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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 7 September 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 7 septembre 2022

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PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

SAFE AND HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES ACT (ADDRESSING
GUN VIOLENCE), 2022

LOI DE 2022 POUR DES COLLECTIVITÉS
SAINES ET SÉCURITAIRES (TRAITANT
DE LA VIOLENCE ARMÉE)

Ms. Hunter moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 9, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act and the Health Protection and Promotion Act in respect of addressing gun violence and its impacts / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé et la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé en ce qui concerne la violence armée et ses répercussions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It is an honour for me to rise today on behalf of the people of Scarborough–Guildwood to speak to Bill 9 and to shine a spotlight on gun violence and its aftermath. This issue is of critical importance to me, my constituents, many who are here today—and I was hoping that they would be watching, but that will come another day—

Interjection.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Oh, we're good to go? Wonderful—and communities across Ontario.

I want to begin by noting that, first, the occurrences of gun violence in Ontario have been increasing and are continuing to increase and to spread. In my home community of Scarborough, incidents have gone up by 60% this year, and I have heard from members in this chamber that it is spreading in southwestern Ontario, in Peterborough and in northern communities. Second, in the aftermath of a shooting, survivors and people connected to them often experience acute stress, or post-traumatic stress disorder. They have the added complexity of a physical injury, but also of a psychological one as well.

Due to the increased number of incidents, the past few years have seen gun violence really rising in the public's consciousness. But while discussions and debates have often focused on the gun regulation side of things and keeping deadly weapons out of the hands of potential

perpetrators, far less attention has been dedicated to the impact of gun violence on victims and their connections.

The fact is, the consequences of gun violence are pervasive and leave marks that can alter the health, choices and lifelong trajectory of children, young people, adults and communities. Left unsupported, these consequences become intergenerational.

The time to act to break this unhealthy cycle is now. Gun violence is a public health issue. It is a public health issue that has been recognized by Toronto's own medical officer of health, Dr. Eileen de Villa, who said, "Community violence has numerous physical and mental health impacts on the victim, perpetrator family, friends, neighbours and communities. As Toronto's medical officer of health, I applaud efforts that employ effective evidence-informed interventions to prevent incidents of community violence, and mitigate negative impacts of violence at the community level."

What happens when the street that you live on, the house that you live in or the school you go to—your loved one has taken their last breath at that place. I've walked those streets; I've visited those homes; I've stood in the halls of those schools. It is impossible to imagine, and yet there are families in Ontario who are experiencing this.

As provincial leaders we must not look away. We must respond with compassion and empathy by addressing the impact on victims, their connections and their communities. I want to be clear, it is time to broaden the focus of our discussion about gun violence from enforcement and emergency care to include social, emotional, physical and mental health impacts of those traumatized, and whose lives are shattered, by these incidents.

This moment requires urgency, action and investment. It requires urgency because people exposed to gun violence may experience negative short- and long-term psychological effects of violence. It requires action because individuals may be at a higher risk for negative outcomes if they are exposed to gun violence. Studies show that this is particularly true for people who were injured in gun violence, who witnessed violent acts at close proximity or who were exposed to high levels of violence in their communities. It requires investment because addressing the social, emotional and physical well-being and mental health needs of Ontarians exposed to gun violence requires more supports that do not exist today.

And given that the perpetrators of gun violence are getting younger, it also requires strategies to reduce the number of children and young people who are initially exposed to gun violence in the first place. As Tyrone

Charles has said to me directly, “Let us not allow guns to get into their hands in the first place.”

Addressing gun violence as a public health issue through Bill 9 will allow the province to listen to and to respond to victims and survivors of gun violence. We saw the need in February of this year when an 18-year-old student was killed in a shooting incident in a high school in Scarborough by a fellow 14-year-old student. We also saw that in April when five men were shot in a drive-by shooting while standing in a parking lot near Markham and Lawrence. I’m relieved that, just today, Toronto Police Service that they have made an arrest in that case.

Here in Toronto a public health response to gun violence has started and there are some notable initiatives that have come on stream, like the Sunnybrook hospital’s BRAVE Program, which is specifically designed to address the trauma impacting many shooting victims. It is the first of its kind in Canada, and Sunnybrook uses the teachable moment approach to intervene early and to support patients’ overall physical, social and psychological needs. There are early signs that this program is working and other hospitals, like St. Mike’s, are taking note.

At the city of Toronto, there is the SafeTO strategy, which includes a comprehensive multisectoral gun violence reduction plan which will work together with city departments, Toronto Police, Toronto Public Health, community organizations and other levels of government.

