyone has access to affordable housing?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre for her question. Every week, I have open office hours where people can just come in and share their concerns. It's one of the things I've done over the past four years that I'm really proud of. Sadly, almost every single day, there will be a case about housing—almost every single day, Speaker—because there are just so many people who are struggling.

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It's not just people who are waiting on the wait-list for social housing, but people who are struggling with their rent, people who are finding it difficult to even think about how to keep up with the mortgage they signed up for or what to do for their kids. How do they support them and what are we doing? They have ideas or they want to share their concerns.

We could have done so much more, especially if the government thinks that this is—I don't know if this is their platform or what they're aiming to do, but they could have done so much more to actually support the missing middle and those across the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you again to our wonderful member from Scarborough Southwest for speaking so passionately about why we need affordable housing and how this government's bill does not offer that.

I thought I would ask the member from Scarborough Southwest—where I know many of your members are also renters—how crucial is rent control to your community in Scarborough Southwest, a community of working-class members, of post-secondary students, of intergenerational families, of the very front-line workers who have been supporting us during this pandemic?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for her question. It's a very important question. We have so many front-line workers, so many PSWs, grocery stores. Everywhere, we have seen people who work minimum wage jobs, who work double shifts or lost hours, now struggle to keep up with their rent.

I shared the story of Mr. Ephraim. I just want to take a second to reiterate: Mr. Ephraim, when he shared the rodent issue with his management, one of the things that management told him to do was to leave. He said, "If you have so much of a problem, then you can leave the apartment and we'll find new tenants." This is a young family with children, one on the autism spectrum. The reason why management wants him to do that is because they can hike the rent—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Thank you.

Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the opportunity to engage with the presentation this evening and the speech

from the member from Scarborough Southwest. I appreciate her passion for the subject. Obviously, it's one that we're hearing about across the province. We've seen a tremendous increase in housing prices. We've seen a tremendous increase in people looking to obtain homes. I obviously understand that this is a real challenge.

I just wondered—the member opposite didn't talk a lot about municipalities' roles in the approval process. Of course, we know that municipalities have a great deal to say when it comes to the impact on approvals, on zoning, on all the regulations, on the development charges—all these sorts of pieces. The member seemed to talk a lot about the demand side, and I respect that and I understand that that's part of the equation. But does she honestly think that all the municipalities are doing such a good job at approving all of these projects?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member for his question.

I think it's important for us to work together. It's important for us to listen to the municipalities, listen to the people and understand what's going on in our province.

Different municipalities have different approaches. If I understood correctly when the minister was speaking, one of the reasons why they held back on their bill was because there are municipalities that were opposed to certain schedules they wanted to put forward. Isn't it important that we work with different municipalities to make sure that we get it right?

It's great that we have timelines and streamed timelines that work for all of us. But making sure that we're accountable to that as well is so important. There is a new provision in here that talks about community infrastructure and housing accelerator—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Thank you.

Questions?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The member was just commenting on the new provisions in the bill to deal with minister's zoning orders, the community infrastructure and housing accelerator. I wondered if she wanted to share some of the concerns that have arisen about the misuse of minister's zoning orders and why control over that power is so important.

Ms. Doly Begum: Every time we have had this government put forward bills, there is always a caveat to them that says, "Trust us. Give us power and just trust us." It's just mind-boggling because we have seen what the ministers have done, especially with the municipal ministerial zoning orders.

This is sort of a new form of power that pretty much gives similar power to the minister when it comes to zoning orders, but with a new sense of—what they're calling it is "transparency," but what I have failed to understand is what kind of transparency will be put in place and how the ministry will be held accountable.

We have a lot of concerns. We have seen with the conservation authorities, we have seen in past legislation, we have seen from Environmental Defence, for example, and we have seen—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It is an honour to rise to participate in debate on second reading of Bill 109.

This bill is a bitter disappointment to so many young Ontarians who feel abandoned when it comes to addressing the housing affordability crisis. My oldest daughter, and so many young people, worry that they will never be able to afford to own a home, especially when they are struggling just to even pay sky-high rents. The government had a real opportunity with this bill to address the housing affordability crisis. So many experts have been speaking out on the issue over the last year, putting forward a variety of solutions. But it's clear to me that the Premier just does not get the severity of the crisis or the urgency of the need to act right now.

Under this government's watch, the average home price in Toronto has increased from \$787,000 to \$1.3 million. This is a story that is playing out in communities all over Ontario, including in my home, Guelph. Sky-high rents and housing prices are making it hard for people to be able to find an affordable place to call home, let alone to be able to afford the dream of home ownership.

After being in power for four years, the government's response was, "We need to consult more." Speaker, what has the government been doing for the last four years? I know we've had a pandemic to deal with and I understand that, but you would think that housing consultations would be at the top of the list, when one of the responses to the pandemic is sheltering in place. You need an affordable place to shelter in place.

I would encourage the government to do some consulting with the Ontario Greens' housing plan, which offers real solutions that have been out there for the public since last June. I've consulted with hundreds—hundreds—of housing experts and I can tell you that the solutions are there. People should not have to wait for those solutions to be delivered.

The bitter irony of the government's housing bill is that it doesn't actually help build homes that people can afford, and the mechanism it uses to speed up the approval process will most likely actually slow the process down, making the supply crisis even worse.

I want to quote from a letter sent by Ontario's Big City Mayors today: "While the province encouraged municipalities to look in our own backyards for solutions to planning delays, we are encouraging the province to continue to do the same." Yup. I'd say yup. Instead of blaming municipalities for the delays, the government needs to take a look in the mirror. The changes made to LPAT, bringing back the old OMB rules with its costly appeals process, and then folding it into the Ontario Land Tribunal, with an appeals backlog, will likely cause more delays, especially with the timelines and penalties outlined in Bill 109.

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The bottom line is that municipalities need staff to make planning decisions and they are facing staff capacity

constraints that have been made worse by the pandemic. Some housing experts have described the timelines in Bill 109 as “laughable” without money to hire additional planning staff. As a result, there is a real likelihood that municipalities will just say no to applications to render a decision within the timelines outlined in the bill, and then that decision will be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal, which has a huge backlog. As a matter of fact, the OLT backlog is often as long or longer than the backlog at the municipalities.

The government is creating an appeals process that is essentially a dog’s breakfast that’s actually going to make the housing crisis worse. People deserve better. They need an affordable housing strategy now. And if the government really wanted to speed up the lengthy approvals process, all they had to do was take a few pages out of our housing plan. Our plan would allow triplexes and fourplexes as of right—that means a speedy process for small infill developments, with no appeals needed—and pre-zoning for missing middle and mid-rise on transit lines and main streets to speed up development. These are quick ways to build more gentle density and missing middle housing into the existing character of existing neighbourhoods and truly get housing built as quickly as we need it, without the red tape that this government talks about so much.

The government could actually take some actions right now to make sure the housing supply that is there is affordable: bringing in rent control and vacancy control; putting money on the table to actually build 160,000 affordable housing spaces over the next decade, outlined in our plan. The reality is, in the mid-1990s, both the provincial and federal governments got out of housing. They stopped funding housing. The problem and the crisis have been getting worse and worse ever since then. Certainly the Liberals contributed to that, and now the current government has made it even worse.

We need the province to come back to the table with the money to support non-profits, co-ops and social housing providers to build more affordable housing supply. We need to put people first by combatting rampant housing speculation and financialization, including implementing a province-wide vacant homes tax.

Speaker, I’m going to do something that might make the government happy. I’m actually going to say that the non-resident speculation tax increase was a good element in this bill, something I have been calling for. But it doesn’t go far enough. Why are we only applying it to non-residents? If you’re going to speculate, you’re a speculator, whether you’re a resident or not a resident. We should just apply the tax to speculators.