In this very Legislature, I have taken inspiration from the outspoken advocacy of members of this House, including MPP Chris Glover of Spadina–Fort York, who has been an ardent supporter of addressing gun violence through a public health lens, like Louis March always reminds me—thank you, MPP Glover—and also my colleague MPP Jill Andrew, whose community in St. Paul’s has been disproportionately affected by this issue. I’ve talked to other MPPs, like David Smith from Scarborough Centre, and there are so many others who are battling this issue.

1810

All of us in this Legislature, regardless of political party, can agree on one thing: that community safety is a top priority and that when it is threatened, it is an issue for all of us. So I have faith that we can advance Bill 9. It is in our hands to give people the help and the support that they need right now.

Bill 9 addresses gun violence in three provisions: It prescribes hospital-based and community-based violence intervention programs; it makes public health programs aimed at reducing the impacts of violence and eliminating them prescribed by public health boards; and it also expands services through OHIP to allow for trauma-informed counselling. That’s it.

Through Bill 9, we can activate community organizations and agencies within the public health system, enabling them to provide specific supports needed in their local communities to get more upstream and preventative strategies and programs in place.

One aspect of gun violence that in my view never receives enough attention is the intergenerational impacts on families. So in my few remaining moments, I want to talk about some of those families—some of them are here today—like Ali Demircan, who was one of the victims of the Danforth shooting. A husband and father, Ali survived the shooting incident but immediately felt a void. He told me, after the shooting, his family did not know what to do or how to move forward with life. He related how his family was struggling mentally and economically and how more than two months went by before he was sent some counselling services information, but that did not extend to his nine-year-old daughter or his wife.

I think of the Charles family, of the conversations I’ve had with Tyrone Charles, the grandfather of Shyanne Charles, who lost her short life in the Danzig shooting at the age of 14. It was just about a year after that tragic day that I was first elected into this Legislature, and the images of the Danzig shooting have stayed with me.

Tyrone said to me, “Mitzie, when an incident happens, there’s five minutes of fame and then nothing.” We cannot allow that to happen. We cannot allow the memory of Shyanne to stay at that place. We have to help those families.

I also want to mention a family—this is very difficult, because the Khosrawi family lost their son in 2020, and he was just 15 years old. He was shot while standing at the bus stop right after school—he was 15 years old; his name is Safi—by another 15-year-old who went to the same high school as he did. What is very challenging about the situation of Safi’s family is that every time his mother and father open their front door, it is at the spot where their son died. Literally, this dear couple is stuck in their grief and in their pain at the loss of their son. Safi has left behind his classmates and his community, all of whom are suffering.

My worry is that incidences of gun violence are escalating to the point that they are becoming normalized. We cannot let this happen. Each and every time I hear about another incident of gun violence, it is impossible not to think of the victims and the families, like Safi’s and all the others that I’ve described today. We have an opportunity in Bill 9. We can expand the support system to help these families.

There’s no reason that Safi should have died. He was just simply walking home from school at the wrong time.

As provincial leaders, it is time that we respond to their pain with compassion, with support and with action. I ask you, all members of this Legislature, to support Bill 9 through second reading so it can get to committee and honour these victims, the survivors and the communities who are suffering right now. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate? The member for Toronto–St. Paul’s.

Ms. Jill Andrew: Thank you, Speaker—uh-oh. I just lost it. My apologies. You know what? I’m going to go without it, actually. My computer has been giving me problems the whole day.

I would like to say that I absolutely support Bill 9. What Bill 9 does is it raises awareness about the need for trauma

counselling, for community-based supports for families, for victims, for onlookers; for, often, the women and girls who are left behind as the forgotten victims of violence, as the YWCA article spoke of.

We need to see a little more in the bill to make it even stronger. It's good legislation as it is, but we could see a ban on illegal handguns; we could see a ban on illegal ammunition. We could see some meat within the bill that speaks to how community spaces, for instance—affordable housing, access to better jobs, all of the social, cultural aspects of community—also prevent students, youth, folks from falling into violent circumstances.

In our community in St. Paul's, we have certainly seen our share of shooting incidents. Frankly, you hold your breath. You wonder, is it someone you know? Is it a friend? Is it a family member? We love our community. We don't want anyone to be afraid of our communities. We want folks to come to our communities, shop in our communities, live in our communities, and stay a while.

Violence is not only a physical violence to the folks who live in our communities. It has an economic consequence to communities. It prevents people from coming and visiting. It prevents people from wanting to raise their families in our communities.

You know, when the member from Scarborough–Guildwood spoke about the lack of mental health supports—this is one of the very reasons why I had put forth a bill, co-sponsored by our health critic, the member for Nickel Belt, calling for HST to be removed from psychotherapy, because we don't need any member in our community who needs access to this kind of support having to be 13% away from that support, or having to dig even further into their pockets to access the dollars they need.

For us in St. Paul's, whether it's Black Urbanism TO, whether it's Reclaim Eglinton West, whether it's SafeTO, whether it's our BIAs, whether it's our store owners, the parents, the teachers, the education workers, or people from the John Howard Society helping folks who are struggling with mental health and addiction—we are a community and we are trying our best, but we need to get support from this government as well. The government needs to address gun violence as a public health emergency, one that's impacting all of our lives. It doesn't have to happen in your backyard for it to matter, but believe you me, it's happening in every single person's backyard. And if it's not directly there, someone has been adjacent to gun violence. I assure you of that.

1820

I really need the government to support Bill 9. As I've said, it needs to go a little further, but for right now, it's something we can support as the beginning of an answer to addressing gun violence while we also fight for real affordable housing, while we also fight against cuts to our education budgets that leave the very youth the member is talking about without the after-school programs that we need to help enrich their lives, while ballooning police budgets. I'm not saying that there isn't a place for authority, but we have to be mindful. When our libraries,

our shelters, our ambulances, the social and community services we need are underfunded, it's time to think about divesting from police and investing into the communities and the people in the communities who are making change every single day, addressing mental health, addiction and the social and cultural issues that we're facing in our community.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: It is so important for me to speak to this bill today, because this year alone, there have been already 44 shootings in Ottawa, a majority in my riding. Gun violence is one of the most important public health issues facing my community, and supporting Bill 9 means bringing support to survivors of gun violence.

I feel this is desperately needed, because I've been to too many funerals, trying to find the right words of support and not being able to tell the members of the families and friends what the government is doing concretely to address gun violence. People are expecting us to do something. They are so many ways that we should be fighting gun violence. Longer prison sentences have limited effects. That's why we also need to find the root causes that lead to crime. We need a strong education system. We need to be engaging all students in schools, leaving no one behind, so that they don't turn to criminality, to substance abuse, become homeless or face poverty. We need the measures contained in Bill 9.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to rise in the House today to speak in favour of this bill, the Safe and Healthy Communities Act. I want to thank member from Scarborough–Guildwood for bringing it forward.

I also want to thank the members in the gallery for coming out. I know many of you, and I know many of you have been advocating for an end to gun violence for years, so thank you for your continued advocacy.

Years ago, I was on the Toronto Board of Health, and I brought forward a similar bill asking for a public health approach to gun violence. The goal was to break the cycle of violence, because you need to deal with the trauma that comes out of every incident of gun violence. So far this year, there are 277 shootings in the city of Toronto and 131 people killed or injured by guns in the city. Each of those incidents leads to lifelong trauma. I've worked with many mothers who have lost their children to gun violence, and that trauma never goes away. But the trauma treatment and the supports go away all too quickly, if they're available at all, and we need to provide supports to family members.

There's a young man I met whose older brother was killed in an incident of gun violence, and the social workers working with him were trying to keep him from picking up a gun and getting revenge for his older brother's death. This is how the cycle of violence continues. If we don't deal with that young man's trauma, then that will lead into another incident of gun violence. In fact, the biggest predictor of an incident of gun violence is

a previous incident of gun violence. So we need to stop the cycle, and this bill actually addressing the trauma will help to do that.

In research that I've done on gun violence, the impact of the stress of living in violent communities leads to higher rates of pre-term births and low birth weights, increased rates of fear, anxiety, depression, PTSD and low survival expectations. This means that young people in violent communities do not expect to live to adulthood. There was a researcher in Chicago speaking with a 10-year-old boy, and he asked the 10-year-old boy, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" And the 10-year-old boy said, "If I grow up, I want to be a bus driver."

There are many young people in this city and in this province who have been impacted by gun violence, who also don't know whether they're going to grow up, and that changes their behaviour; that changes the way they look at the world. So we absolutely have to address the trauma that comes out of every incident of gun violence.