We can improve affordable housing supply by making better use of underutilized land like parking lots, abandoned plazas and brownfield sites that are cleaned up, so we can unlock spaces to build new homes within existing urban boundaries. The province must make provincial land available to non-profit, co-op and private developers who will permanently guarantee deeply affordable housing. Speaker, we can invest in livable, affordable, connected communities instead of building expensive

highways that will supercharge sprawl and make life even less affordable for people, forcing them to move farther and farther away from where they work.

Solving the housing crisis will require us to engage the private sector and increase public investment in housing while working with all three levels of government. And we can do it without paving over the farmland that feeds us or the wetlands that clean our drinking water and protect us from flooding. Instead of expensive sprawl and increased climate pollution, we can build livable, affordable, connected communities within existing urban boundaries—affordable communities where people can live, work, play and shop locally; communities where we build the right supply, which means housing types that are there to suit families of all sizes, people of all ages and people of all abilities. We owe it to the people of this province to put forward the solutions that will build the Ontario we want—the affordable Ontario we want. The Ontario Greens’ housing plan provides the leadership to get it done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: “No, no, no”—that’s what we heard from the member opposite, the same as with the NDP and the Liberals. Complain, complain, complain; no solutions, no innovations and no new homes. “Control, control, control”—I think that was the word I heard number one this evening from the member from Guelph—no desire to build, no desire to progress.

I’ve heard from the member opposite about the need for not-for-profits and co-ops. My question for the member this evening is very simple: Who built your home?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, I’m wondering if there are some earplugs on the other side of the aisle, because obviously the honourable member didn’t listen to all the ways in which I talked about how we can actually unlock housing supply in this province: as-of-right zoning for triplexes and quadplexes; pre-zoning to help developers build faster along transit lines; having the provincial government actually come to the table with money to support co-ops, non-profit and social housing providers. I’m putting forward a lot of solutions here that would enable both the public and private sector to build more housing supply, but affordable housing supply that the people of this province can actually afford to live in.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Questions?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to the member from Guelph for his presentation. Yes, the official opposition had a plan, an outline that is called the housing plan. We presented it in 2020. I know that you also have a lot of ideas and plans as well, but I see this plan says no rent control. It’s also not building any affordable housing, and no support for first-time homebuyers as well. We presented that those who make less than \$200,000—

Interruption.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: —to provide them equity loans. What is your opinion on that?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question. If we’re going to address the housing crisis, right now we

have to focus on supply and building affordable supply. That's exactly why the plan I'm putting forward, which is fully costed, commits to building 160,000 affordable housing spaces over the next decade, working with non-profit, co-op and social housing providers to increase the housing stock.

There was one time in this province that almost 20% of housing starts were non-profit and co-op housing. We need to get back to that being part of the mix. Some parties say only the private sector can deliver solutions and some say only the public sector can deliver solutions. Speaker, I say both can deliver solutions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: You know, the member for Guelph is a very selective member in terms of what he presents on the table, and he misses a lot that the government—he's very selective. He talks about us needing to support co-ops, yet the co-op federation of Canada has issued a statement thanking us for our Community Housing Renewal Strategy that makes sure that co-ops stay in the system and don't leave the system.

He's also very selective when he talks about how we need to give municipalities money, for example, to hire planning staff. Since our government took office, we've provided over \$350 million to municipalities, including the \$45 million under the Streamline Development Approval Fund to do exactly what the member opposite talks about.

He asked us to put skin in the game, and I would like to ask him a question—Speaker, if I can—given the reference to Ontario's Big City Mayors. At the start of the press conference yesterday, I acknowledged that all the government ministries were committing to putting our skin in the game and, as of January 1, 2023, ensure that we have comments back within 45 days. Does the member not agree that that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Thank you.

The member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Will the government put skin in the game to reverse the changes they made to bring back the old OMB rules under a new name, the Ontario Land Tribunal—which creates so many costly and expensive delays, and that essentially enables people with deep pockets to overrule local planning decisions through the appeals process. Will the minister come to the table, not only keeping co-ops in place but actually delivering money on the table—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): I thank the member from Guelph.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Randy Pettapiece): Order, please.

Further debate?

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Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's always an honour to rise this afternoon on behalf the people of Mississauga–Lakeshore, to speak in support of Bill 109, the More Homes for

Everyone Act, introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I would like to thank him and his team, including his parliamentary assistant, my friend from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, for all their work on this bill. I'd like to thank the members from the Housing Affordability Task Force and all of the municipal partners, experts and members of the public who sent their feedback.

As the task force wrote, “The way housing is approved and built was designed for a different” time. “But it no longer meets the needs of Ontarians. The balance has swung too far in favour of lengthy consultations, bureaucratic red tape, and costly appeals. It is too easy to oppose new housing and too costly to build.”

If passed, Bill 109 would speed up development and create more options for homeowners and renters, crack down on speculators who are driving up the cost of housing and protect homebuyers from predatory development practices.

A week ago, the National Post columnist Chris Selley tweeted that the idea that “‘housing supply isn't a major problem’ is by far the craziest argument I know to exist in the Canadian political universe.” It's an argument we've heard many times from the opposition here at Queen's Park, so it's worth taking a moment here to address it.

Last year, Scotiabank reported that Canada has the fewest housing units per capita of any G7 country, and Ontario has the fewest units per capita in Canada; across the G7, there are 471 housing units per 1,000 people; in Canada, there are 424 units per 1,000 people; in Ontario, there are under 400 units per 1,000 people; and in the GTA, there are just 360 units per 1,000 people.

Scotiabank reported that Canada would need another 1.8 million housing units just to bring us up to the G7 average, and two thirds of them, 1.2 million homes, are needed in Ontario alone. To support the population growth that is expected over the next decade, Scotiabank reports Ontario will need another million new homes. That's a total of 2.2 million new homes needed over the next 10 years. The task force recommended at least 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years.

Speaker, just to put these numbers into perspective, in my riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore, Lakeview Community Partners are developing an 177-acre site on the former OPG coal plant into a new Lakeview Village, with over 8,000 units and 20,000 new residents. The minister visited the Lakeview site with me just last year. To hit this target of 2.2 million new homes, we would have to build a new Lakeview Village in each of the 124 ridings in Ontario.

Ontario has a housing crisis because we don't have enough housing. As the task force reported, NIMBYism is a constant barrier in the way of building new housing. An outcry from just a small handful of constituents has been enough, in far too many cases, to convince local councillors to vote against development, even while admitting in private that development is needed.

I've seen this personally in Mississauga–Lakeshore, even right next to higher-order transit stations, the Hazel

McCallion LRT corridor, the Port Credit GO station, and the planned Lakeshore BRT. So we have a new term for NIMBYism in Mississauga and in Peel region, Speaker: BANANA, which stands for “Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything.” I would guess every member has experience with BANANAs in their own riding. As the task force wrote, this is bad policy. It is exclusionary and it is wrong, and we can see the results.

Ten years ago, the average price for a house in Ontario was \$329,000. Last year, it hit \$923,000. Speaker, that is an increase of 180% during a decade when the average income grew by only 38%. And in the past year alone, there was another 26% increase in the MLS home price index, as the average home price rose above \$1 million for the first time. The Canadian dream of ownership, or even just affordable rental units, is now out of reach for far too many young Ontarians, even those with good jobs, who are just looking to start a family. Last year, the Ontario Real Estate Association reported that almost half of Ontarians under the age of 25 have considered moving out of this province in order to afford a home. Speaker, that is unacceptable. It is a crisis, as the task force wrote, that demands immediate and sweeping reform.

Speaker, it’s worth taking a moment here to talk about some of the progress we have made so far. Three years ago, I was honoured to speak here in support of the More Homes, More Choice Act, which was Bill 108 at the time. This law cut red tape and made it easier to build new housing supply. While we still have a lot of work to do, our government’s approach is clearly working. There were over 100,000 housing starts in 2021, the most since David Peterson was Premier, in 1987, and there were more than 13,000 rental starts, the most since Bob Rae was Premier, in 1991.

The ministerial zoning orders are helping to accelerate over 58,000 planned housing units across Ontario. We’re getting it done, but we know that despite all of this progress, it is still too difficult to find a home for far too many Ontarians. That’s why we’re moving ahead now with another package of smart, targeted policies that will help get a mix of different types of housing built here in Ontario for families, from family-sized condos to starter townhouses and mid-rise rentals.

Speaker, as the task force reported, among 35 OECD countries, only Slovakia takes longer than Canada to approve a building project. The UK and the US approve projects in a third of the time, without sacrificing quality or safety, and they save homebuyers and tenants time and money as a result, making housing more affordable.

If passed, the Planning Act amendments included in schedule 1 and schedule 5 would streamline planning requirements, provide more certainty, consistency and transparency across the province, and help municipalities to make more timely decisions. For example, municipalities would be required to gradually refund site plan control application fees: 50% if a decision is not made within 60 days, 75% if a decision is not made within 90 days, and 100% if a decision is not made within 120 days. Right now, site plan approvals in the GTA take an average of 12

months to 30 months, and there are similar gradual refunds for rezoning decisions that now take an average of nine to 25 months in the GTA.

The province is also investing over \$19 million to help the Ontario Land Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board speed up decisions and reduce the backlog of cases. This funding will help increase staff and technology to reduce delays and to help build homes faster.

If Bill 109 is passed, the government would also be able to introduce a new tool to help municipalities to accelerate their own planning process. Municipal governments would be able to request a community infrastructure and housing accelerator order from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to accelerate approvals for non-profit housing, market housing or long-term care, so that we can move forward with these projects without the risk of political opposition or criticism surrounding the use of MZOs.

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Speaker, I should add that I’ve been proud to announce two major, game-changing projects in Mississauga–Lakeshore, including the single-largest investment in hospital infrastructure in Canada, to completely rebuild the Mississauga Hospital and 632 beds at two new long-term-care homes on Speakman Drive in Sheridan Park, which will be ready later this year, as part of the government’s accelerated build pilot project. Both of these projects required MZOs. In the case of the hospital, the MZO was actually requested by the former Liberal member for Mississauga East–Cooksville, who is now our councillor for ward 7.

But we know that the political controversy around MZOs can be exploited by NIMBY and BANANA groups to block much-needed new development. This new tool will help to remove that problem. The MZO option will still be available for provincially significant infrastructure, including transit-oriented communities.

I’d also like to thank the minister for making clear that the new tool he’s proposed today can’t be used in the greenbelt. We made a commitment to protect and expand the greenbelt, and it is a commitment that we’re going to keep. Speaker, as you know, that’s a big change from the previous Liberal government that carved up the greenbelt 17 times, removing almost 1,000 acres. Just to put that in perspective, that’s about 570 soccer pitches, or 2,400 hockey rinks. And this included environmentally sensitive lands like Glen Williams in the Credit River watershed, that the Liberals carved out of the greenbelt in 2017. As many members will know, this watershed feeds into Lake Ontario at Port Credit, which is next to my constituency office in Mississauga–Lakeshore. So I’m very proud that our government is taking a different approach.

Speaker, I’d also like to take a moment to thank the minister for raising the non-resident speculation tax from 15% to 20% and expanding it to the entire province, effective yesterday, March 30, 2022. This is now the most comprehensive non-resident speculation tax in Canada. It will help close loopholes and fight tax evaders. The tax will now apply to homes purchased anywhere in Ontario

by foreign nationals, foreign corporations or trustees. This is a change that the Big City Mayors have asked for, and I was happy to see it included. I was also pleased to hear that newcomers to Canada, who commit to lay down long-term roots in Ontario, will be able to qualify for tax relief.

We're also working together with municipalities that are looking to bring in a vacant home tax. And, Speaker, this includes the region of Peel. I understand that Peel region staff believe that over 13,000 house units are sitting vacant across Mississauga, Brampton and Caledon. The city of Toronto has introduced a vacant home tax, and I know many others are planning to do so, including the city of Ottawa. We're setting up a working group to share information about this and to learn best practices.

Schedules 3 and 4 of Bill 109 include many other important amendments to the New Home Construction Licensing Act and the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, to help strengthen protections for consumers. This is also in response to feedback from our municipal partners about projects that have been approved by municipalities but have remained unbuilt by developers for many years. From personal experience, I know my constituents are dealing with several of these projects in Mississauga–Lakeshore, so these amendments will certainly be very welcome in Meadow Wood and Clarkson, and, I'm sure, right across Ontario. I know that the minister and our government will continue to work together with our municipal partners to crack down on land speculators and to protect homebuyers.

Speaker, I just want to take a moment to thank all the municipal officials, experts and industry groups who have already supported this bill, including Mayor Bonnie Crombie and the Big City Mayors, who wrote that Bill 109 “will provide more opportunities to build much-needed housing in Ontario, in partnership with municipalities.”

The Ontario Home Builders' Association president wrote that he was “pleased to see the province take bold action to increase housing choice, variety and supply in our province by bringing this legislation forward. This plan charts a path forward which will help create the right environment to accelerate the delivery of new housing for Ontarians at all stages of life.”

Ontario's Real Estate Association CEO Tim Hudak said that the More Homes for Everyone Act is another step in the right direction of housing supply from the Ford government.

I could go on, but at this point I also want to acknowledge that some are disappointed that this bill doesn't go further and faster in implementing more of the 55 task force recommendations. To them I want to say, I understand your frustration. But as Tim Hudak said, this bill is just another step in the right direction. There is no silver bullet. No one bill will solve the housing crisis alone and no one level of government will solve the crisis alone.

The fact is, municipalities have told us that they are not ready to implement some of the task force recommendations. If we can agree on anything, we can agree that solving the housing crisis will require a strong partnership between all levels of government to ensure the policies we introduce will actually be implemented on the ground.

We've seen this before. In 2019, as I mentioned, we passed Bill 108, the More Homes, More Choice Act. This bill included new measures like additional residential units and the community benefits charges framework that municipal governments either haven't implemented or have implemented in a way that reduces their impact.

To ensure that municipal governments will work with us to address this crisis, this summer the minister will set up a housing supply work group. It's encouraging to see that Big City Mayors are looking forward to joining this work group and working together with us to overcome NIMBYism and ensure that every level of government does its part to increase our housing supply.

Again, I just want to thank the minister and his team, as well as his parliamentary assistant, for their work on another important bill that will help to ensure Ontario remains the best place in the world to work, live and raise a family. I would urge all members to join us and vote for Bill 109 to build more affordable housing in the province of Ontario for our children and our future grandchildren.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to very much, member from Mississauga–Lakeshore, for your great presentation. You are right: As a parent, I know it is very difficult for young families to get their first home. Like many of the other parents, we have been working hard to support them, to help young families, as well as new immigrants, buy their first home. Can the member please help me to see how this bill is able to protect first-home buyers from predatory development practices?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. There are a lot of situations that happen, on new builds especially, when you purchase, say, a condo, and it doesn't get developed for years. Then they say that they will not end up building it because they can't afford to build it anymore and they want more money from you, or they give you your money back at 6% interest, and that puts you out of the market at that time. We will be stopping that, moving forward. I think that's a great idea. Once people purchase a new build they will be able to know that they will be getting it, moving forward.

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

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Ms. Jill Andrew: It's my pleasure to ask the government the following question: Is there a particular reason why this bill speaks predominantly to homeowners or to those who can already afford a \$1 million or \$2 million home, a \$700,000 home or what have you? Is there a reason why renters are somehow left out of the equation?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. We have the highest start of rentals since 1991, since Bob Rae was in power, so I don't understand how you can say that we're not building rental.