When the government talk about guns and gangs, they talk about a police response. The police response is important, but police cannot solve gun violence. Even the former Toronto police chief said that you cannot arrest your way out of gun violence. You need to address the root causes. And the root cause of gun violence is the growing gap between rich and poor. Every decision that is made in this Legislature that increases that gap or leaves people living in poverty—the \$15.50 minimum wage does not provide enough money for food, shelter and clothing in this province, anywhere. When you leave people living in destitution like that, that feeds into the cycle of violence. When you're building 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years, but none of them are affordable, that leaves people without housing and with no options, and that leaves people in poverty, and that feeds into gun violence.

So if we want to break the cycle of gun violence, first and foremost we need to narrow the gap between rich and poor and bring an end to legislated poverty in this province. The next thing we need to do is, we also need to address the trauma. That's what this bill is doing today—to provide the trauma supports so we break that cycle of violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: One of the first gunshot victims I ever treated received a shotgun injury to the head that opened it like a book. They survived, but I know that the emotional scars lasted long after the physical ones healed.

If there is one thing I have learned after a decade of clinical practice, it's that the consequences of gun violence reverberate long after the shots have been fired, and there are far too few resources to support victims and their families once the acute trauma has been dealt with.

Trauma from guns can take many forms, including suicide, homicide, gang violence, unintended discharge and other kinds of accidents. Only a minority of these make the news, and they impact families and victims in an unimaginable way.

Public health promotes and protects the health of people in the communities in which they live, work, learn and play. Declaring gun violence a public health issue will permit a more enlightened, root-cause approach to support victims and allow desperately needed counselling and preventive programs.

I fully back this bill and encourage all members to vote in favour of it passing. It will ensure survivors and families of victims have the critical support that they require to heal with dignity and achieve their full potential.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It is an honour for me to be here tonight for the reading of my colleague's proposed Bill 9.

I would like to take this time to remember kind-hearted, loving, strong, hard-working and humorous Reese Fallon. Born and raised in Beaches–East York, she and Julianna Kozis tragically lost their lives on July 22, 2018, in the Danforth shooting—two young lives taken by grievous gun violence, and so many profoundly and forever affected by the events.

Following incidents of gun violence, victims receive health care for physical injuries, which is a straightforward process in which most of the cost is funded via OHIP until the patient is "recovered." The mental health trauma, however, is often harder to treat. Mental health and trauma counselling is neglected, and the system is not easy nor cheap to navigate.

Bill 9 aims to make it easier for gun violence survivors to receive trauma-informed counselling. This is a step in the right direction to help those closely affected by these tragic cases. I absolutely support my colleague's Bill 9.

1830

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It's an honour to rise again to speak on behalf of the residents of Toronto Centre and to speak in support this time of Bill 9, the Safe and Healthy Communities Act. My own community in Regent Park is too familiar with the horrors of gun violence. And as a former city councillor, sadly, so am I. After horrific shootings in our community, I have sat with grieving mothers and grandmothers and siblings as I held their hands, oftentimes perplexed by the loss—the preventable loss—of life. This loss of life is oftentimes young, Black and male.

Immediately after any shooting we all show up en masse—media cameras, politicians, community service providers. That's not the problem. It's what happens afterwards that is the problem, and that's the missing piece which is being addressed through Bill 9. A few days or sometimes a week later, everyone leaves and the traumatized survivors are left on their own without support—and this has been happening time and time again. Gun violence and the aftermath is tragically an everyday occurrence in my neighbourhood of Regent Park. Gun violence tears families apart, ruins lives and results in violent death for so many people, including the

young. No survivor of gun violence should have to struggle without support, and this is why Bill 9 is so critically important.

My community has heard decades of platitudes and promises from governments, and witnessed decades of failure of traditional approaches to eliminating gun violence, oftentimes with more money to policing but not enough money for supporting the community—definitely not enough money for the elimination of poverty. The tough-on-crime approach just doesn't work. This strategy has not been working and the rate of violence has continued to rise.

I want to recognize in the House community leader Louis March, founder of the Zero Gun Violence Movement, who has said, "Nobody is born with a gun in their hand. Nobody is born saying they want to be a gang leader or a drug dealer or a pimp or a bank robber."

If gun violence is a treatable public health crisis rather than a moral malaise, then it actually enables us to think and act proactively. We don't need to throw money at a situation, in the wrong direction. What we need to do is invest in our local community. And we need to do so by addressing the root cause of violence.