But there is an issue. It's supply and demand. I can refer this to the automotive industry. Right now there's an issue with chips, so you cannot find new cars, so you have to pay a premium for used cars. It's the same with homes. If there are 10 people bidding on one home, there's no

supply, so you're going to pay top dollar. So the more supply we put out there, the better it is for everyone in rentals, in housing, in everything across the board—for condos too.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore and his commentary this evening. I just wonder if he could walk through a little bit more about what he just spoke about: supply and demand. When it comes down to it, the population of Ontario grows by a quarter million people every single year. It's amazing. We love new Ontarians, we love new Canadians and we love to see our population grow and add to our great province.

But, of course, under the former government, we saw, what, 30,000 or 40,000 new units coming online every single year? It doesn't really add up. We see the opposition members, the Liberals and the NDP, talk about addressing the demand side of the equation, which I understand is about 3% to 7% of what their measures would address. If you do the math on that and you see a 3% to 7% decrease on the demand side, you're still ending up with, what, 95%, 97%, 93% of the overall demand needs. And so, I'm wondering if the member opposite could talk a little bit more about the supply and demand and the imbalance that we need to address.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for Niagara for that excellent question. As you know, the Golden Horseshoe is going to be expecting two million people in the next 10 years. Looking at two million people, we're looking at approximately 1.5 million homes. We need supply. Otherwise, where are we going to end up putting these people?

We're creating jobs in this province. Look at the auto industry. Look at Niagara. We're putting in a new EV battery plant that's going to hire 2,500 people, plus we're going to be the number-one jurisdiction in North America to build electric cars, as well. These people are all moving to Ontario. We need homes, we need supply and we need it now.

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

Mr. Gurratan Singh: We know that across Ontario we're facing a really dire housing crisis. I look at the community of Brampton, the city that I live in and that I represent a portion of, and we've seen house prices just shoot through the roof. I think recently, it was sold in Brampton, the highest-selling—it was a semi-detached home sold for around \$1.65 million. The dream of home ownership is just becoming further and further.

But the reality is that all of this happened—we've seen this dramatic rise under four years of the Conservative government. For four years, you were in government and you allowed this to happen. Why? Why did you choose to neglect our housing market, to neglect this dream of home ownership and create this crisis that is really destroying the dream of so many folks of owning a house in Ontario?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for Brampton for that question. Since the government implemented More Homes, More Choice in 2019, we have seen

significant progress in 2020, seeing the highest levels of housing starts in decades and the highest level of rental starts since 1992.

Like I always said, it's always supply and demand in this province. In any aspect, it's economics 101. When you have supply, prices are low. My parents bought their house in Port Credit with \$14,000; now it's worth \$1.5 million, but it's about supply. The more supply you get, the lower the prices, and that works across the board for everything we do around the world.

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please. A reminder to all members to turn off their phones or silence their ringers, or forfeit the machines. Thank you.

Okay. I will continue. Next question.

Mr. Lorne Coe: In this legislation, we're making changes to streamline site plan requirements and approval processes at the municipal level. Having served at the municipal level for 13 years—Durham regional council and Whitby council, as you know, Speaker—this is a significant, significant change. Can the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore talk about how these changes are going to allow municipalities to build homes faster and fill the capacity?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member from Whitby for that question. Streamlining the requirements for municipalities would improve the speed that things get done. Instead of having it sit there for 120 days, we can get this done much quicker, more efficiently, and get these homes built.

I go back to the supply issue. Once we have more supply out there, prices do stabilize or come down, and that's with everything in the world. Let's be honest: We know that even when you're ordering things, if there's a lot of supply, the price is lower. When there are sales, it's because they have an overstock of quantities. That's why there are sales. It's the same with homes: If there is a lot of supply out there, the prices do stabilize or go down.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Ms. Doly Begum: The member talked about how this will actually provide the ability of the middle class, of young people to purchase a home. I have a simple question: Can you tell us, in this bill, how exactly a family that is surviving on dual income and barely has enough for a down payment, for example, can actually envision buying a home for the first time? And how will this bill help them?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question. It's back down to supply and demand again. But the thing is, if a young person—I have two sons that are looking to buy a house right now. They're joining together to buy that first house together.

By being able to have more supply, more choice out there, they will be able to buy the home they want in the community they want. Working with the community builders to have them build all types of housing will lower the price, as well as building more rentals so they can move into rental units. So it goes back to supply and

demand. We need supply out there and we have to get it out there quickly for the two million people who are moving into the Golden Horseshoe in the next 10 years.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There isn't enough time for another back-and-forth. Further debate?

Ms. Jill Andrew: It is an honour to stand on behalf of my community members in St. Paul's and, frankly, on behalf of many Ontarians who are bothered by this government's lack of action with regard to building actual homes that are affordable, or even investing in the homes that we currently have to ensure that they are livable, that people can walk into their homes with a sense of self-esteem and a sense of joy and a sense of belonging and not have to worry, as some do in certain temporary types of housing, about their properties being stolen. I could go on about that.

First off, I just want to say a few things. This bill, Bill 109—similar to Bill 108, quite frankly—does nothing for supportive housing. If anything, we have seen during the pandemic how critical supportive housing is. We have seen how critical transitional housing is. We have seen a surge in gender-based violence, for instance, and we know that when survivors don't have a safe home, when they don't have safe options, it makes it so much easier to return to a violent situation.

We know in Ontario that roughly 80% of solo-parent households are led by women, single moms. This government, the official opposition and everyone in this House have recognized that women have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. So it worries me when the government puts forward legislation that once again does not consider the lived realities of our most vulnerable people.

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As one of our members on this side from the official opposition said—I don't remember who it was; many people of us have been speaking and raising our concerns about this bill—people who are sitting in \$700,000-plus homes are already housed. They're already housed. We need to figure out how we're housing those who do not have housing at all, who, frankly, are completely left out from this piece of legislation.

It also does not bring back rent control. This is something that is especially important, because it creates a sense of transparency, I would argue, between a current renter and a new renter. You can see what the other person paid. It certainly does not put an end to vacancy decontrol either. These are two things, by the way, that our housing platform, Homes You Can Afford, recognizes. The NDP recognizes that the housing affordability crisis is what needs seminal attention.

Now, we're not suggesting that building new houses is a bad thing—not at all. But what we are saying is the issue is not only one of supply; it's also an issue of who can get these houses. It's an issue of where the houses are built. It's an issue of time and planning and consultation with our communities to make sure that folks don't get left behind even further. We know that there are 35% or so of

seniors waiting for affordable housing. I'm wondering how this bill can support those vulnerable folks in our province, to support the seniors in St. Paul's who I know during the pandemic had issues with food insecurity. How do we know? Because we delivered food to them, because they were forced into situations on fixed income where, frankly, they had to make tough decisions. This is just not how it should be when you're in your golden years. It's not how it should be, either, when you're just starting out: a new graduate or a young family with little ones, trying to make it through. You should be able to make it through.

What we know is we've got a riding of roughly 110,000 or 117,000 folks here in St. Paul's—I'm at Queen's Park, but you know what I mean: in St. Paul's. About 60% of those folks, roughly, are renters. They're tenants. We need to make sure that when we're talking about making homes for everyone, it really is including everyone. Right now, this bill, to me, seems to really prioritize the government's friends: the developers; folks who are profiting off of homes that aren't affordable, quite frankly, and that certainly is not everyone. At least it's not the people we know in St. Paul's. It's not the average Joe who's just trying to get by, or who has an aspiration: who has studied hard at school, they've got a career, they want to get a down payment put together, but yet the dream just keeps moving further and further away.

It is concerning to me that, not only is this bill not talking about starter homes and you're not seeing a lot about duplexes or addressing the missing middle, but it's also concerning around the timing of this bill. It seems as though it's one of those election pieces. I mean, we've been here for four years. We have been here for four years, and I can tell you, in the short time—although it feels like 40 years sometimes—that we've been here, we have seen people get evicted, even during a pandemic. We have seen people struggling, and this government has not done that much.

I seem to remember a call for this government to name the homelessness crisis, and even that call from the official opposition was not heard by this government. The title of the bill, More Homes for Everyone Act—it really should be more homes for everyone, but as we have seen from day one, from the cutting of rent control back in 2018 for new builds, we saw that the government's priority was not about having homes for anyone—or for everyone—a Freudian slip; sorry about that.

What we need to talk more about is affordability. For me, getting rid of red tape is not exactly going to solve the problem. Supply is part of it. Yes, we need homes, but we need homes that are affordable. Right now, more than one in four homes in Ontario is reportedly being purchased by investors. In Toronto, according to some reports, this number was about 39% for recently completed homes. These are people who aren't looking to live in them, or they're not even in the province. We call them speculators. Speculators are driving up the cost of homes here in Ontario, and it is something that we see in every single one of our ridings. And for me, in St. Paul's, it's no different.

Across the city, we know that there are tens of thousands—probably about 70,000 or so properties or

units—sitting vacant. This is what has been allowed by this government and what this bill does nothing to address. And that number, I have to say, is seven times or so the number of people experiencing homelessness in the city each night—those who could be housed if the government would just have the courage to stand up to their donors and their friends and the developers. And I really think it's time. I do believe that some of them may have the call to put a plan in place to really be able to provide homes for everyone, but I don't know, because this bill doesn't quite do it. Instead, this bill reduces responsibility onto municipalities. And at the same time as downloading on municipalities, the government is also rushing municipalities.

Let me just read this here, schedule 1, city of Toronto: The city must refund 50% of the site plan application fee if it does not approve the application within 60 days. The refund increases to 75% if there's no approval within 90 days and to 100% if there's no approval within 120 days.

I would argue that the municipalities also need time to consult with their communities. There needs to be time to plan wholesomely to ensure that there are community benefits associated with new developments in our community. I would argue that that is pretty important work that needs to be done.

I would also like to say that we have seen this government time and time again abuse, quite frankly, their power with regard to minister zoning orders. This is something that puts our ability to have affordable housing in jeopardy, and that is something that I wonder if this bill also addresses. Despite the misuse of MZOs by this government that might have people wondering if the province should be involved in housing at all—of course, they should be—this housing crisis is province-wide, and it needs a provincial response, one that us in the official opposition will make once in government. We're making this a top priority, because it's a top priority of Ontarians.

I want to flip through a little bit and remind folks of some of the legislation that we've actually tried to put forth. Of course, we know inclusionary zoning is very important. It is a way to actually diversify our housing stock. It is a way to bring communities together, where we can grow together, learn about each other, where people can stay housed in their community as opposed to having to fly to other areas that are cheaper. All of this is part of what we're trying to do to make sure that folks in Ontario have affordable housing. That's why I had put forth a motion asking the government to ban above-guideline increases a while back, at the very least through the pandemic. AGIs, as we know, are a tactic that has been used again and again and again, often by greedy, greedy, greedy corporations, frankly, that could afford to fix their roofs on their own, but that's a whole other day's worth of discussion.

2000

This is another opportunity that we had—we came together, me and the members of Toronto Centre, University–Rosedale, and London North Centre. We tabled a bill, the No COVID-19 Evictions Act. That would have also been something that could have helped people

remain housed, which could have helped with affordability concerns and challenges during the pandemic. That was also shot down.

Then there was the members from Parkdale–High Park, Ottawa Centre, University–Rosedale and London North Centre's bill, the Rent Stabilization Act. That also didn't happen in this chamber. The government said no to that as well. This would have embedded “pay what the last tenant paid” legislation in Ontario as a real rent control to desensitize—oh, my gosh; tongue-twisted again; disincentivize; there you have it—greedy corporate landlords from evicting good tenants just to jack up the price for the next one. This happens all the time and has truly put Ontarians from a home and a community into shelters, and frankly, into encampments. We have seen the way that people have been unjustly criminalized simply because our broken system here in Ontario has made them experience homelessness.

These are all kinds of bills that we have put forth, some of them to try to actually address the issue of housing affordability here.

As I had mentioned at the top of my talk, we've got approximately 60% of folks in St. Paul's who are renters, and they need support. They need support because they are struggling; many of them are struggling. It's the reason, actually, why we have so many resilient tenants who have created tenants' associations and many organizations that advocate for tenants' rights to ensure that folks can stay housed, especially during a pandemic, but well before that.

Let me just see where I am; yes, there we are. So, the bill is called the More Homes for Everyone Act. As I was being cheeky here—I have a side note—people are just looking for a home. They're not necessarily looking for 10 or five or eight, they're looking for a home that they can call their own, a roof over their head that they can live comfortably under without fear of losing it.

And losing it is a real fear. This is the case for an entire building in my community. They've received notice of an application to tear down their building for a new development. They're being demovicted. These residents, many of whom are seniors, have lived there for roughly 40 years or so. They built their lives there, raised their kids there and built communities. Many are on fixed incomes. This is the home they could afford. The concern they have raised is, “Where will we go? Will we be able to stay in our community?”

On that note, we had actually put forth a motion—where was it? We've actually put forth a motion here and what did it read? “That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 ... to offer better support to tenants who are being temporarily evicted due to renovations (“renovictions”) and redevelopments (“demovictions”) by requiring developers to: assist with moving logistics and costs; and either pay the difference in rent for a similar unit in the same neighbourhood or provide a housing option deemed acceptable by the tenant that is accessible until the primary residence can be reassumed...” That was just one attempt that we made to try to address this issue of demovictions.

Another thing that I want to raise as well is the number of folks we have in St. Paul's who are on ODSP, who are on OW, and for whom owning a house will likely take 100 years, let alone the salaries of two working-class folks taking 50 years. On the current rates, it might take 100, if at all. This is a concern that we also need to have in this House. We must address the realities of people who are disabled, people for whom food is a struggle—a well-balanced, nutritional diet is a struggle—let alone ever having that dream actualized of actually owning a home.

I also want to address folks who are living in co-op housing as well. We have a wonderful resident who lives in co-op housing, but that is also at risk due to a broken funding formula, a funding formula that is at no cost to this government to repair—and that they would know because I have sent letters to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing spelling this out. This would be good for traditional homeowners, if we consider the end of their mortgage. But for co-op buildings, this means prices for tenants will skyrocket due to a formula that no longer works.

For a constituent of mine, an elder on fixed income, she says that she's "lived in my co-op unit for 36 years, raised my family here, and been actively involved in the community. Now, as a senior on a pension, if I could not live in this affordable co-op housing, I would have to move out of the city, and leave all that I have built, and which is meaningful to me, behind."

She needs the funding formula fixed. It's a relatively easy legislative change, with no impact per se, and we're wondering where that amendment is in this bill or in any bill. Co-op housing is one of the few options for real, affordable housing outside of the profit-driven housing market. It is proven as a wonderfully viable affordable housing model that this government somewhat overlooks, and I do wonder why. I wonder why.

At the end of the day, we have to realize that, whether it's shelters, whether it's temporary lodgings, these are not, or shouldn't be, seen as real options. These need to be seen as a temporary—very temporary—solution and, in some cases, some would argue that they're rather inhumane. I don't know how many of us have ever spent a night in a shelter. I have, and I remember what that was like having to not have a home, not have a door where you can put a key in and take that sigh of relief after a long day. Something that becomes really poignant to you when you are living in a shelter is that you cannot bathe on your own time.

And my time's up. I had more to say, but thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. Maybe she'll have the chance during questions and responses.