In my local community of Regent Park I want to extend my thanks to Mothers of Peace Regent Park, who have actually organized community members so they can get the support they need where governments and institutions have failed. I also need to thank Wanasah, an organization that actually specifically supported the Black and Muslim communities oftentimes left behind because of cultural and linguistic barriers. There are so many others that we need to address, but that is exactly why Bill 9 is so important and I'm very proud to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Good evening, Madam Speaker. My thanks to everyone here today for this debate and my thanks especially to the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for bringing this important issue to the floor of the Legislature today. I'd also like to recognize the guests who are here today. I spoke with Louis March recently at a community event, so I'm glad to see him here today. I want to commend the member for Scarborough–Guildwood for her advocacy and for her work on addressing gun violence and its impacts, an issue that people in many communities across Ontario, including my own, are facing.

Gun violence is an important issue. Statistics Canada reports that from 2009 to 2019, criminal use of firearms increased by 81%. In 2020, 40% of Canada's homicides were committed with handguns. While the statistics tell us, Speaker, that the issue is significant, the statistics don't capture the toll that gun violence has on individuals, on families, on communities, and the far-reaching consequences. The numbers really don't do justice to the far-reaching consequences that violent gun crime has on the community, on survivors, on family members and on those living in the area and trying to manage. Violent crime shatters and unravels the social fabric of our communities,

and it sows distrust between neighbours. It victimises thousands across Ontario. It victimises the innocent. And its impacts echo around the community and, yes, down through many years.

Recently, I was speaking with Louis March and also another member of the Black community that's centred around Eglinton in my riding. While setting up for the community festival, the person—who I won't name because I haven't got her permission—indicated to me that there were gunshots. There were 14 shots fired on the street. Thankfully, nobody was hurt. But it took her back to a time in her life, 25 years earlier, when her brother died of gun violence. I have spoken with her and we're setting up a community round table to try to discuss what we can do to bring solutions forward. I also said I would speak with Louis to do the same thing.

So I firmly believe that combatting this issue requires community-based solutions, and preferably solutions that are advanced by and embraced by those in the community itself. The member acknowledges the importance of community-based violence intervention programs in her bill. Our Roadmap to Wellness is a \$3.8-billion, 10-year plan to enhance our mental health service across the board. And it has had extensive stakeholder consultations when it was being developed. I myself participated in 18 consultations around the province in various locations with respect to that. One of the many things agreed upon by our stakeholders was that upstream investments in areas such as early intervention, traditionally delivered by community organizations, have one of the highest rates of return of any mental health spending and should be a significant area of focus.

We followed that advice, Madam Speaker. The government recognizes the importance of early interventions delivered by community organizations. We recognize and we fund evidence-based interventions that have been proven to work. Through our Roadmap to Wellness, we have allocated an increase of more than half a billion dollars in annualized funding for mental health and addictions support since 2019—that's every year. This includes funding specifically to expand culturally sensitive services in communities across the province.

In the two years since the roadmap's release, our government has acted upon that advice, expanding, for example, our youth wellness hubs, which offer mental health and addictions and social service navigation supports and primary care services for anyone aged 12 to 25 on a walk-in basis. Hubs develop working relationships with local service providers so they can provide in-community referrals. Hub workers do "warm hand-offs", as they are called, often accompanying youths to these providers as well. And yes, early intervention programming is hosted and community outreach efforts are based in many of the 22 hubs now located across Ontario. Last month, our five youth hubs in Wellington county reported seeing over 14,000 visitors. Speaker, these are 14,000 kids with a plan to address their issues, referrals to specialists they need and knowledge that in their community there is a safe space where they can be heard and recognized.

The member from Scarborough–Guildwood is right to highlight the role of community in the recovery process. Treatments must be individualized and developed in consideration of a patient’s issues, background and needs. While this government can provide the leadership required to build a mental health and service system, we must rely on our partners in community to give us guidance on how to deliver it. This has given us the opportunity to partner with several organizations who are developing their own culturally-centred programming.

For example, we have invested \$150,000 in the Muslim Association of Canada, to help address mental health and well-being in connection with racism and discrimination. A further \$800,000 has been invested with the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies, to develop services and supports for our LGBT2SQ+ youth. Last November, we were proud to announce a \$2.9-million expansion of our substance abuse program for African and Caribbean Canadian youth at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. And this funding has been expanded so the program will be available not just in Toronto but in North York, Peel, Ottawa and Windsor. Speaker, this program has been shown to improve health outcomes for Black youth and also serves francophone, LGBT2SQ+ or disconnected youth and youth impacted by significant trauma, including community violence.

1840

In bringing this bill to the chamber, the member from Scarborough–Guildwood seeks to close the gap in care and create a more robust health system overall. We believe that the principles align with several government priorities. We remain open to collaborating with her and any other members of this House to work on addressing these issues with funding for community-based community intervention initiatives, which we think are crucial to building an equitable, accessible and evidence-based mental health system for all Ontarians.

The government has made significant strides with our Roadmap to Wellness toward a comprehensive and connected mental health and addiction system and is poised to build on our successes. We’re fully committed to supporting all Ontarians on their journey to wellness by investing in services across the continuum of care from prevention to recovery. Thank you once again for the opportunity to speak to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It’s an honour to rise and speak in support of Bill 9, because too many families are grieving lost loved ones and too many survivors, families and community members are not able to seek the support they need. Speaker, that is why I am so pleased that the member from Scarborough–Guildwood brought this bill forward. It is so important for every party in the Legislature to be clear to the families of gun violence that this is a public health issue, that it will be treated as a public health issue, with a focus on prevention, especially addressing childhood trauma. So I not only encourage every member to vote for the bill; I encourage all members

to push, to move this bill through committee and bring it back for third reading support.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to speak to an extremely important matter. The member from Scarborough–Guildwood introduced this bill in the last session. I thank her for bringing it to our attention once again. This bill’s principles are something this government can stand behind. However, this is an issue that can be addressed without formal legislative changes.

Gun violence is on the rise across Canada and any government worth the support of its people must be able to address those matters of public safety swiftly and effectively. In fact, we have acted in a multitude of ways, developing and launching programming that is addressing the issue before this piece of legislation would see third reading. We have done so using a whole-of-government approach.

The business of protecting communities and ensuring a bright future for Ontario’s youth falls well within the mandate of several ministries. Partnerships between the Solicitor General, Attorney General, and the ministries of Health, Children, Community and Social Services, Education, Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the associate ministry of mental health and addictions ensure that those victimized by gun violence will not be neglected by this government. We recognize the value of early interventions. We understand how critical it is to recognize problematic behaviour, engage with those youth to understand its causes, and provide young people with more options and opportunities to succeed.

The Youth Outreach Worker Program run by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services sees front-line workers forming relationships with at-risk youth and providing wraparound care. Each year, the Youth Outreach Worker Program connects 9,000 youth to services in their communities, volunteering positions, jobs and mentors.

Another service connecting young people to respectable peers is our Youth Mentorship Program. Another MCCSS initiative, it works with high-risk youth to make healthy choices, increase resiliency, and achieve a goal of their choosing. It could be employment, an educational achievement, an act of civic engagement or pursuit of their cultural identity. Whatever that goal, it is the mentee’s choice, knowing that the program and the community have their back.

The Ontario Trillium Foundation has also been an incredible resource for community-based organizations to open a line of dialogue with the government, communicate their needs and receive support through its Youth Opportunities Fund.

I’m going to skip on here; I’m pretty near done in time.

I did want to speak about back home. We have a mental health initiative started back in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton called Access Open Minds. I was reminded of it by the member for Eglinton–Lawrence. She mentioned working with youth. My granddaughter actually sits on the

board and is one of the founders. It's all young people, 14 and up. It's a place for them to go, a safe place.

The Solicitor General's office, which I am the PA to, supports a number of these initiatives, connecting young people to a range of supports to reduce their likelihood of reoffending and foster successful integration into school, work and their communities.

As a result of these programs, Ontario has seen an 88% reduction of youth in custody. In 2020, Ontario saw 36.8% less youth crime than the year before, the largest annual decrease ever recorded. The Solicitor General's office is also making targeted investments to broaden the skill and knowledge base of our law enforcement officials and socialize them with the communities they serve.

In 2021, they announced the Community Safety and Policing Grant program, of \$267 million over three years, to fund a number of these projects.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Scarborough–Guildwood has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank all of the members who spoke. I'm sure you will indulge as I give the last words to a survivor, Danielle's story.

"I was a second-year nursing student who was shot by Faisal Hussain along with 12 other people on July 22, 2018. I sustained a permanent injury to my spinal cord which paralyzed me from the waist down and confined me to a wheelchair ever since. I was not able to return to my previous employment or my RN program as a result of my injuries. And I still live with debilitating levels of chronic pain in my lower back and limbs.

"Given the absolute life-altering effects of the Danforth shooting on my life, I can attest to the immense difficulties faced by those who have sustained a serious injury following an incident of gun violence.

"While I was lucky to have received funds donated by" a public "GoFundMe account ... in my honour, through my recovery I have met countless individuals who have been similarly affected ... who do not have" this resource.