Questions?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member from Toronto—St. Paul's for your presentation, and also thank you to the member from Scarborough Southwest for passionately talking about the issues affecting your riding and for talking about some of the families facing a lot of challenges.

The housing issue is not a partisan issue. We have been debating for day and day, night and night. The previous government, for 15 years, did nothing on the file. At least our government is moving, starting the process. There is a lot of action planned, and they're changing the legislation to make a difference. We are talking about the symptoms; we've already diagnosed the problem. We are trying to give a prescription, but the opposition is not taking the prescription.

I'm asking the member and the opposition to finally get on board with us on unlocking the housing supply.

Ms. Jill Andrew: To keep up with the demand and keep homes affordable, the Housing Affordability Task Force said Ontario needs to build 1.5 million new homes over a decade, which will require a pace of new home construction that is double the current rate. The measures proposed in Bill 109 and the accompanying More Homes for Everyone plan will not come anywhere near achieving this.

2010

That's just one problem. My big issue? It doesn't create supportive housing. It doesn't create more social housing. I am worried about that. We need help now.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I know the member spoke passionately about the bill and the needs in her community. One of the things in this bill is expediting the timeline for municipalities. I believe the government whip asked about this as well. We have now a timeline for municipalities. Unfortunately, what this bill is missing is having a timeline for developers. It doesn't actually give a timeline for how long the developers have to develop, which is a huge problem. Zoning orders are passed and then we have developers sitting on that and nothing happens.

Would the member like to talk a little bit about how that could have supported so many across our province?

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Scarborough Southwest for that question. Here's what I'd say. We need a timeline for the developers as well because the bottom line is this: There are too many families who have scrounged up and finally gotten that down payment for a mortgage. The property is supposed to be built in this year, in that year, in the year after and the year after. Too many folks, quite frankly, lose. They lose thousands of dollars. They can lose thousands of dollars when development plans do not happen, when they fall through.

This is a conversation I've had in the chamber before, a year or two ago, and it goes hand in hand with the consistent advocacy we've been trying to do around the Tarion home warranty program to ensure that it is transparent, to ensure that there are actually community members on that board and not just developers. We don't want conflicts of interest to take away people's pride and joy, and that can be your first home.

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

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you to the member for Toronto—St. Paul's for her presentation.

In her speech I heard the member list a lot of the problems we are facing now, such as a housing shortage and a housing crisis across the province. Speaker, in my opinion, this is because the member's party supported the Liberal government, who did absolutely nothing on the housing file in their 15 long years in government. They've asked for this much. They had 15 years to plan for the growth we all knew was coming and they failed. They failed to think ahead. That is why our government is introducing this bill and some bills before.

My question is simple: Could the member support this bill and stand with us together to solve the problem?

Ms. Jill Andrew: It's a very ironic time. I think back to being a kid and that time when we were precariously housed and when we had to do a stint in the shelter system. Mike Harris was actually the Premier at that time.

Here's what I'll say: The Conservative government hasn't done much for affordable housing, quite frankly. The Liberal government before that slashed, as I said before, almost \$200 million—\$150 million or something like that—in funding for social housing to give corporate tax breaks. Neither of those governments, Liberal or PC, have done enough to tackle the housing affordability crisis in Ontario. But I do know that the Ontario NDP's plan, as New Democrats, to create homes and to repair homes and to make green homes that we can afford is how we're going to get Ontario on the right track.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to my colleague from Toronto–St. Paul's for your excellent presentation. You talked about homelessness. I can relate to that, because when I was a teenager, I was homeless for about eight months. I think this bill doesn't address that. There are so many folks who are homeless in the city of Toronto, and you talked at length about that. Could you also elaborate on that? Because there are also a lot of people waiting for affordable housing on waiting lists, and it doesn't give people options to support them.

Ms. Jill Andrew: The thing about homelessness is that it affects every aspect of your life. Before my time ran out the last time, I was saying that the simple, basic need of having clean, warm water fall onto you in the morning from a good shower becomes a very complicated task when you don't have a home. Pursuing your academic goals becomes a very complicated animal when you don't have a home. Applying for a job so that you can be a contributing citizen to your province, to St. Paul's, to any of our ridings across this province, becomes a complicated project.

We need to actually name the problem if we're going to address the problem. We have a housing affordability crisis. We certainly also have a homelessness affordability crisis—which, frankly, the government has never named in this Legislature, to my memory—and we have to address it, because we shouldn't be in such a province of resources and supports and have folks literally sleeping outside of Queen's Park without a home. That's a shame.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): One more question.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thanks to our opposition member from Toronto–St. Paul's. I'm glad that you agreed with us that there are 1.5 million units needed to meet the demand on the market for housing. Yes, as much as I agree with you on the subsidized homes and the social housing, this is needed as well and needs to be addressed as well. But the spirit of this bill is trying to accelerate and speed up the building process and making it faster and removing the red tape so that builders can build fast. So, as we agreed on the point that we need it, what do you think can be added to that to accelerate the building of houses?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A quick response.

Ms. Jill Andrew: First of all, you can read our Ontario NDP Homes You Can Afford plan. It's all laid out there for you. It would also be really nice if the government listened to and accepted any one of the million amendments that our official opposition has made around creating affordable housing.

To end on the fine words of city councillor Gord Perks for Parkdale–High Park, "Last year the city spent around \$800 million on housing in Toronto, including TCH, new builds, rent supplements and more. The Ford government spent ... \$6 million on housing in Toronto when it has access to the kinds of taxes that let you spend on social housing."

For goodness' sake, it's been four years that this government has had power. The Liberals screwed up for 15. We're talking 19 years. The housing crisis should no longer be a—

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

Mr. Faisal Hassan: It is my pleasure to rise this evening to speak on behalf of the hard-working and decent people of the fine community of York South–Weston. Our community is home to many essential and front-line workers, and individuals and families who love York South–Weston. We have an incredible community spirit and community involvement as folks try to make their neighbourhoods, their community, the best place to live and raise their families and to care for our elders. We are a diverse community that brings a unique perspective to life and enriches York South–Weston culturally, socially and economically in ways that it is impossible to measure but easy to see. People want to live in this community, but it is increasingly difficult to do so. The cost of housing has skyrocketed under this government's watch.

I am happy to have the opportunity to speak to this Bill 109 dealing with housing. In fact, I am happy to speak about housing at every opportunity, because the cost of housing is quite simply one of the most significant barriers people face to having economic security and a good quality of life for people.

2020

This side of the House has spoken about housing issues repeatedly during this government's term, right since when one of the first actions this government did upon forming government was eliminate rent control on units built after 2018. That was a clear signal about the

government's priorities when it came to tenants and housing affordability. We know whose corner they are in by their actions, and now, in the fourth year of their mandate, there are countless examples of bills that favour developers over families, and highways and sprawl over green space.

So here we are this evening with Bill 109, with another of the government's ironic titles: homes for everyone. Homes for everyone—like “working for workers” and their upcoming new piece entitled “up is down”—is a bill that is not as it appears. Bill 109, which was tabled yesterday, is comprised of five schedules that look to enact and amend various statutes. Schedule 1 looks to make amendments to the existing City of Toronto Act. Schedule 2 deals with some basic housekeeping around disclosure around municipalities and development charges. Schedule 3 talks about the New Home Construction Licensing Act dealing with penalties around licensees. Schedule 4 is another Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, which in some cases could extend the time of a warranty where, for example, work has not been performed in a specified time. Schedule 5 is the Planning Act changes and amendments to the Planning Act and some important changes to how the tribunal operates.

This is a brief snapshot of the main thrust of this bill and deserves further exploring, which I intend to do. But off the top, I did notice that the government's renewed interest in housing, as we are weeks away from an election, included some provisions that seem to have been lifted from the NDP's own housing plan, and I'm happy to see that. We have been offering housing solutions for a very long time, and that the government would read and learn from our housing plan, Homes You Can Afford, is nice to see, and I mean that truly, sincerely.