"I strongly believe this bill is an important piece to address the funding gap faced by victims of gun violence and I urge all" members "to support this bill."

Finally, I just want to acknowledge those that are here: Christine Lewis, a teacher from West Hill Collegiate; Tyrone Charles, with Afifa Durity and Karisha Duncan and Guedeji Djimi; Ken Price; and I know Claire Smith is watching; Ali Demircan; Swabir Shariff; Dr. Najma Ahmed; and of course, Louis March. And I want to give a shout-out to Sureya from Mothers of Peace, who was one of our initiators on this bill.

I know that this is all of us coming together, but we are doing this on behalf of those who are victims, their families and their communities. You have the opportunity to do that right now by supporting Bill 9.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The time provided for private members' public business has expired. Ms. Hunter has moved second reading of Bill 9, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act and the Health Protection and Promotion Act in respect of addressing gun

violence and its impacts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carries?

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

1850

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Ottawa Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the government House leader. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister may reply for up to five minutes.

The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: It's important from a perspective that I care deeply about, the perspective of Ottawa, that we get a little deeper into the question I posed to the government today.

When I asked the government why it did not decide to participate in the federal inquiry into the use of the federal Emergencies Act, the answer I got was that this is a federal process and because it's a federal process, there's no obligation—if I can understand through you, Speaker, the government's rationale—or reason for the government to want to participate in a review of the recent use of the federal Emergencies Act during the convoy protests in Ottawa from January 22 to February 23. If I'm wrong in stating that, I'm sure the government will correct me in their response. But that's what I heard this morning.

Here's the problem I have with that, Speaker. I know for a fact, given disclosure, that there are at least three provinces who have been given standing to participate in this federal inquiry: the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. I know that the Ontario Provincial Police has been given standing to participate in this public inquiry into the use of the Emergencies Act during the convoy protest. I note that the Insurance Bureau of Canada has also been given standing to participate in this inquiry around the use of the Emergencies Act during the convoy protest.

All of these entities are provincial entities. Why are they deciding to participate? Speaker, I would think it stands to reason, by the fact that these people are on the list and the commissioner of this inquiry has given them standing, that it's because there are provincial interests in this use of the Emergencies Act and why it had to be invoked in the first place.

So I want to go through a brief timeline, and I hope it informs the response I get from the government. This convoy protest arrived in our city on January 22. We struggled with it for days. On February 1, I made a formal appeal, joined with councillor Catherine McKenney, who represents the downtown area of Ottawa directly impacted by this convoy protest, directly to the Premier—on February 1—imploring upon immediate action, particularly with respect to incidents of violence, harassment, diesel fumes choking our streets and horns blaring at all hours of the day.

We got a response on February 3, from the Premier, indicating to us that the matter had been referred to the then Solicitor General. But we had nothing, no way of response since that, absolutely—the sound of one hand clapping.

On February 7, the Ambassador Bridge gets blocked in Windsor, and then, all of a sudden, we see some potential movement from the government in Toronto. Then we hear cries of outrage, when significant economic activity is impeded by the same movement which had gridlocked our city.

But it was only February 11, Speaker—February 11—where the Premier declared that the occupation of our city, led by the convoy movement, amounted to a siege and required the invocation of the provincial emergencies act. February 11. Let's go through that chronology again. January 22 to February 11: That's about three weeks.

Now, I want to submit to you, Speaker—and there are other Ottawa representatives here—if any one of our communities was gridlocked by 500 vehicles stationed in the downtown and people were harassed on their way to work and horns were blaring at all hours of the day, we would want to think it's our obligation to make sure there was action. But there was no action.

So, honestly, what I want to hear from the government today is their rationale for not participating in this federal inquiry. What I know is what I said this morning: If you participate, if you're given standing to participate in this federal inquiry, the compulsion the commissioner asks of you is that you disclose documents. And my, oh, my, did I want to see some provincial documents with respect to this.

I want to know why, on February 13, the former chief of staff to Premier Ford, Mr. Dean French, was all of a sudden present in our city, brokering an apparent deal with convoy leaders at the behest, he said to the media, of former Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador Brian Peckford. I want to know, was there any communication between the Office of the Premier of Ontario, his former chief of staff arriving surreptitiously in our city, announcing an agreement—which didn't hold, which was rejected. It was a complete farce, Speaker. If I can be honest, that's what it was.

So we want to trace the details. People of our city, the city of Windsor—we want to know what happened here, and I'm disappointed that this morning what I was told was, "Not my jurisdiction." It's a typical diversionary tactic, sadly, in Canadian politics. I submit through you, Speaker, to the government: It is your jurisdiction. Ottawa

is part of Ontario. It is not the federal government's responsibility. It's part of our province, and people have a right in our city to live in peace and dignity.

I look forward to the response.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): No? Okay.

HOUSING

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member for Beaches–East York has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Associate Minister of Housing. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for five minutes.

Go ahead.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I hope someone is here to answer me tonight.

My question earlier today was not given a sufficient response, so I stand before you tonight to once again ask my question to the minister. For a bill titled Strong Mayors, Building Homes, I find it unusual that the text of the bill fails to mention housing even once. The aforementioned proposed amendments I provided that focused on housing were deemed out of scope and principle, yet the government continues to insist this bill is going to aid our housing crisis.

Madam Speaker, can the minister please provide a concrete example of how this bill will be putting shovels into the ground, and be specific about what types of housing will be built as a result? Further, if no specifics about the types of houses the government aims to build can be provided, I wonder why the bill was titled "building homes" to begin with. We need measurable goals to ensure that housing is actually built.

My first amendment asked that the amount of new housing built within each city every year is proportionately sufficient to meet the goal of building 1.5 million new units of housing in Ontario by 2031. It also included the need for a progress report by the head of council to assess how well they have met this goal, including reasoning for why they have or have not met it and a plan for subsequent years. This amendment was deemed out of scope and principle at committee and did not pass.

My question is, then, will the government be tracking and regularly reporting back about the building of new home units in these cities, in alignment with the 1.5-million homes goal, and if so, what system will they be using to do so?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Parliamentary assistant to the minister of housing.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Our government is working tirelessly to address Ontario's housing supply crisis. We're taking concrete action to increase supply and ensure Ontarians from every corner of this province have access

to attainable and affordable housing. That's why we have created a Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team, chaired by municipal leaders and with a mandate to help us deliver on our core housing commitment. That commitment, Speaker, is to facilitate the construction of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years, a goal that will require the support of our partners at the federal and municipal levels and in communities across Ontario.

There's no silver bullet to address a challenge as big and complex as Ontario's housing crisis. That's why, along with the implementation team, our government has committed to developing a housing supply action plan every year over the next four years, and to encourage our municipal partners to remove roadblocks to new housing at the local level. That's where the Strong Mayors, Building Homes legislation comes in, Speaker.

We have heard from many of our municipal partners over the years that delays at the local level are standing in the way of much-needed housing. Toronto mayor John Tory, for instance, has noted that a strong-mayor system can help "make sure city hall is working more efficiently and effectively" for the residents of his city. The Ontario Real Estate Association called this bill "a critical and overdue step towards solving the housing affordability and supply crisis." The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario said this bill will "ensure that mayors have tools to combat the systemic barriers that exist at the municipal level that prevent housing from being built." And even former Premier Dalton McGuinty supported a strong-mayor system during his time in office.

Well, Speaker, it is this government that is finally getting it done. This bill proposes to give heads of council the powers they need to remove roadblocks standing in the way of housing. At the same time, this legislation includes robust checks and balances to protect our local democracy. For instance, many of the new powers proposed for the mayors of Toronto and Ottawa under this legislation

would be used to advance provincial priorities. These priorities, Speaker, would be set out in regulation by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. And he has already indicated that our government's commitment to fix the housing supply shortage is at the top of that list.

The minister has said many times publicly that these priorities will include building 1.5 million new homes in 10 years to address the housing supply crisis and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure such as transit and roads to support new and existing residential development. Our government's goal is clear, but let me restate it: We are committed to the creation of 1.5 million new homes over the next 10 years. We know this goal is critical to meet the demands of Ontario's growing population, particularly in large and fast-growing cities like Ottawa and Toronto. And we also know where we stand: Last year, Ontario saw more than 100,000 new housing starts—the highest number in more than 30 years. This data is collected and made readily available to the public by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.

And it's guiding our approach at government moves forward. Because even though our housing starts have reached a level not seen in decades, it is still not enough. We are making progress, but we need to make even more if our provincial housing supply is to meet the needs of Ontarians in the years ahead. The Strong Mayors, Building Homes Act is one important step in this direction. It can empower the mayors of our largest cities to get more homes built faster. We know Ontarians expect their municipal and provincial governments to work together to address the housing supply crisis, and that is what this legislation does.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): There being no further matters to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1903.

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Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
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Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
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Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
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Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
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Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
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Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
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Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
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Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
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Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
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Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
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Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	