On this side of the floor, we have long recognized that housing speculators are a serious problem to housing supply and prices. There are countless apartments and houses sitting vacant across the GTA and province—on the property to increase demand as prices soar or these properties are used on the Airbnb market, which ultimately achieves the same result of housing shortages. Non-resident speculators, in particular, have made millions playing the housing market. We see it here, and we first saw it in a really big way in British Columbia. We have called for an annual speculation and vacancy tax on residential properties, and I see the government is finally adopting something similar now.

Speaker, this government's track record on housing is not good. They have long tilted the playing field in a way that rewards their developer friends and does not offer any help to homebuyers and renters. This problem with housing did not start with the Premier and his team. We know that under the Liberals and a very long and devastating 15 years in government, that instead of trying to improve the chances of opportunities to get into the housing market, they opened up loopholes for housing speculators and allowed for unlimited rent hikes between tenants. There is little doubt that those looking to buy homes and those trying to find affordable rent and a decent

place to live are worse off under this government. However, like when someone purchases a home, it is important to look at the foundation, and the foundation of the housing crisis started with the Liberals and has been allowed to run rampant under the Conservatives.

Just this morning, I rose to ask a housing question. One of the things I spoke about was how in York South–Weston folks face massive rent increases if they choose to leave their current units. Perhaps their family has grown and they need a larger space. Well, folks are afraid to move because they cannot afford what their next rent might be. Above-guideline rent increases are frequently abused and used as a tool by landlords to jack up rents, in some cases as much as 73%. With the end of rent control in new units in 2018 by this government, tenants faced huge increases and often can't afford to stay in their homes and communities.

Seeing nothing from the government to address these critical issues and seeing nothing about how new homebuyers could be helped, I rose to ask in good faith about that today. The answer I got from the housing minister—this province's minister responsible for housing, keep in mind—was that I should be talking to the federal government. Time after time, this government always points fingers to another level of government and never assumes responsibility for the powers that they have.

How many times during the pandemic have we seen this government avoid responsibility by saying, “Oh, that's up to local public health” or “Oh, we need the federal government to come forward.” Leadership is not passing the buck. All three levels of government indeed have a responsibility to step up to the plate on issues we face, but that means the province needs to step up too.

An NDP government will ensure co-operation and responsible leadership in its provincial role, and that is called leadership. It is also the best way to ensure Ontario functions and delivers at its highest level for everyone in the province, not just some.

Last year, for example, the city of Toronto spent about \$800 million on housing. Of that \$800 million, spending was made on Toronto Community Housing, new construction and rental supplements. The provincial government, on the other hand, spent about \$6 million on housing; \$6 million versus \$800 million is hardly a collaborative effort and hardly co-operation with the largest municipality in Canada.

Speaker, something this government doesn't understand is that investing in housing, and social housing in particular, is an investment that pays off long into the future. For a government that doesn't invest in education or health care, it is sadly not a surprise that they don't really want to invest in housing in any meaningful way.

My colleagues on this side of the House have introduced solid private members' bills, motions and statements on housing that is affordable, stopping evictions and renovations, bringing back real rent control and helping first-time homebuyers, to name a few. I am proud of the work we have done, and I am proud of our Homes You Can Afford plan that we have released.

I also cannot help but reflect on the private member's bill I tabled along with my fantastic colleague from Brampton Centre. It was just over a year ago that the bill was debated here in this House. The Housing is a Human Right Act, 2021, was a bill that sought to level the housing playing field, and in particular with an eye to the deep racial and socio-economic divides that exist in housing.

I don't believe I will ever hear the words "housing is a human right" from any government member, and in their current bill I don't see many words when it comes to housing. I don't see "poverty," I don't see "homelessness," I don't see "youth," I don't see "racialized," I don't see "seniors," I don't see "people living with disabilities," I don't see "Indigenous" and I don't see "equity." This bill is more about what isn't in it than what is.

We simply cannot talk housing in a meaningful way without talking about and actually addressing the inequities and disparities that exist in access to housing. That is what the Housing is a Human Right Act set out to do. I know that the government had its own housing task force created, and just ignored its some 55 recommendations; so I don't expect them to listen to us, but they really should. The fact is that Toronto renters spend at least 30% of their income on housing, and that number is rapidly growing.

The housing crisis cuts particularly cruelly along racial and socio-economic divides. In my community of York South-Weston and elsewhere in Toronto, many families are living in cramped conditions, unable to afford to move to accommodate a growing family. That overcrowding is three times higher for visible-minority renters.

I ask that the government view housing through the lens of housing being a human right. This view is about building a fair and equitable society. The government's obsession with cutting red tape comes with a cost, and time and again, we see who actually pays the price. I can assure you it is not developers; it is not speculators; it is folks struggling to get by and trying to find affordability.

2030

Madam Speaker, I don't see the words "co-ops" or "social housing." It happens to be true that during the time the NDP was in government in Ontario, record numbers of social housing and co-ops were built. Many of them still exist today, and I always have a sense of pride when I know where that foundation started.

Well, we left power and Mike Harris formed government, and housing, education, health care, long-term care and social justice have never been the same since. That housing I spoke of that the NDP built in the 1990s has never come remotely close to being achieved again. The Conservatives and the Liberals carried on a series of austerity measures that benefited their wealthy buddies and friends, and that continues until June 2. The Conservative-Liberal gravy train must end. That is the type of red tape I would like to see cut.

In 2021, the average price of a home in Toronto was 44% higher than two years earlier. I shudder to think what the 2022 statistics will show, because the soaring house prices have not stopped, and they have not even slowed. The housing minister himself admitted that Bill 109 will

not address housing supply or prices in the near future. This is a stretch goal.

This bill could have implanted measures that would immediately help with affordability right away, in the immediate short-term, but it does not. There is, in fact, nothing to help buyers or renters. There is nothing that takes into account the government's own housing task force—the task force the housing minister announced with such fanfare just a few short months ago. A tip for the government is that if you are going to create a task force and ignore all of their advice, save your money and cut the red tape of a task force.

In this bill, we don't see about building starter homes, duplexes or townhouses, and certainly not co-ops. One barrier to entering the housing market is that young people and families simply cannot afford the down payment to buy that first home, particularly in today's overheated housing market. The NDP plan would help first-time homebuyers finance their own payment with a shared equity loan of up to 10% of the home's value. Prepayments of the loan will not be needed until the homeowner sells or moves, and in fact, homeowners will have the option of buying back the government's share at any time. This is a real and achievable measure that makes sense for families and the government alike. I was going to say that it is a win-win, but do not want to confuse people that this is actually an NDP proposal.

Schedule 4 of Bill 109 deals with home warranties, but not in the way we propose. The Liberals and Conservatives allowed warranty regulator Tarion to go unchecked, and we have well documented that on this side of the House over the past few years. The Ontario Auditor General, who knows this government well, wrote a very damning report on consumer complaints and demonstrated that Tarion is run by home builders and serves home builders at the expense of homeowners. We would end the Tarion monopoly, as it was first called for and ignored in 2016 under the Liberal government.

Home builders and big developers are still running the show, and this bill doesn't take away any of that power. In fact, many are arguing that it gives them more power, especially not having that burdensome red tape. Our housing plan will hold home builders accountable and would ensure that new homebuyers have accurate and up-to-date information about builders' records.

Speaker, we need to protect homebuyers and renters, and we have to make it easier for homebuyers to get into the market, all while cooling off a hot housing market. We also need more homes, including creative solutions like basement apartments, laneway houses and granny flats. We need the government to view housing through the eye of a buyer and not just how a builder can keep building. More supply does not mean lower prices, not without taking into account and controlling speculators, condo flippers and bad actors.

Interestingly, I heard the other day of a landlord who represents an enormous firm that has 30,000 homes, who explained that young people "don't want to own houses." This is of course ridiculous, but it represents a housing

mindset and view that tries to justify the rampant exploitation and greed in the housing market. This individual's firm had their profits rise 67% in 2021. It is this corporate greed and speculation that drive prices up. It is why, when a homebuyer bids on a property, they are bidding along with many others only to lose out time and again to a numbered company that pays substantially over the asking price. Until we all believe that, no matter where you live, your age, your financial background, your identity or ability, you deserve a safe and affordable place to call home in Ontario, we won't get there.

Government is in place to protect citizens and to provide the opportunity for strong and affordable communities for all. The inequities-and-disparities gulf that exists in Ontario needs to narrow, and it needs to be actively fought off with all of our economic policies. Investing in people is the best investment a government can make, and I hope this government invests in people, invests in everybody and also builds co-ops and invests in affordable housing so that we can tackle the issue of downloading the responsibility of the provincial government. And yes, we need to work with all levels of government to make housing better.

The people of Ontario deserve better, and they deserve a better plan and better government.

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

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I wanted to inform the member opposite about the investments that our government has done on Indigenous housing. Back in January of this year, the government announced new annual funding to provide Indigenous-led, culturally appropriate long-term housing solutions and support services to Indigenous people at risk of homelessness. That's something that we have done, back in January.

Working as a nurse, I have had the unfortunate privilege of sometimes having to discharge people who are precariously housed, frankly, to the streets, so I couldn't agree more that we need to do more for people who are precariously housed or at risk of homelessness.

But the good news is that since our government implemented More Homes, More Choice in 2019, we have seen significant progress: 2020 saw the highest levels of housing starts in a decade and the highest level of rental starts since 1992; 2021 broke even more records, with the highest level of housing starts since 1987—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: —and the highest level of rental starts in 30 years. So—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I'm sorry; you're out of time.

Response?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks for the question from the member from Mississauga Centre. I think you talked about Indigenous communities. In Indigenous communities,

they have been—my colleague Sol Mamakwa has been speaking here every day. They don't have drinking water, clean water. We need to invest—I agree with you—in Indigenous communities. We need to sit with them, and also speak treat nation to nation and invest in more housing, more investment there. And I know the federal government have failed there, but we need responsibility to do our job as the government, and you are not doing that job, madam.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question? I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Stop the clock, please.

We're going to work in rotation, and if anyone else would like to get on the record, they are welcome to do that again.

I apologize. Start the clock. I return to the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Ms. Doly Begum: Thank you, Speaker.

I want to thank the member from York South–Weston for advocating for people who are facing homelessness, for his community, for so many people: for seniors, for the Indigenous communities. I know he works hard for York South–Weston residents, and we're really proud of the work that you do there, my friend.

My question is: When we look at this bill, one of the issues, it looks like, is that it's an issue of zoning orders and permits, whereas we have over 250,000 permits that have already been granted, where developers are just sitting on them—over 250,000 of them. Why don't we have the government doing something about that in this bill?

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Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you, my colleague from Scarborough Southwest. You're right: The government can act. They have been in government for four years. Of course, we see the failure of the Liberals for the last 15 years, but now you've had four years in government and we have seen challenges and crises in housing. Now is the time to listen and to adapt.

My colleague from Scarborough Southwest, you're right: We can do something now to move it forward. If they cannot do it, we will do it June 2.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I appreciate the words from the member from York South–Weston and his advocacy for this issue. Obviously, housing is very important in each and every one of our ridings, and we recognize how crucial it is.

I just want to ask the member opposite: Of course, we understand there's a quarter of a million new Ontarians each and every year here in our province, which is a wonderful thing; we welcome new Ontarians. But obviously, when you are, under the former Liberal government, only building 30,000, 40,000 or I think close to 50,000 units a year, there's going to be a shortfall.

I've heard a little bit about what you don't like about this bill and how you don't agree with all the aspects of it, but what's your plan to increase the substantial number of housing that we need to see coming on board? Because I've heard the NDP talk about the need to address the demand side of the equation, but I haven't heard much about the supply side, to be completely honest.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to the member from Niagara West. Yes, we have a plan. The way to do it—you have to have many options. You have to have co-ops. You have to have affordable housing. You have to give people ownership of their own homes by providing them direct loan equities, especially young people, because it takes them a while for them to get the down payment or save for the down payment. If you could provide them loan equities to put a 10% down payment, many people would be able to have access to ownership. That, I think, is one option.

Another option is for others who may not be able to actually carry a mortgage. So you need to build them affordable housing. You need to build co-ops and other options as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: I've discussed this before; I've commented about it in the past. We know we're in a housing crisis. In Brampton, we've seen semi-detached homes sell as high as \$1.6 million or more. The dream of owning a home is becoming, sadly, no longer a reality for way too many people.

We know that the skyrocketing house prices have occurred under the past four years of this Conservative government. My question to my colleague is as follows: Why do you think the Conservative government decided to leave behind so many Ontarians and refused to act to actually address the housing crisis when they had the opportunity four years ago?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thanks to my colleague from Brampton East. You're right: This government had four years to act, and now we are a few weeks away from a general election. Now we have this bill, and it's not even enough. I've talked about it in my comments.

What we need is a leadership that builds and supports people, and looks at all sorts of options to support communities. If you look at our plan, the Ontario NDP plan, we provide those options to every Ontarian, and we will do it as soon as we form government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Next question? The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I really appreciate that. I want to thank my good friend and colleague for sharing his thoughts with us tonight.

I do want to ask him a question, though. He mentioned in his speech, and one of my other colleagues did as well, that red tape was really not a problem. That was surprising. He said, "What's the infatuation with us wanting to remove red tape?" I think all my colleagues here on this side of the House will agree that removing excessive regulation and red tape is absolutely essential in making sure that

more homes are built in the province, after many, many, many years of neglect by the previous government.

I'll tell you who else agrees with us on this, Madam Speaker. During the consultation with the public, municipalities and the Housing Affordability Task Force that my honourable colleague across even referenced, they said red tape and bureaucratic inefficiencies are holding back Ontarians from buying homes and driving rising costs. Do you know what that cost is? Six months of delay through red tape adds between \$10,000 and \$20,000 to the price of every home. So I'm wondering if my honourable colleague will now agree with me that excessive red tape needs to be removed so we can build more homes and all kinds of homes for the people of—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to the colleague from the government side. Thank you for your question. What is important here is that the government has a responsibility. When the government downloads their responsibility to municipalities and says that we have nothing to do with housing matters—Mike Harris did that, Dalton McGuinty, Kathleen Wynne, and now you have for four years. You have done nothing, and the government cutting education, cutting health care—that's not red tape. That's an investment for people, and that's what we need to do: invest, not cut the important services and programs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We have time for a very quick back-and-forth. Question?

Ms. Doly Begum: I heard the members opposite talk a little bit about what kind of things should have been included or what kind of things we're proposing. We briefly spoke just a few minutes ago about this. We have 250,000 zoning orders that have already been permitted. That's already done. That's ready by municipalities. Why aren't they doing anything about developers? Why is there no deadline for that? Isn't that something you agree with me on, member from York South–Weston: that it could have been done better?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you to my colleague from Scarborough Southwest. I think what's lacking here is leadership. Also, just four weeks from an election, now we have a housing priority for the government, but they could do more by simply listening, consulting, listening also to the recommendations. Your task force has provided 53 recommendations, and none of them have been included in this bill. That's, I think, a case in point there.

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

Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 109, An Act to amend the various statutes with respect to housing, development and various other matters.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day—or orders of the evening? I recognize the member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill.

Mr. Michael Parsa: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until Monday, April 4 at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 2048.

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Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
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Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

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Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin, Jim McDonell
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Vanessa Kattar

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, Tom Rakocevic
Sara Singh, Donna Skelly
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell