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of Ontario



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(Hansard)**

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Jeudi
25 août 2022

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 25 August 2022

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 25 août 2022

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next, we'll have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 10, 2022, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. I have about seven and a half minutes to complete my response to the throne speech of about two weeks ago. I just want to start by reflecting back. I won't repeat what I said in the first part of my response to the throne speech, but I was noting when I was reviewing what I said last time that, in the moment, when this throne speech was first presented, the government was using that opportunity to reassure Ontarians about the state of our hospitals and the crisis in emergency rooms. They were saying things like, "High-urgency patients are finishing their emergency visits within target times," which is not what we're hearing, of course, from hospitals, and continue to hear. So we were commenting on the fact that the government was seeing this all through rose-coloured glasses.

In the meantime, since that throne speech was first presented, the government has used this opportunity to actually leverage what I think is a crisis in our emergency rooms and in health care as an opportunity to further privatize health care in this province and to push patients—vulnerable people—out of hospitals and into long-term-care facilities without their consent, which is another bill which we will be continuing to debate, although apparently which won't be appearing before committee where anybody else in this province will have a chance to comment.

I wanted to start there because I think that's important context, because what the government has gone from in the last few weeks is to take a situation in this province that is very, very dire, which is frightening for so many people in my community and across this province, and then use that and exploit that opportunity to, at the end of

the day, pad the coffers of shareholders and exploit the opportunity to further privatize health care in this province.

One of the things I meant to do the last time I was responding to this is reflect on something that one of my constituents shared with me, because in the first question period of this government, of this session, I asked the Premier and the health minister about whether or not this was the kind of level of care that Ontarians could expect from this government. I had a constituent call me very distraught about the state of our health care system. They brought their son to SickKids after he broke his finger and faced a five-hour wait after being examined in a hallway. When they complained, the staff told them, "Call your MPP. We're exhausted here." And I suspect that people are calling. I think they're calling the members opposite; they're certainly calling us. The government, again, is using this opportunity to take a path toward privatization instead of doing what really needs to be done, which is addressing the staffing crisis.

The government could, right now—and I called for this yesterday in my comments on Bill 7—stop their low-wage policy, stop this arbitrary cap on health care workers and other public sector worker salaries and repeal Bill 124—easy. Just do it.

I want to talk for a few more minutes though and use the opportunity I have now to talk about another area which I think is very important to many Ontarians. When we talk about this government's attempt to privatize public health care—and we've put this government on notice that we will not stand for that and the people of this province will not stand for that. But I wanted to also talk about another area which people in this province care very deeply about, which this government has opened up the door to privatization, and that is education.

Tacked on to this throne speech was the offer of another direct payment program. The finance minister and the education minister continue to have few-to-no details about what's going to happen here, but when we do the math, it really works out to a payment directly to parents of about \$50 per student or per family to cover private tutoring costs. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I have received nothing but outrage from families about this as they face another September with classrooms packed to the rafters and kids who are struggling. What they want to see is actually what their taxes pay for, which is an investment in public education. They know that every dollar that you put into that public education system, you're going to get so much more out of it, and kids are going to benefit so much more from that than from any dollar that's put into a pocket, which is going to pay for,

what—\$50? You might get an hour of tutoring, if you're lucky, and most tutoring programs are going to cost a lot more than that.

The other part of it that I think is really frustrating for families is it puts the onus on parents to go out and supplement their kids' education because this government has let them down again. I've got to tell you, my youngest is now heading into university this year, and so I'm out of that part of the education system to some extent, but the years as a working parent that my partner and I spent trying to support our kids while juggling full-time jobs—this is the reality for so many families, and many more who struggle more and have to juggle multiple jobs. And then to have to think, "Okay, I put my child in this school. I know that their teachers and other education workers care for them and are looking out for them"—but my gosh, the added stress of having to seek out additional support for them, that's something that only very few people have the privilege to do. It's not just a money issue, it's a time issue. It's really difficult for so many families who are already struggling with that.

I wanted to say, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, that the government thinks they can throw 70 bucks or 50 bucks at a family and that that's going to cover up the growing class sizes or the growing mental health and anxiety issues our kids are experiencing. This stripped-down, bare-bones approach to education that denies our children the quality of education they could be getting in so many other countries, frankly, and putting our province and those families at a huge disadvantage is really, very—not just unfortunate; it's really deeply disappointing.

I want to imagine for a moment a future where kids go to school hungry to learn, not hungry for food—it really shouldn't be too much to ask—a future where kids go to school and get the supports they need; where teachers and other education workers aren't exhausted; where you can have one educational assistant maybe per class. Imagine that, instead of one per school or two per school. Imagine a future like that.

But this is where we're at with this government. They had a chance to lay out a plan with solutions to address the crises we face in education and health care and cost of living, and they chose not to. But it's not too late to do the right thing. People aren't looking for business as usual, because that has not been working for them. They want to see all of us here in this place get to work and deliver for them, so I invite the government to work with us, to listen to the voices of front-line workers, to invest in the public services and solutions that will help lift all Ontarians and chart a better, greener future for all of us.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll now invite questions to the member for Davenport, if there are any.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was listening to the member continuing her speech. I find it interesting. We all come to this place with good intentions to provide more hope and opportunity for the residents of Ontario, and I was hoping we would start on a new foot in the sense of, let's invest more in home care, let's invest more in our seniors, let's really lift up Ontarians so they can have a better, brighter

future. And time after time, I just find the opposition, instead of providing solutions and working with us to progress legislation, they just try to stall, and Ontarians can't afford the stall. They need solutions now. They need beds now. They need care now. Students need to go to school now. We can't afford the pause.

0910

If you want to pause the world and get things done in 20 years, great. Maybe that's why you haven't formed government in many years.

But I just want to ask you: Here's your opportunity to really move progress. Will you do it?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the member from Barrie–Innisfil. I think maybe the member missed my speech because I would say that in fact what I was doing was proposing solutions, just not the solutions this government wants.

I have to say, on this point about making it happen faster: Well, first of all, the piece of legislation that we've seen since then, Bill 7, which takes away consent from seniors and families, that's a piece of legislation—yes, this government wants it to move fast. They sure do. They don't even want it to go to committee, where it will have public hearings, where they can hear from the families that will be impacted by this legislation, and that is shameful. And so I would say, no, I don't want to see bad legislation sped through this place without an opportunity for debate.

Again, this government may have elected more members, but have a little humility and think about the people that you are here to serve. It isn't just the people—what, the 41% of people or whatever. It is not just those people. You represent everybody in this province. Those families will be impacted and they deserve a say.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Like most of us, we have three kids. I have seven grandkids, six of them old enough to be in school, and I would say that they are—they're wonderful; they're mine, but they are just like everybody else. Kids in school, 20% of them will excel no matter what, if they're online; 20% of them will struggle no matter what. They need that extra support. And the 60% in the middle, well, they do good in math but not in history etc.

When you look at this and you look at the government's plan to give every parent \$50, how will the 20% of kids who need this extra support, who need the tutoring to be able to achieve their full potential—we know how to support them. We know how to make them thrive and succeed, but they need that extra help. How is the 50 bucks going to help the 20% of kids who need support in order to be able to achieve their full potential?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt, who, I think, always brings such a great perspective to this place and has done such extraordinary work representing her community and all Ontarians.

It's a really good question, because I think about it now, and I mentioned it in my comments, that the work I had to do to help my children when they had struggles with learning—and they did, like many kids out there, and they

are not even kids who struggle the way that some do. When I think about what advantages I had as somebody who could navigate a really complicated system to get them the supports that they need, so many families do not have the time or the ability, quite frankly, and the time and access to that information to be able to assist their kids.

Right now, our system is starved for support. Educational assistants are exhausted. Teachers are exhausted. ECEs are exhausted because they are overwhelmed. And this government chooses instead to give money that, frankly, most parents will never be able to take advantage of, even figuring out how to access those private tutoring services. It would be so much better spent in classrooms right now.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Good morning to everyone in the House.

I had a question just with respect to the speech from the throne. I know the Lieutenant Governor, when she spoke, spoke a little bit about some of the investments and the opportunities in the automotive sector, with \$16 billion in investments in Ontario in manufacturing for electric vehicles as well as the battery plants right here in the province of Ontario, the opportunities that that presents and the challenges that we've overcome in the last four years when most of that sector was looking at leaving the province. Obviously, the government has created the right environment for business to flourish here, whether it be \$7 billion in savings or red tape reductions.

I just want to get your perspective as the official opposition in terms of how you see the automotive sector growing and what we've done so far and what we can do maybe in the future.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member from Oakville for that question. You know, it really is an opportunity to, I would say, start by thanking the union movement, particularly the unions that represent workers in the automotive sector, who have bargained so successfully and worked so hard to attract investment here while at the same time not undermining the wages and working conditions of the people they represent.

I want to use this opportunity in particular to thank my sister from the east coast of this country, Lana Payne, for her successful election as the national president of Unifor. We're proud of you, sister. We know that you're going to do a great job representing so many of the workers and this sector, and working together with us and with government to make sure that we provide more opportunities for the workers of this province and boost our economy at a time when the government people opposite are unfortunately driving down wages and increasing the cost of living.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thanks for the presentation by my colleague. The Conservative government never ran on the privatization of health care. Not once was it discussed at the door, not once did the candidate that was in my area even come to debates. Privatization of health care, with

their 18% of the vote in the province of Ontario, is an absolute disaster. Bill 124 is a disaster.

The new word that the PCs are using is "innovative." That's their new word. It's not innovative to have seniors taken out of our hospitals without consent. It's not innovative to have people call 911—they're supposed to get an ambulance, and they end up getting a cab. So my question is very clear: Is it a myth that seniors moved without consent is not in the bill?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the member. Yes, I would say absolutely it's a myth. Bill 7, which is what the member is referring to, is full of the mention of being able to move seniors and take all these measures without consent. That's absolutely what it's built on. We heard the Minister of Long-Term Care yesterday—not in this chamber, when he was asked directly, but outside in scrums with the media—confirm that they were going to actually be billing those seniors for taking up beds if they don't take the first bed offered to them—which is shameful, because that could be anywhere in this province.

I want to also thank the member for mentioning that privatization of health care was not something that this government ran on in the election. We know that. We suspected it; we told people that this was what was coming. But I'll tell you one of the things that really upsets me right now is that when I talk to people in my community, they will tell you that they never expected—especially grandparents—that they would have a situation in this province—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Thank you. Question? The member from Mississauga–Malton.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's always great to see you in that chair. As you know, I'm proud that our government, through the speech from the throne, is making investments. We are investing in rebuilding Ontario's economy by creating new jobs with bigger paycheques, supporting workers by raising the minimum wage and investing in skilled training and skilled workers. I actually had an opportunity to visit one with the Hammer Heads.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member opposite, do you support these kinds of investments that we are doing into the skilled trades strategy and into the youth as our leaders of the future?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you to the member for Mississauga–Malton. What I would like to see, and I think we do have—we obviously need to address those issues. I would refer to the member from Scarborough Southwest, who has presented this government repeatedly with some really good plans and innovations—real innovation that would actually help us to accelerate the placement, for example, of health care workers who are internationally trained in our system. This is what we need to see happen here.

I would say I would differ with the member on his characterization of the kinds of jobs this government is creating. What we're not seeing in this province are decent wages, are decent jobs being created. What we're seeing

is a government that is freezing the wages of the hardest-working people in our province—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Rick Byers: Good morning, members. It is my pleasure to offer my inaugural speech in this chamber. As I was preparing my remarks for this morning's presentation, I realized that I don't think I've ever spoken for 20 minutes straight, so this will be an adventure. At the same time, it's something I clearly will have to get used to. Who knows? Sometime soon, I may think that 20 minutes is only a healthy introduction.

0920

To be one of only 1,968 members to have stood in this chamber in all of the history of our great province of Ontario is still something I'm getting used to. I understand from the Clerk that I'm member number 1,937. I like that number. Seeing those names in the corridors of this beautiful building and knowing that we are continuing the important work that they undertook is a little overwhelming. As I hope to outline in this speech, though, I want to focus on the outcomes of government, as I know they did over the past 155 years.

I want to begin my remarks by thanking the people who were so supportive in helping me with my journey to this chamber, beginning with my dear wife, Margot Byers. Margot is here with us this morning. Margot and I will have been married for 36 years as of next month. She has been a caring and loving partner and fantastic mother of our three sons. She has also been tremendously supportive and patient as I've pursued elected office many times, as you will hear shortly. Thank you for everything, Margot.

Margot and I have been blessed with three fantastic sons: Adrian, Peter and Cameron, who are actively pursuing careers in health care, finance and engineering. Thank you for being who you are. You make us proud every day.

I'm delighted that our fantastic and multi-talented daughter-in-law Teresa Silva-Byers is here as well. She and Adrian will have been married three years as of next month. Thank you, Teresa, and welcome.

My mother, Mary Byers, is here as well. In addition to being a great mother and a very accomplished author, she is a big reason why I am standing in this chamber today. You see, she and my father, David Byers, were very active in the PC association and campaigns for Len Reilly, who was the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, which is where we lived when I was young. In fact, when Mr. Reilly announced that he was not running and Roy McMurtry was thinking of running, Roy first asked my dad if he wanted to run. Roy would have supported my dad if he had wanted to run. But Dad was not interested, and Roy McMurtry not only became a member here, but of course had a distinguished career as Ontario's Attorney General and Solicitor General. So thank you, Mom, for who you are and for lighting the spark that led me here today. Dad passed away 26 years ago, but I know he would have been pleased to see today happen, and I know he's looking down from a gallery above.

Of course, I also want to thank the constituents of the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I am very grateful for the confidence you showed in me as a new candidate in this past election. The voters sent me to Queen's Park with a solid margin, and I will be forever grateful. I will work hard to earn your trust every day.

I want to recognize, as well, the incredible work of our dedicated campaign team. We are fortunate to have a history of campaign success in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, but we take nothing for granted and always work like we're 500 votes behind. This time was no different. We all worked our tails off putting up signs, getting to the doors, raising funds and running the office. And in the end, we got it done. So I want to thank our core team, also known as the A Team, for all their dedication, support and friendship: Karen, Carol, Dave, Bill, Jo, Sharon, Don, Bob, Paul, Tyler, Ted and John—from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

And finally, there were so many friends who supported my campaign efforts, from former work colleagues, friends who used to live in the riding, and friends and supporters from past campaigns. Clay, Jim, Larry, Bill, Andrew, Michael and many more—thank you for your guidance and friendship.

I now want to acknowledge the person who represented Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound from 2011 to 2022, Mr. Bill Walker.

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Mr. Rick Byers: Hear, hear.

Bill could not be here today, as he is active with his new job. We know he will be here again soon.

Bill grew up in the riding, in the booming metropolis of Hepworth. He was very active in sports, and I understand he developed his speaking ability while playing third base for various baseball teams in the riding.

Bill was successfully elected in 2011, 2014 and 2018. I was Bill's campaign manager in 2018. He worked actively for our community during his two terms in opposition, including as critic for long-term care. But it was during his last mandate, when in government, where Bill was able to really deliver so fully for our Grey-Bruce community: three new schools, three daycare facilities, broadband investments throughout the riding, 958 new and upgraded long-term-care beds and, of course, the new hospital being built in Markdale. What a track record. That is getting it done.

These accomplishments would not have happened without Bill's energy and dedication. You've heard of the Energizer bunny; we called him Energizer Billy to acknowledge how hard he worked every day. As members here know, Bill's friendship and team approach defined how he operated all the time. Oh, and of course, saying over 127,000 words in this chamber in one year and having a drink—the Billy Walker—named after him were also an important part of his legacy.

Bill, thank you for all you've done for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and who you've been throughout your terms of service. You've served your community and your province with distinction.

I want to also take a moment to acknowledge Bill Murdoch, who represented Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound from 1990 to 2011. As members know, Bill passed away last week. He was an extraordinary and incredibly active member of the Grey–Bruce community and of this chamber. His name is carved on the walls five times. Bill’s legacy will long be remembered and cherished. Many current members served with Bill and have related fond memories of his work here at Queen’s Park. I know we will have an opportunity to formally remember Bill Murdoch in this House sometime soon, and I know we all look forward to that presentation. Thank you, Bill, for your great work and for being the great person you were.

Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is a big and beautiful riding. From the southern communities of Hanover and Dundalk up to Tobermory, it is 175 kilometres from end to end. Our biggest centre is Owen Sound, at 21,600 people. It’s where my constituency office is located, which is run by Ontario’s best constituency team: Julie, Lisa and Karen. Thank you so much for your excellent support.

The economic base of the riding is heavily agricultural, with large beef, dairy and cash crop producers throughout. In addition, there’s a solid economic base, with a variety of excellent businesses, including Chapman’s ice cream, in Markdale, and Bruce Power, in our colleague Lisa Thompson’s riding, but with substantial operations in Owen Sound and in my riding. Both of these companies were excellent community stewards during COVID.

Of course, I could not discuss Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound without referring to the significance of the landscape, which we are so fortunate to enjoy. Whether it’s the harbour and islands around Tobermory, the beautiful grotto on Georgian Bay or the rugged beauty of the Beaver Valley, our home is a beautiful and scenic place to live. Please come and visit.

And, of course, we’d love to see you up in Wiarton on Groundhog Day, where you can see and hear Wiarton Willie make the bold prediction about when spring will come. The Premier has been to see Willie, and we sure hope he will be back. Trust me, watching fireworks at 7 a.m. on a cold winter morning is something you will not soon forget.

So why am I here now and what was the journey that got me here? Well, my journey started in grade 3. I was attending John Ross Robertson public school. I enjoyed math, playing the recorder and recess. Then our teacher, Miss Redmond, told us one day that there would be an election for mayor of the grade. So I ran for mayor of grade 3. Who does that? But it was fun. I had a neat slogan: “Want a New Pair of Plyers? Vote Byers for Mayor.” It rhymed very well. There were three candidates: me, another boy and a girl named Janet Cameron. Of course, I didn’t win, as the boys either voted for me or the other fellow, and all the girls voted for Janet. It was my first taste of vote-splitting. But I’d caught the political bug.

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Next was four years later and my chance to be a page here in the Ontario Legislature. It was 1972—that’s right, 50 years ago. Now, I know some of you are saying, “Rick,

you look so young. Are you sure it wasn’t 30 years ago?” Others are probably saying, “It’s probably more like 70 years.” Anyway, regardless of the time, my interest in being a page came from my parents’ active involvement in our local riding.

So in the spring of 1972, in the 29th Parliament, I was here. Bill Davis was Premier, Bob Nixon was Leader of the Opposition, and the cabinet included Bette Stephenson, Darcy McKeough and Frank Miller. It was a thrill. I loved it every day. I even got the seating plan signed by almost all the members. I still have it. The bug was getting more active.

The next step was a chance to work for Michael Wilson in Ottawa, when he was Minister of Finance. I worked on his staff in a tax policy role. It was a tough environment back then, with rising interest rates and challenging inflation—sound familiar? I was involved in four budgets and with many policy areas, including helping structure everybody’s favourite sales tax, the GST. But the lesson that stuck with me from that work was the willingness of a government to make the tough but right decisions, even if the politics were difficult. I saw that first-hand. It had a big impact.

My work with Mike Wilson triggered a career in finance with BMO Capital Markets and then the OMERS pension plan. I worked with governments on financial and infrastructure matters, and I enjoyed and appreciated seeing public policy’s perspective from the viewpoint of a commercial partner and the financial markets.

During this time, we were living in Oakville and raising our family there. And during this time, I ran in three elections: federally in 2000 and 2004, and provincially in 2007. I lost each time. Who does that? I must hold some record for most electoral losses in Oakville. Oh, well. I mention these political losses not to relive the memory of having gone through them, but because they have instilled two lessons which I hope to use to my benefit in my current role as a member.

The first lesson: While losing hurts, it makes finally winning even more cherished. More importantly, though, it motivates you to focus even more on serving your community. As I noted earlier, I will never take for granted the voters of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who gave me this amazing opportunity to serve the community and the province—never.

Secondly, I believe it has made me focus more on the outcomes of government, rather than on the process. When I was asked by the party to be a candidate for this election, the previous losses made me think very hard about whether I should try again. Margot, of course, had the best perspective. She said, “If you don’t run, I won’t listen to you for one second on how good you might have been as a member”—sound advice. My decision to run ultimately focused on my desire to get things done for the community and for the province; in other words, the outcomes of government. That is certainly what I hope will guide my actions in this chamber.

That’s why I was so pleased to hear the major elements of the throne speech, as delivered by the Lieutenant

Governor: building our health care system, building an economy with better jobs and bigger paycheques, building Ontario's roads and transit infrastructure to keep Ontarians moving, building the workforce we need for the jobs of tomorrow, and building more homes that people can afford. These will all be important outcomes and results from our work together here in this chamber. They will deliver important results in our communities and for the province. For me, these goals reinforce why I'm so happy to have made this long journey to the Legislature of Ontario.

As I look at the clock, I see that miracles do happen and that I'm approaching my 20-minute limit. Further, as Jim Flaherty used to say, I've gone on for almost as long as it seems. So let me finish with a story that will put in further context how I plan to think about the challenge we will face in this 43rd Parliament. The story is set in Antarctica. You see, when I was leaving OMERS in mid-2015, I was approached by a great organization called the True Patriot Love Foundation about an upcoming expedition. True Patriot Love is a fantastic foundation that raises money to fund programs for injured Canadian veterans and their families. They had organized and run expeditions to various exciting places since their start-up in 2009. In fact, our colleague Peter Bethlenfalvy went on an expedition to the North Pole in 2014. He told me it was an incredible adventure.

True Patriot Love said there was a group of 10 veterans and 20 civilians going to Antarctica to climb Mount Vinson—at 16,050 feet, the highest peak on the continent—and would I like to come? Well, of course, anyone who gets asked that question says yes, right? Well, I did end up saying yes and went on this extraordinary adventure to Antarctica in January 2016.

We flew to Punta Arenas at the southern tip of South America, then took a military transport to Antarctica that landed safely on a glistening ice runway. We camped in the intense white of an Antarctica summer, which is a balmy minus 25 degrees most days, with sunlight 24 hours a day. We moved progressively day by day towards the summit opportunity.

To make it to the actual summit, though, we had to traverse a long, narrow ridge at the top of the mountain. It was about 60 metres long and about two metres wide. We were roped together in teams of five. About halfway along the ridge, our group paused. I had a chance to look around. To my left was 45-degree slope and a beautiful white mountainous scene. I remember thinking to myself, "This is fine. If I were to trip, my team could easily secure me." All was good.

Then I looked down to my right. About 18 inches from my right boot, it was 1,000 feet pretty well straight down. "Yikes," I said. "Byers, quit being a tourist and take your next step and make sure it's the best step you can take." So I did.

Happily, everyone in our group made it to the summit and safely back to camp. A few days later, we took the transport off the ice. What an adventure.

After our celebrations and storytelling though, and coming back safely, I had a chance to reflect on that moment many times: the goal of taking the best next step. I realized that those words can well apply beyond being on a mountain. In fact, it doesn't matter whether you're near the summit, at work, with your family or managing your next challenge, the goal should be to make sure you take the best next step.

I believe this thinking can also apply to our role in government. We all know we are facing significant challenges in so many areas. Whether it's health care, housing, education, the economy or other issues, I believe it's critical for us to think in terms of taking the next step and making sure it's the best one we can take. That's the thinking I hope to bring to my work here in the Legislature, and I know you will hold me to account for that approach.

So, colleagues, thank you for this opportunity to share some thoughts about my journey to this important place and the approach I hope to take. I look forward to working with you all and, together, taking the best next step.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Mr. Chris Glover: I thank the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for your comments. I will agree with you on one thing: It is a beautiful area that you represent. I've got a friend in Oliphant and I drive through that area many, many times. It's an absolutely gorgeous area.

Look, I'm going to use my question as an opportunity to make a personal plea to you. One of the issues that I'm most concerned about in my riding and across this province is homelessness. Homelessness is not just in downtown Toronto; it is across this province. I was just reading a report from Grey Bruce public health. They interviewed 77 residents who are experiencing homelessness: 38% of those have a physical disability, 67% have a mental illness.

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One of the issues that we are facing is that ODSP rates do not provide enough funding for housing, so half of the people, the 16,000 people in this province who are experiencing homelessness, have either a physical or an intellectual disability or mental illness. And so the government's proposing to increase ODSP rates by 5%, which would increase the housing allowance from \$497 to \$520. That's not going to provide housing. People are going to be—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for the question, and I share your views and concerns about homelessness. We do see it in our riding, whether it's Owen Sound, Hanover, there are pockets of homelessness. I know it's being worked on well—in fact, two responses that have been very significant. One, there was a huge investment through Grey Bruce Health Services of about \$6 million recently for increased mental health support and facilities at the Owen Sound hospital, so we sure look towards using those resources to help.

And on ODSP, I understand the views. I would say, the increase of 5% is significant and linking it to inflation, but

also, so many other programs apply that support those in need. But we share the concern with you about homelessness.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question? The member for Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You are looking great in the chair.

And thank you to my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. It is a beautiful riding. You talk about your landscape and the water and the green—always, I miss your riding. Thank you for your election. Thank you for bringing your wonderful family to the chamber, and congratulations on your election.

My colleague comes from the municipal world. He understands the housing crisis is not only facing Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, but Ontario as a whole. Tell me about the throne speech—elaborate on that—bringing hope and dreams to the next generation of Canadians of having a home, having a roof over their heads. Please elaborate on that.

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for his question. And welcome to Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I look forward to seeing you on Groundhog Day. It's a frosty morning, February 2, but I look forward to seeing you there.

Look, on housing, we share the view that more needs to be done. We see that. Listen, I know it personally. I've got three sons who are looking for spots for sale. We know it directly. That's why I'm so pleased about the work that our government is doing and the commitment to build 150,000 new homes a year. And 100,000, the highest in 30 years, have been built already this past year.

I want to work to get it done. This is one of the important outcomes of government I talked about. I look forward to working with members in the House and our members in our local community in Grey county and getting it done. Thank you for your question. I agree with your approach.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Lise Vaugois: Welcome to the House. We are arriving at the same time to this place, and I'm sure you're finding it as interesting as I am.

The most important action this government could take to address the health care crisis would be to repeal Bill 124 and remove the wage repression experienced by our existing health care workers. I have noticed that it seems that there are certain words that the members of the government are not allowed to utter.

So I have a two-part question. Are you allowed to say the words "Bill 124," and if so, could you please address why this government will not repeal the bill or even mention it?

Mr. Rick Byers: I'm pleased to reference Bill 124. And I think that it's clear to me—and again, early days in my time here in the House—but we agree about the need for building and improving our health care system throughout the province. We get that.

What you've got from our side is a very tangible plan for huge investment in health care facilities over the next

decade, long-term care and on and on. I understand the significant support that has been delivered through the health care system in the last several years: over 10,000 new health care workers hired since March 2020 and other supports that have been given.

I know I'm aware of the questions in the community. I have heard them. We'll work to make sure there are proper resources to support our patients and health care systems in the province and in my riding.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, I want to congratulate PA Byers and Margot for the election. It's always a family affair. By the way, my family's favourite place is Tobermory, so I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

I was looking at your past, and I saw that you've been actively giving back to the community as vice-chair of the South East Grey Community Health Centre, the Royal Canadian Legion, Christ Church Markdale. It's incredible when you see the members coming and giving back to the community. This is what we are here doing.

My question to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound would be, what is some of the legacy work that you want to do for your riding going forward as a member of provincial Parliament?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for his question, and I appreciate his observation. We all do a lot of work to support our communities, and I've been pleased in my last years of not-full-time work—which of course has changed now—to have been involved in several elements in the community.

I will mention the South East Grey Community Health Centre, because it's a great point that you've mentioned. Here is a community health centre that is staffed significantly by nurse practitioners and some visiting doctors, which provides fantastic care in the community. I love that model. One of the things that I want to get done is that they're looking to build a new facility in Dundalk—of course, the source of the famous bee-swallowing incident recently. We want to get a new facility for the South East Grey Community Health Centre down there and get it done to continue to expand health care services in our community.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's rather interesting, because I was also going to ask you about the South East Grey Community Health Centre, a community health centre—like all of them—where care is based on needs, not on ability to pay; where people who have complex needs can be taken care of by an interdisciplinary team. Not only do they have nurse practitioners, they also have social workers and they have nutritionists, and they all work together so that they can make people as healthy as they can and support them if they have complex needs.

I was happy to just hear you say that you support the model. There are about 20 communities in Ontario that have been waiting for a long time for a community health centre or a satellite of a community health centre. Would you help advocate so that your government funds those

communities who have been waiting such a long time for a community health centre?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for your question. I'm glad you have, it sounds like, great knowledge of the community health centre model. I must say, I've been indirectly involved in it for the last three years on the board. I love it. I think it's a very practical model and something that, in answer to your question, I will happily advocate for, on seeing it expanded.

I think it's very practical, and as you said, it's not just health care, all sorts of community programs apply. It's an important part of our primary care model, and I think that's the other element that we've been talking a lot about: hospitals, but our primary care infrastructure. It's also important that we build out and coordinate and support other elements of health care, so I look forward to supporting the community health centre model.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was happy to hear the Lieutenant Governor give the speech from the throne, but I must say that one of the sentences that she said within the first five minutes—the first five minutes of her speech was really focused on health care, understandably. We just came out of a pandemic, and COVID-19 is still around. But the sentence that really bothered me was, “Together, let's build a health system that better cares for patients and keeps our province open.”

I have no problem building better care for patients, but we have to look at the link that was made right at the beginning of the throne speech, that our health care system should be there to support people based on their needs, not on their ability to pay. It does not exist to keep our province open.

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So why does this link bother me? Do I want our province to be open? Absolutely. Some 20% of the small businesses in Nickel Belt closed or went bankrupt during the pandemic. Those businesses did nothing wrong. Those businesses did what the government told them to do. They closed down when the government told them to do so, but yet there was no support for them to stay open. There was no support for them to make it to the other side of the pandemic. And 20% of the small businesses in Nickel Belt do not exist anymore through no fault of their own—that is, people that don't have jobs anymore; that is, families that need to find other ways to support themselves; that is, businesses that have been there for three generations that are not there anymore. That means, whether you go to Place Bonaventure Mall in Chelmsford, or to the Hanmer mall, there are more empty places in the malls than there are businesses still open. Do I want our province to stay open? Yes, absolutely. I don't want to lose any more businesses in Nickel Belt.

But I also want our health care system to be true to Canadian values. When Tommy Douglas brought us medicare, he made it clear that care will be based on need, not on ability to pay. This is a value that defines us as Canadians. This is a value that really distinguishes us from

our friends to the south. In Canada, you get the care you need based on your health needs, not on your ability to pay. Whether you are a two-year-old, newborn or a 102-year-old person, you will get the care you need. But all of this is under threat right now, Speaker.

When we look at Bill 7 that the government introduced, where you will take away the right to consent from frail, elderly people needing long-term care, so that you could free up beds so that our hospitals allow our businesses to stay open? This is to put the burden of all of this on the shoulders of frail, elderly people. How, as a society, could we even contemplate doing things like this?

Do I want our hospitals to be there? Yes, absolutely. Do I want them to have enough beds for the care that we need? Yes, absolutely. Have I had it up to here with hallway health care? Yes. My hospital, Health Sciences North, has been full at over 120% every single month for the last three years, except for that little wee part there during COVID where they were allowed to stop everything. They're still full. I didn't look at the stats this morning, but yesterday they were at 124%. What does that mean? That means that every single bed is full. That means that the hallways on four north and four east have at least four beds in all of them. That mean that there is no more shower room—we have patients in there. That means that this big, ugly room beside the morgue in the basement of the hospital has at least eight patients in there, in beds with no bathroom, no call bell. This is what hallway health care looks like in northern Ontario, and I don't want any of this.

But there is so much that we could do. First, invest in home care. Our home care system was privatized by the last Conservative government that was there. Remember, it was called the Common Sense Revolution. The private sector was going to deliver home care faster, better, cheaper than the public system. Fast-forward to 2022: Would anybody say that our home care system does a good job? Absolutely not. It fails more people than it helps, every single day.

I will give you some examples. I don't have the right to share her name, but we'll call her by her initials. D.R. has concerns regarding home care services for her husband, Mr. R. She has been trying to reach her care coordinator for two weeks. She leaves voicemails, but does not receive a call back. She had heard from a PSW from Bayshore that the hours of care for her husband will be cut from four hours a day to two and a half hours a day, because there is a lack of staffing.

Mr. R. just returned home from the hospital two weeks ago. He is quadriplegic and spends most of his days in bed. She wants her husband to have proper care at home; so does he. But with two and a half hours—when you're quadriplegic, it requires quite a bit of care and requires the skill to be able to provide that care. There are very good PSWs that have been working with that family for a long time, but now her hours of care are being cut, because there are not enough PSWs to do the job.

We all know how to fix this. We have been told over and over again. How do you fix the shortage of PSWs in our home care system? Let me repeat it, Speaker: The

government can, today, pass the law that we would all agree to this morning, to make 70% of jobs in the home care system permanent, full-time, well-paid, with benefits, sick days, a pension plan and a workload that people can handle—problem solved.

There are tens of thousands of PSWs that are good at what they do, that care for the people, that have the knowledge and the skill to care for a quadriplegic patient in his home who wants to stay with his family in his community. But if they work for home care, if they work for Bayshore, none of them have a permanent job, none of them have a full-time job, none of them get paid enough to be able to pay the rent and feed their kids. So rather than taking a shift with Bayshore, they will take a shift with Home Depot, with Giant Tiger, because Giant Tiger will pay them more than what they get when they work hard as a PSW.

In my riding, I serve 33 small, local communities in northeastern Ontario. The communities are far apart. They come to me and they show me—every two weeks they submit their mileage. They could have 800 kilometres of mileage. They could have 600 kilometres of mileage for what they do in a two-week period of time. Do they get paid? How long do you figure it takes to travel 800 kilometres on the not-so-good roads we have in northern Ontario? It takes hours and hours. They don't get paid for that travel time. They get 34 cents per kilometre. You can go to Foleyet. There is one gas station, and gas is at \$2.29. How far do you figure that 34 cents brings you? Not very far.

It is better to go do a shift at Giant Tiger at minimum wage than it is to care for Mr. R., who is quadriplegic and who needs home care. This is wrong. Why can we not respect PSWs? Why can we not respect the fact that 90% of people want to stay home, that we have tens of thousands of PSWs who are good at what they do, who want to care for people, who went to school to do this, but who cannot pay their rent and feed their kids if they work as a PSW in home care? Why can we not change this today? It would make such a huge difference.

Mr. R. will end up in the hospital, he will end up being labelled ALC, and he will end up in a long-term-care home an hour's drive away from his family.

I can give you the example of—again, I don't have permission to share her name, but we'll call her G.B. Mr. B.'s wife is the primary caregiver at home. She called for assistance. Her husband receives home care, and she receives respite. Her husband has dementia. He's diagnosed with Alzheimer's and is on dialysis three days a week for his kidneys. She takes care of him most of the time, but she was receiving respite hours on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays—three hours three days a week. She decided to take her husband on a little holiday. It was summer, COVID was finally lifted; let's go for a little holiday. When she returned, she realized that her home care had been cancelled. She has not received any respite care since then. She spoke to her care coordinator at the Home and Community Care Support Services and she is saying that there are not enough PSWs to reinstate her respite care.

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She spoke to a PSW at Canadian Shield and she told her that there are a lot of PSWs available, but, again, they need to pay the rent and feed their kids and they will make more money working at Giant Tiger, Home Depot or Tim Hortons than they will—she is very disappointed. Nobody told her that if she was to take her husband on a little holiday, they were going to lose their respite care.

I have Mrs. C.K.: Mrs. K. reached out to our office with her concerns. She says that her care coordinator from Home and Community Care Support Services North East told her that she had too many home care hours and they were going to make some cuts because the guidelines had been changed. Mr. K. had been receiving home care since 2019.

She says that she received one hour in the morning and half an hour at night, which equalled 10 and a half hours per week. It's for her, not for her husband. They help her dress, make her bed, bathe her, change her commode, wash her hair in the sink during the hours that they are there in the morning, and the half an hour at night is to change her commode and get her ready for bed. Now, she has one hour per day. The half hour has been cut off at night. All of this, she is told, is because of budget cuts and her care will be down to a minimum.

We all know what will happen, Speaker. This woman won't be able to stay at home. Everybody needs to be washed. Everybody needs to sleep in their bed. You cannot sleep in a wheelchair; you will end up with a pressure ulcer on your butt, or anywhere else, and then you end up in the hospital. And then the doctor will say it's not safe for you to go back home, and then you are labelled ALC. Then, apparently, you take up a bed in our hospital and you are not keeping our province open, because this is how this government looks at that.

I have another failure of home care here: Mrs. D. lives in Hanmer. Her husband broke his neck several years ago and he has slowly deteriorated. She sold their home and moved to something that would be more accessible to him, but he has been in the hospital following a fall. She wants to bring him back home. She moved to a place that will be easier for him. But there is no home care. He needs a lift to get out of bed and into his wheelchair to get around. He was sent to rehab for three months. Everybody feels that he would be ready to go back home, and there is no home care.

She has made an inquiry of her own. She found home care. She went and bought the equipment. She moved their home into a place that will be wheelchair-accessible so that her husband could come back home. But there is no PSW to provide the home care that her husband needs.

The hospital and the rehab says that with one hour a day, she would probably be able to manage having him at home. Think about this. For the sake of one hour with a PSW—most of them are paid \$18 an hour—for the sake of the government investing \$18 a day into this family—he is in the hospital. He has been labeled ALC in the hospital. It costs the taxpayers \$500, \$600 a day to keep him there. He will be transferred to a long-term-care home

where the government will be investing about \$187 a day—for the sake of \$18 for one hour with a PSW to bring this man back home.

I can talk about Mrs. M.R. Mrs. M.R. lives in Whitefish in my riding. She is on home and community care support services and has a plan of care for a PSW to go to her house every day for an hour to help her dress, put her braces on etc. When she was discharged from the hospital, the care went pretty good for many years. Now, the PSWs, day after day, don't show up. If there's nobody to help her, then she is at very high risk of a fall because she needs help to put her leg braces on. When she talked to the scheduler at Bayshore, the scheduler at Bayshore told her that it will get worse before it gets better. This patient is getting worse. She has cancer. She is partially blind. She needs home care. Again, for the sake of one hour a day of a PSW coming to help, Mrs. M.R., who lives in Whitefish in my riding, is going to end up in the hospital, and she's going to end up being labelled an ALC patient. She's going to end up in a nursing home for the sake of one hour of a PSW a day.

I could keep going on and on, but I see that I have very little time left.

To keep our hospitals open, certainly, fix our home care system. It is very economical to keep people in their own home. This is what people want. The best quality of life is to be in your own home, with the people you love, in the neighbourhood you know, with the people who support you, with your circle of care. And yet, we have a privatized home care system that does not respect their PSWs, that cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce, which means that for the one hour a day of a PSW—I've given you three or four examples. I have pages and pages of examples all from my riding, but in every single one of our ridings it is the same story. We could keep all of those people safely at home if we fix our home care system rather than taking away their right to consent.

We could also do a whole lot to help our hospitals if we were to invest in community mental health. When we see where the investments are being made, in more in-patient mental health rehab—unfortunately, 90% of them who go to those beds will relapse because they don't have the support in their community. We have billions of dollars coming from the federal government. Invest them into supporting people with mental health issues and addictions in their own homes so that they will not end up in the ER, in our hospitals.

There is lots that could be done to help make sure that our hospital system, our safety net in our health care system, is there when we need it. But taking away the right of elderly people to consent to their assessment for long-term care and taking away the right of frail, elderly people to consent to sharing their personal information and having people access their personal health information is not something in line with the values of Ontarians. We should run away from this and fix the part of our health care system that would keep our hospitals free.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Again, I always pay attention to what the members opposite say as a slogan here, "Listen to the Other Side," but time after time there are still no solutions.

Our government is proposing lots of solutions in terms of helping our seniors, getting them the care they need, investing in home care.

I think it's rich because the members talk about home care, but when they had an opportunity to vote for record investments in home care, they voted against it.

Now you have an opportunity to vote for better quality of care for seniors who do not want to stay—it's their choice. They don't want to stay in a hospital. They have a better opportunity to go somewhere—better for their families. And yet, you're still opposing it.

So I ask the member: What solutions are you going to come to the table with that Ontarians can actually move forward with and our government can move forward with?

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M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you for asking a question about home care. The solutions in home care are clear. To continue to invest into the for-profit companies that dominate our home care system, when there are no checks and balances, does not give us better home care.

To give us better home care, mandate permanent full-time—mandate 70% of jobs in home care to be permanent, full-time, well-paid, with benefits, sick days and pension plans, and the problem will be solved. You will make a huge difference. Tens of thousands of PSWs who presently work elsewhere will come back to the job that they love, to the job that they are good at doing.

By keeping all of those people in their homes, you free up beds in the hospitals. There are solutions that are within the government's control to help free up beds in the hospitals. I hope you will do it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Let's be clear: It was the Conservative government that privatized home care and privatized long-term care. And let's also be clear: We know that under this Conservative government's watch, 5,000 of our seniors—parents, grandparents, mothers-in-law—have died in long-term care, in for-profit homes. Just last week, Madam Speaker, 40 died—in the last two weeks.

Knowing this, do we feel it's okay to give medical information of patients—seniors—to long-term-care providers without their consent, which is in Bill 7?

M^{me} France Gélinas: In order for our health care system to work, people have to have trust. You need to be able to trust that the person who you're talking to will respect you. How do we make sure that this trust is maintained, so that people continue to get quality care? We always ask for consent.

If you share information with a physician, with a nurse, with a lab tech, with a physio or whatever, they are bound to keep that information secret. Nobody will know. The bill, Bill 7, takes away that right, takes away that bond. Now health care professionals will be able to access information without your consent—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Thank you. Question?

Mr. Deepak Anand: I just want to acknowledge the member from Nickel Belt. It's always a pleasure listening to you and listening to the issues that pertain to our health care system.

I just want to talk about the investments made by our government, especially talking about the Weeneebayko Area Health Authority health campus of care, a new culturally appropriate health campus that will include a new hospital and lodge, as well as a new ambulatory care centre on Moose Factory Island. Another example is building a new francophone community health centre to consolidate primary care, nursing, and mental health and addictions services in a modern facility. Another long-term-care project is the Golden Manor project, building 50 new long-term-care beds—and the list goes on.

My question to the member is simple: Do you support these investments, and do you support this throne speech?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I think that we should always be very careful with taxpayers' money. I think that we should always make sure that we get the best value for money from taxpayers' money.

We just came out of a pandemic. We have seen the difference between private, for-profit long-term-care homes, where two times or three times more people died than in not-for-profit. When you see the difference is so clear in the quality of care—it costs the exact same to the taxpayer to invest in a not-for-profit home as it does to invest in a for-profit home. Why not make sure that we get the best value for taxpayers' money and invest in a not-for-profit long-term-care home, as opposed to what you're doing?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It's now time for members' statements.

Debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WOMEN'S CRISIS SERVICES OF WATERLOO REGION

Ms. Jess Dixon: I'm standing up today to shout out a great organization hard at work in my riding of Kitchener South—Hespeler: Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region. Their mandate is to support women and children in moving beyond abuse through outreach services, education and safe shelter.

Last Friday, I got a tour of their newest project, Aspen Place. Aspen Place is a residential building, a triplex that the organization was able to buy outright back in May. It will provide transitional housing for up to a year for women and children fleeing abuse. The building was purchased largely through community support, but our local ReStore, Home Hardware and Activa homes were especially generous.

Aspen Place is meant to feel like a home, not a shelter, and I was so touched and impressed by the dedication of

the crisis services staff to making that goal a reality. When I was there, I met Faune and Ashley, who were both absolutely covered in sawdust and paint and hard at work cutting down cabinets to build toy storage.

Jen Hutton is the CEO, and we had a great conversation about how financial dependence binds women to abusive partners. I got the chance to share some of the amazing retraining and skills upgrading initiatives developed by our very own Monte McNaughton. Jen and I are excited to meet again soon and talk about how our government is continuing to empower women to achieve financial independence through new employment opportunities.

Today is the official ribbon-cutting for Aspen Place. I can't be there in person, but I'm there in spirit. Great work, ladies. I appreciate all that you do.

CANADA SUMMER GAMES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It is my pleasure to recognize the 2022 Canada Summer Games in Niagara that officially came to a close Sunday, August 21. I had the opportunity to witness many visitors and victories by impressive athletes from all across Canada. These young individuals showed true sportsmanship and dedication to their sport.

It was truly an honour to present winning medals to these athletes at beach volleyball, long jump and rowing events that took place over the past two weeks. A huge congratulations to all 509 athletes from Team Ontario for collecting a total of 198 medals: 86 gold, 60 silver and 52 bronze. You have made all of us very proud, and you should be incredibly proud of your personal accomplishments, going home to your family and friends, knowing you served your province and did your best. These wins would not have been possible without the guidance of many coaches, managers and parents. Thank you for your dedication to uplifting young athletes.

Big wins were also celebrated by 12 provinces and territories that participated in the Summer Games. Thank you to the dedication of 3,000-plus volunteers who really gave a gold medal performance.

As the Canada Games torchbearer for St. Catharines, the 2022 games will forever remain a special memory. We are all very much looking forward to watching the 2023 Summer Games in Prince Edward Island next year with Team Ontario sweeping another big win.

VETERANS

Mr. Andrew Dowie: One week ago, I had the sincere privilege to represent our government at the national ceremony for the 80th anniversary of the Dieppe raid hosted in Windsor by Veterans Affairs Canada. It was a tremendous honour to meet three veterans at the ceremony, each of whom epitomized courage under fire and sacrificed so much to protect us.

Sapper John L. Date was presented with the National Order of the Legion of Honour at the event from Colonel Bruno Heluin of the government of France, recognizing

his service with the 11th Canadian Field Regiment in the Dieppe raid.

Also recognized for their service to Canada were Arthur Boon of Perth–Middlesex, who served with the Canadian Forces on the beaches of Normandy, France, on D-Day; and Charles Davis of Windsor–Tecumseh, a proud veteran of the Normandy campaign, who landed on Juno Beach on D-Day plus four.

It was a sincere honour to meet, have dinner and speak with Mr. Date, Mr. Boon and Mr. Davis last week, and I want to thank them tremendously for their service to us. I'd like to take this opportunity as well to congratulate Mr. Davis in advance for his upcoming 100th birthday on September 27.

A special thanks to Veterans Affairs Canada for delivering a national ceremony in Windsor that demonstrated tremendous dignity and respect for the sacrifice of our veterans.

1020

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just want to talk for a moment this morning; I'm looking forward to speaking a bit about our health care system, because we in Ontario cherish our public health care system. The right to health care for everyone regardless of income or where they live is part of our identity as Canadians. So it's no surprise Ontarians are reacting to this government's recent attack on public health care and seniors' care with growing fear and anxiety.

I want to take the few moments that I have here this morning to speak to something very specific, which is this government's decision to table a time allocation motion on their government bill, Bill 7, on long-term care. This is the bill that would deny seniors and their families the right to consent to where they want to be sent for long-term care. I wanted to raise that because the government has tabled a time allocation motion that would prevent committee hearings, prevent this bill from going to committee, which means that the people of this province who care about these issues, which are most Ontarians, will not have an opportunity to speak, to present and, frankly, to outline their concerns or arguments around this legislation.

I think it's really unfortunate. I think that we need to do better here in this place. This government was elected with a majority. They can do whatever they want, pretty much, at this point. I encourage them, please, to provide an opportunity for people to speak to this bill, for experts to come and express their concerns, and maybe we can actually create some good legislation in this place.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Rob Flack: Next week marks the beginning of Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Every September, we are given the opportunity to remember those who have lost their lives to childhood cancer and honour more than

10,000 children who are currently getting treatment while fighting this ongoing battle.

Approximately one in five children will not survive their battle with cancer. Dave and Maureen Jenkins's daughter, Maggie Jenkins, was a bright and loving girl from my riding who tragically lost her life on March 14, 2014, after complications from an aggressive cell cancer that had previously gone undiagnosed. Sadly, she was only 12 years old.

The fight of childhood cancer survivors never ends. Approximately 95% of survivors live with chronic health problems for the remainder of their lives. Childhood cancer is the number one cause of death by disease of Canadian children.

The Jenkins family is pleased to provide every member of this Legislature a gold ribbon lapel pin through the Maggie Project in memory of those who have fought and continue to fight childhood cancer.

I would like to encourage all members of this Legislature to reflect upon this reality over the coming month and encourage all Ontarians to continue our hard work towards ending childhood cancer.

Thank you for your time and attention.

CHILD CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: My constituents in Nickel Belt continue to wait for this government to follow through on their commitment to provide affordable child care spaces—parents like Janelle, from Chelmsford in my riding. Janelle has had her child on the registry since April of last year—that's 16 months ago—but she has yet to find a child care spot. This young woman travels and has applied to 10 different child care centres, yet she is still empty handed, her maternity leave ends in September, and she wants to go back to work, but cannot do that without child care for her baby.

K.G. lives in Hanmer and is a registered nurse. She has two young children on multiple wait-lists. She would accept driving to two different daycares, twice a day, every day so that she can get back to caring for patients as a nurse. Her maternity leave is done. She wants to get back to work, she is very much needed as a nurse, but she cannot go back to work until she finds child care for both of her children.

Yesterday the government stated, "Every job that sits unfilled hurts Ontario's economy." I agree, Speaker. But those are just two of the thousands of professional jobs across our province that are unfilled because this government won't follow through on the commitment to deliver child care to the working parents of Ontario—talk about an easy solution that would help our health care system tremendously.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Mr. John Jordan: This past Friday, I joined the honourable member for Leeds–Grenville–Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, with members of the Rural

FASD—fetal alcohol spectrum disorder—Support Network, at South Gower Park to hear more about the impact a \$500,000 Youth Opportunities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation will have. The four-year-long grant was awarded in 2022 and is designed to help the organization and its organizational mentor group, Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth, to expand on their work with individuals with FASD and their caregivers. Individuals diagnosed with FASD experience unique and complex challenges in all stages of life. This investment will go a long way to provide the appropriate support for individuals with FASD and their caregivers.

In addition to improved access to programs and training, the Rural FASD Support Network will be able to expand upon its peer-facilitated support and fellowship, and provide additional forums for people with FASD to share their voice and lived experiences. The network connects individuals with FASD and their caregivers from across Ontario with local FASD-informed service providers and provides evidence-based, researched training. Thanks to the grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, people with FASD will be able to access those needed supports to achieve their full life potential.

DAPO AGORO FOUNDATION FOR PEACE

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's an honour to stand and speak today about an important event that happens in Ottawa's east end: Dapo Day, held the third Saturday in August, and this past Saturday was its 20th anniversary. Twenty years ago, the Agoro family lost their son and brother Dapo Agoro to senseless knife violence. The Dapo Agoro Foundation for Peace was born out of the loss. The Agoro family wanted to not only honour their son and brother Dapo but to be a catalyst for change.

As humans, we all face trauma, adversity and stress on a daily basis, and the ability to recognize and recover is a tool that we all need, both as individuals but also as a community. The Dapo Agoro Foundation is a non-profit organization that promotes non-violent conflict resolution.

This year's anniversary featured a virtual panel discussion around the road to resilience. The panel explored the definition of all that resilience means, including what it means when someone can be too resilient, and shared personal examples of this resilience. The attendees left with new insights and connections within Ottawa for help and learning.

Sadly, it's a daily occurrence to read in the news of young men and women being hurt and killed by violence. Nevertheless, this foundation continues to honour Dapo Agoro's memory by exploring how to build a healthier, stronger community to support our youth and help them navigate their lives.

MEMBER FOR MARKHAM–THORNHILL

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I'm always honoured to rise in this chamber. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the

residents of Markham–Thornhill, the most ethnically diverse riding in Canada, for putting their faith and trust in me and re-electing me for a second term.

I want to thank all my re-elected and newly elected colleagues in the House. I would like to especially thank our Premier for his strong leadership in Ontario.

My success wouldn't have been possible without my wonderful campaign team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my volunteers, my family, my core team.

Mr. Speaker, when I escaped from fear of persecution and came to Canada as a refugee, I had nothing. I lost almost everything, except for my hopes and dreams to live in this wonderful province, to have peace and harmony. And here I am, a re-elected representative in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, a symbol of democracy. I never thought that one day I would become an MPP and a parliamentary assistant.

I thank my parents for giving me their values, principles and courage to become who I am today. I regret that they are not here, but they are looking at me from above.

As Ontario reopens, we have now started to re-engage with our community. I was happy to attend the 25th anniversary of Vedic Cultural Centre in my riding. I would like to congratulate President Yash Kapur and his team.

In this 43rd Parliament, my goal is to drive on forward and get it done.

1030

TRIOS COLLEGE

Mrs. Nina Tangri: I would like to recognize one of our long-time constituents, triOS College, on celebrating their 30th anniversary this summer.

Speaker, triOS began and are still headquartered in my riding of Mississauga–Streetsville. They began 30 years ago by offering network operating systems training to computer resellers and corporations.

In the 1990s, they expanded into career training of unemployed adults, acquired a five-city chain of career colleges, and became triOS College of Information Technology.

After the dot-com meltdown of 2001, they pivoted from IT to offering business, health care, law, and supply chain programs.

They've since expanded to eight campuses in Ontario, plus four more locations in the Maritimes as Eastern College.

In the past two years, they've launched an online college and partnered with Sault College and Mohawk College as their GTA training partner.

Speaker, triOS College employs over 700 staff and faculty, trains over 5,000 students daily and has graduated over 60,000 adults into meaningful jobs, including thousands—yes, thousands—of PSWs.

Speaker, triOS has been recognized as one of Canada's best-managed companies for the past 12 years.

Please recognize their co-founder and CEO, Frank Gerencser, together with his team, John Cruickshank and

Massimo Noce, who are in the members' gallery today. Welcome.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Byers: It's a great pleasure to have three very special people with me in the members' gallery today: my wife, Margot Byers; my mother, Mary Byers; and my lovely daughter-in-law, Teresa Silva-Byers. Thank you very much for being here, and welcome.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'd like to welcome, in the members' gallery, Erin Ariss from the Ontario Nurses' Association, vice-president, region 4, and a registered nurse in Ontario, and Nour Alideeb, a government relations specialist. Thank you for being here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'd like to recognize several special guests of mine from the great riding of Windsor-Tecumseh. In the west members' gallery are my lovely and amazing wife, Mary; my mother, Mary Jo; my exceptional campaign manager and executive assistant, Paul Synnott; and my tremendous, hard-working constituency assistant, Rachel Haddad, who excels in helping people, day in and day out, those in need. Thank you so much for being here, to all my special guests, for their first visit and certainly not the last visit.

Miss Monique Taylor: Today is the last day for our pages. Daunte Hillen is a page from Hamilton Mountain. I know he's missing all of his baseball games, but he's really happy to be here, supporting us.

Thank you, Daunte. Thank you to all the pages. We'll miss you, again.

Mr. Rob Flack: I am pleased to have in the gallery my new legislative assistant, Tanner Zelenko; one of Ontario's top educators, Beth Allison; and the one and only, my wife, Denise Flack. Welcome.

Hon. David Piccini: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Michael Elliot. Mike started in my constituency office in Norwood, banged on probably more doors than I did, the only person in the 2018 campaign—he is now working for the Minister of Health in Saskatchewan. Welcome to Queen's Park, Mike.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'd like to introduce the Mazzucco family from my riding: Mark, Michael and Madina. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Doly Begum: I would also like to give a big shout-out to Tanisha Hossain from Scarborough Southwest, who has been a wonderful page and has come back for a second time to help us out. I know her parents are very proud. Thank you, Tanisha, and thank you to all the pages who have been helping us. Thank you very, very much.

Mr. Vincent Ke: I want to introduce guests from Vancouver: Mr. Phil Laird, the vice-president of Trinity Western University, and Mr. Michael Shao, the CEO of Tresor Solutions. They are going to open a new campus in my riding of Don Valley North. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: It brings me great honour to introduce Neal and Debbie Roberts, the parents of Andrew

Roberts. He's very hard-working. He's a bright star and a part of our team who works with the Premier, so welcome. You must be very proud of your son because all of us rely on him every day. Thank you.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I would like to introduce Robert Morales. He is a constituent from Simcoe-Grey and he has recently joined my office as my legislative assistant.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and to introduce Elya Keren-Sagiv, a legislative page from my riding of York Centre. Today is her last day as part of the program. Congratulations and all the best on your journey ahead.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to introduce and welcome today to the House Jacqueline Pizzimenti, the daughter of a very good friend of mine who just completed her psychology degree and is on her way to Windsor to study and do her master's in social work. I welcome her to the House—her first opportunity to see the place in action.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm now going to ask our pages to assemble so that we can thank them.

Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of the chamber. They have cheerfully and efficiently delivered notes, ran errands, transported important documents throughout the precinct, and have made sure that our water glasses are always full. We have been indeed fortunate to have them here during this special summer sitting of the Legislature.

They depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of them will go home and carry on, resume school in the fall, continue their studies and will, no doubt, contribute to their communities, their province and their country in important ways in the coming years.

We expect great things from all of you. Maybe some of you will someday take your seats in this House as members or work here as staff. We wish you very, very well.

Please join me in thanking and expressing our appreciation to our legislative pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt has informed me she has a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis this afternoon during orders of the day.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion to allow an emergency debate on the health care crisis this afternoon during orders of the day. Agreed? I heard some noes.

1040

QUESTION PERIOD

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier. This government is giving itself the power to sign people up for long-term-care homes they don't want to go to. Yesterday, the long-term care minister admitted to media that they will use financial coercion to make them go. He said, "Should a hospital charge them? Absolutely."

Why does this government believe that a hospital stay should end with a bill?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, we can't keep doing the same old thing over and over again, pouring billions of dollars into the health system, and expect a different result. We need new solutions to old problems that the Liberals and NDP created. The opposition will always find reasons to say no. They will keep defending the status quo, saying no for the sake of saying no. We refuse to accept the status quo. The opposition want people who should be in long-term care in hospital beds. Hospital beds weren't made for long-term-care patients. And what's happening is it's clogging up the emergency departments, delaying surgeries. These problems are decades in the making, created by years of refusal to act under the Liberals and NDP. The Liberals and NDP, who caused the problem, are now complaining about the solution. Their solution is to do absolutely nothing, to change nothing.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Speaker, cruelty is not a solution. These seniors, these people with disabilities—they've done nothing wrong. What's wrong is the broken long-term-care and home care systems, systems that have been cut and privatized to the bone.

Late yesterday, we learned the government plans to ram this legislation through without any hearings or opportunities to hear from front-line workers and from families whose lives will be devastated by these changes. Why is the government so unwilling to hear from families and front-line workers who will be devastated by this bill?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: The opposition want to keep the status quo, which means longer wait-lists, less hospital beds for people who need them. Mr. Speaker, according to the Ontario Hospital Association, there are 6,000 beds being taken up by alternative-level-of-care patients in hospitals. It's the highest number in the history of this country, and in the last three months, we saw a 1,000 increase. The policy is absolutely necessary. It will free up 2,500 beds.

The opposition will always say no to building more hospitals, no to hiring more nurses, no to building more hospital beds. They will say no to shorter surgery wait times, no to making the system better. The Liberals and NDP built 611 long-term-care beds. We're building 31,000 new long-term-care beds, investing \$4.9 billion, hiring more than 27,000 long-term-care staff—

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

The final supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: This government is sacrificing people in what might be their final month. It's separating them from their spouse, their sons and daughters, their essential caregivers. When someone cannot afford to pay to stay in a hospital, how far away is the government willing to move them?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader and Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I truly don't think the opposition understand what we are trying to accomplish here. The Premier just highlighted the fact that there are some 6,000 people who are in ALC across this province. The impact that has on hospitals all over the province is of a magnitude that I don't think the opposition understands.

What we are saying is that long-term care can be part of the solution. For the first time in decades, because of the investments that this government has made in new and upgraded long-term-care beds, in four hours of care, in 27,000 additional health care workers, we can be part of the solution. I appreciate that the opposition always want to tear down what is being built up, but we will not stop, Mr. Speaker, because we cannot. As the Premier has said, as the health minister has said, the status quo is just simply not an option any longer, and there is nobody who would suggest that somebody who is on the long-term-care wait-list should wait in a hospital as opposed to being in a long-term-care home.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

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

Every day over the last week has raised new concerns about the government's plan for private health care. Today, we have a leaked copy of a poll from the government's pollster of record, asking Ontarians whether they agree with the following statement: "I should be able to pay for my own health care to get better service in Ontario."

I would like to put the same question to our Premier: Does the Premier think people should be able to pay their way to better health care in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I have said it before and I will say it again: In the province of Ontario, we use our OHIP card to pay for health care in Ontario when people need those services.

Our five-point plan to remain open includes many investments in many different areas to preserve our

hospital capacity, to provide the right care in the right place. It's exactly what we need today in the province of Ontario. We're making those investments. I only wish that the people across the aisle in the NDP caucus would understand that we need to make these innovations. We need to encourage them. We need to allow hospitals, health care providers, long-term care, primary care physicians to do what they do best, which is look after people with your OHIP card.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: It's not just about private health care. The same government poll asks people whether they agree that the government should allow more private and/or charter schools in Ontario—charter schools. That is public funding of private education, let's be clear.

Does the Premier agree that public money for Ontario's education should be diverted to private and charter schools?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: There is no government in the history of this province that has put more money into public education than this government ever—ever. And every step of the way, of course, the opposition has voted against those investments because, as we say constantly, when you are building a better system, the only thing the NDP have to offer is how they can tear that down. It's not just about saying no for them, it's about tearing down the progress that the people of the province of Ontario have made.

Better math scores. We have more teachers in schools. Our students finally—finally—are doing better in STEM, Mr. Speaker. When you combine that with the investments that the Minister of Colleges and Universities has made, when you combine that with the great work of the Minister of Labour to bring the skilled trades back into the schools, we are building an education system that works for all Ontarians and we're doing it faster and better than anybody could have ever imagined with higher investments than any other government in the history of this province.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier again: When this government talks solutions, you know what I hear? You know what Ontarians hear increasingly? They hear that that is code for lining shareholder pockets at the price of public education and public health care. And whether they're slapping seniors with massive fees to stay in hospitals or pushing private schools and private health care on Ontario families, this has never and will never for this government be about anything else other than lining shareholder pockets.

Why is this Premier so determined to divert public money from our schools and our hospitals at such a great cost to Ontarians?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, I think that question in its entirety really underscores why it is that the NDP has such a small caucus in this place.

Look at the record of this government. We took over from a Liberal-NDP coalition that almost bankrupted the province of Ontario. They didn't build long-term-care homes, they didn't invest in hospitals, they didn't build schools. In fact, they closed schools. Together they laid off thousands of nurses.

What have we done? We have been working to create thousands of jobs in the province of Ontario, not by government jobs, but by bringing back policies that bring back companies to the province of Ontario—300,000 lost jobs under them; thousands of jobs because of the work of this government.

We brought back the auto industry. The Minister of Labour brought back the skilled trades to support all of the new building that is happening with the Minister of Transportation.

1050

Subways: How long did people wait for subways? Under that crew, nothing got done. Under us, Ontario is moving forward. We will build and we won't let them tear down the progress we made.

Interjections.

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

Restart the clock. The next question.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Earlier this month, the London Health Sciences Centre was forced to close their world-leading epilepsy monitoring unit due to critical staffing shortages. The unit being closed and a lack of access to EEGs means even more delayed surgeries. Think of the impacts to health, mental health and the quality of life of patients suffering from seizures.

When will this government admit the crisis in health care is real and address the staffing shortage that they created?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, this question will highlight some of the work that we have already undertaken with the Ontario College of Nurses and with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to expedite the internationally trained experts in health care who want to practise in the province of Ontario. We have asked and directed those two colleges to make sure that people who have applied have their process going through very quickly so that they get that accreditation and they get that licensing because the member is right: We need to increase the supply of health care workers in the province of Ontario.

I would add respectfully that this is not unique to Ontario. As recently as two days ago, I was meeting with the FPT, the federal, provincial and territorial leaders, to talk specifically about what Canada can do and how they

can assist to make sure that those internationally trained individuals who want to practise in Ontario can do so quickly.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Respectfully, through you, Speaker, Bill 124 is unique to Ontario.

People on waiting lists are waiting even longer and it is because of the disrespectful policies of this government. Epilepsy patients, like Sarah, live in fear wondering when their next episode is going to happen.

Clearly, the Minister of Health wants to peddle privatization as a cure all for the crisis Conservative cuts have created. Overworked and underappreciated by this government, then Bill 124? It's a perfect storm. Will this government finally admit they got it wrong, repeal Bill 124, and finally treat health care professionals with respect, yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: There is no government in the history of this province, under the leadership of the Premier, that invested more in public health care than this government. Mr. Speaker, that includes investing in health human resources.

Since March 2020, we have added over 10,900 health care professionals across this province. This includes making sure that, in the future, we also have health care professionals by building medical schools in places like Brampton and Scarborough, making sure we almost double the number of doctors in the north. We put forward programs in the fall economic statement: \$342 million to support adding over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses, as well as an additional 8,000 personal support workers.

Every step of the way, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have voted against each of these measures to help support health human resources across this province. That is a shame.

HEALTH CARE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Rob Flack: The long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have put pressure on the health care system right here in Ontario. We need more health care professionals now more than ever. With our health care services trying to stabilize after dealing with the COVID pandemic over the last two years, we need to address these urgent pressures so our province can stay open with an even stronger health care network.

Medical education is critical to providing Ontario with the health care and human resources that are desperately needed. Can the Minister of Colleges and Universities share the government's plan to expand medical education so we can welcome more medical trainees into this province?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London for that important question. He is right. We need to increase health human resources, and that starts with post-secondary education.

Our government, under the leadership of this Premier, is getting it done by taking action to increase health human resources across Ontario through our historic expansion of health care post-secondary education. This includes building the first new medical school in the GTA in over 100 years. Speaker, the last medical school built in the GTA was at the University of Toronto in 1843. We are the government that is building the new Toronto Metropolitan University medical school in Brampton. We're also creating the new University of Toronto Scarborough Academy of Medicine and Integrated Health in Scarborough and expanding the Queen's Lakeridge Health campus. Earlier this year, we also established the Northern Ontario School of Medicine as the first stand-alone medical school in northern Ontario.

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

Mr. Rob Flack: Health human resources were heavily neglected under the former Liberal government, I think we all know that. In their term, they failed to build a single medical school addressing the growing need for health care access. Their actions left this province vulnerable to a staffing shortage—this we know.

We currently have six universities that provide undergraduate and postgraduate medical education, but more action is needed to strengthen our health care and intellectual infrastructure. Our government understands the need for the correct number and mix of health professionals in the right places throughout this province.

Speaker, can the minister update the House on what the government is doing to strengthen the development of our existing medical education and professional development programs?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you again for the question. I'm happy to say that our government has taken action on this issue. We understand that a growing population means a growing need for health care professionals. As the member mentioned, it is important to have health care education infrastructure across Ontario that will keep us open in the long-run. Not only are we increasing the number of medical schools across Ontario that will serve both urban and rural communities, but we are also enhancing existing medicine and health care programs. Our government is adding 160 undergraduate seats and 295 postgraduate seats to six medical schools over the next five years. This is the largest expansion of medical seats in over a decade.

Earlier this year, we also announced our Learn and Stay program, which over the next four years can help 3,000 nurse graduates receive financial supports to cover the cost of tuition in exchange for committing to practise for two years in an underserved community. We want to ensure that everyone has access to health care where they need it, when they need it.

NURSES

Ms. Sandy Shaw: My question is to the Minister of Health. You announced the creation of the operating room assist position at Hamilton Health Sciences, but we're

hearing a concerning story from registered nurses. Registered nurses at Hamilton Health Sciences caution that replacing highly trained scrub nurses with ORAs puts patient safety at risk in the operating room. Patients don't want someone in their OR who is unable to intervene when unexpected things happen during surgery. When a patient is coding in the operating room, there isn't time to wait for a nurse. Delays can be the difference between life and death. With only 22 hours of online learning, two practice labs and two weeks of practical experience, ORAs do not have the same expert knowledge and specialized training as highly skilled scrub nurses.

My question: Will you stop cuts to nursing at the cost of patient care and require Hamilton Health Sciences to keep nurses in the critical scrub nurse role?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: This question really speaks to the fact that while we in the Progressive Conservative government are embracing and welcoming these innovations and suggestions being brought forward by unions, by professionals, by hospitals—we're allowing that innovation to happen. It is, frankly, disturbing that the member opposite is suggesting in any way that we are impacting patient care. What we are doing is we are empowering people who have the skill set and the training to be able to operate at the height of their skill set. Having those professionals in surgical units, in emergency departments, in our community care and long-term care is what's going to make our world-class health care system here in Ontario even better.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: What's disturbing is putting patients' lives at risk to save a buck. Because you wouldn't want a flight attendant to land a plane instead of a pilot. So why are you removing nurses from the scrub nurse role and replacing them with operating room assistants?

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I agree that we need to address the nursing crisis, but you are compromising the standard of surgical care for patients to save money. You need to invest and protect the scrub nurse position to ensure patients get the care they need and deserve. Without proper standards of care, patients may have a higher risk of unexpected complications, which could result in multiple surgeries and, in the worst-case scenario, even lose their lives.

My question to the Minister of Health: Will you address the nursing crisis by ensuring that the right care is provided at the right time by the right provider and stop removing scrub nurses from that critical role in the operating room?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: When I talk to heads of nurses' unions, when I talk to doctors, when I talk to health care professionals, they say, "We want to work as a team. We want to be part of that continuum of care for the patient." It is exactly why we are encouraging funding and enabling Ontario health teams to be operating in the province of Ontario. From diagnosis through treatment through placement, we now have a coordinated system that allows that patient to have a touchpoint no matter where they are

in their continuum of care. That's the kind of thing that gives patients and families comfort, that they know that wherever they are in their treatment, they are going to have a touchpoint and a group of professionals who are working together for the best outcome.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Soaring inflation is causing parents in my riding to spend more money and save less. Often these families must work more to keep up with rising costs.

Under the previous Liberal government, the cost of child care rose 400% from an already astronomically high number. The government negotiated with the federal government to lower these costs, but our province was the last to sign an agreement to bring affordable, \$10-per-day child care to the people of Ontario. The Liberals and NDP say they would have signed a deal to provide relief earlier.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Education, why was Ontario the last province in the nation to sign a deal with the federal government and what difference will the working parents of this province see in this period of economic uncertainty?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Oakville for his question. It is relevant because we didn't sign the first deal, as proposed by the opposition. We signed a better deal for the people of Ontario, a deal with \$13.2 billion of investment. We're talking about literally \$3 billion more, an additional year—the only province in the federation to have that type of funding certainty—and a commitment to for-profit and non-profit child care operators, in which those 30% of for-profit operators would have been omitted if, God forbid, we had followed the advice of the opposition.

We stood up for all families, for parental choice and ensured that every single parent is eligible for the reductions they deserve: \$4,000 this year on average; \$12,000 per child next year on average, on the way to \$10 a day by the year 2025.

This is a massive step forward as we encourage more economic participation of women in the economy, and we reduced costs at a time of national inflation. We're going to continue to work with all levels of government to deliver the affordability parents deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the minister. The primary way to ensure affordability for parents accessing child care is to get operators opting in to the agreement our government signed earlier this year. Many child care operators in my riding have expressed concerns about the agreement, causing them to delay signing the deal.

The government needs to help operators sign this agreement that will put hard-earned dollars back into the pockets of families. We need to do everything we can to incentivize operators to opt in to this deal that will provide certainty for parents. The minister has changed aspects of

the deal and now operators are saying they are confused, which impedes their willingness to sign on.

Speaker, what exactly has the government changed in this child care agreement and will these changes make a substantive difference for operators who have not signed on?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I do appreciate this question from the member from Oakville. Many parents in his community and across this province are depending on government to get on with the business of making life more affordable after it increased. The cost of child care increased by 400% under the former Liberals. We all must accept the premise that that was an indefensible record.

Our Premier has a mandate to get the job done, to reduce fees, and part of our plan is to listen to the advice of the very operators, often women entrepreneurs, who run these centres.

I want to give a shout-out to the member from Ajax, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education, who has been leading efforts to streamline the process, to reduce red tape, to create funding guideline guarantees—exactly what the sector wanted—and more time for them to enrol and build comfort, to November 1, as we work together to increase participation, decrease costs and make life affordable for Ontario families.

HOME CARE

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Carmen is the primary caregiver for her 91-year-old mother. Her mom qualifies for two showers a week through home care, and Carmen made an inquiry to see if she could get a bit more. Her mom was re-evaluated and now she gets one shower per week.

Is that an example of the enhanced home care that this government keeps boasting about?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I think that individual cases—while I obviously cannot delve into them here in question period—are an important thing to highlight why we have in our budget a \$1-billion investment in home care. It is investing for the next three years to improve quality of care and keep the people of Ontario in the homes they love, longer.

We are investing not only in the nursing visits, in the shifting hours, in the therapy visits—including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech-language pathology—but we're also doing it within the community. That is, as many of us know, the programs like adult day programs, meal services, transportation, caregiver supports and assisted living services.

Will the member opposite be supporting this \$1-billion investment in our budget?

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

Mr. John Vanthof: This government has been in power for four years. This happened this week. Carmen was just asking for a little bit more help for her mom. She

got less. And you know what? Carmen's mom now gets two showers because Carmen pays for the other one herself. This is privatization. That PSW is the same PSW.

So is that the solution? Pouring billions of dollars isn't the answer if Carmen's mom only gets one shower, at the end of the day, through home care. I keep hearing "billions of dollars," but it's services to people that matter. Is this government actually going to provide the service through public health care?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, when we passed the Connecting People to Home and Community Care Act—which, I must say, the members opposite voted against—it modernized the delivery of home and community care services by bringing an outdated system, designed in the 1990s, into the 21st century.

We'll continue to do that innovation. We'll continue to bring forward the things that people need when they want to stay safely in their own homes. That is including an investment that we have made in this year's budget. I hope the member opposite takes a close look at what that investment will mean to his community and people across Ontario, and do the right thing and vote for our budget.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'm very proud to be here to represent the very green riding of Beaches–East York.

My question is to the Premier, whom I know well from our days at Toronto city hall together. Last week, the federal government put out a climate adaptation report. Guess what, Mr. Speaker? Ontario is falling behind on mitigating the worst impacts of climate change, and that is because of "limited political will," as the report states. Ontario's infrastructure is especially vulnerable to climate change and will result in cascading economic and social impacts. The cost of inaction for climate change is too much.

So far, I have not seen the government propose anything to protect and create resilient infrastructure. What good is building highways if they flood over and have to get repaired every single year? We could be creating the strongest, most resilient province in this country. Instead, we cannot even say the word "climate" in the throne speech.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this government take climate change seriously? When can Ontarians expect this government to stand up and take a leadership role to safeguard the future of Ontarians?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

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Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate the question from the member opposite.

The government is working diligently on building adaptation and resiliency. That's why we were the first government to launch a climate change impact assessment, something that could have been done under the decade-plus rule of the previous government but wasn't.

We have launched that impact assessment to work with municipalities at a regional level to identify areas of vulnerability and act. That's why our Minister of Infrastructure has invested historic dollars into rural municipalities, northern municipalities, and is working around the clock with her federal counterparts at making these historic investments.

Also, that member would know very well, coming from the Beaches, the record investment in stormwater and waste water investments under this Premier. In fact, I'll quote the mayor, who said this was a "significant investment" to benefit and improve the lives of Toronto residents. That member knows that because, in her community, under the previous Liberal government, sewage was discharged in record amounts into Lake Ontario. This Premier is cleaning it up.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I appreciate the minister's response, but quite frankly, this government seems to still be stuck on step one. We need to stop only doing assessments and really begin to implement measures. "Get it done," as you say.

The report says, "There is little evidence of adaptation being mainstreamed into decision-making." Last week, at AMO, I attended session after session after session that highlighted the need for climate action to be tied to infrastructure. Municipalities are asking for this government to step up and actually start implementing climate strategies to create resilient communities.

Mr. Speaker, instead of forcing cities, municipalities, Indigenous communities and climate leaders to take action themselves in an attempt to safeguard their towns and homes, Queen's Park needs to step up and create a climate framework for this province.

Will this government finally agree to add the lens of climate adaptation to their policies and decisions in order to help our municipal counterparts thrive and create truly resilient communities, and allow Ontario to adapt to the climate consequences that we have created?

Hon. David Piccini: The only ones stuck at step one are the Liberals, and step eight is how many seats they have.

Step one is the platitudes that we heard from the previous government. Step two is meaningful action, making investments into municipalities, something this government has done. Thanks to the leadership of this Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we have record partnerships, historic investments into the municipalities. Thanks to this Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, we're creating clean, green jobs of the future, making record investments into the electrification of the automobile that's breathing new life. We're taking two million cars off the road thanks to partnering with Algoma and Dofasco, and those workers are staying right here in Ontario. You know where they would have gone? Step one for them was leaving the province, under the previous government.

Our government is taking meaningful action, attracting jobs and talent into this province, and we're building a greener future—

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

Next question.

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is to the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Constituents in my riding of Niagara West face a shortage of skilled trades, frankly, like we have never seen before. Families depend on these trades to maintain their homes, their vehicles and their businesses. Entrepreneurs and workers alike need these trades to build the products that we know will make us the envy of the world.

Education investments and skills development are crucial to keeping our local economies competitive and building up our skilled trades, so could the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to invest in and develop talent in the skilled trades?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member for Niagara West for that question and for his promotion of the well-paying careers in the skilled trades in the Niagara region. You've done heroic work down there—to the member. So I want to thank him for that.

Mr. Speaker, since day one, our government has been on a mission to get more people into the skilled trades. These careers are exciting, in-demand, come with good pay and benefits, often with a defined pension, and you can be damn proud of what you build. The skilled trade system, however, suffered massive neglect thanks to the former Liberal government.

Today, nearly one in three journeypersons are over the age 55 and will soon retire. That is why our government is making truly historic investments—in fact, over \$1.5 billion over four years—to fix the problems that we inherited. Mr. Speaker, it's all hands on deck, and we're working with employers and unions every day to prepare more people for these lifelong careers.

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

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: This government is getting the job done across the Niagara region by making historic investments in infrastructure, health care, long-term care, new hospitals and investments across our region. We're enhancing our transit and road infrastructure, and I know that my constituents waited long enough to get these investments announced due to the neglect and, frankly, indifference of the former Liberal government supported and propped up by the NDP. The last thing they want to see is further delays in project delivery because of a lack of skilled tradespeople to get these projects built.

What is our government doing to ensure that there is training for people in Lincoln, West Lincoln, Grimsby and across the Niagara region to make these projects a reality?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I want to thank the member for this really important question. In fact, in the town of Lincoln, our Skills Development Fund is truly

changing lives. I had the chance to see this first-hand with the member from Niagara West just a number of months ago. We're investing more than \$2.5 million to help 145 young people ages 14 to 29 develop skills in key areas that support local tourism and hospitality. Together, program participants are spending over 73,000 hours helping 100 local small businesses enhance their websites and digital marketing so that they can attract more customers and grow.

Through our Skills Development Fund, we're giving people right across Ontario the skills they need to fill in-demand jobs and earn bigger paycheques for themselves, but, most importantly, for their families.

Mr. Speaker, our government has an ambitious plan to build Ontario and we're leaving nobody behind.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, to the Premier: During the provincial election, 11 people died in a climate pump storm system that charged through Ontario and Quebec. The climate crisis is deadly and yet the Premier has no credible climate plan. When will the Premier present a serious and funded plan to address the climate crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: The reality is, this Premier has. The Leader of the Opposition offers no solutions. It's this Premier who's led to the largest reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through partnering with Algoma and Dofasco. What does that mean? Two million cars off the road. It's this leader that has moved beyond the NIMBYism flanked by the Leader of the Opposition, whose members know all about it, who has actually gotten shovels in the ground on public transit—record investments. Residents in my community can now benefit from two-way, all-day GO. We're expanding investments with the Ontario Line, getting shovels in the ground on the lowest carbon public transit project in North America.

Speaker, all they offer is doom and gloom, driving jobs out of this province. This Premier is building a cleaner, greener future.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier weakened the province's greenhouse gas reduction targets—weakened them in the face of a global crisis—and now he plans to ramp up electricity from gas-fired power plants, which will dramatically increase carbon pollution in this province. When will the Premier finally take the situation seriously and present a comprehensive and adequately funded plan to address the climate crisis?

Hon. David Piccini: That member could check on the publicly available Environmental Registry of Ontario—updated climate modelling on GHG reductions are there. But don't take my word for it, Speaker. It's Navius who also do BC, who also have looked at our federal government's modelling, and that member's best friend, the David Suzuki Foundation, as well. They have validated

our plan. They have said that the Premier's plan to invest in clean steel, the Premier's plan to get shovels in ground on public transit, the Premier's plan to electrify the automobile sector, investing in EV manufacturing, the Premier's plan to work on climate adaptation and resiliency—all of it's working, Speaker. We're not driving jobs out of this province. We're leaning on ingenuity, the talent of Ontarians.

They offer doom, gloom and misery. This Premier offers green jobs, opportunities for young boys or girls in the trades, and we're proud of it.

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HOUSING

Mr. David Smith: I rise today for the first time in the House to address a question, and I'd like to raise it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

While former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty mused about implementing a strong-mayor system, it is strange to see why current Liberal members now question its value. At the time, Premier McGuinty and the then Liberal cabinet were dismayed at what they saw at Toronto city council. They were concerned about the lack of action taken by city council to cut through red tape on behalf of their constituency.

We must act now and empower mayors so there is no further delay on priority projects. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing inform the House how the strong-mayor legislation will ensure the mayors of the city of Toronto and Ottawa have the tools they need to support Ontario and deliver the results that their communities need?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for that question and congratulate him on taking his place in the Legislative Assembly.

He is absolutely right: We're giving mayors the tools they need to get it done because we know that municipal governments play a crucial role in determining housing supply.

The reality is, Speaker, over one third of the growth expected in the next decade will take place in the cities of Toronto and Ottawa. These changes will help drive increased housing supply in growing municipalities by speeding up local planning approvals and helping the councils with their discussions to be effective on provincial priorities. We need to empower local leaders with the tools they need to get shovels in the ground. We're counting on them to cut red tape and get housing built faster so families can realize the dream of home ownership.

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

Mr. David Smith: I thank the minister for his response.

Strong mayoral powers are needed now more than ever to cut through the red tape and move priority projects forward. Year after year, new studies, reports and commission findings say the same thing: We are falling behind on building homes, and immediate action needs to happen.

My constituents want more home options, from empty nesters looking to downsize to young couples looking to find a home to raise their family. We must build more homes of all kinds. To do that, we must streamline.

Mr. Speaker, what is the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing doing to get more housing built across the 444 municipalities in the province?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, I want to thank the member from Scarborough Centre for that excellent question.

We know that there's no silver bullet that's going to solve the housing supply crisis. The province remains a strong partner in getting more homes built faster and making sure our promise to Ontarians that we're going to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

Our housing supply action plan implementation team will draw on the work of the Housing Affordability Task Force to advise on the policies and the tools that we need to put in place to get housing built faster. The team is going to work with experts, including municipal leaders and industry members, on how to best implement the recommendations from the housing supply task force. We stand ready to support municipalities to get shovels in the ground that are committed to growth and to cutting red tape.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Health. Nurses who work full time in health care with good union jobs with benefits and what used to be good wages are making the unimaginable decision to leave their jobs in hospitals to go to private temp agencies without benefits or protections. Remember, Speaker, that hospitals are forbidden by this Premier from paying fair or competitive wages because of Bill 124.

All nurses are paid for with public dollars. This Premier is making darn sure that private agencies can reach deep into the public money bucket.

Hospitals want to keep their nurses and pay them fair and competitive wages. Why won't this Conservative government remove their public sector wage cap and let them?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: This government will continue to make the historic investments into health care that we have since being elected. This starts with ensuring that we have health care workers across this province, and that is why we have put forward programs that will, as in the fall economic statement, invest over \$342 million to add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses, as well as an additional 8,000 personal support workers.

Mr. Speaker, this is on top of the investments we made to ensure that our health human resources across the province are appreciated by investing another \$763 million to give up to \$5,000 per person, which is almost equivalent to a 6% increase on the average salary to those health care workers in Ontario.

We will continue to make the necessary investments in health care and health human resources across the province.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again to the Minister of Health: More and more hospitals, like Lakeridge Health, are forced to hire temp-agency nurses to fill their shifts. Hospitals aren't allowed to pay their own nurses what they are forced to pay temp nurses working alongside their former colleagues. Hospitals are being held hostage by these agencies and are forced to pay whatever they demand.

This is not about opportunities; it is a racket that is bleeding public tax dollars out of our health care system and into private agencies—publicly paid-for, privately delivered, Premier-approved. Why won't this Premier scrap Bill 124 and allow hospitals to pay their nurses what they are worth?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to make historic investments into health care. Let's take a look at this government's record and what the opposition has opposed every step of the way. When it comes to hiring over 10,900 nurses since March 2020, the members opposite voted against each of those measures. When it comes to making historic investments into capital infrastructure and building hospitals across this province, whether it's in cities like Brampton that were ignored by the previous Liberal government for 15 years or cities like Windsor or Mississauga, the members opposite have voted no to \$40 billion over the next 10 years and adding 30,000 new beds into the system.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make sure that health human resources and health care workers across this province are supported, and we will continue to make those investments by working with our stakeholders in the industry.

ELECTRICITY RESTRUCTURING

Mr. John Jordan: Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Energy: Ontario has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with over 90% of generation creating zero emissions. This clean grid is the envy of nations around the world, and should be a point of pride for Ontarians.

We heard earlier this week from the Minister of Energy on how nuclear power will continue to be the backbone of this clean grid. I've heard from my constituents, who are looking for certainty that our province will have the power we need, particularly as we continue to secure new investments and as we prepare for the Pickering nuclear generating station to go off-line.

Through you to the minister: What is our government doing to ensure we have our clean, affordable and reliable power we need to support our growing economy?

Hon. Todd Smith: I want to thank the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston for a great question, and I want to assure him and everyone in the province that we're

going to have the power that we need for families and businesses when they need it.

Our government has a plan in place. We've extended the Pickering nuclear facility to 2025. We have a plan in place for when the Pickering facility is no longer operating, and we have a plan to power this province when it comes to electrification. Because of the unprecedented success that we've experienced with the leadership of our Premier and our Minister of Economic Development, we have electric vehicle platforms coming to Ontario now to build the cars of the future here. Those EV batteries that are going to power those cars are going to be constructed here in our province. World-leading green steel is going to be made right here in Ontario.

These successes are great news, and we know there are going to be more of them to come. We have a plan to power our province, including the world's first grid-scale small modular reactor at Darlington.

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

Mr. John Jordan: I thank the minister for his response. I'm glad to hear that work is well under way and we have a plan to respond to the incredible growth we have seen.

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We all know that under the former Liberal government, jobs and investment were fleeing the province every single day as electricity prices were increasing by 8% a year.

We know that to support electrification and economic growth, we need to continue our track record of keeping prices low. With an increasing population, growing economy, widespread adoption of electric vehicles and the electrification of public transit systems and major industrial processes, demand for electricity will continue to increase.

Speaker, what is the minister doing to ensure we have an affordable electricity supply that will support new companies, new investments and new jobs coming to Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Again, I want to thank the member for a great question. He's absolutely right: Demand is going to continue to grow as we continue to see these tremendous, unprecedented investments made in our province.

That's why we have the SMR project, enough to power 300,000 homes with one small modular reactor. It's why we've gone through this competitive procurement process for new electricity generation.

The member is absolutely right: Under the Liberal government, the price of electricity went up and up and up. But under these competitive procurements that we've been able to secure electricity for the future, we've seen the price go down, down, down, saving ratepayers in our province 30% under these new contracts.

We also have 55 companies from around the world that have submitted to provide energy to our province, many in the battery storage area.

We're working with the Independent Electricity System Operator to ensure we have the power that we

need, when we need it. Like the previous Liberal government did—they helped out their friends; we're providing on the experts to give us the advice we need to—

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

HEALTH CARE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier. I was recently written a letter from one of my constituents. They actually provided, quite honestly, some very sad news. They received some communication from their medical health care provider, their primary doctor, who is actually asking them to find a new doctor after 17 years of being their primary physician. What the doctor said to the patient was that his workload is untenable, it's unmanageable, and that he has to reduce the workload. So out of a randomized system that's set out by the College of Physicians and Surgeons, they've selected 262 patients—anonimized—and they sent out the same letter to those patients telling them to find a new doctor in their neighbourhood. That represents a reduction of 40% of patients in that clinic now.

My constituent went about asking community members for referrals and none of them were able to help them. The medical care professionals said to them, "We're not taking new patients."

What will this government do, what will the Premier do, to stop this dumping of patients by medical professionals because they can't manage the workload? What can you do for my constituent and the—

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is, of course, very disturbing when medical doctors, for workload or for retirement, have to make that difficult decision and share with their patients that they are decreasing or retiring in the practice.

However, as a government, we have been investing. We have an additional 400 doctors practising in the province of Ontario now that we did not have. We have worked with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to say, "If there are internationally trained doctors who want to practise in the province of Ontario, let's expedite those licences." We're doing the work here to make sure that individuals have access to the appropriate care where they need it.

I hope the member opposite would have ensured that their constituent is aware of Health Care Connect, to make sure that the matching between patients and doctors has already occurred. But there are opportunities through community health clinics, through family health clinics, that they make sure that those assets and resources are in their constituents' hands.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I appreciate the Minister of Health answering that question. But the challenge before us right now is that this particular constituent is now one of 262 constituents who have all received the same letter from the same primary care professional, their primary

care doctor, who is saying that the workload is unmanageable. So now they are having a very difficult time finding a new doctor in their community.

What is the government going to do to address the current health care crisis? What do I say—what do we all say—to this particular constituent or to an Ontarian who is looking for a family doctor? What do we say to the other families that are looking for primary care professionals? We are in a health care crisis, and I don't think this government is taking it seriously. We need help; our constituents need help. What can you do to help them today?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Thank you to the member for the question. We are taking it very seriously. This government wants to ensure that everyone in this province has access to a family physician, whether you are living in northern Ontario, rural Ontario or underserved areas within the GTA. That's why we are taking measures to ensure that we are training more and more doctors by opening the new Brampton medical school, the Scarborough integrated medical school, as well as expanding the Queen's Lake-ridge Health centre. These are all measures we are taking to ensure we have more doctors for the future.

We're also expanding the medical seats in this province. This is the first time this has been done in over a decade. There will be 160 undergraduate seats and 295 postgraduate seats.

This government takes this very seriously. We want to ensure every Ontarian has access to doctors and proper health care resources across this province. We will continue to work together with this and ensure that everyone has access to these resources.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Andrew Dowie: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. With inflation rates at nearly 10%—it costs more for groceries, more at the pumps, more for everything—across the province Ontarians are feeling the pinch. As the cost of life's essentials increases, the hardest hit are those on fixed incomes, including those on the Ontario Disability Support Program. I heard it frequently at the door from my constituents in Windsor–Tecumseh. I'm sure there isn't a member of this House who hasn't seen it first-hand in their own ridings.

My question is simple: Can the minister tell us what the government is doing to support ODSP recipients as the cost of living goes up?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for the question. Our government's progress to support those who depend on social assistance has been consistent throughout our time in office. We raised ODSP and OW rates in our first year in government, and we've introduced programs like the LIFT and CARE tax credits that put money back in the pockets

of 1.7 million people, including people on social assistance.

Today, our government is supporting those who need it most by making the largest increase to ODSP rates in decades. On top of that, we're going to index ODSP rates to inflation so that vulnerable people get more support to pay for life's essentials, especially during times of high inflation. This investment means more money in the pockets of people who need it most to spend on the essentials of life.

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

Mr. Andrew Dowie: ODSP recipients are struggling to make ends meet as the cost of living increases. Under the previous Liberal government, the social assistance system faced neglect and mismanagement, and so many I've met told me they've lost hope. There is little focus on rates, resulting in inconsistent increases. Our social assistance program requires modernization and a focus on the people it serves, and this begins with putting more money in recipients' pockets.

Speaker, can the minister explain more about this government's investment to improve our system and what it will mean for ODSP recipients?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. As I said before in this House, our government is making the biggest increase to ODSP rates in decades, and we're aligning rates with inflation, so when the cost of living rises, rates do too. The Liberals had 15 years in power to do either of those things; they did not. The NDP could have prioritized aligning rates with inflation or a historic increase while they propped up the Liberals; they did not.

The opposition parties said no when they had the chance to help vulnerable people in our society. Our government is saying yes. Our government is getting it done. These investments back up our transformation of social assistance to build a more—

Interjections.

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

Opposition come to order.

The next question.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the Premier. GTA drivers in my community and many others are still being gouged on their auto insurance—drivers like Yavuz Selim who cannot afford auto insurance, impacting job opportunities and his quality of life; drivers like Deepak who pays \$9,000 a year for two cars despite a 20-year clean driving record.

Just before the election, I co-sponsored an NDP bill to end postal code discrimination in the GTA and it received unanimous support, but this government did not pass it into law. I will be tabling the bill again this afternoon. Will the Premier pass it into law so we can finally end auto insurance postal code discrimination in the GTA?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question from the honourable gentleman because it helps give me an opportunity to highlight the really great work that this caucus has done, being the actual first government to reduce auto insurance rates across the province of Ontario by \$1.3 billion. Now, we went a bit further than that. We didn't just stop at reducing insurance rates, we then lowered the gas tax. Colleagues, you will remember who voted against that gas tax deduction. It was them.

Then, Mr. Speaker, when we took the tolls off of the 412 and 418. You remember the tolls that the Liberals put on, supported by the NDP? They actually were against that. And then when we took the extra step of refunding and eliminating those stickers on the backs of cars—you know, those little stickers that you had to get, it was \$120. They were against it and voted against putting more money back in the pockets of the people of the province of Ontario.

So it's not just about insurance that we reduced by \$1.3 billion; it is about all of the other ways that we've made life more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, they voted against it. But we'll continue on doing that job.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning. There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Doly Begum: My visitors, I think, are just coming in; I will still introduce them. I'm very pleased to welcome some wonderful volunteers from my riding of Scarborough Southwest. Please welcome Paul Gingrich, Alison Hayford, Noshin Talukdar, Safiya Tasdeem, Lydia McPherson, Rina Alam, Dayan Moshe and Zoya Moshe to the House today. Thank you so much, and welcome to the House.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'd like to welcome back Cole Gorham, who's from Vincent Massey Secondary School in the city of Windsor. It's a great school—my archrival at l'Essor, but a phenomenal place for education. I'm grateful that Cole is joining us today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

405456 ONTARIO LIMITED ACT, 2022

Ms. McMahan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr2, An Act to revive 405456 Ontario Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

ENDING AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE DISCRIMINATION IN THE GREATER TORONTO AREA ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 METTANT FIN À LA DISCRIMINATION EN MATIÈRE D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE DANS LE GRAND TORONTO

Mr. Rakocevic moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Insurance Act to prevent discrimination with respect to automobile insurance rates in the Greater Toronto Area / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances pour empêcher la discrimination en ce qui concerne les taux d'assurance-automobile dans le Grand Toronto.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member care to give a brief explanation of his bill by reading the explanatory note?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Thank you, Speaker. The bill amends the Insurance Act in order to prevent residents of the greater Toronto area from paying different rates for automobile insurance based solely on the municipality or area in which they reside in the greater Toronto area.

Amendments require the chief executive officer of the Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario to refuse to approve a risk classification system used in determining the rates for each coverage and category of automobile insurance if the system considers the geographic region as a determinant and fails to consider the greater Toronto area as a single geographic area. The amendment also prohibits insurers from entering into contracts of insurance that provide for insurance rates that were determined based on such a risk classification system.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT, 2022

LOI DE 2022 SUR LE COMITÉ CONSULTATIF DES SUBVENTIONS AUX RÉSIDENTS DU NORD DE L'ONTARIO POUR FRAIS DE TRANSPORT À DES FINS MÉDICALES

M. Mantha propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant :

Bill 13, An Act to enact the Northern Health Travel Grant Advisory Committee Act, 2022 / Projet de loi 13, Loi édictant la Loi de 2022 sur le Comité consultatif des subventions aux résidents du Nord de l'Ontario pour frais de transport à des fins médicales.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to give a brief explanation of his bill by reading the explanatory note.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The bill enacts the Northern Health Travel Grant Advisory Committee Act, 2022. The act requires the Ministry of Health to establish an advisory committee. The committee's mandate is to make recommendations for improving the facilitation of reasonable access to health care services for people in northern Ontario by means of reasonable, realistic and efficient reimbursement for travel costs. The committee is required to consult with all relevant stakeholders, including, at minimum, the stakeholders specified in this bill. The committee is required to report its recommendations to the minister. The minister is required to inform the assembly of the recommendations that the minister will implement.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 2, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes and Bill 7, An Act to amend the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021, with respect to patients requiring an alternate level of care and other matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996, when Bill 2 and Bill 7 are next called as government orders, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bills, without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bills shall be ordered for third reading, which orders may be called at the same time; and

That, when the orders for third reading of the bills are called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bills, with 50 minutes apportioned to the members of Her Majesty's government, 50 minutes to the members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and 20 minutes to the independent members as a group. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of each bill, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There's a discrepancy between what the member read and what is actually written in the motion.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Yes, Speaker—"which orders may be called that same day."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's what I see too. Thank you.

The member for Barrie–Innisfil has moved government notice of motion number 4.

I recognize the member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I urge all members of the House to unanimously adopt this motion for the greatness of the province, the greatness of our health care system, and for

all those seniors who are relying on us. Year after year—in fact, 15 years of opposition—they waited long enough. Under the Liberal government of the time, we only saw 611 beds built between 2011 and 2018.

In my riding alone, Speaker, we were able to build 256 new beds at what's going to be the Lang Yi home and community care model in Innisfil. We also have 64 new and 66 upgraded beds at IOOF Seniors Homes in Barrie, and there are more in Simcoe county. This is us getting it done for the residents not only in my riding of Barrie–Innisfil but across this province.

1310

While we say yes to building long-term-care beds, we keep hearing no from the opposition—supported by the NDP.

While we say yes to building up our great health care system so that people don't have to wait in long lines and are getting those needs that they want—the opposition, supported by the Liberals, say no.

While we say yes to expanding nurses being able to practise and learn at colleges, like Georgian College in my riding—we say yes to these types of programs all across the province of Ontario, but the opposition, supported by the Liberals, say no.

And we don't just stop there.

We continue to say yes to building core infrastructure for health care, like building new hospitals. We hadn't seen new hospitals built in this province for decades. Finally, this government is saying yes and getting those hospitals done. Unfortunately, the opposition continue to say no, supported again by the Liberals.

Speaker, this motion is very much about saying yes to delivering results for the people of Ontario, who put their trust and confidence in the strong, stable majority government that we have on this side. I don't know how much confidence they have in the opposition these days. But, definitely, we have a strong mandate to be able to get things done. They sent a clear message: They can't wait for delays. They have loved ones who need the care now. By not supporting this motion, what kind of message are we sending to residents?

I spoke with Doris Fulkenstein in my riding. We spent so much time speaking about long-term care. She's in a long-term-care facility now. She went from living very well in a retirement home, when she was taking care of her husband, who was in a long-term-care facility—now she has succumbed to dementia, and she's living in the same home with her husband. I remember, before Doris was even a resident of long-term care, what she said. She said how broken the system was. She tried—governments after governments—to get things done. She made a lot of great suggestions, many of which we're doing, like quality of care—four hours of hands-on care, a national-leading standard across this country here in Ontario, a made-in-Ontario solution to help seniors get better care. This was something she spoke much about. She was also, in her working days, a care provider, a nurse, so she saw firsthand the fixes that needed to be done. When she was taking care of her husband, Ollie, who was in a long-term-

care facility—and he's still there; they're at Victoria Village—she spoke about just knowing the resident. You can't know your resident unless you're spending that time with them. She said if you are able to increase the level of care with that individual, the people working in the home will get to know that person; they'll know their eating habits; they'll know their dressing habits. That's building a relationship. Again, the opposition talk about trust. That's going to build trust with that particular resident in the home so that that personal support worker or that nurse will know the needs of that resident. They'll know when they are able to take their meds. They'll know what kind of food they're able to eat—like we experienced with Doris's husband, Ollie. He was very particular. Unless a nurse or a PSW spent a lot of time with him—they were not always going to get their way. He was going to be very stubborn with them. So it was really getting to know that individual.

That's what we're doing—we're doing so much good. No matter how much good, no matter how much progress we make along the way, we keep getting resistance. I don't know why they're so resistant to progress in this province.

I'm a, I'd say, very young elected MPP. Some of these acts we're amending came well before I was even a twinkle in anyone's eye. Technology and everything has advanced. We've moved on. We've progressed as a society. But there are still these archaic, dinosaur-legacy models that need to be updated—and this is exactly what we're doing, so folks like Doris and Ollie can tell their kids that things are getting better. Then, when they get the services and the help they need in their care facility, they can expect a better level of care.

When I talked to Doris's son, he said she didn't want to be in a hospital.

When we talk about this bill, we talk about alternate-level-of-care beds. I heard it time and time again from our local hospital in Barrie, Royal Victoria hospital—every time we'd have a meeting with them, they would say, "Here's how many alternate-level-of-care patients we have." They'd say, "Andrea and Doug Downey"—my counterpart in the area—"we just can't support these patients. They no longer need to be there. We need to clear out beds for other patients who need to be there." So they came with an idea. They said, "Can the government help us with this concept where we're going to take some alternate-level-of-care patients and we're going to bring them to IOOF Seniors Homes"—which is actually a not-for-profit seniors' home, if we're going to get into specifics; I know the opposition love to get into specifics. The pilot worked. We were able to off-load about 100 patients from Royal Victoria hospital and bring them to IOOF, where they're getting the care they need—because, frankly, they did not want to stay in the hospital, just like Doris told me she didn't want to stay in the hospital. In her case, she was already at the long-term-care facility. They transferred her to the hospital, the last place she wanted to be, and she had to fight to get back into the home. That's where she wanted to be. When we talk about consent and people's free will—well, her free will was going against

it, because she wanted to go back and no one would let her back in. These are people who, in her situation, had a long career of taking care of other people, so she had expected, when she got to that age, that other people would take care of her. She was let down, and that's unacceptable. When I stand up in this House and I support bills like we're doing with long-term care and I support moving along and not dilly-dallying on these matters and getting them done quickly, it's for people like her, because she deserves it. She worked hard. She played by the rules. She did everything she could to make patient care better when she was in the health care system as a worker—and she deserves the same level of care.

Time and again, governments did not invest in health care. Thankfully, in my shoes—I wish we got elected earlier, because four years went by very quickly. We did as much as we could, but we ran out of runway. Luckily, we got a strong mandate to do even more. The health care system was broken, and we saw it. Speaking with individuals like her—it's day and night. Time and time again, not the right investments were made, not enough investments were made.

So here we are as a government, and we're investing in training nurses, training personal support workers, utilizing new Canadians who are coming to Canada so that, instead of being underemployed, they're well employed. They're getting a good, high-quality job that comes with benefits so that they can help support their families. And we're allowing colleges to train more of these professionals. We're improving the system. We're giving more people access to the system.

We have a publicly funded health care system. That means there should be access to it, but time and time again, there wasn't, because we didn't have the right infrastructure. We didn't have the right investments. We were short on ICU beds. So when someone goes to the hospital, they say, "Great. I have publicly funded health care. I'm giving them my OHIP card." And then, all of a sudden, they're told, "Sorry. There's no bed available." How is that possible? Well, again, it was year after year of underfunding the system, not putting in the right investments, and not utilizing our beds in the hospital as they should be utilized.

In this bill, you see it—ALC beds: This change is a game-changer. It doesn't mean that, overnight, we're going to get rid of our ALC beds in a hospital. Yes, they may still exist, but not at the level they do now. It's freeing up beds for a lot of patients who need them now. It may free up 2,500 beds because of this policy, which is huge for these hospitals.

We talk about wait times. Guess why there are long wait times? Those people are in the waiting room because they don't have a bed to be in to get the care they need. And do you know who suffers? The residents of Ontario, because they end up in a hallway.

I've seen this. I was raised by my grandparents. They obviously have aged much faster than my parents. My grandpa had a stroke. He was in a hallway bed. He has a history of heart issues. He was not able to get into a room,

in a bed, to be plugged into a heart monitor. When he went in with flu-like symptoms, which could possibly be a stroke, they weren't sure, so he was just waiting to be seen by someone. In that time of waiting to be seen, he had a stroke in the hospital, and no one knew because he wasn't hooked up to the equipment that they needed, because there was no bed available.

I don't want to see this story repeated for other Ontarians, because it's heartbreaking. That means that individual has to go through learning how to walk again, learning how to speak again. They now need extra supports. They come home and can't use their house because there are stairs and they can't walk up the stairs. They can't shower, because most homes are built with showers on the second floor. So it would be much easier for the residents of all of Ontario to know that that family member is getting the care they need in a long-term-care home while they're waiting to basically change their whole life and their home so that family member can be there.

These are the changes that we need to move forward. We can't wait—because we have a lot of experience of getting elected and why we got elected, and we have our own families, and that gives us our experience. Every day, Ontarians are going through the system, and they want a public health system that is available for them. We hear it on our side of the House—that the status quo is not enough. Anyone who has gone through an emergency room situation lately or been a caretaker for their family members—status quo is not acceptable. We need to do better, and Ontarians expect us to do better.

The cost of living is going up. There are a lot of expectations for that one dollar. So every time this government invests a dollar—whether it's home care, whether it's a PSW, whether it's a nurse, we have to stretch those dollars and ask people to do a little bit more. We're trying to do that on this side of the House, because we can't mortgage the next generation's future either.

1320

It's a balancing act, Speaker. We're doing it quite well, and Ontarians are quite happy. I would say that the resounding majority government that we were mandated to govern with is a strong testament to the work that we've done.

We hit the ground running from day one when it came to improving the health care system. One of the first bills we introduced was fixing our health care system, because we knew, whether it's home care, whether it's our PSWs, whether it's our hospitals—that whole infrastructure, we need to fix. And here we are, debating a fix to long-term care, and we want to move it forward.

So I really do hope that we can make progress and we can tell those individuals about how many more beds they can expect and the better care they can get, so I can go to Georgian Manor and say, "Yes, those 19 new beds you're getting are going to be built," and I can go to the Villa Care Centre—they're going to be getting five new and 109 upgraded beds. Again, this is in Simcoe county.

In addition to that, we can talk to the residents and to the family members in Simcoe county and say, "There is

hope, because there are going to be 68 new and 60 upgraded beds at Sara Vista."

In addition to that, Victoria Village Manor—the same Victoria Village Manor I was telling you about earlier in my speech, Speaker, where Ollie and Doris Fulkenstein currently reside—is getting 128 new beds. This is a great facility. They take care of their residents. They give them activities. They really try to provide the best care they can—and I think all homes strive to do that, but as we know, we need to train more nurses and PSWs to help those long-term-care facilities achieve many of their goals.

But it's not just those places; it's places like Grove Park, which is also getting two new and 62 upgraded beds. Schlegel Villages in Barrie is getting 80 new and 112 upgraded beds. Simcoe Manor and Simcoe Village in Beeton are getting 34 new beds, and we know that Beeton needs them, given what has happened over the last few months. Collingwood Nursing Home—I know my colleague in that area is delighted to see this—is getting 36 new and 600 upgraded beds. Oak Terrace is doing a redevelopment, and they're getting 34 new and 94 upgraded beds. And there are more in Simcoe county. It's a growing community, and we need to keep up with the demand.

Not only are we building these long-term-care beds in the area of Simcoe county, but Innisfil is getting a new hospital. Again, we haven't built new hospitals in this province in decades. People aren't getting any younger, and we're getting new generations of families who are moving up to these areas that are underserved, who need those services. We're getting it done—so I really hope that we can finally get moving on this stuff.

It's the summer, and a lot of families worked hard so they can enjoy their summer months. They're going to get back in the fall, with the kids in school, and they're going to say, "What has the government been doing?"—and when I say that, it's everyone in this Legislature. What have we been doing to better the lives of these individuals? I can proudly go to my riding and say, "Well, we spent the summer continuously improving our health care scenario and improving the budget of the province to help put more money in the pockets of hard-working Ontarians so they can get the support they need for their kids, so they can get the support they need to and from work or to their kids' activities."

We're bringing down the cost of gas. We helped stabilize electricity rates. We're helping with the LIFT tax credit for those who need a little more of a hand up. We're increasing ODSP rates; we're bringing it to the cost of inflation. We're getting daycare delivered for residents so they can go to work, whether they work in a long-term-care home or a hospital, so they can have the daycare spaces that are affordable, when and where they need them the most. And we're building on that by focusing on our economy, so that we can put the economy on a good footing, so we can continue making these health care investments. We're continuing to make investments in our long-term care—by improving what Ontario can not just export, but our entire economic sector, whether it's

manufacturing, whether we're exporting or building new cars here, both good for good, high-paying jobs, but also great for our environment and, again, building those skilled-trades jobs that we're also working on, so we can build these hospitals, because someone is going to have to build them.

All these things are being done, and I'm proud that I can go to my riding and say, "These are the things we're getting done." We hit the ground running when they gave us a strong majority mandate.

I do hope that the opposition joins us and passes this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, it's always an honour to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin. This is actually, since we've returned, the first time that I've had that opportunity, where I'm going to be able to share some context and some comments on behalf of how people are impacted with this, but also other things that this government is moving forward.

We're dealing with, again, the time allocation—a custom that has become a habit for this government to move issues forward according to their agenda. It tickles me when the government says "if this bill passes." Of course, they have the majority and the bill will pass. They have many levers at their disposal to move things along and to move their agenda.

I just want to start by congratulating you and the other Speakers who have been granted the opportunity to serve us all in this chamber.

I want to also thank the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin for returning me here. It is a privilege and an honour to take my seat each and every day in this House on your behalf. Whether you voted for me or not, I'm always listening and I will always take your comments and your issues here to the floor of the Legislature. I immensely thank you for giving me that privilege to be here.

When we look at this bill, Bill 7, and the member who just spoke, a lot of her comments—she shouldn't be surprised by this, but I agree. I really enjoyed her sharing her personal story.

I want to take the time to share a personal story with yourselves, as well—to see it from a different lens as far as how individuals are being impacted through this process.

I agree with you that the status quo needs to change. We need to reinvest in our health care system. We need to make sure that those who are working on the front line—PSWs, dietitians—the individuals we rely on, day in and day out, in our long-term-care facilities are there, fully staffed, paid properly. The other thing that is missing from this bill and from this government is concrete steps toward paying those individuals good wages, full-time wages, pensions and benefits, so that they can do what they went to school for and what they're so proud to do. Whether it's through home care or through a long-term-care facility,

this is a calling for a lot of those individuals. Unfortunately—and we've been repeating it from this side of the House—Bill 124 has hindered that process. People have walked away from a trade, a love, a passion that they've had in the health care sector because they're tired, they're disrespected, and they feel that they are not being provided with all the tools and the assets they need to perform their job to the best of their ability.

When you look at the context of the bill, the government spends a lot of time talking about things that are—I call it window dressing. They're not particularly in the bill, but they're all over the place. But when you look at this bill, and when I hear the previous member talking about, "Why won't you support this?"—there are a lot of things that we need to do. She and I could have discussions at great length, and we're going to find common areas where we can agree on the things that need to be done.

However, there is one thing that I just cannot agree to. It is a fundamental thing. When you are withdrawing, removing, the ability of an individual to provide their consent, and go over that—remove that out of this bill and we will have another conversation. But because you are actually using your ability to remove consent from those seniors in those centres, that is a place I will not permit myself to go.

I refer to these changes—and I've often taken my place in this House and I've stood and talked about different pieces of legislation—and this would be the poison pill of this bill. The government spends, again, an enormous amount of time indicating how, in this opposition party, we oppose, oppose, oppose. Well, they continue to insert these poison pills into legislation, which they know we're going to oppose. They say that we never support anything, and they say things like "if it passes." Well, you know that it's not going to be supported, and you know the bill is going to pass anyway.

1330

I want to take the time to explain that because it brings me to another point: We are dealing with a time allocation motion. You would think that something that impacts our seniors so much and the future of our long-term-care facilities—you would think that this is something that would go out to the public. The reason why it would go out to the public is to engage and to have some discussions. So you would think that they would want to hear from stakeholders, individuals, seniors who are in long-term-care homes, organizations that are out there or organizations that represent those who work in this field.

Again, the government spends a lot of time taking their place and saying how we oppose every single thing. But I want to bring to the floor some of the comments that have been brought forward not just by us; they are being brought by numerous individuals. The comments are quite severe.

The Ontario Health Coalition states: "The bottom line is the Ford government is using the health care crisis to privatize Ontario's public hospital services and to push seniors out to fill long-term-care beds in the worst nursing homes that no one wants to go to because they have

terrible reputations, most of them for-profit. It is all couched in very carefully selected and manipulative language, but the actual policy changes they are proposing are clear and they clearly benefit for-profit companies at the expense of patients, particularly seniors.”

We talk in this House and we think that people outside of this House know exactly what we’re talking about. That’s false. One time, I think it was a previous member who was here—and it came to my attention this week by one of our colleagues. They said that we have to use Canadian Tire language so that we can communicate with people outside of this Legislature. I want to try that right now.

When we use terms like “privatize,” many people outside of this chamber—some do understand, but some don’t. Basically, what that means is, when you use public dollars to provide a service, a lot of our public facilities—as a Legislature, we make sure we go through the processes that they have and the actual dollars in order to function. Some of those services that are needed are paid with our health card. Some of those services are part of why we have our schools that are open—we provide that public service to our children who go to our schools. But when the government is looking to privatize, that same dollar that we use to pay a PSW or to pay a doctor inside of our hospitals is being changed; the envelope is not going there anymore.

The government is good at saying, “We’re putting tons of money back into the health care sector”—and they are putting money into the health care sector. But at the same time, they are promoting—and some of those dollars are actually going towards the private sector. In the public sector, the shareholders are us; they’re investing in us. We’re holding this government accountable to make sure that every public dollar goes towards our services—our roads, our schools, our hospitals, and so on. We want to make sure that it’s there.

I don’t know if I’ll have enough time today, but I may get into the scenario of what happened with the previous Liberal government and the boondoggle that they did with the privatization of Hydro One. Everybody has felt the negative impact of the privatization of the hydro system, and that will be the connect for people when I’m talking about the impact of privatization.

In this case, when we’re looking at our health care dollars, we’re looking at dollars that are going to go to the private sector. At the end of the day, that same doctor who is performing that surgery or that anesthesiologist who is in the operating room with that doctor or the nurse or the PSW—when they perform that same service in the private sector, that dollar has now multiplied to \$3. That’s what it costs us. It costs us \$3 to \$4, if not more. So we ask the question: If they’re doing the same service, why does it cost more? Well, at the end of the day, we hold the government to account to make sure that every public dollar is paid into the public spaces and the services we need, but when it goes to the private sector, the public is out of it, and then the question is, “How much of that dollar can we make sure goes to stakeholders, to shareholders, to

make sure they get their profits? If there is an investment, we’ve got to make sure that we get our dollars out of it.” So those are some of the questions that a lot of people are asking when we’re raising these issues inside the House.

When it comes to long-term-care beds, we’ve seen that the Canadian military actually exposed this government and what they did during the initial days of COVID. We’ve seen the deplorable conditions that seniors were left in. It broke everybody’s heart inside of this room and across this country. Those particular long-term-care homes now are without residents; they can’t get them because their reputations have been tarnished. So this piece of legislation was designed by this government in order to make sure that they can refill those beds in the private sector. Essentially, this is what is being done.

This bill is called Bill 7, More Beds, Better Care Act. I re-identified it as “more profits, better return for shareholders.” That’s how I looked at it.

It is frightening to hear this government, day after day, get up and say that the opposition wants to just do nothing and accept the status quo. Well, we agree with you that things need to change. We agree that, prior to you coming into government four years ago, there were a lot of poor decisions, poor management that was done by the then Liberal government. But this is not the fix to that issue.

When I stand here and say that it’s impossible for me to stand here and accept that we’re going to take away consent from our seniors, from their decision and their families’ responsibilities, and remove that—I just can’t stand and accept that as a bill. I cannot stand here on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin and vote in favour of this type of legislation.

The legislation will pass. This government has a majority government.

It just baffles me, again—I know I stated it earlier: Why aren’t we going out to the public? Why aren’t we talking to the organizations so that we can attempt to make this legislation stronger, so that we can look at ways that we can actually address some of the issues that are out there?

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly said, “We oppose” the “proposed amendments ... revoking the right of seniors in hospital to consent to” long-term care “which will result in them being moved far from supportive family & community, again attempting to ‘fix’ health care to the detriment of seniors.”

The Ontario Long Term Care Association said, “Long-term-care homes are experiencing staffing challenges with registered nurses, registered practical nurses, personal support workers, and other important supportive roles such as dietary staff. In many communities, this has reached a crisis point.”

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We’ve been trying to push this government to have a discussion on the health care crisis in this province. The member from Nickel Belt has been rising daily trying to bring that to the floor of this Legislature, and to no avail, because this government has turned down that opportunity to have this discussion.

Doctors, nurses, health care workers and advocates are voicing strong opposition online, calling the government's plan "morally reprehensible." That's some pretty tough language there. You would think that we would want to go out and have that discussion with individuals.

I said earlier in my comments that I want to talk about a personal friend of mine in my riding and to bring his story and how it relates to what we're discussing here today. I was actually at his funeral on Sunday, in Blind River. My good friend Russell Clearwater, and his wife Vera—beautiful people. Russell was a proud veteran, a proud legionnaire. He was very firm on processes. If there was going to be a parade or a ceremony, he made sure that proper protocol was followed. He was described as a burnt marshmallow at the celebration of life, because he was a little bit rough and dirty on the outside but on the inside he was really "smushy." That's the way they described him.

Russell's health deteriorated very quickly due to Alzheimer's. He had suffered a little bit of a leg injury, and he was going in and out of the hospital. Something got triggered, and Alzheimer's set in. Vera could no longer take care of him at home. They tried, but she just couldn't. So he ended up in the ALC portion of the hospital, and they were looking to off-load him to make room for somebody else to come in. There was just no other room. There was nothing that was actually available, so they wanted to send him back home. So they sent him back home, but it was for a very short period of time.

He had another incident. He was trying to have a shower. Those old houses, as you indicated, are narrow—you can't get in. They're both at an age where it's physically challenging. Russell was a big, burly boy, and poor Vera just couldn't manoeuvre him through the narrow door. The toilet is right there, and you've got to lift your feet to get into the tub. I know it sounds very simple to all of us in this House, but it's a huge challenge for an individual who has restrictions. He ended up coming out of the shower, and he fell again. He ended up back in the hospital.

While he was in the hospital, the family noticed the impact this was having on Vera. Vera was now exhausted. Vera contacted me at my office. She said, "Mikey, I need you to come over. I need to have a chat with you." So I went over and had a chat with her. We had a coffee, and she said, "I can't no more. They're trying to push him on me—and I can't. It would be one thing if he were here and we'd get the proper home care for him at home, but we're not even getting that."

You have to remember that although Russell was suffering from Alzheimer's, he was a very crafty fella too. He knew exactly what to tell the assessors so that he could give them some type of comfort level to get him released from the hospital to go home. The wits were still there. He was still sharp, and he knew exactly what to say: "Oh, no, I can cook, and I will help Vera to do dishes"—but he couldn't. He just didn't have those abilities.

What Vera explained to me, and what I saw in her eyes—she was so desperate to try to get a message to the doctors, to tell them, "If you send him back home to me,

the next time he comes here, I'll be in the bed next to him, because I'm going to end up here as well." Can you imagine? Poor Vera is probably about 140 pounds soaking wet, and Russell was a good 220. If Russell lost his balance and fell over her—there's a hip, there's an arm, there's something that's breaking, and they're both in the hospital, and that's not helping anyone.

We had to wait and wait until that bed finally opened up in the long-term-care home, but then it was just—how do we get him there, how does he become eligible? The only way was to really work on the doctor and say, "Hey, Doc, if you don't do this, if this is not the case that happens—if they're not assessed in a way that makes him eligible to get into that home, he's going to end up again with Vera, and they're both going to end up here." We were successful. Everybody was successful.

Russell was okay with the idea of going to the long-term-care home—because, at the end of the day, it's still the choice of the patient. The patient still has to give that consent. Initially, Russell was fighting it because he wanted to go back home. He's an independent guy. He wanted to go back home. But he knew, after having a very lengthy heart-to-heart talk with Vera, that that's where he belonged. He ended up going there.

His health deteriorated very quickly, and to the day—it was a Saturday afternoon. I was coming back from an event up north in my riding, and I got a text message from Vera telling me that Russell had passed away. We had a celebration of life on Sunday.

That was his experience with what we're experiencing and the problems we're seeing in our hospitals and the problems we're seeing in our long-term-care homes. I wanted to bring that to the floor here and to say that we acknowledge that there are problems that we have there and that the status quo just does not fit today's times. There are challenges that we have.

Going out and providing an opportunity for stakeholders—not closing doors or ears; listening to what is out there—reinvesting in our hospitals, reinvesting into the public sector, making sure that home care is there for individuals, and making a huge, strategic development with resources available in home care will also be a huge step in the right direction to preventing and opening up beds in hospitals and freeing up spaces in long-term-care homes.

People want to stay at home. That same person we're paying for over at the hospital or in a long-term-care home—it's much cheaper when we provide it at home, where they can stay and enjoy a very lengthy, fulfilling life and remain with their family, because we know that where people are happiest is in their home, and that's where they're going to care for each other that much more.

Having said that, Speaker, I'd like to move an amendment to the bill.

I move that the motion be amended by deleting the text "the bills shall be ordered for third reading, which orders may be called that same day" and replacing with the words:

"Bill 2 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and Bill 7 shall

be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

“That the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet to arrange committee proceedings for Bill 2 and the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet to arrange committee proceedings for Bill 7; and”.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has moved that the motion be amended by deleting the text “the bills shall be ordered for third reading, which orders may be called that same day” and replacing with the words:

“Bill 2 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and Bill 7 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

“That the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet to arrange committee proceedings for Bill 2 and the subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet to arrange committee proceedings for Bill 7; and”.

Back to the member for further debate.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, did you want me to read what the new motion would read? No? All right.

Again, this is to provide that opportunity for the government to actually take the time to travel this bill, get it out to the organizations and get some input, so that we can get it right. I know from previous years in this House that when bills are travelled, when we actually go out and do the people’s work, when we actually go out and listen and take the time to get it right, there are often suggestions, ideas, points of view, new versions that can be brought into a particular bill that will make it successful. There are many pieces of legislation that have stood the test of time in this Legislature, and that’s why they’re still good law—because we haven’t had to change them, because we’ve taken the time. We’ve engaged with the general public. We’ve listened. We responded. We’ve given and taken on these issues—it’s not just “government knows best.” There are good ideas that come from the opposition, and there are opportunities where we can actually work together. It means so much to those who are outside of this chamber when they have a Legislature that is working towards common goals, that makes good policy changes.

With that, I want to thank the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin for having again sent me here. It is a pleasure to stand in my place. But I just cannot stand in this place and accept the fact that we’re going to be removing the consent of individuals—the right to consent—with any relocation under this particular bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the opportunity to speak again today on this very important motion. The

deputy House leader, of course, already did a very wonderful job of outlining why it was so important that we move forward this motion.

It is curious, I will say from the outset, before I start getting into some of the other more salient points of my discussion, that now, all of a sudden—and I know colleagues will probably agree with me—the NDP want to travel a bill. They actually didn’t even want to serve on committees earlier in the week, and now they want to send the bill to committee. That is what we’re going to see from the NDP for a number of weeks and months in this place—it will be, of course, the old NDP adage of delay and obfuscate and “How can you tear down walls?” But ultimately, what the member is asking us to do is to delay passage of a bill that is so important to the people of the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: You hear the member from Spadina–Fort York yelling across about the province and this and that, but what he’s really saying is that he just wants to delay, and that’s what the crux of this amendment by the opposition is. It’s a delaying mechanism.

So, to the people of Ontario who hear this: Why is it that the NDP want to delay? Why is it important that we vote against an amendment to the amendment that the NDP have put forward?

If I could, Madam Speaker, I’d just have one of the pages bring me a copy of the amendment. That would also be very helpful.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: A big page, and a rather old page as well, but nonetheless—not many pages have grey hair, but this one does.

Under the guise of wanting consultation and wanting to hear more, the NDP have put a motion forward. Forget that there’s an opportunity in question period to talk about things and question the government on things. That didn’t really happen today. There was not much discussion on these items. Forget the fact that, when it comes to the budget, we went to an election and the people of the province of Ontario were put the budget that we had passed beforehand on the table, and we asked them to review the budget and pass judgment on the government, and they did, by sending us back with a larger majority and, of course, reducing the NDP to a rump in the House.

The crux of the motion that you have in front of you here, colleagues, is that the NDP want to send the budget to committee. The member for Algoma–Manitoulin wants to hear from people—“We should go around and hear from people on the budget.” We did actually go around and hear from people. We introduced the budget in April. We then travelled around the province. We all went back into our ridings. At the time, when we went back into our ridings, there were 41 NDP members and 70 Conservative members. We consulted with people at that time, day after day after day. It came back, after that consultation was completed, that this side of the House became so large that we actually had to occupy that side of the House as well. In fact, this side of the House, the Conservatives, were

returned with such a large majority after the consultations that the NDP were made much smaller. In fact—not to digress too much, but I will, just a little bit—they remained so small that the Leader of the Opposition could no longer sit in the Leader of the Opposition's chair. He had to move over a few seats because their caucus was too small—to actually sit where the leader is supposed to sit—so they went to a corner.

I would submit to the opposition that the biggest consultation that a province can ever undertake is an election. The motion is about consultation. In his own words, the member was talking about consulting people, hearing from people. If I'm to address how we consult with people and why I think this motion is not worthy of being accepted by us, I think that we have to talk about how those initial consultations went. It's important for me, it's important as a caucus and as a government—because the motion that is put forward might be an indication that we haven't consulted with people and that is why this motion was put forward. If that is the case, if that is the argument the member is making—and one would assume that that is what they have done here, because that's kind of what their motion is, and that's what the member said in his remarks to this—then it's strange.

I'll speak to the long-term-care part of the motion in the last 20 minutes of my remarks. The motion that he puts forward and the consultations that he talks about—I think the strange thing about it is that you will remember, those colleagues who were here in the last Parliament, that when the budget was introduced, they were saying that we should go to the people and let the people decide on the budget. This was what we would hear from the NDP. All colleagues will remember this: "Go let the people decide." And then we would hear the refrain: "Because after June 2, when we're over there, we're going to introduce a brand new budget, and it will be a budget for the people," and so on and so forth, and blah, blah, blah.

But after that consultation was completed, which, again, was the largest consultation that a province can have, the people actually did return and they came back with a very resounding supportive and—really, not just supportive. Not only did they send us back with a larger majority—it's the first time a government, elected with a majority, was returned with a larger majority, I think, in over 50 years. I think that is also something that is worth mentioning. I think that is an important part.

1400

Again, though, let's think about earlier in the week. Why would I be against this motion? And why am I suggesting that my colleagues vote against this motion? Because I think when one compares this amendment to the points of order that were raised by the opposition earlier in the week—and for clarity, because I'll bring it all around, I think it's important to look at what we are talking about, why I'm referencing that.

In the motion earlier in the week, the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane mentioned that one of the reasons the NDP couldn't support a motion that we brought forward, which was ostensibly about committee membership as well as the roles of the Deputy Speakers—and you will

remember, Madam Speaker, and the House will remember, that they actually voted against that—was that we, as a government, put members on committees without asking them. I think it's an important point. You'll see as I bring it around. We didn't ask them for permission and we put members on committees. Again, remember that after the election—because they were so diminished in size, because the people returned them as a much smaller caucus, because many of their members were defeated and replaced by Conservative members—they weren't entitled to a large amount of people on committees. They're entitled to two, but we thought there should be three. They were against that because they didn't think that—well, actually, I don't really know what they thought. They didn't think committees were important, so they didn't want to send people on.

The Speaker ruled that in fact that motion was in order, but then the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane went on to talk about how we didn't put the member for Waterloo on a specific committee, which was troubling since she was the finance critic—and colleagues will remember that we actually had to force the opposition to put their finance critic on the finance committee. So it didn't matter to them earlier in the week. Committees were unimportant earlier in the week. They didn't care whether their finance critic was on a committee earlier in the week.

But when it comes to delaying important business of the people of the province of Ontario, then, colleagues, it becomes really, really important to the NDP. Why would that not be something that a government wants to do? As the member for Barrie-Innisfil talked about, both of the bills that have been brought forward are, in fact, important pieces of legislation—one that was introduced prior to the last election, and the other which was just introduced.

I had the great honour of being able to introduce the amendments to the Fixing Long-Term Care Act. It's a small bill, colleagues. It's not a big bill. It is really just three pages long. When you take the explanatory note out, it's a one-page bill.

Again, just for colleagues who are new, the NDP will, at some point in time, claim that this is an omnibus bill—because anything that's over two paragraphs long, the NDP usually claim is an omnibus bill, that it's too big and needs to be separated. But I digress. I just wanted to clarify, because there are so many new Conservative members who weren't here in the last Parliament. There are so many of them that I think, when we deal with motions like this, we also have to take the opportunity to explain—because this place is so much about precedent and what has happened before—why things happen the way they do. So that's important.

I believe that debate collapsed on the first two motions that we had put forward. So despite the fact that they are against their members serving on committee—and I'm told, actually, that really, although they have the entitlement to three, they're only sending one person to committee anyway; there's not a lot of participation.

Having said that, when it comes to the budget, consultation happened riding by riding by riding—done. We heard the voices of the people.

Colleagues will know we've talked about this a lot already—and I believe that's what's important in this motion. The NDP will try to do, through process and procedure, what the people of Ontario will never let them do. The people of the province of Ontario will never let them govern—they tried it once and it was a disaster, and they've never let them govern again. Because they can't win the confidence of the people, they come here, they obfuscate, they try to delay things, because for the NDP, delay is victory. Destroying what's built—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader will withdraw.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Absolutely, I withdraw.

For the NDP, delay means that they can avoid constructively helping the government build and improve, and in some strange way, there is a belief that that might help. I believe that perhaps there is a feeling that if a government falls or fails to fix things, that the people of the province of Ontario might look at things differently when the next election comes. It hasn't worked for a lot of years, but anyway, that's what it's at.

One would wonder why you would want to send the finance bill—and I'll get to the Fixing Long-Term Care Act in my last 20 minutes. Let's look at the finance bill. There are a number of really important measures in the finance bill. All colleagues will know this, and you'll know this because we campaigned on it and the people returned us in larger numbers than when we left.

They didn't want their finance critic to be on that committee, but now they want to hear from the people of the province of Ontario, when it was made very clear—I would say the finance minister was very, very clear on this point prior to the election—that when we came back to this House after securing another majority government, we would be reintroducing the same budget and we would be passing that budget.

The only change in that budget, of course, is that we have increased ODSP rates for the first time in many, many, many years. That's an improvement.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, it's supporting people. So it's an improvement.

They would like to delay that, and we think that that shouldn't be delayed, that that's something that should go forward. I know how hard the minister has worked on this file. We think that that measure needs to go forward.

I just want to get to a part—I don't have my reading glasses with me, so just bear with me. Somebody has reading glasses. Oh, are those yours, Madam Speaker? Thank you. I appreciate that. There we go. See, that's help. That's the process when you help each other out, and that's a lot of what happens in this place. Yes, it's as I thought—and I'll just have one of the pages bring those glasses back to you.

Why is it so important—before I get to the Fixing Long-Term Care Act portion of it—that we go forward with budget measures right away? Because that is really the crux of it.

1410

We believe that this bill has been debated. We believe that this bill has gone to the people of the province of Ontario. The bill has been debated in terms of the throne speech; commitments were made in the throne speech. We believe the people passed judgment.

There were leaders' debates with the former leader of the NDP, who I'm told now, colleagues, is actually very supportive of all of the things that we have done. I don't know how this happened, but even the former leader of the NDP, the former member for Hamilton Centre, now has come out in favour of the things that are in this budget and apparently now supports development, supports building houses, supports transit and transportation, and even is using the slogan that we used—"Getting It Done"—as her campaign slogan. It was just a mistake, all of those years that she was opposed to everything we're doing—but now she has seen the light.

So for the member who is now running to be the mayor of Hamilton, the former leader of the NDP—what would that candidate, Andrea Horwath—I can say it now because she's no longer an MPP, a member, so I'm allowed to. What would Andrea Horwath, the former leader of the NDP, think of a motion that seeks to delay what she is campaigning on in the city of Hamilton? What would Andrea Horwath, the former leader of that party up until June—up until a few weeks, June 3, 4, or whatever it is—say to this blatant attempt to delay all of the good things that are happening in Hamilton? I think, given that she's using the "Get It Done" slogan, that she would be very, very upset if we delayed further and didn't move things on. I don't know if colleagues would agree with me on this or not; maybe they would, maybe they wouldn't. But I know that the members we have from Hamilton—the new member from Hamilton—

Hon. Neil Lumsden: East.

Hon. Paul Calandra: East.

I'm going to stray for one second, Madam Speaker, but you'll see the connection. I know that sometimes the table gets a bit worried that the connections aren't there. But the connections really are there. We're connecting the former leader of the NDP, who, until very recently, was a member of this House, who was unsupportive for 10 or 12 or 13 years, as leader of the NDP, particularly in the last four years, of measures that were—transit and transportation: didn't like it; building homes: didn't like it. Anti-development—that was the leader. Two weeks after leaving office, running for mayor—well, all just a misunderstanding; people really didn't understand her.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Misunderstood.

But what we understand now is, we've got to get it done.

Again, I stray a bit far, because the member for Hamilton East, of course, Madam Speaker—and it will come around, I promise you—has a magnificent track record in his community; it goes without saying. The member for Hamilton East is a community builder. He helps build that community. And I will say—I know he

will forgive me—there were a lot of people who probably said before the last election, “Conservatives will never elect a member for Hamilton East.” I know they said that.

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, they did. I know you say no, but they said it. And we said, “No, because the people of the province of Ontario who have seen the budget that we have introduced are going to look at that budget and are going to say, ‘I want more of that. I want more of it.’” And what did they do? They looked at a community builder, the member for Hamilton East, and they said, “I want him to get here, pass the budget as quickly as possible, and help build my community.” And who are we to say no to the member for Hamilton East? But more importantly, who are we to say no to somebody who’s running for mayor, who used to be the leader of the NDP up until a few weeks ago? We’re not, especially once we’ve come across that big consultation—but it goes further than that.

Could I seek unanimous consent now to speak for an extra hour, Madam Speaker? I’ve only got 22 minutes. So I’ll do it right now.

I seek unanimous consent to extend my remarks by another 60 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to extend the debate for one hour.

Interjection: His speaking time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): His speaking time for one hour.

I hear a no.

Hon. Paul Calandra: You just want to extend democracy, you just want to have the opportunity to be heard—and there it is, the NDP.

I think that highlights why we can’t support the motion—because it’s not about being heard, because they shot down an opportunity to be heard. It’s not about the government being heard. It’s not about the people being heard. It’s only about what they want.

So, given that the NDP don’t want people to be heard, it makes this whole amendment to the motion irrelevant. Given that they don’t want to be heard, I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1417 to 1447.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 0; the nays are 69.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion lost.

We now return to the government House leader to continue debate.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I note I have 20 minutes left—but before I do that, I just want to thank all of my colleagues, because this was a challenging motion, because it was ostensibly the NDP wanting to shut our voice down. When I had that motion beforehand to extend the speaking time—I put a motion forward—they wanted to quiet me down. They wanted to turn off debate. I put a motion forward to end debate, but it was this caucus, this team here and over there, who said, “Don’t let the NDP silence you. We’ve got important work to do here. Don’t let that crew of naysayers and doomsayers, the people who want to tear down what is being built up—don’t let them silence you. You go back into that House and continue the debate even if they want to cut it off.” And that’s what we did, colleagues. So I want to thank all of you.

It’s not often that a House leader has an entire party vote against him and is happy about it—because they did what always happens with Conservative parties: They lifted me up so that we can continue the hard work for the people of the province of Ontario, and again, I thank them for it. We couldn’t get any of this done if we didn’t work together as a team.

As I look across the vast expanse of Conservatives on this side of the House, on that side of the House, where used to sit NDP now sit Conservatives—that’s a majority caucus on that side of the House, over there, and they want to be heard on the budget. They’ve been talking about the great budget that was presented, as I talked about, by the Minister of Finance before the last election.

We’re not going to delay making things better for the people of the province of Ontario—because they wanted to shut down me, they wanted to shut down all of you. We said no. And we came in massive numbers, just like the people of the province of Ontario did on June 2—and in return, a strong, stable Conservative majority government for the province of Ontario. Why did they do that? Because they knew that progress could not be stopped. They said, “There is no way we are going to stop the progress that is made.”

A budget that includes transit and transportation initiatives—we talked about this earlier. When we allowed the NDP-Liberal coalition that almost destroyed the province of Ontario for so many years, they couldn’t come up with a subway. We heard it over and over and over again. I talked about this when I was a federal member. I announced the Sheppard subway and the Scarborough subway four different times, and by the last time, it was like—“Holy mackerel. We’re not coming back out until you guys figure out what you want to do.” And in the first year of our mandate, what did we get done? We got a subway in Toronto. We got a subway into York region. And let me tell you, Madam Speaker—where are the member for Richmond Hill and the minister from Aurora—

Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill? These two drove the York subway extension, and it's for them. They said, "We need a subway in York region," and they fought for it. For so long, Liberal politicians failed. But we got it done. We're getting it done.

For those colleagues who really were so instrumental in saying, "Get out there and talk about the things that are important. Don't let them shut you down," I referenced earlier in debate—for some of you who were so intense in reading your files, I wanted to refresh you on how the former leader of the NDP now wants us to pass our budget. Her slogan for mayor of Hamilton is "Get It Done." Andrea Horwath, the former leader of the NDP, now running for the mayor of Hamilton, supports everything we're doing.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Del Duca on roads.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, colleagues, you're so right. It's not just the former NDP leader; the former Liberal leader also sees the value of passing this budget. He now wants highways. Yes, he's running for highways. He now wants to get it done, as well, while he runs for the mayor of Vaughan. So it is for those—it is for the former leader of the Liberal Party, it is for the former leader of the NDP, it is for all of my caucus who convinced me, "Get in there. Get it done. Don't let the current NDP silence you." And they showed up in vast numbers, and they said, "Let's get it done."

Look at my Mississauga caucus that was returned to the House—Mississauga–Streetsville, Mississauga Centre, Mississauga–Erin Mills, Mississauga East–Cooksville, Mississauga–Lakeshore, Mississauga–Malton. Are you telling me there are Conservatives in all of Mississauga yet again? Is that what you're saying to me? Why are there Conservatives in all of Mississauga? Because you're getting it done.

We talked about the member for Hamilton East, but let's talk about the member for York South–Weston. When was the last time a Conservative held the seat in York South–Weston? I think it was 75, 76 years ago. They all said, "It's not going to happen," but we got it done.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Would the government House leader please direct your comments through the Speaker?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Yes, Madam Speaker.

There's just so much. Where does it end?

There was a very good member in this House—I enjoyed working with him. I'm going to be honest. He was a member for a very, very long time. He is a good, decent man—the member for Timmins, Gilles Bisson. Everybody said, "You're not going to beat Gilles Bisson." He's a good guy. Don't get me wrong; he accomplished a lot in his time in office. Everybody said, "You can't do it. You're not going to win the north. It's not going to happen for Conservatives." Well, guess what? George is here.

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Excuse me; I'm sorry. The Minister of Mines, the member for Timmins, is here, and he's getting it done for the people of Timmins.

We heard that before. The member for Sault Ste. Marie said, "Conservatives are never going to win Sault Ste.

Marie," but we got that one done even before the last election.

Then, in North Bay, they said you couldn't do that, but we still maintain North Bay,

In Thunder Bay—"You're never going win a seat in Thunder Bay. It's not going to happen." But did it happen? It happened.

It's all about getting things done. That's why we don't want to delay the budget. Why would we want to delay the budget, a budget that returned so many Conservatives?

Let's think for a second, for the new colleagues, about what it was like in this place before the last election. I'm going to share a little story, Madam Speaker, through you, to the colleagues who are new. You will remember, because you're a veteran of the place, how time after time after time we would talk about things that were important to Brampton. We would talk about things that were important to Brampton, and they said, "Well, you don't know what you're talking about. You guys don't understand the people of Brampton." We would talk about transit: "You don't get them." We would talk about a highway: "They don't want a highway." We would talk about health care: "They don't need health care." They said, we are going to take them—and actually, the leader of the federal NDP, his brother was one of the members who was in that area. The deputy leader of the NDP was also there. And do you know what?

Help me—Brampton Centre is a Conservative. Is it Brampton East—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Conservative. Brampton West, Brampton North, Brampton South—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Are they all Conservatives there, too? Holy mackerel. Wow. It's incredible.

I know what all colleagues are thinking. They're thinking it can't get any better than that. "Holy mackerel. Does it get any better than that?" I think, yes, it does get better than that, because there were two ridings—Essex and Windsor–Tecumseh. Windsor–Tecumseh—94 years between Conservative—

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Ninety-four years.

Perhaps colleagues can help me. Is there a Conservative in Windsor–Tecumseh?

Interjections: Yes.

Hon. Paul Calandra: There is a Conservative member in Windsor–Tecumseh right now—94 years. Later today, he's going to give his maiden speech and he's going to knock everybody's socks off because he's an incredible member.

People will remember the former member for Essex. He did a good job for the job that he had to do. I actually like him. He's a decent guy, but it's tough to find a more negative take on our—a good guy. He's a very positive guy—but it's hard to find a more negative take on the things that we were accomplishing as government. But guess what? Is the member for Essex a Conservative, colleagues? Yes—right there.

Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—“Conservatives don’t win in francophone ridings. That doesn’t happen.” Is the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell here? Is he a Conservative? Yes, he is—right there, colleagues.

Across the board, that is what Conservatives do—they get things done.

The NDP bring a motion to the floor of this House, colleagues, and what do they want to do? They want to delay, and how—think about this: We want to continue debate. You all convinced me we’ve got to continue debate and we won’t be silenced. But who was silenced this afternoon? Who didn’t even stand and vote? It was the opposition NDP. They didn’t even have the temerity to get out of their seats on the last vote and be heard by the people of the province of Ontario. It really proves, colleagues, that it’s all about games. That’s all they care about.

Well, we care about getting things done for the people of the province of Ontario.

We want to reform health care in the province of Ontario. That’s why we’re not going to delay. That’s why we’re not going to go for an amendment to a motion—colleagues, you know we brought forward a motion because we want to pass the budget, which the people of the province of Ontario massively approved in an election. We said we won’t delay it. We also brought to this floor a piece of legislation that will help improve health care for millions of people in the province of Ontario. They want us to delay it. They want us to delay any changes—like somehow it makes it better to delay. Well, that’s what they did.

We saw what NDP policies were—you remember this. When they did have the one chance to govern, they almost bankrupted us—an \$11-billion deficit in 1995. They closed down—well, colleagues, what did they do? They actually fired nurses, laid off doctors. They then did something called a Rae Day—they made you take 10 days off without getting paid. They closed floors of hospitals, shuttered floors of hospitals—but don’t worry, because then they got together in a room, created a song and sang a song at a piano, “We’re all in this together,” and that was supposed to make everything better, but it didn’t. It took a Mike Harris government to put Ontario back on track—and we got it done.

Madam Speaker, I think it is very clear why we want to continue working for the people of the province of Ontario; why we aren’t going to play the games of the opposition; why I, as the House leader, am going to take the advice of my colleagues and use all of the tools at my disposal to make sure that these two important pieces of legislation pass quickly. Because of that and because I want to get these bills done and passed, I move the adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This is a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1503 to 1533.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Would the members please take their seats. The government House leader has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

All those opposed to the motion, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the Clerks.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 0; the nays are 71.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion lost.

Pursuant to standing order 50(b), I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Mantha has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of time on Bill 2, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes, and Bill 7, An Act to amend the Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021 with respect to patients requiring an alternate level of care and other matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Health Care Consent Act, 1996. Is it the pleasure of the House that the amendment carry?

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 nays have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on August 25, 2022, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I am proud to rise today in this great place among my distinguished colleagues in this House.

First, Speaker, I wish you a sincere congratulations on your own re-election in this past campaign. I grew up learning quite a bit about you on CHCH television when I could tune in with my rabbit ears. It’s truly an honour and privilege to have the opportunity to serve side by side with you and all 124 members of this House who represent their communities.

I want to begin by taking this moment to wholeheartedly thank the voters of Windsor–Tecumseh. I am grateful to each person who gave me this privilege to serve them. The community told me that this is the government that, when it mattered, supported our community. The

delivery of real, tangible results from this government stood out for my constituents.

Les actions de ce gouvernement sont transformatrices pour ma communauté. C'est ce gouvernement qui a fait possible l'avancement de l'hôpital régional de soins aigus de Windsor-Essex. C'est ce gouvernement qui termine enfin l'élargissement à quatre voies de l'autoroute 3 à travers Windsor et le comté d'Essex, un projet autrement suspendu depuis 2011. C'est ce gouvernement qui investit des centaines de millions de dollars en soutien financier pour la fabrication de pointe dans notre région, comme l'usine d'assemblage de batteries de véhicules électriques NextStar Energy, le Centre d'innovation pour les batteries Flex-Ion et le réoutillage de l'usine d'assemblage de Stellantis à Windsor.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm just wondering if the members of the opposition might be able to come to order so that we could hear the member's maiden speech.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I was going to let it go, but I would ask that the House just please keep it down a little bit. We have someone speaking. Thank you.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh can continue.

M. Andrew Dowie: Les actions de ce gouvernement assurent l'espoir et l'optimisme dans notre communauté comme je n'en ai jamais vu auparavant.

Speaker, I would not be here without those who put their heart and soul into helping me, and many are in the gallery today:

My loving wife, Mary, with her heart of gold, put everything aside to support me in the election and beyond. I hope that Mary forgives me for complicating our wedding plans with an election campaign.

My mother, Mary Jo, who, as a retired Catholic elementary teacher, put herself well outside of her comfort zone as a PC canvasser, but has been so supportive of me and a continued champion for me for my whole life.

1540

My campaign manager and executive assistant, Paul Synnott, who, after 20 years of working hard to help the people he believes in, truly earned a significant win that is reflective of the impact that he brings to a campaign.

And I wish a warm welcome to my constituency assistant Rachel Haddad, here in the gallery, who's worked with sincere passion and has delivered tremendous results for the betterment of our community since she joined our office.

To all my loyal and hard-working campaign volunteers: I can't thank you enough. Your support and your devotion, especially for something that wasn't a sure thing, will never be forgotten.

My journey here really began with Scouts Canada, as a member of the 35th Tecumseh Scout Group. I joined scouting 35 years ago. Today, I proudly serve as the group commissioner. Scouting is where I learned the importance of citizenship, of values and of ethics. Our scout law is a reliable guide every single day to be helpful and

trustworthy, kind and cheerful, considerate and clean and wise in the use of all resources. Scouting is also where I learned the importance of teamwork, to pitch in and to share the load, whether it is chairing the jamboree or cleaning the kybo. Every task is an essential one, and there's often unpleasant work to be done. But the values I've learned from scouting have never let me down.

Speaker, I also come to the House armed with a significant career in government, working both as a member of the civil service and as an elected official in my own right. For almost 20 years, I've been a civil engineer employed by the city of Windsor. The city of Windsor is home to three quarters of my constituents. It is a city built on grit, of standing up for yourself for what is right and what is just. It is a city that reflects resilience, and a populace that comes together in times of need. Windsor's history is tailor-made for a movie script. From rum-running to railroads, from a strong Indigenous and colonial history to industrial progress, Windsor is one of a kind. It's been a privilege to serve the residents of Windsor every day of my professional career and to work to improve our neighbourhoods and their services. I thank Mayor Drew Dilkens for his support, and as my employer that he and the city granted me a leave to have the opportunity to serve here in the Ontario Legislature.

One highlight of working in Windsor was my time spent with former mayor Eddie Francis. He was an incredible salesperson for the city of Windsor. I worked with Mayor Francis for two and a half years on economic development files for the betterment of our community. He showed me exactly why the work that we do here on a policy basis is meaningful and rewarding.

My experience being a civil servant enticed me to apply my skills in new ways. The municipal council of the town of Tecumseh, led by mayor Gary McNamara, took a chance on me by appointing me to the committee of adjustment, the Essex County Library Board and the Property Standards Committee. I'm grateful for the eight years that I served with those citizen appointments.

By 2014, armed with my experience working with Mayor Francis, I ran for municipal council, knowing I could offer the best possible understanding of how government works and how to achieve results; how to apply the problem-solving skills I developed as a civil engineer. In spite of having no profile to speak of whatsoever, the residents of my ward elected me in 2014 and, four years later, in 2018, returned me to council by acclamation. I remain incredibly grateful that most of the residents of Tecumseh chose to continue to support me for a third time in the recent provincial election. I would equally like to thank my colleagues from the town of Tecumseh council, led by Mayor McNamara, who unanimously supported my candidacy for this election across party lines.

I'd like to make a special thanks to councillor Brian Houston, who gave me hundreds of hours of help on this campaign and delivered in spades as my get-out-the-vote chair—and a sincere congratulations on his own acclamation for a third term to Tecumseh council.

Professional Engineers Ontario has noted that I'm the only professional engineer to be elected serving in this House in the 43rd Ontario Legislature. My actions here must reflect the highest level of ethics and of a duty to the public. I pledge to make my fellow engineers proud of the service that I deliver in this Legislature.

Being from Windsor–Tecumseh means that many generations of my family work in or have worked in the auto industry, and this brings forward a set of rivalries that might not be as pronounced elsewhere in Ontario. Speaker, I will let you be the judge as to whether my mom's Plymouth Horizon or my dad's Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera was the better vehicle. But my family, like so many others in Windsor–Tecumseh, is ingrained in the auto industry. On my father's side, it was Newham Chev-Olds in Chatham-Kent–Leamington, in Merlin, Ontario. On my mother's side were countless relatives working at the Windsor assembly plant. So when family Christmas was hosted every year in Riverside, it just would not be right to stoke the fires of the Chrysler versus GM versus Ford debate. Usually those debates were initiated by my father, and I don't quite take after him in that sense, but he sure made things fun.

But in Windsor–Tecumseh, the auto industry is who we are. It is our pride. I'm proud of my brother Jim, who continued this legacy as a mould-maker, skilled in what he does in supporting the development of vehicle parts in one of Oldecastle's world-class advanced manufacturing companies, Crest Mold Technology.

We are home to so much more. We are home to Hiram Walker and Sons Ltd., home of Canadian Club, J.P. Wiser's, Polar Ice and McGuinness. We're home to two of Ford Motor Company of Canada's engine plants. We're home to Bonduelle, who package many of the frozen vegetables that you buy at the grocery store. And we're home to Jamieson Wellness, one of Canada's leaders in natural health product manufacturing.

Nous avons ainsi à Windsor–Tecumseh un fort patrimoine franco-ontarien. Dans ma circonscription, c'est facile de retrouver toute évidence de ça : les chemins Pierre, Lacasse, Lesperance, Lauzon, Drouillard, St. Pierre, Labute, Wyandotte. Cette histoire demeure très importante, et la communauté franco-ontarienne fait grand effort à se faire inclure chez moi.

J'ai eu la chance d'apprendre le français grâce à notre réseau des écoles francophones. Il en existe quatre dans mon quartier propre où les anglophones comme moi peuvent devenir francophiles et partager la culture franco-ontarienne. Mon école secondaire, L'Essor, était même le sujet d'un débat ici dans la 31^e Assemblée. Le projet de loi 3 était une loi obligeant le conseil scolaire du comté d'Essex à fournir une école secondaire de langue française. C'était en 1977. Aux députés qui avaient supporté ce projet de loi, merci. J'ai appris la langue française grâce à vos efforts.

J'ai continué mon éducation à l'Université d'Ottawa. C'était important pour moi de ne pas perdre mon bilinguisme. J'ai complété deux baccalauréats avec une éducation dans la langue française ici en Ontario. Il y a très

peu d'autres endroits où c'est même possible, et j'apprécie bien que c'est grâce à la politique provinciale que je peux m'exprimer en français.

One of the best parts of coming home to Windsor–Tecumseh is the immersion in our community of generosity, tolerance and respect for one another—and did the community ever consider trying a new approach on June 2. Speaker, there's not much precedent for my hometown electing a PC candidate. The people of the town of Tecumseh have not been represented by either a Conservative MPP or a Tecumseh resident since our community's beloved first mayor and hero from World War I, Colonel Paul Poisson, who served in this House from 1926 to 1934. It is an incredible privilege to be able to follow in Colonel Poisson's footsteps.

But what is certainly with precedent is a history and a record of good representation, no matter the political stripe. My hometown has been represented by some of the most respected members of this House: Dave Cooke—who I thank very much for watching my speech from his home today; I truly appreciate it—Wayne Lessard, Dwight Duncan and my predecessor in this riding, Percy Hatfield, who remains a giant in our community. Percy was our community's go-to for politics. He was the host of Percy's Panel on the CBC Windsor evening news, and is a consummate professional in every sense of the word.

As a municipal staff member, I watched as Percy provided an exemplary demonstration of class and nobility as a city councillor. He did not tolerate disrespect of process or of the people involved. He demonstrated to me and to the civil service that our contributions were appreciated.

Percy clearly had a sincere appreciation for the political process, no matter who was involved. A few years ago, he was one of the attendees for a PC leaders' debate hosted in my neighbourhood at the Lakeshore Imagine Cinemas, and I was quite happy to see that Percy had secured one of the best seats in the house for that one.

Shortly after I was elected to town council in 2014, I attended the Professional Engineers Ontario Queen's Park day reception right here at the Ontario Legislature. Percy showed me this beautiful building and the hidden gems in his office, and he also left me with a parting reflection, that at some point in the distant future, he will need to have a worthy successor. I will do my utmost to give justice to the role given to me and to offer the same level of respect and dignity that Percy gave to this role for the many years that he served.

1550

As I know Percy is also likely watching as well, I want to say a sincere thank you to Percy Hatfield for his tremendous service to our community, for his friendship over many years and for the tremendous efforts of him and his staff to transition our constituency office.

I would like to thank Premier Ford and everyone at the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario for believing in me and for supporting my candidacy despite our riding's electoral history. The truism in politics is typically that you fish where the fish are. But the English philosopher

Thomas Paine might have coined it best in this case: “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.”

Speaker, I would like to close in recognizing my father, James Dowie. He worked seven days a week, usually beginning at 5 a.m., and had a difficult job as an insurance adjuster. He often gave people news that they would be unhappy with and witnessed the aftermath of countless tragedies. He knew the importance of balance, though. On weekends, he was both the president and the garbage collector at Rochester Place Resort.

One of the last things he was able to tell me before he passed away in 2017 was this: that he would regret very much not having had the opportunity to see me become mayor some day. I told him not to worry, that it was not destined to happen. If only he could see me now, being given the tremendous privilege of serving the people of Windsor–Tecumseh and the people of Ontario.

I look forward to working with all members of this House to move Ontario forward and appreciate the opportunity to listen and learn from every one of you over the next four years.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh and congratulate him on his inaugural speech. What you’ve brought into this House is exactly what the previous member brought to this House: class.

That was a very classy move of you to recognize the contributions that Percy did bring to this House. He brought a decorum in this House. He was very successful in bringing the poet laureate private member’s bill that he had. He had a constant smile, and we are all—all—going to miss his poems that he brought into this House. You have some big shoes to fill, and I hope to hear a poem or two coming out of you.

C’est tellement un plaisir d’avoir un autre francophone ici dans la maison aussi. Je regarde vers toi pour apporter le même comportement que le membre, Percy, apportait dans cette maison. Je te pose la question : qu’est-ce que les gens de ta circonscription puissent s’attendre de toi? Percy a apporté plusieurs histoires ici au plancher de l’Assemblée, et une touche personnelle—n’oublie jamais qui t’as fait parvenir ici en maison. Mais qu’est-ce que tu apportes de la part de ta circonscription et des gens que tu représentes au plancher de l’Assemblée ici?

M. Andrew Dowie: Merci au membre d’Algoma–Manitoulin pour sa question. Effectivement, j’aimerais bien être au service de ma communauté. J’aimerais bien faire tout ce que M. Hatfield a apporté à ce rôle, au sein du gouvernement. Ce que, moi, je peux offrir? Comment est-ce que je peux dire ça en peu de mots?

I would like to make sure the well-being of my community is taken care of, and that means working with everybody in my community, even those who really don’t like me or don’t support me. But the reality is, my community is better off by having achieved some good. And if I’m here for four years, if I’m here for longer, at the end of the day, I have to look back and say, “Did I represent

our community with dignity and with pride?” And that’s what I will bring to this role. I will give a dignified representation of service every single day that I’m serving in this seat.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for sharing his beautiful information and story, and I was pleased to find out that he was a Boy Scout and involved in this wonderful and time-honoured organization. Would the member advise or recall the badges he received at that time?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I did achieve my Chief Scout’s Award. I did not quite make it in my Queen’s Venturer Award. However, I currently hold the Bar to the Medal of Good Service. There are still a few more medals to be earned, which I’m still working on, and hopefully I’ll get there some day. Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to congratulate the member from Windsor–Tecumseh on your election and also on your maiden speech today. It was really a pleasure to listen to you. And I, too, want to say that your comments about Percy were really heartfelt, and I think it really reflects the impression that we all had of him in this Legislature. I got a chance to speak to and to support his private member’s bill on the Poet Laureate, and am really thrilled that the first Poet Laureate for Ontario hails from Scarborough, Randell Adjei. It’s a big deal for our community to see someone like him, who grew up in the community, having this role and influencing young people to love literature and poetry.

I wondered if you could talk about the importance of representation from your background in Scouts, as well.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: It’s vital that people of all walks of life, of all faiths, of all cultures, of all identities be represented in what we do. Inclusion is the best way of finding a path forward to making sure that we have the best possible society. And so, what I’ve learned from Scouts is that usually, when you’re in that organization, you’re about developing your skills. You may not be the best hockey player or soccer player, but boy, you have a lot to offer, and really, that’s most normal people, to be quite truthful with you. So it really brought me in line, or it brought me into being with people of all different backgrounds, and I learned from the diversity of the population that came forward. Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: It’s a pleasure for me to put a question to my good friend and neighbour from the riding of Windsor–Tecumseh, who, by coincidence, is from a hometown whose nomenclature hails back to the history of our area, just as the name of my hometown hails back to the history of our area. So I would like to ask the kind member if he would touch a little bit on the history of his hometown and give the members of this House the benefit of the knowledge of what we’re all about.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: My hometown is the town of Tecumseh. It was created—actually, we just celebrated our 100th anniversary of the original town this year. It was

1921 that the town was founded. It had seceded from the former Sandwich East township, with the feeling that it hadn't been getting the proper representation from the taxes it paid, so Colonel Poisson was the founder. Earlier on, it was developed as a railway depot named Ryegate, but ever since, it has just grown and has been the place that people wanted to be from. It's been a great place to live and a great place to—I'm proud to call it home. We're proud of our past and confident in our future. It is a place that was built on service and history has shown that that service is there in its people. I thank you very much for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Tom Rakovec: Congratulations on your election and your wonderful speech. It was very noble of you to bring up Percy. Certainly we miss him, but we of course welcome you here in the chamber.

I was also really pleased to hear that you come from an engineering background. I have studied the sciences, and I'd love for you to share with us maybe what unique perspective having a background in engineering and science brings to politics.

1600

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I appreciate the question from the member from Humber River–Black Creek. This is actually something I've been able to apply throughout my career. I haven't always practised as an engineer. Within the city of Windsor, I've worked in the mayor's office or in the CO's office. I've done traffic. I've done land development.

So at the end of the day, what's of value is the problem-solving skills. You are given a set of constraints and you figure out a solution that fits within those constraints. You don't use ideology; you look at, on balance, what is best. There's never really a perfect solution, but you evaluate the options, and ultimately when we debate policy, that is entirely what we're doing in this House. We consider the options, we consider the consequences and we cast a vote based on our feeling of what's the best balance. That is the approach that I've always engaged in, and I'm looking forward to applying it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: First of all, I would like to congratulate the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his election. What an accomplishment. You were a councillor. You were actually recognized as one of the 40 leaders under 40 in Windsor–Tecumseh. It's a pleasure to see you here.

My question would be if there's anything that you want to accomplish in the next four years for your riding. If you could share that as well.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Absolutely. Thank you to the member opposite for that. The regional acute care hospital is my number one priority. This has been on our waiting list as a region for many, many years. It was supposed to be in the 2018 budget and it did not make it, for reasons unknown. I'm just delighted that this government invested in that to make sure that the plan went forward, because otherwise I don't know how much longer our facilities can go. We are losing faith. Our residents are very much losing

faith in the system. We have outdated equipment and outdated facilities that are long past their prime.

This government's commitment to redeveloping and developing the new regional acute care hospital on County Road 42 was a game-changer, and it's why I'm here today. I have to see that come to fruition for the betterment of our community. I'm delighted that the government supports that direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We are out of time for questions and answers.

Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I wish to use my limited time today for my inaugural speech to tell you why I'm here and what I hope to accomplish as the new MPP for Don Valley West.

Before I do that, I want to acknowledge that we are on the land of many First Nations peoples and recognize their enduring presence here and the work still needed to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Je tiens à vous féliciter, monsieur le Président, pour votre réélection à la présidence. Je voudrais également féliciter tous les députés ici pour leurs campagnes réussies, ainsi que les candidats de tous les partis qui ont eu le courage de participer à l'élection.

Thank you to the residents of Don Valley West for talking to me at the doors, on the phone, at community events and at three debates during the campaign. I'm humbled by and grateful for their support. I will work hard and to the best of my ability to represent their needs here at Queen's Park, and will strive to exceed their expectations.

I'm also humbled to sit with my fellow Liberal MPPs, both because of the small number of us elected here but also because of their mighty and varied talents.

Thank you to my family, extended family, friends, neighbours, campaign team, volunteers and donors who supported me throughout my first election campaign and for bringing such enthusiasm and delicious food to the office:

—my loving husband, Dave, and wonderful children, Maddi and Luke Farwell, who are here today, who campaigned almost as often as I did and who gave advice and help with things I couldn't do myself;

—my parents, Keith and Barb Bowman, also here, who as always gave me their unwavering support and love even when they asked if I knew what I was getting myself into—and I'm sure I didn't;

—my supportive in-laws, Peter and Barbara;

—my campaign team, many of whom are also here: Michael Fontein, Fatma Said, Abeir Liton, Caroline Leclerc, Jenna Ghassabeh, Ethan Ullmann and Shafiq Qaadri.

I would like to name all my dedicated volunteers but in the interests of time I will name a few to represent the many: Maralynn Beach, Ali Baig, Masood Alam, and members of the Don Valley West PLA.

To the rest of my team, ranging in age from 12 to 87 and from all parts of the riding, thank you. You all made our campaign so much fun.

I want to also give a special thanks to Kathleen Wynne, the past MPP and former Premier, for both her support and for giving me space as the new candidate to chart my own path.

Don Valley West has been my home for 28 years, and it is where my husband and I have raised our two children. It is a wonderfully diverse community. As candidates, we meet many interesting people during our campaign. Some who stood out for me were two Afghani refugees, two sisters, who had just landed in Toronto, and Canada's own Gordon Lightfoot—especially since I'm fan.

Don Valley West was also home to John Bosley, who served as the Speaker of the House of Commons from 1984 to 1986 and who, sadly, passed away in April of this year, and Agnes Macphail, one of the first two women elected to the Ontario Legislature, in 1943.

Many Ontarians and indeed Canadians benefit from the great work of organizations in our community, like Sunnybrook Veterans Centre, Holland Bloorview kids rehab hospital, York U's Glendon college, Sunnybrook Hospital, the Canadian Film Institute and the CNIB. It is also home to Fraser Mustard Early Learning Academy in Thorncliffe Park, one of Canada's largest all-kindergarten schools, with 500 students, most of whom have a first language other than English.

Madam Speaker, I so appreciated listening to the inaugural speeches during the first two weeks of this 43rd Parliament. Hearing the personal stories of my colleagues in the House, including from Windsor–Tecumseh today, demonstrates that we have much more in common than the political differences we tend to focus on here. You will hear some of that similarity as I share my story.

I am descended from settler ancestors who came to Canada in the 1800s from Londonderry, Northern Ireland; Argyllshire, Scotland; and Cornwall, England, all of whom were farmers in southern Ontario.

I am fortunate to be born on this land. I was born in London, Ontario, eldest daughter of Keith and Barb Bowman and big sister to Mike, Dan and Dennis.

My parents both grew up on farms near Stratford. They learned about hard work by necessity, and my brothers and I learned it from them.

My father was one of eight children, my mom one of seven, and my paternal grandmother one of 14. Family is everywhere, and it's a big part of who I am.

My paternal grandmother, Florence Bowman, had 23 grandchildren and 39 great-grandchildren. She died in her 100th year, on March 4, 2020, just as the COVID pandemic loomed. I have longevity in my genes, and I want to leave Ontario a better place for my great-grandchildren.

My maternal grandmother, Isobel, lived to be about 90 years old and made us laugh all the time. My grandfather abandoned her and their seven children all under the age of 11. I come from a line of strong women.

I followed in my father's footsteps as a CPA chartered accountant, but in my mother's in being a mom to my kids. I worked hard as a woman and working mom to have a fulfilling career and to make our house a loving home. I

hope I have succeeded at both most of the time and that my kids forgive me for the times I didn't.

My mother led the charge to save our local London public school from being shut down, and it's still open today. My father served on numerous volunteer boards throughout his long career. He retired at age 75, after which I promptly enlisted him to be my campaign CFO.

My grandparents and parents were all great role models, and are still today, for living a life of service, for lifelong learning, working hard and using one's talents to make a difference and reach your full potential. I want to support our public institutions so that all Ontarians can do that too.

As a young kid of 10 or 11, I delivered the Globe and Mail in the early mornings and have loved reading it ever since. I built on that interest and became a CPA and later a banker, which gave me a wide range of opportunity, from conducting an audit at Darlington nuclear station to working in finance in Canada, the US, the Caribbean, Latin America and Asia. During my professional life, I worked hard to accomplish my career goals while living out my personal values by volunteering with great organizations like the Kidney Foundation and co-founding a women's network more than 20 years ago. I continue to be involved in supporting women today.

In 2017, life dealt my family and me a very severe blow: My youngest brother, Dr. Dennis Bowman, died suddenly at the age of 39. Dennis was a physician, an anesthetist, an outdoorsman and a minimalist. One of the things we had in common was the pursuit of efficiency, in time, money and resources. Dennis loved his work but would also share stories about the opportunities he observed in the health care system, and we would talk about how things could be better.

In the months that followed Dennis's death, I thought about family, my career and what was next. I wanted to use my skills of leadership, financial expertise and implementing major change to make a more meaningful impact and contribution of service in advancing women, education, economic prosperity and diversity and inclusion. I was fortunate to be appointed to the board of the Bank of Canada. It was a wonderful opportunity for someone like me, who has a keen interest in our economy. Policy really matters, and policy-makers have an enormous impact on our lives.

Being at the bank, I got to see first-hand how interesting the work of policy-makers is, and I began to think about how I could contribute to that work in a more meaningful way. Strong policy, community service, working together for a common cause—that is what we are all here to do.

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I want to focus on what I can give back to my community of Don Valley West and this great province. I bring to this experience the things I've learned when helping lead businesses and organizations, and that includes the belief that we can provide better opportunities for more people when we work together, when we are inclusive.

The residents of Don Valley West work together to support those in need and to shape the future of their

neighborhoods. They have spoken about the need for more home care for seniors, affordable housing, and about the surprise announcement of the Metrolinx maintenance and storage facility in Thorncliffe Park, one of the most densely populated parts of Toronto.

Many of my constituents were disappointed with the government's cancellation of the Midtown in Focus plan, which was created with input from municipal and community stakeholders and approved by a democratically elected city council. This plan would have balanced the needs of a growing population with the services that that growth demands. Instead, residents feel that they are losing their voice, and it's up to us to make sure that they are engaged in how their communities grow.

There are smart, capable people in every party, and therefore there are innovative ideas in every party. Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney brought Canada NAFTA. The CCF brought universal health care. These were both good for Canada.

I am a Liberal because progressive policies help Ontarians thrive, and when people thrive, businesses thrive and the economy thrives. I ran in Don Valley West as a fiscally minded Liberal who believes that we can invest money wisely to lift our public institutions so they lift people up. Progressive policies do just that.

Policies like subsidized child care not only lower costs for families, they bring more women into the workforce, alleviating the worker shortage, promoting economic growth and helping address inequality. More diverse boards result in better business outcomes. Policy that would drive more diversity on boards would improve equality and grow our economy. According to McKinsey, taking steps to decrease gender inequality in the workplace may benefit Canada's economy by as much as \$150 billion. That's like adding a whole new financial services sector to our economy. Progressive liberal policy, progressive policy, is fiscally responsible.

I want to acknowledge, having just mentioned several policies that would advance women, that, along with the other 46 women MPPs in this 43rd Parliament, there have only been 162 women elected here in Ontario, of 1,968 parliamentarians in total. Mr. Speaker, there is more work to do to ensure women's voices, diverse voices, are heard here at Queen's Park and outside these walls.

I will conclude with a story of my first time at Queen's Park. It was June 18, 1990. Thousands of people, including me, left their offices to see Nelson Mandela, just four short months after he was released from prison. To hear his words and see his spirit of hope after what he had endured was so inspiring. With a majority of seats, this government does not need the support from those of us with other political stripes to pass their bills, but I urge the Premier and his ministers to think not only in terms of seats but in terms of people—all people of this province, who are represented also by those of us in opposition. I urge him to consider the words of Mandela, to ensure that at the end of the debate we should emerge stronger and more united than ever before.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Deepak Anand): Questions? It's time for questions.

Member from—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Davenport.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Deepak Anand): Davenport.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Speaker. I sneak around here on the edge. You can't quite make me out sometimes.

I want to thank the member from Don Valley West for those comments. It was really a pleasure to hear more about your own personal history and to be introduced to some of your family and supporters. I know how much it means. I remember back not that many years ago, four years ago, to my inaugural address and how much it meant to have those people who I care for around me.

You've had such interesting experience in life and professionally, and I wondered if you wouldn't mind reflecting on what these last few weeks have been like for you. Was this what you expected? What would you like to see change? What are you hoping to achieve here in this chamber over the next few years?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you for the question. I think that the first few weeks, as all of us know who are new—it's a learning experience every day, although I've been assured by my colleague that she continues to learn, two years into this, so I expect that that will be the case. It has been exciting. It has been interesting. It's been a pleasure to meet with my constituents and different business leaders in the community who are reaching out and just introducing themselves. They might not even have a particular issue. They just want to say hello, to wish me well and, if there's anything they can help with, to extend that hand. That's really been appreciated.

I think about debates and I think about how we can be at one end of a spectrum and another end of a spectrum. I recall being in a meeting not too long ago where, after hearing one side of the debate, I thought, "Oh, that makes sense." I then heard the other and thought, "Oh, that makes sense too." Really, it was just highlighting a risk of that first person's view, and we landed somewhere in the middle. I wish we could do more of that here. I would like to see us do more of that here, where we listen to the views of all the people who want to contribute and end up with a solution that is better for all.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Jess Dixon: Thank you for your comments. It's certainly clear from hearing your words that your brother meant a lot to you. That loss and your reflection on it is obviously playing into your decision to be here today.

My favourite author, Terry Pratchett, said that no one is truly gone until the ripples they left in the world die away. I would certainly appreciate it if you were able to tell us a little more about your experiences or memories of your brother and immortalize his name in the Hansard for us.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you. I might need to take a deep breath.

Dennis's birthday was just this week, so it's a little hard for our family. But let me just say, as I said, that he was committed to his work and to his patients. We've had the

pleasure of meeting so many of them, following his death. Again, they reached out. It's been five years, but it feels like yesterday.

I think that when we see people dedicate their life to service, that is always inspiring, so Dennis was always inspiring to all of us. I said at his funeral that he was the best of the four of us. He got the best of all of us.

I'm sorry that I'm a little emotional here to talk about this.

I think that another connection we have here is that on the day he died, he was paddleboarding. He loved to paddleboard. He loved the outdoors, as I said. Sadly, he drowned. We have some questions about exactly what happened. But I think about his life of service when I'm here and I think about the doctors who are here, who have taken their place in this House. I think about Dr. Eric Hoskins. He happened to be at the hospital where Dennis worked in Orillia the day after Dennis died, so he commented on that.

The last time that someone says his name—that will be a long time from now, because he was a wonderful doctor, a wonderful brother and a wonderful son.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you, member for Don Valley West, for your fascinating story.

I'm going to ask you a lighter question than that. You met Gordon Lightfoot, an iconic Canadian legend. I'm sure we all can start with, I don't know, Sundown, the railway trilogy, Edmund Fitzgerald—so fantastic and such a fascinating Canadian. Can you tell us about that experience, meeting him?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you for the question. Yes, that was a fun day. We were out door-knocking. I had knocked on a few doors and left a few flyers. We saw, as we were leaving one house, that an older man was walking. But he just kind of stood still for a moment. I thought, "Maybe he's annoyed at me for leaving a flyer in his mailbox or something." But I approached him, and as I got about from here to the other side of the aisle, I realized who it was. Of course he has aged, but luckily he's still with us. But he was a bit frail. He said, "Oh, hello. What are you doing?" I told him what I was doing and who I was. He was very pleasant. I told him, of course, that I was a fan—I was a little bit star struck, but I did get over that. We had a lovely conversation about his contribution to Canadian music and how my children, my parents and I love to dance to his music.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to thank the member for her great, great speech. I was looking over her biography, and I noticed she did a lot of great volunteer work, especially through women's organizations. As she knows, we're all so very ambitious to try to get more women into the workforce, to try to break down some of those barriers. So I wanted to ask her, with her great experience on many of those volunteer organizations and boards, what she's learned with that and how she wishes to progress those types of ideas and policies here.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you for the question. Yes, it is something I'm very passionate about. I think that sometimes women have to be asked to do things. There are a lot of things that we do every day as mothers, as working mothers in terms of our children and our careers. But sometimes we need to be asked, because they might be reticent to take on a new challenge. There's lots of research that says women often think they are under-qualified for something and therefore don't go seek that opportunity—so I think encouraging women.

I recall being asked to join a finance committee of an organization when I was quite young. I would not have put myself forward for that, but they approached me and asked, and that began a lifelong commitment to the Kidney Foundation of Canada. I think more of that is required.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to congratulate the member from Don Valley West on her election, and thank her for sharing her stories, for the beautiful inaugural speech.

I know that you shared about your family, who is here today—welcome to the House—as well as you shared about your volunteers and the contributions that they have made. We have some of our volunteers from Scarborough here today as well, and I know that they're the pillars of a campaign, of a movement that you create. Regardless of party line, they really inspire you. You also talked about diversity and the first time you came to Queen's Park, seeing Nelson Mandela.

I guess my question would be, in terms of the ratio that that you told us about the amount of women that we have, I feel like an imposter sometimes. When I walk through the doors here—it's been almost five years now—I still feel that at times. What are some of the things that you want to do to inspire more women to run for public office, and some of the things you want to do for diversity?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Thank you for the question. Yes, I think, again, all of us just by being here—and those candidates who put their names forward, of course, are also very impressive.

I look at my mother; I told you a little bit about my mother. My mother went back to school later in life to get her nursing degree. My daughter has just graduated with two undergraduate degrees, engineering and business, and my son also, who's here, I'm very proud of, is just going into his fourth year at TMU in media production. And I think that just by showing up—we need to show up. And women need to be, as I said, encouraged to show up and encouraged to use their strengths and talents, and to ask other young women and young people to get involved in their campaigns and other political activities, because it is a great experience.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Glover: You know, it's been really pleasant in here this afternoon. It was wonderful to listen to the inaugural speeches from the member from Don Valley West and the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, and I appreciate the tone of cordiality and collegiality in the House this afternoon. In keeping with that, I'm going to

use a tone and I'm going to make a plea, particularly to the government members but to all of the MPPs in this House, and I'm going to ask you to support a call to double ODSP rates.

In keeping with the throne speech, the speech from the throne is entitled "Together, Let's Build Ontario." It says, on the second page, "Because now is the time for unity.

"A unity of people. A unity of purpose."

That has to include Ontarians with disabilities. And this is an issue that I feel very strongly about, in part because of the education I've received over the last two and a half years during the pandemic. A friend and I started a food program; it now feeds 1,500 people a week. So almost every week for the last two and a half years, I've been delivering meals to people experiencing homelessness, and I've gotten to know many, and I've also known many who have died. This is the challenge with our ODSP rates. Our ODSP rates are literally killing people in Ontario.

CTV reported a few months ago about a woman named Denise. She's 31 years old, she uses a wheelchair and has multiple chemical sensitivities. She applied for MAID, which is medical assistance in dying, essentially because of "abject poverty." She cannot afford a wheelchair-accessible apartment with cleaner air that is safe for her illness. And they had also reported on another woman named Sophia, who also had a disability, and she opted for medically assisted death last February because she could not find housing that could accommodate her disability.

Earlier this week, my colleague from Ottawa West-Nepean spoke about two other people, Ontarians with disabilities, who are choosing medical assistance in dying because they cannot afford adequate housing; they cannot afford to live with their disability with the current ODSP rates. And last week, I had a conversation with a gentleman who is also in that process of applying for MAID because he cannot afford it. So the ODSP rates are literally driving people to seek to die because they cannot survive on the \$1,169 a month.

And it's not just this medical assistance in dying. ODSP rates are also driving people into homelessness, and the number of people who are homeless is increasing. It's growing. It's doubled over the last four years.

The Center for Justice and Social Compassion estimates that almost half of the Ontarians who are homeless have a disability, either a physical disability, an intellectual disability, a mental illness or an addiction. Based on my experience of delivering meals to people, I would say that's probably accurate: About half of the people who are chronically homeless have a disability of some type. Toronto Public Health keeps track of the numbers. In 2018, 94 people died who were experiencing homelessness in the city of Toronto. I couldn't find Ontario-wide numbers, but in the city of Toronto, it was 94. In 2021, it was 216. So in the term of office that we were here—this government was here between 2018 and last year—the number of people experiencing homelessness in the city of Toronto more than doubled. That's a legacy of this House, of the decisions that are made here, and we have a chance to change that.

The challenge is that, relative to inflation, ODSP rates are 30% lower than they were 30 years ago. I'll talk a little bit about Ontario Works recipients, as well. They are suffering even more. Their rate is \$733 a month. People in Ontario are supposed to somehow survive on \$733 a month. It just can't be done. There's no way. You cannot rent a room for \$700 in Ontario anymore. We need to drastically increase this.

For Ontario Works and ODSP, the amount is calculated based on two calculations. One is for shelter and the other is for basic needs. The shelter amount for Ontario Works is \$413 a month. So we give people on Ontario Works \$413 a month and that's supposed to find them shelter. We give people on ODSP \$497 a month and they're supposed to find shelter. It just can't be done. Even with the increase—and I know the government's promised to increase ODSP rates by 5%. That will bring it to \$522 a month. You cannot—I've looked and I've been talking with people—rent a room anywhere in Ontario for \$522 a month. So that increase is going to leave people on ODSP and Ontarians with disabilities continuing to be homeless.

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That's something we can change, and we can change it now. Part of the reason I'm bringing this up because the budget bill actually has that increase in ODSP of 5%, and we can change that. We can ask for a doubling of that ODSP.

The other thing about the 5% that should be pointed out is that it's in addition to a 1.5% increase that this government made in 2018. So that's a total of 6.5% increase over the last four years. Inflation over the last four years is 12%, so it's actually a 5.5% cut by this government to ODSP over the last four years. People were living in destitution four years ago, Ontarians with disabilities were living in destitution—it's even gotten worse. And this is why people are seeking medical assistance in dying. This is why so many people are homeless and why so many people who are homeless are also dying. So it's something that can be changed.

I've been looking for how do we actually calculate this and what the rate should be. Statistics Canada calculates the very fundamental basic housing unit as a shared two-bedroom apartment. So how much is half of a two-bedroom apartment? The average cost in major cities in Ontario is \$2,236 a month. That's what Statistics Canada says. Half of that is \$1,118 a month. That's what Statistics Canada says is the minimum residence allowance that people need—not for a fancy apartment, not for anything fancy; just to share a two-bedroom apartment. The \$497 that's currently allocated and the \$522 that it's going to increase to—it's less than half of what people actually need in order to have a place to live.

I'll give you an example of a gentleman I met, Darrel MacDonald. He has got a disability. He currently lives in a one-bedroom basement apartment, and it costs \$1,250 a month. He rents out the living room to another person, so he's sharing a one-bedroom basement apartment. The landlord is selling the building, so he's looking for a new place. He knows he's going to have to move. He's been

phoning around. He lives in Toronto currently. He phoned Niagara, because he saw a room advertised for \$500 a month. He phones the guy and when he's talking to the landlord, it turns out it's not \$500 a month for the room; it's \$500 a month for half of the room and you share it with somebody else. You cannot find a room in the province of Ontario for the \$522 that we're going to be voting on, that this government is going to be voting on to allow for people with disabilities. We absolutely have a moral obligation to make that change.

The other portion of Ontario Works and ODSP: There's the residence amount and then there's the basic needs amount. In 1995, Ontario Works was cut by a Conservative government by 21.6%. The minister at the time, David Tsubouchi, argued that people could survive on the welfare diet. The welfare diet consisted of dented cans of tuna and pasta with no sauce or salt or other condiments. The welfare diet wasn't healthy and it wasn't really affordable. But since then, the cost of food has increased by 100%, and the basic needs amount of Ontario Works has increased by only 41%. So people today who are on Ontario Works or ODSP cannot even afford half of the welfare diet that was not a healthy diet 25 years ago.

This is why I'm making this argument, that we need to—I will just make a little aside here. Before becoming an MPP, I was a trustee in the Toronto District School Board. There were 22 of us representing all parts of the city. Most of us were party-aligned but not strictly party-aligned, because we didn't have to be, and some people were not party-aligned. At our monthly meetings, we would have 15 votes or maybe 20 votes. Every vote was a different configuration of voters, because we were all voting according to what we thought would be best for the students in the city of Toronto. I lost some votes that were important to me, but I would say, overall, we actually did the best that we could for the students in the city of Toronto.

I would love to see that kind of collegiality, that kind of co-operation in this House. I would love to see us actually get together and say, "Hey, people with disabilities are going to be a priority over the next four years," not just for the government side but for all of us in this House, the 124 members in this House, that we are going to make them a priority and we're going to double ODSP rates because we don't want people choosing to die because they can't survive on ODSP rates. We don't want people driven into homelessness because they can't survive on ODSP rates.

I'm going back to Statistics Canada: The current amount for basic needs for ODSP is \$672 a month. The basic needs amount that Statistics Canada calculates is \$1,200 a month. When you add that up, Statistics Canada is saying that if you want to rent one bedroom in a two-bedroom apartment, you need \$1,118. If you want to have enough money for food, transportation and clothing and other basic needs, you need \$1,200 a month. Statistics Canada says the bare minimum that somebody can survive on in the province of Ontario is \$2,300 a month. That's why I'm calling for this doubling of ODSP.

Let me give you one other example, too. Andrea Hatalal is a person in Ontario with a disability. She's a passionate advocate for people with disabilities. She lives in an apartment. She gets her \$1,167 and she gets a \$250 nutrition supplement. Her rent is \$1,100 a month, so that gives her \$300 a month to survive on. She survives by using food banks. Any time there's a free meal anywhere—that's how she survives. That's how she gets the food that she needs, and she's constantly struggling. It's not just her. She's actually one of the ones who's housed. At least she has housing. Some 8,000 Ontarians with disabilities don't even have housing.

I'll give you one other example. A gentleman I met a couple of months ago, Pat Gallagher, used to be a roofer. He was a roofer for 25 years and he's given me permission to share his story. He fell off a roof and was badly injured. He was prescribed OxyContin to manage the pain. He developed an addiction. He hasn't been able to overcome the addiction. He's wanting to go into detox, but he can't get into a detox bed. So he's been homeless for the last three years. Last February, while he was homeless, his feet were badly frostbitten and his toes were amputated. He had hope of going back to the roofing business, overcoming his addiction, getting his life together and going back into the roofing business. I don't know that he can without the portions of his feet that were amputated.

The thing I've learned in delivering meals to people experiencing homelessness is that homelessness is a constant series of crises. It just keeps compounding the problems. I went to one encampment to deliver meals last winter, and in the one area where I was delivering, there was a couple whose tent had burned down and it destroyed everything. Thank God they were okay. Another gentleman—and this is a different gentleman—had been taken to the hospital because he had suffered frostbite. The other gentleman had had an overdose and was in the hospital. Homelessness is an absolute nightmare for the people experiencing it. It's also terrible for the communities because in the communities we do not have the resources to provide people with what they need. What they really need is housing. In order to get housing, we need to double Ontario Works and we need to double ODSP.

I made the Statistics Canada argument for doubling ODSP. There are two other government agencies that also argue that the basic amount that people need to survive in this province is well over \$2,000. CERB was set at \$2,000, and CERB was set to provide people enough to get by through the pandemic.

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There's one other calculation, and this is from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy. This is a federal agency—some of you are nodding, because you know—and it implements the bankruptcy and insolvency rate. They had a table: When a person goes bankrupt, they are allowed to keep a certain portion of their income in order to survive while they start to pay off their debt. Beyond that, they start to pay off their debt. That basic amount that they calculate at the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy is \$2,355 a month. That's

what they figure is the basic amount that people need in order to survive, so that they can start paying off their debt. And then, when they make more than that amount, a portion of it goes back to paying off the debt.

The design of the system is to be restorative rather than punitive. Somebody has gone bankrupt, and the idea is to help them get out of bankruptcy, pay off their debts and get back on with their lives. I would argue that the system that we have—the Ontario Works and ODSP systems that we have in Ontario—are actually punitive rather than restorative, because when you are trying to tell somebody that you have to survive on \$732 a month or \$1,169 a month, that's punitive. You are telling them, "You're going to be living in a constant state of crisis, just trying to find a place to live, some place to rest your head at night and enough food that your stomach isn't constantly hungry."

Ontarians with disabilities are going to continue to struggle and they're going to continue to die until we actually increase Ontario Works and ODSP rates to a rate that will actually allow people to get on with their lives, to live decent lives, to have shelter, to have the food, clothing and transportation that they need to live and get on with their lives, so that they can actually restore some of their lives.

I'm almost out of time, but the member from Don Valley West was talking about a life of service, and all of us here are serving our communities. We all have a dedication to service in some way. I think we all are also thinking about the legacy that we're going to leave behind here. I would really love the legacy of this Parliament to be the doubling of ODSP rates and OW rates, so that we don't have people living in absolute destitution and in a constant state of crisis. It is possible.

I know that's not the government's direction right now, but especially the caucus members from the Conservative Party, you, in caucus, have a voice. You have an opportunity. You can speak up in your caucus and say, "Look, we have a moral obligation as Ontarians to support Ontarians with disabilities by doubling ODSP rates," and I'd ask that you do that. That's my plea to you, because I don't want to continue seeing people dying all the time on the streets in this province, and it's something this Legislature has the power to fix. So that's my plea to you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member from Spadina–Fort York for your passionate speech. I know you always stand up for the marginalized and vulnerable people in your community and the province. You talked about food programs—you started a food program for needy people in the areas in your riding, and also you were talking about ODSP. I know you bring a different perspective to this House.

My question, through you, Madam Speaker, to the member: Could you please elaborate on your food program? You're known as a food man in your area. Please elaborate on that program for the benefit of this House.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for the question. The food program began at the beginning of the pandemic. I got a call about a supportive housing building in my area. The people in the building, a lot of them, have disabilities. Many of them have disabilities. They weren't allowed to go out, because they were medically vulnerable, and so they were getting meals delivered through the week, but not on the weekend. A friend and I, we went to Kentucky Fried Chicken and we bought everybody a lunch, right? And then we thought, well, we can't continue doing that. Nothing against KFC, but it's not the healthiest option if you're going to eat it every day. Also, we couldn't afford to keep doing that.

So we organized some people, we asked some people to cook some meals and we started doing that. Then my friend really took off with this and made it her mission. The program is now feeding 1,500 people a week. It operates three different food banks. It's an incredible program, and it's an honour to be serving the community in this way.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to express my thanks to my colleague the member for Spadina–Fort York for his passionate address this afternoon, but also for his advocacy and his commitment to putting words into action, which he has shown by his efforts.

But I wondered if he could comment on—there was a 2019 report from Feed Ontario that estimated the cost of poverty in Ontario is somewhere between \$27 billion a year and \$33 billion a year. They looked at the loss of tax revenue and the increased cost to the health system, the justice system. I wondered if the member could comment on the cost of poverty.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for the question, and absolutely right. I'll speak specifically to homelessness. Homelessness costs a lot of money. The Homeless Hub estimates that it's \$110,000 a year to keep somebody on the streets, because they end up using our health care system. When somebody has frostbite, they get sent in an ambulance, they go to the hospital, they're treated in the hospital and they also lose some of their physical ability and may not be able to get back on their feet and get back to working. They estimate it's \$110,000 a year to keep somebody on the street.

I'll just quickly summarize: It's \$24,000 a year for supportive housing with round-the-clock, seven-days-a-week support.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member opposite for his considered remarks and for his significant work in the community. I know you asked a question to me this morning about homelessness.

I wanted to ask you, though—and as you've heard on the issue of ODSP, firstly, the increase that has been proposed is very important, and linking it to inflation as well is very important. But as the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services has also offered, there are many other programs that I understand typically are offered to, potentially, ODSP recipients as well.

My question to the member is: Is that your experience? Because as we as a government look at this, we can't only look at one program in isolation, but look at all the other programs combined. I'm curious to hear your thoughts, member.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for the question. The number that I've gotten from some of the agencies that serve people with disabilities is that 30% of ODSP recipients are in supportive housing, so they get a discount on their housing. But that leaves 70% of people on ODSP without that supportive housing. And it's the housing cost that is the killer, because if it's \$1,018 to rent a room, and you're only getting \$1,167 a month and only \$500 of that is supposed to go to housing, you just can't do it. But I appreciate the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to thank the member for Spadina–Fort York for your comments. I really appreciate that you took this opportunity to speak specifically about ODSP and OW and the doubling of ODSP rates. And I want to thank you for taking me out with you on food deliveries during the pandemic. Actually, I'm sure you would be pleased to have others join you at some point. I think we met some of the folks that you mentioned.

But I wanted to mention one other thing: My experience in working with people in my community who are on ODSP is that the other piece of this is that ODSP is punitive, as you pointed out, but also how often ODSP is clawed back and, in many cases, quite arbitrarily, and how often people who are on ODSP have to fight and fight and fight, and how few of the case workers can stick around for more than a year because they can't handle the pressure and how depressing it is to be constantly clawing back on people's already meagre payments.

1650

I wonder if the member would care to comment on that and also whether this 5% really—what that's actually going to look like in terms of impact on the lives of the people he was mentioning.

Mr. Chris Glover: You're right, and one of the challenges is there's a lot of bureaucracy involved with ODSP, and a lot of the people that we serve don't have the capacity to navigate that bureaucracy. Plenty of us in this room would have a hell of a time navigating that bureaucracy. Add to that a disability, add to that homelessness, add to that you're homeless and you're in a shelter overnight and somebody stole your ID and you have to start all over again and you don't have a home address: It just becomes an absolute nightmare.

The 5% will take us from, what, \$1,169 a month and add about \$50. It's only \$1,200 a month. It's barely even going to cover the cost of a room with the whole entire amount, let alone food and transportation and other things. So the 5% is really, really, really inadequate, and it will leave people continuing to suffer, and continuing to die.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Spadina–Fort York for just being so clear about the needs of people in the face of rising inflation and those that are

reliant on income supports, ODSP in particular, and the need to provide adequacy.

I wondered if you could talk about your experience as school board trustee and the importance of school nutrition programs in making sure that children and students have adequate nutrition so that they can learn and the concerns that are now being faced with some of those programs and what we can do to solve it.

Mr. Chris Glover: You're right, absolutely. Food insecurity is not just the lowest-income people; it's a lot of people in this province, particularly coming out of the pandemic with the inflation: food inflation and inflation on all the other costs. There are a lot of children that end up going to school hungry, and that is absolutely inexcusable. We cannot have children going to school hungry in this province, and as part of that, if we increase the Ontario Works and the ODSP rates, that will happen less often.

Then when they get to school, we have to make sure that we have food in the schools. The provincial government contributes money, I know, to different public health units and to the school boards, but we need to increase that amount because inflation has eaten away at what that can actually provide. As a teacher, I've sat in a school with a student who was hungry. I didn't recognize what was going on at first—she was just lethargic, she could not think—until we figured out what was wrong: She was hungry in the classroom. That just can't be happening. In a province as wealthy as this, there's no excuse for people to be suffering in that way or for anyone to be going hungry.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We do not have time for further questions.

Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I am deeply humbled to rise before all of you, my esteemed colleagues, in this truly august chamber, to deliver my inaugural remarks as the member of provincial Parliament for Don Valley East. Madam Speaker, I thank you for allowing me this opportunity.

I invite everyone to take a moment and look around us. I can't help but admire the richly stained wood making up our desks, these beautiful golden clips, the silent and busy industrious army of young legislative pages—thank you for all your service, by the way, on this last day of yours. We sit amongst intricate carvings, rich tapestries, beautiful murals, and when we're done here, I'll retire to my office which has 17-foot ceilings and, frankly, a comical number of new computers that just keep getting delivered by IT services.

This is very real for us. And yet, it is not reality for Ontario. The average income in our province is \$52,600. That number is influenced, of course, by people like us who make well over \$100,000. If you take everyone in the province and rank them from the lowest income to highest income and you split that right down the middle, the median income for our population is \$39,100. And so, in this beautiful chamber, we are insulated from that reality, but I hope that we will never forget it. I know that I can't.

I'm the first child of immigrants from families that have taken, quite frankly, the scenic route to this country by travelling, over a few generations, from India to East Africa, then to the United Kingdom and, finally, ultimately, to Canada. With our family having endured so much hardship along the way, I've been raised to look out for and defend those who, like ourselves in the past, hadn't enjoyed much privilege.

Growing up, my parents weren't sure what I would be good at and so they signed me up for everything in the hopes that something would stick. I always put my heart and soul into everything, but never really found anything that I was truly exceptional at. For example, placed in Little League baseball, I was always relegated to the deep outfield. In soccer, I was always given some token minutes of field time but otherwise busied myself with eating orange slices on the side. I was bullied in school and, therefore, dutifully put in martial arts. I earned a black belt; however, my strongest scores on my black belt test were not in sparring or patterns but on the essay that I had to write, because I was and continue to be an academic. I eventually earned a pilot licence, but was threatened with failure multiple times for various reasons, including poor eye-hand coordination and a tendency to taxi my Cessna 150 above the speed limit every single time.

These experiences and others taught me a few things. I learned about hard work and perseverance. I learned about how much people struggle, even if outwardly it looks like they have everything under control. And I discovered that my calling was to help others who, like myself, may not always have fit in or needed a little bit of extra help. Coupled with my interest in science, this led me to my career in medicine.

I studied medicine at the University of Toronto, just across the street from here. It's actually amusing to think how many times I've cut across the south driveway over here because I was running late for class. I eventually earned dual qualifications in family medicine and emergency medicine and started my career going to the places where help was needed the most, serving rural and remote communities, especially Indigenous communities, in northern Ontario, the Northwest Territories and in the Canadian Arctic.

I delivered babies, admitted in-patients, worked in emergency departments and at one point was the sole physician providing 24/7 coverage for multiple consecutive weeks in a community that was 40,000 square kilometres. I transported gunshot victims in air ambulances, performed emergency surgery alone in nursing stations, and one time even received a gift of a polar bear skull after saving the life of an Indigenous matriarch in a remote community.

And while all of this has been rewarding, I always felt that the need for help exceeded what I could offer and that I was never addressing the root causes of my patients' illnesses. For example, on far too many occasions, I've treated a troubled, suicidal Indigenous youth in the emergency department, providing counselling or medications, only to discharge them back into the same homelessness,

poverty and intergenerational trauma that made them suicidal in the first place.

I've seen growing health impacts of climate change through increased prevalence of heat-related medical emergencies, of increasing respiratory illnesses from air pollution caused by forest fires and the growing prevalence of tick-borne illnesses like Lyme disease.

I've seen people come to the emergency department on a regular basis because they have nowhere to sleep or nothing to eat, and I've seen kids come to the ER because they've developed eating disorders from the stress of this pandemic and because they had no mental health worker to see them. These experiences made me want to do more.

In 2017, I took a sabbatical from my medical work and studied public policy at the University of Oxford. My goal was to learn economics, law and political science so that I could implement pragmatic policy solutions to the social policy problems I saw unfolding instead of just complaining about them. And I hope that, in this chamber, you will find that my criticism is always intended to be constructive, helpful and well intentioned.

The pandemic struck soon after I returned from Oxford and, alongside my work as an emergency doctor in Toronto, I became the medical director of 11 COVID isolation shelters for homeless people in Toronto. I had the privilege of overseeing the work of nurses, nurse practitioners, family doctors, psychiatrists and addictions specialists, and I've no doubt that our work saved countless lives by managing outbreaks and fighting the opioid epidemic. Meanwhile, I dealt with COVID patients in the ER and fought for disadvantaged communities in Toronto to get vaccinated.

1700

But there is always more work to be done. So I embarked on this career, where I count myself so fortunate to stand in your midst, amongst all of your illustrious ranks, to join each of you in the fight for a better province.

It is clear by now that I have only just become a political person, and so I needed a lot of help to get here. I would like to thank my wife, Salimah, and our darling puppy, Petunia Wigglebottom. She's a two-and-a-half-year-old golden retriever-cocker spaniel mix that we love, frankly too much because, unfortunately, my wife and I can't have children. By the way, as evidence that I'm a political novice, I would like to point out that Petunia has a better Instagram account than I do.

I'd like to thank my parents, my sister and my brother-in-law, who have been there for me physically and emotionally before, during and now even after the campaign. And I would like to thank the best damn campaign team that anyone could possibly hope for, including incredible volunteers and very generous donors. All of them have been kind, patient, incredibly hard-working and so tolerant of my political naïveté.

I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the past MPP for my riding, Michael Coteau, and his lovely wife, Lori. He's a former minister from this Legislature, and we are honoured to have him continue his public service now as a federal member in Ottawa. I simply couldn't be here

without him. I hope that I can continue in his tradition of fighting for those of us who are most vulnerable, as he exemplified when he passed his landmark legislation, Bill 89, which increased protections for minors.

And now a word about my riding, Don Valley East: It is a riding that is the very microcosm of what makes our province so great. In Don Valley East, we are profoundly diverse and multicultural, with a vibrant sense of community, along with unmatched resilience in the face of no shortage of struggles. We have outstanding shopping, world-class museums, sprawling greenery and a majestic ravine ecosystem. To represent this community is the greatest privilege of my life, and I thank the voters for placing their trust in me. I will never stop fighting and championing your needs.

In my final moments, I would like to acknowledge I have so much to learn from every single one of you. I wonder if, in anticipation of that, I may try to return the favour by offering a few suggestions of my own, drawing upon my clinical experience.

I would first like to share my firm conviction that all policy is health policy. When I say this, what I mean is that we can't achieve our physical, emotional and social well-being until we have addressed things like proper education, housing, affordability and a better environment. Health care needs, of course, nurses, doctors and hospitals, but it isn't just about those things.

Second, I hope that the decisions in this room can be guided by evidence and data. My colleague from Kingston and the Islands spoke last week of his commitment to the scientific method. In that same spirit, I hope that our decisions can be guided by intellectual curiosity and a rigorous devotion to data, where and when it is available. In medicine, following the evidence has often taken me in surprising directions that have challenged my preconceived notions, and it is by following the evidence that I have come to understand empirically that health care should be about patients and not profits.

And third, in this chamber I hope that we can be courageous in choosing the right solutions and not just the easy ones. As politicians we are often asked to defend the most visible or immediate consequences of a particular policy, when it is the later consequences that will be the ones that have the greatest or most lasting impact. For example, an adequate number of paid sick days is an example where there may be an upfront cost that some of us might balk at, but for which the later economic benefits—in prevented outbreaks and decreased health care utilization—could actually save more money.

Many people have wondered why I, a physician, would propose to step away from a clinical career to serve in elected office. At its core, medicine and politics are fundamentally about the same thing. They are about helping people. The difference is in the tools that we use to accomplish this and the scale with which we can have that impact. So fundamentally I am here for the same reason that all of you are here: There are 15 million people in this province that need us. I want to join you in fighting for every single one of them.

And so I thank you for welcoming me amongst your ranks.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: I'd like to first off congratulate the member on his election and such a great maiden speech. I also want to thank the member; I was one of the member's first patients here in the Legislature, which I don't think he was expecting, so thank you for that.

But across to the member from Don Valley East: You talk about people outside looking in. How do we go about making Ontario more inclusive, where people from all walks of society feel welcomed? I know you spoke about that at the beginning; I'd just like you to elaborate for the House on that.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I sincerely appreciate the question from the minister, and I'll begin by saying as a physician that every member has a right to patient-physician confidentiality. I admire you for acknowledging me publicly, but it is my pleasure to serve both in a political capacity and, of course, if my services are ever required, in a clinical capacity as well.

One of the things that I hope to bring forward as a physician in this Legislature is the fact that I have a unique privilege: When serving in the emergency department, my patients tell me things that they don't necessarily feel comfortable sharing with other people, because of stigma, because of things that have happened to them in the past. I hope that when I rise in this chamber, I can amplify those voices and tell those stories, and I would humbly ask if you would join me in listening, in helping me to amplify those voices as well, so that we can fight for every single person in this province, not just the ones who can be the most vocal. For me, that is one thing I would hope for.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you to the member from Don Valley East. It's a real pleasure to listen to your inaugural speech, and I also want to thank you for your service to the community, especially for the most vulnerable in the community.

I want to ask you to expand on a couple of things you said. You talked about serving First Nations community members, providing some care and then sending them back to the conditions that had them need the care. You also talked about serving people experiencing homelessness through the pandemic. Can you talk a little bit more about how an investment in preventing that kind of crisis—housing situations, and that kind of crisis—can actually benefit us as a broader society and benefit our economy?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, sir. You know, it's so fascinating that working in the emergency department—be it here in urban downtown Toronto, or in an Indigenous community in northern Ontario or the Northwest Territories—the ER functions as a safety net for society. It pulls back the curtain on all of the ways that government works and, far too often, all of the ways that government does not work.

A close friend of mine shared with me an account just last week of a young woman who had passed out, and so she came to the emergency department. It costs hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars just to register someone in the emergency department, to ensure that it's adequately staffed and to pay for the services that are provided. Ultimately, after the consultation was complete, the reason that she had passed out was because she hadn't been able to eat that morning. She couldn't afford to do it.

Stories like this remind me that up-front investment in things like—sir, you spoke about food insecurity earlier. Investments in things like housing, in food, in making sure that disabled people can access the services that they need, can have profound and massive impacts on their long-term quality of—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The member for Oakville.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member opposite for your inaugural speech. It was very good, so congratulations. Welcome to the House, and thank you for all your medical service. I really do appreciate it.

1710

You did talk a little bit about amplifying voices and listening, and I think that's important. For those that don't know, here in the Legislature, above us, which the government is looking at, is the owl, which is for us to make sure we are wise in decisions we make. And on this side is the eagle, which is looking, generally, at the opposition, and a few of our government members because we have so many—to look to ensure that we are held to account and you keep an eye on us as a government. So we are certainly here to listen and to work with the opposition. I just wanted to make that point.

What I would like to hear about from you is a little bit about your riding and some of the highlights and attractions to your riding. I always like to learn about different ridings in the province, so maybe you could highlight a few great places we should visit in your riding.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you so much. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to speak about my riding. Perhaps one of the things that I admire the most about it, and it's not a physical—I wouldn't call it a physical attraction. One of the things that is unmistakable as you come through the riding is just the incredible diversity and multiculturalism. We have people in the north of my riding that have lived in Don Valley East for many generations, and then, in the south of our riding, we have people who have literally just arrived and bring incredible stories about the lives that they have lived elsewhere around the world. They bring so many different kinds of celebrations, religions, languages. It is a vibrancy that one can feel as you literally come into the boundaries of our riding.

Now, of course, I alluded to other things. I truly admire our world-class museums. We have the famed Ontario Science Centre. We recently were fortunate to get a new museum, the Aga Khan Museum, which is a bastion of celebrating multiculturalism. It has proven to be a place of community and sharing new things. So we certainly have that. We have incredible amounts of—we a fair amount of

shopping. And then, what I admire the most is our incredible greenery as well, and the opportunity to run, bike and do all sorts of things—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to congratulate the member for Don Valley East on your inaugural speech. You're going to have to get used to the responses; they're very quick and a minute goes by really fast, so do that. I also want to let him know that—I don't know what style you practise in karate, but I practised Wado Kai; I got to my blue belt. I would love to see you in the dojo. I'm also really happy that I have back up, because it's been known that I've saved a couple of lives here in the park, so I'm glad that you're here and I can turn to you.

I was so impressed listening to you and your background, and the reason why is, being a northern member, one of the biggest struggles that we have in northern Ontario is the recruitment, retainment and getting doctors into our communities, particularly for primary care. Primary care is one of those things that can save a lot of the congestion, the hallway medicine that we see in our hospitals. I was wondering if the member can tell me, in the very short minute that he's going to have: What are the benefits, first, of having doctors performing primary care in northern communities, and what can we do? What is the 30-second elevator version of what we need to recruit and retain doctors and get them to our northern Ontario communities?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you, sir. A few things: Certainly 15% of us in Ontario don't have a family doctor. And without the ability to have access to good and rapid primary care, we can't address things when there are minor issues, and when they can be dealt with if you're in a northern community without having to get transferred out of that community to see specialists or get sophisticated tests. We need to do everything in our power to recruit and retain more primary care physicians.

One of the things that has come up in a previous government was HealthForceOntario, a public sector marketing and recruiting firm. In fact, it's been very successful in bringing family doctors into northern regions, both in the summer and throughout the rest of the year. I would encourage more public sector initiatives like that. And then to continue celebrating the stories of so many of the incredible family doctors who have worked and inspired all of us in—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We have time for one quick question.

Mr. Rob Flack: I am pleased and honoured to stand in this 43rd Parliament of Ontario and make my inaugural address—

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Flack: Oh, I thought she called me to go. I'll start again.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Response?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I have a question.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): No. Response? The member from Don Valley East, response?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Well, I thank everyone for their attention today, and I look forward to hearing the member's inaugural address momentarily.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Nicely done.

Further debate?

Mr. Rob Flack: I feel like I've just been here before. It's like *déjà vu*.

Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased and honoured once again to stand in this 43rd Parliament of Ontario and make my inaugural address to this Legislative Assembly. And specifically, Speaker, congratulations on your election as Deputy Speaker. Well done indeed.

Let me begin by stating that I have been blessed: blessed to be born in this country and in this province; blessed to have been raised by loving, disciplined and encouraging parents; blessed to have received a good education; blessed to have had a work ethic instilled in me from day one; and blessed to have been elected a member of this Legislature.

I'd like to start by thanking the people of Elgin–Middlesex–London for electing me as their new MPP. I commit to serving all of my constituents of EML with steadfast loyalty and dedication as we collectively build on the promise and on the potential of Ontario. This government has a dynamic agenda, and I am confident we will deliver our five pillars of growth and prosperity, all of which we were elected on.

Elgin–Middlesex–London is a magnificent riding on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Attiwandaron and Mississauga Nation. There are four distinct geographies that define Elgin–Middlesex–London: Elgin, which covers 122 kilometres along Lake Erie and is one of the most vibrant counties in this province; Middlesex, or now Thames Centre, includes our home in the village of Dorchester; the southern part of the riding in London, the Forest City, and now a UNESCO City of Music; and finally, the best-kept secret in Ontario, St. Thomas, formerly known as the railway capital of Canada.

Elgin–Middlesex–London was largely settled in 1803. Colonel Thomas Talbot—hence St. Thomas—opened the land for homesteading, leading immigrants and many nationalities to call southwestern Ontario their home.

Speaker, EML—Elgin–Middlesex–London—produces tobacco, ethanol, has a commercial fishery, breweries and wineries, has great beaches, and is home to one of the largest greenhouse propagators in Canada. We are a unique blend of farmers, agri-business, tourism, fishery, manufacturing and small business, with a robust and diverse economy. We are a riding of small towns and villages that all share passionate pride and belief in their communities. And, Speaker, we are a riding that is home to many Londoners, now the fastest-growing city in Ontario. We are also avid supporters of the greatest OHL franchise in the province of Ontario, the London Knights. Applause? No applause?

I'd also like to recognize former MPPs who served Elgin–Middlesex–London or parts of our riding. Jeff

Yurek, my predecessor, served EML for 10 years. Steve Peters, a former Speaker of this Legislature, served from 1999 to 2011. Ron McNeil was a long-time MPP, serving from 1958 to 1987. And a former Liberal Premier, Mitch Hepburn, served as MPP and Ontario's youngest-ever elected Premier from 1934 to 1942.

Speaker, Ontario spoke clearly on June 2, as did the people of Elgin–Middlesex–London. I remain humbled and in awe of the team we put together to get the job done. In particular—and please bear with me—I'd like to thank Bob Stanley, my campaign chair and manager; Alexandra Robinson, our campaign assistant manager; Vaughan Minor, our CFO; Ken Graves, Tanner Zelenko, Bruce Duncan, Beth Allison, who is here today, and Bill Fehr, my regional chairs; Doug Leach, Wayne and Chris Kummer, Fran Richardson, Rainey Weisler, Barb Gonyou and Patsy Brooks for their supreme canvassing and office administration; Mike Manary, Dan Fishback, Danny DePrest, Floyd Wills, Bill Blaney and Dick Nieuwland, my sign crew who painted EML blue; Zak Rahim, Scott Collyer, and Jason Ransom for their social media and communications skills; and to the multitudes of canvassers and those who donated to our campaign.

And finally, I want to acknowledge two wonderful mentors for their counsel and guidance. First is Dennis Timbrell, former member of provincial Parliament for Don Mills, who now lives in St. Thomas. He is a former Ontario Minister of Energy, Health, and Agriculture and Food, and a great mentor; and Betty Crockett, now 95 years young—I'm sure she's watching—a resident of Dorchester and a mentor to many, and I have to say this: Simply put, Betty Crockett is the matriarch of Dorchester.

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I'd also like to acknowledge my new and very competent constituency team: my executive assistant, Deb Ransom, who I know is watching; my case workers, Barb Gonyou and Shirley Slaats; and Tanner Zelenko, who is here today, my legislative assistant. We truly are a great team.

Speaker, one cannot venture into public service without the support of their family. My wife, Denise, again here today patiently waiting, is from Lakefield, Ontario, a great community in central Ontario. She's the third of 11 children of Frank and Julie Leahy, better known today as the band Leahy. They are a Juno-award-winning family band who have had a significant impact on the North American music scene for decades. Denise Flack is a woman of substance. Her faith and her fortitude in seeking truth and wisdom, and her love of me—thank God—and our daughter, Emily, is the foundation of my life. Without Denise, my life journey simply would mean little.

Our daughter, Emily Jean Flack, is also a musician of notable talent and a teacher. She is our pride and joy. Like all of us, we want the best for our children. I am so proud of the woman Emily has become: strong, independent, ambitious and ready to tackle life's opportunities.

I was raised on Plainsmen Road in Streetsville, Ontario, now part of Mississauga. I'm the oldest of four boys. My

brothers, Paul, Jimmy and Kelly Flack, are all accomplished in their own rights, and my parents, Jim and Esther Flack, came from two different parts of this province.

My father, Charles James Flack, was born and raised right here in Toronto. He's a Parkdale boy, who still, amazingly, knows his way around the city, which I cannot get over. His father, Charles Lincoln Flack, fought for Canada in the First World War and felt the ravages of war the remainder of his life. Sadly, I never got to know my father's parents.

My mother, Esther Jean Fraser, hails from the Ottawa Valley as one of the two founding families of the city of Pembroke, Ontario. Her forefathers were Canadian pioneers who forged a life as early settlers on the Ottawa River, dating back to the early 1800s, predating Confederation.

Our family continues to have strong connections to Renfrew County. In fact, we have a cottage on the beautiful shores of Lake Doré and operate a beef cattle farm aptly called Dorbay Polled Herefords.

I'd like to acknowledge someone who unfortunately wouldn't come today, and I'll tease him when we're done: the MPP for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He affectionately now refers to me as his associate MPP for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and, for the record, Speaker, he's already complaining that he's not getting enough work out of me.

My parents were teachers and very skilled at their trade. I believe the most noble profession in the world is that of an educator. Nurturing fertile minds is a calling that needs to be celebrated, not criticized. As my father, now in his 91st year, states, "If we could only put children and young adults first, we would avoid needless and costly disruptions." I totally agree.

I'd like to identify two key community leaders who gave me "the political bug," both people I admire very much. The first is Hazel McCallion. Hurricane Hazel was the mayor of Streetsville when I was a young boy, and we all know her accomplishments in building Mississauga as its mayor. I vividly remember helping her get out the vote in grade 13.

Next, William Grenville Davis was my political hero. He was our local MPP for Peel, and I remember when I was a young boy, I went to school on that Monday morning and reported during—some might remember this—social studies that Mr. Davis was now our very own Premier from the county of Peel.

Speaker, my love of agriculture and rural life began at a very early age, travelling from farm to farm with my grandfather, Wallace Fraser. I was able to spend my youth and teenage years working on farms in the Ottawa Valley. After graduating from the University of Guelph in 1979, I began my business career with Masterfeeds. I simply loved working with local farmers and farm supply dealers in my territory of Wellington, Peel, Halton and Wentworth.

During what I thought would be a few years of training before I moved on to life as perhaps a dairy and/or beef farmer, I realized I was thoroughly enjoying my business experience. So like many I started on the ground floor,

worked hard and was given tremendous opportunities to grow.

As they say, time flies. As of June of this year, I retired from Masterfeeds after 43 years of service and 29 years as president and CEO. I had a tremendous team over my years as CEO, where we grew the footprint of the company right across this country, almost quadrupling the scale of this national agribusiness. I had a tremendous career with Masterfeeds, thanks to my many customers and friends spanning over four decades.

Speaker, the lessons I learned from my business career were plentiful, and I hope I can bring some of these lessons to Queen's Park. The first would be to lead with your heart, but never at the expense of your head; I think Richard Nixon said that once. Hire the best, and do not be afraid to hire people who are smarter than you—in my case, that was easy to do. Have a sense of urgency and have a bias for action, and believe in the words of Benjamin Franklin: "Well done is better than well said."

As has been said, to whom much is given, much is expected. I was taught to always give back to my community. That is why I am proud to raise needed funds for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, Camp Trillium and St. Peter's Seminary Foundation.

As well, Speaker, I'd like to give a shout-out to two organizations that are near and dear to my heart. Having served on the London International Airport board for 12 years, I am proud of what the airport leadership team has accomplished for London and surrounding communities. As southwestern Ontario's premier airport, serving a market of 1.5 million people, the London International Airport now provides \$623 million of economic impact for the city of London.

And of course, Speaker, I have to stand here and recognize—I know my colleague below me here will appreciate this—the renowned Royal Agricultural Winter Fair. The Royal, as it is affectionately called, is celebrating its 100th anniversary this fall. The Royal has survived world wars, depressions, recessions and, most recently, this COVID pandemic, so I am asking all members of this Legislature to attend this wonderful tradition that takes place the first week of November every year. Come and enjoy the sights, the sounds and the smells of the Royal, where the country truly does come to the city.

As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I'm excited to advocate for our province's farmers, farm suppliers, food processors, supply chains and food retailers.

We all know that Ontario will have an influx of more than two million new people in the next 10 years; as such, we need to build 1.5 million new homes as soon as possible, and our government has a plan to do just that. It is why this government is investing in key infrastructure like roads, highways, hospitals and schools, and it is why this government is creating an environment for our industries and businesses to grow, creating good jobs, particularly in the skilled trades.

Now, Speaker, while more jobs, skills training, and new and better infrastructure and homes are vitally important

for all Ontarians, I respectfully submit that the most important resource we need to nurture and grow is food. Farmers feed cities, and this government is the voice of rural Ontario and will remain so. Agriculture and food is the most sustainable and renewable industry not only in Ontario, but in Canada.

From southwestern Ontario to central Ontario, from eastern Ontario to parts of northern Ontario, we truly live in a Garden of Eden. We have some of the most fertile soil in the world. We have advantageous growing conditions thanks to our proximity to the Great Lakes. We have an expanding food processing sector. We have a talented workforce. We have proven research and technology from our own University of Guelph. We have highways, rail lines and airports that can transport our food locally and internationally, and we sit beside the largest-consuming nation on earth.

We are a growing population in Ontario, where thankfully—I want to make this very clear—we can continue to feed ourselves while exporting goods and services, with limitless potential to grow. In fact, our Garden of Eden provides Ontario with an abundant harvest that may surprise some members of this House. Did you know that in 2021, the province's food and beverage processing sector had the largest share among other Ontario manufacturing industries in terms of GDP? In fact, it was at 18%. Did you know that one in 10 jobs are related to the agri-food sector? Impressively, Speaker, did you know that in 2021, Ontario's overall agri-food industry, from the farm gate to the consumer's plate, contributed \$48 billion in GDP to our provincial economy? Impressive indeed.

As the iconic and recognizable brand Foodland Ontario exemplifies, good things really do grow in Ontario, and we plan to keep it that way. I look forward to working with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the member from Huron–Bruce, and my fellow parliamentary assistant, the member from Chatham–Kent–Leamington, as well as our collective team as we help build a stronger agri-food sector, supported by our rural villages, towns and cities.

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Again, Speaker, to whom much is given, much is expected. That is why I've had a lifelong interest in our political process. I have always had a desire to serve but waited for the timing to work for my family and my career.

We all seek public office to make a difference. We all seek public office to advance the interests and opportunities of our constituents, and we all seek public office to help build a more prosperous Ontario. That we all have in common. That being said, I admittedly say I am a partisan. I am a Progressive Conservative partisan. I believe our party and our government, led by this Premier, is on the right strategic path that will get it done for all of Ontario. However, as has been said today, and I agree, we need to work together in this House, and I am confident that we will.

We are in proving the words I quoted earlier of Benjamin Franklin: "Well done is better than well said"—a smarter, leaner more proactive government that is

investing in the future while being fiscally responsible. That is what Ontarians voted for, and that is what Elgin–Middlesex–London voted for.

In conclusion, Speaker, I believe that government is the servant of the people, all of the people, and exists to balance the principles of nation-building, social order and enterprise. May God continue to bless Ontario and our country, Canada.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions and answers?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate the new member for Elgin–Middlesex–London on his inaugural remarks. It was a pleasure to listen to a bit of your history that brought you to this place, and it's been a pleasure to get to know you since you first arrived, since we do share part of that boundary in the city of London.

You talked about the diversity of that riding, taking in part of the city of London, the city of St. Thomas and many of the rural areas in Elgin county. I wondered if you could just elaborate a little bit about how you approach representing a riding that is so varied, that brings together both those urban and rural communities within Elgin and London.

Mr. Rob Flack: Well, the first thing you do, to the member opposite, is drive 10,000 kilometres during the election. It's a big riding. It's a lot of geography. The one thing that I've really enjoyed so far about my experience in this provincial Legislature is being here and learning about here. I just wish in these early days we had more time to be at home because I've got a lot of people to see and a lot of things to do. We've got one constituency office, we've got a great team, but it's really about being out, not sitting in the office. It's like what I did for a living: Get out, be seen, be heard, listen and learn.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: To the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London: Clearly, you absolutely have a passion and heart for the agri-food sector. Thank you for recognizing the significance that the agri-food sector plays in the overall GDP. But I have a fun question for you. When it comes to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, SuperDogs, horse show or the Hereford show—what's the top one in your mind and what else should we go and visit while we're there?

Mr. Rob Flack: I'm very biased; being a Hereford breeder and believing in that breed passionately as part of our food system, I won't miss the Hereford show, but I will also go to see the SuperDogs and equestrian at its best.

The Royal, folks—I'm serious when I say this—is just a wonderful thing to experience. If you've not been to Toronto the first week of November, please go. It's down at Exhibition Place. You're going to learn so much. You're going to appreciate so much about where our food comes from, and the exhibitors. It's fun. Grandparents are one of the number one exhibitors.

What's really fun is to just be there, and I said it—the sights, the sounds, the smells. Go be part of it. Take your family. You're really going to enjoy it—all of it, every little bit of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Amazing speech. It's always great to hear everyone's stories. And congratulations on your win.

I'm really interested in the agriculture component of your riding and of your beliefs. I'm very worried about food security, and in my former life I helped start a few farmers' markets in my riding. I'm a big supporter of Ontario farmers and reminding people to support them—because otherwise, where's our food coming from?—and the supply chain, as well. Actually, one of my markets ran over dinnertime, and we were worried about our farmers coming in from some three hours away, from Markdale and whatnot. So we fed the farmers who fed us, which was great.

I'm just wondering about what you would like to do to support farmers further, and what we can do at Queen's Park for that.

Mr. Rob Flack: Well, I think this government is doing a lot to support farmers, and that's part of the reason why I ran. The best thing we can do to support farmers is to, in some ways, get out of their way. Let them do what they do best. Government is not the servant of these farmers. We are there to support them with good policy, which I know our minister will continue to put forward.

For instance, let's really encourage further development of our beef sector, of our pork sector. It's wonderful how this industry continues to produce, but it's consolidated. When I got into this business, there were nearly 22,000 dairy producers; there are less than 4,000 today. There were 23,000 hog producers; there are less than 400 today. It's consolidated. We still produce a lot more food and it will continue to grow, but we have to get out of the way of their everyday activities and let them do what they do best and produce food.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Questions?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for sharing his story. I also want to thank him for feeding Ontario, because that's such an important role. So many of us forget where the items we put into our mouth come from. I actually want to applaud you for doing that and being part of that process.

My friend across the way asked a similar question, but could you further explain your thoughts respecting food production in Ontario? Particularly, how can we ensure that we can continue to keep up with this, with respect to our growing population, and make sure that everyone is fed?

Mr. Rob Flack: Thank you for the question. Speaker, I was talking to the Associate Minister of Housing today. I didn't realize this—I guess maybe I wasn't listening or it didn't sink in—but the GTHA, in 10 years or less, is going to be the size of all Ontario today. So we have to produce more food, and we are today. I know there are those who are concerned that we're going to run out of that opportunity. I don't believe so. When you take a look at the technology and research that's currently taking place, when you take a look at feed efficiencies and production efficiencies, we continue to grow and keep up and, in

fact—I think the minister would agree—keep ahead of the growing population.

That being said, we can't take our foot off the gas. I think this is a fair stat: OMAFRA calculates that the amount of primary agriculture GDP generated per acre actively farmed has risen 45% since 2016, and 208% since 2001. So it's been on an escalating curve, as has our population. We just have to continue to make sure that happens.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Question?

Ms. Doly Begum: I want to thank the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for his speech, and congratulate him on his election and welcome him to the House as well. It was a great speech and I listened intently.

One of the things I think you spoke very passionately about is your background, the work that you do and who you are. Sometimes we don't really know what our backgrounds are. One of the things that my friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane and I talk about all the time—my grandfather was a farmer, so it's in my blood. When we talk in this House, sometimes we just have the idea of who we are in this House, but the fact is there are so many different ways that we can relate to one another and learn from one another and actually connect with one another.

1740

My question is simple. As I learned from you when you spoke, I also want to hear a little bit about what you want to accomplish in Ontario's agricultural sector in terms of how you want to grow and build on the different agricultural sectors that we have in Ontario and what you hope to accomplish in your term here.

Mr. Rob Flack: I think the biggest thing we can do—and it goes back to an earlier question—is continue to ensure our food production keeps up to and expands beyond the growth of our population. I'm confident we will do that. I know we're advocating the minister, and the parliamentary assistant and myself are very active along with our team engaging stakeholders. I'm going to come back and say what I said earlier: listening and learning, not telling. We don't have all the answers here, but out in the industry they do. That's the one thing I learned in my business career: If you're going to succeed, be a good listener; if you're going to succeed, hire really good people. That's what I think this ministry is doing and this government is doing.

Hopefully, at the end of the day, you've got to really love what you do, and I think that was part of my success. I know everyone here has their story—I enjoyed the member opposite's. Your success was because of passion. You've got to love what you do. Educators: There's a young educator up there. She's great. She loves it. She's passionate about it. If you're passionate about it, you will do well at it. I promise.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): A quick question.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I know there's not much time left. So I just wanted to congratulate the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I had the opportunity to meet you before the election, and what a wonderful career you had

with Masterfeeds—the youngest-ever president and CEO in 1993. I just want to say to the member, when are you inviting us to your Dorbay cattle family operation?

Mr. Rob Flack: Any time you want to come, you're welcome; Lake Doré, Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I have to say that it's been a real pleasure to hear the speeches this afternoon, to hear so many new members share their life stories. Sometimes there were jokes and laughs, and sometimes there were tough times and emotional times. We heard about losses of people dear to them.

Unfortunately, we lost an hour of it. And that's part of what it means to be a legislator; things like that happen here. An hour of it was lost, and in turn we heard a lecture from the House leader. I must say, and I say this humbly and with greatest respect, he's an incredible speaker. And I do enjoy those lectures. They make me laugh sometimes. But I would like to offer sincere, humble advice, and my advice is directed to the new members in this chamber, particularly the Conservative ones. Because I'm a new member too: I've just been here a term, just got re-elected. I remember what it was like for the last four years. And I know why every government, not just yours, wants to silence the opposition: because we make your job harder. And sometimes you may feel like you want to take it personally, what we say. And I'm sure for those members that were here—I don't know how many are in the chamber were here under the last government—I think you know what I'm talking about. And again, I am a new member.

I watched after the last election how there were standing ovations for literally everything. Sometimes I felt that you guys were up on your feet—well maybe not the new members—more than you were answering questions at all. Constantly, the Speaker would have to get up and say, "Stop the clock." There was a lot of boasting. We hear it. "We won! We won! You lost!" We heard that a lot. We continue to hear it. And you know what I saw? I watched the polling numbers just like you, and this is what I saw, just like this: Eventually the government, your government, about three years ago reached the popularity of the government before you, the team you called the minivan party. And then the pandemic happened and things changed. That's where you were.

I think there's something we should all address and consider: We have gone through an election where people felt hopeless. They were filled with despair. I know you know this; you heard it. There were not many people rushing to vote. They felt like the future was very scary to them and their loved ones, and so we saw the lowest turnout per capita in Ontario's history. You won. You won a majority and you gained seats, and you did so with 18%—with a loss of half a million votes. And sure, we lost votes. We lost more than you. But what is out there is a feeling of disenfranchisement that I've never seen before, not to this level. And it's scary. All of us need to consider this, and I hope that you consider it, too. I hope that despite

what we hear sometimes in this chamber, when you're in your caucus rooms talking and thinking about it, that you actually think about what's actually going on.

I know that it is difficult for you as a government. It must be very hard for ministers. All I've ever known is opposition; I've been here for just one term. To get up and have to answer questions when we bring out stories of individuals that are not the exception, because in many cases the exception is the rule—people suffering in many different ways, and you have to get up and scramble and give an answer. I know it's not easy. I get it. I know your job is hard.

Listen or don't listen, but people out there are suffering. I want to say, you might want to shut us down and keep us quiet, but we have options and ideas to help. You will hear those amendments when things get to committee. I think a third of all the material may, in fact, go to committee. We can fix a lot of the things that you are dealing with. We can help you. It is your choice to listen to us or not.

Your throne speech doesn't go far enough. I can't match the words of the member from Spadina-Fort York. And to your credit, the questions that were asked of him and the compassionate speech that he gave were very respectful. How can people live on a 5% increase in ODSP when we are facing this inflation? It is impossible. I know you know this.

You look at the throne speech, and I get it—I did a Ctrl-F on the word "environment." I found it three times. Two times, it had to do with the business environment.

Health care crisis: Each day we get up and we say, "We need to deal with this. Let's call an emergency discussion and debate on it. Unanimous consent." It fails every day. Why do we criticize you? I know it's not easy to hear. Because there are things that we observed—at least, I observed—in the last four years that could have been done so much better.

Privatization: We don't have to raise it. You raise it. You call it "innovation." Conservative governments have a pedigree, a history, of ripping apart and tearing down public services and institutions. You did it to hydro and we saw the rates go up. You sold the 407. I get it. That wasn't you, new members; it was the government before. But last year, when the 407—the people that own it—owed a billion dollars to you and the taxpayers, this government said, "Keep the change. We don't need it." Imagine.

The list goes on and on, and sometimes it feels—and we all know that there are people out there always waiting to turn a profit on a crisis.

Long-term care: I'd like to talk about long-term care a little bit more. I must say, and it is not an insult, that until the pandemic happened, I do not believe it was a priority for this government. We tabled bills like the Time to Care Act where we said, "Give at least four hours to our loved ones to take care of them." It was ignored. You heard, just like I did, PSWs and nurses come in, file into our offices and, through tears, tell us that they had to help residents—dozens, for one nurse, one PSW, dozens who needed to be changed, who needed to be fed, an impossible task. It's not just about creating the beds. It's about hiring the workers

and giving them the time, the respect, to be able to help the people who are entrusted under their care.

In 2019, before the pandemic: 626 homes. How many proactive inspections do you think happened under this government? Nine. Most of the inspections happened because it was a phone call—someone in a crisis. You would have heard it: nine proactive inspections. And during the pandemic, those proactive inspections were suspended, I think, as far as into last fall. I'd have to do a little more research to see if it's still happening as we speak right now.

What a past government did—I don't blame you who are sitting in this chamber—was open the doors to privatization. I've heard the stats: For every dollar invested in long-term care, 49 cents in private long-term care goes to direct patient care, but in non-profit public, it's 79 cents. Is the solution to continue to build private beds, private beds, private beds? We all know that the majority of people who were suffering the worst during this pandemic were in those facilities.

1750

If there was more attention spent in that first year, PSWs—having multiple shifts, rushing in and out of long-term-care facilities, some of them with full outbreak going place to place—would that have happened? Would the training have been there? Would the PPE have been there to save lives? I'm not putting this all on you individually, but as a system the people have been failed.

I'm going to talk a little bit more now about my own portfolio as NDP auto insurance critic. I have to say that I think so much more could have been done in the last four years. It's unbelievable. When the pandemic started, there was—and I did the math; I reached out to Toronto police—a 74% reduction in automobile accidents in the city of Toronto, and the government's response at the time when it came to auto insurance was what? Let them give rebates. In fact, what did these insurers do? Since most people couldn't even drive, a lot of them just parked their cars at home. They switched their coverage to things like fire and theft, and what happened as a result of that? Of course, in those instances, they paid less. Again, what did the government do? It felt like PR. The former finance minister, your guy, came out and it felt like he was doing PR for the automobile industry. They were giving out peanuts, if anything, to drivers.

What else happened? We would always wait on the quarterlies when the auto insurance companies would report if rates were going up—rates were going up. Well, this government hid it. Your government—not you new members—hid that fact, and about a year later we learned they were preapproving auto insurance increases. I honestly think sometimes that right there in that nice green space, the government should plop a chair and sit an auto insurance executive right here because sometimes I feel what this government does around automobile insurance—there's got to be executives watching on TV, just nodding. I want to see them sitting there in the room, nodding their heads. It's just unbelievable. What did they tell the last government? They said, “Reduce automobile

insurance accidents and we'll reduce rates.” Guess what? Rates went up.

I see in the government's Bill 2 that you talk about fraud, and that's something the insurance companies will always tell you. They'll say, “Why are the rates so high? It's fraud. It's all fraud. Everybody is lying.” That's why, if a person is catastrophically injured, they will be getting lawyers out and telling them they're lying; for sure, they're lying.

It's in here, and it's hard to not be cynical. It says that you want—or this government, it seems, wants to authorize that your regulators will be able to get more information when it comes to the issue of automobile insurance fraud. It's hard to not be cynical and think, are you going to use this information to help drivers or not help drivers?

This afternoon, I and colleagues of mine that are here in this chamber, the member from Scarborough Southwest and the member from Davenport, introduced a bill, a bill we voted on unanimously before the election happened and it said, “Let's deal with postal code discrimination in the GTA.” Drivers in Ontario, especially the GTA, pay not just the highest rates in Canada, they pay the highest rates in North America. All the while, last year, do you know what the return on premiums was for the auto insurance industry? 23%. Can you imagine the amount of money? So if someone on your side gets up and says, here's a person who saw a rate decrease or not—and I'm not hearing it. The proof is in the premiums. Ask the people in your constituency. If you represent an area in Scarborough or Brampton or Vaughan or many of the areas—in fact, the Premier's own riding in northwest Toronto, my neighbour—people in our communities are getting crushed in this affordability crisis when it comes to automobile insurance.

Home warranties—and we're going to hear a lot about it. They're going to build a million homes, right? And this government I don't think has ever seen a bad development. Those of you who've been on a city council have. Sometimes it's great—we all, for the most part, unless we built our home, live in a development—but sometimes there's a little bit more work that needs to be done to get it right.

So if you're going to build a million homes, wouldn't you want to get the warranties right? We had an opportunity to fix new home warranties in Ontario. It was an honour and a privilege to travel this province when the government said they had a plan to do better than the Liberals before them. And the consumer protection advocates, many of whom were not facing problems with a new home warranty, but were so traumatized by things that may have happened even as far as 20 years ago that they're fighting for people, gained nothing. They put in time and money to help others after them.

We travelled the province, and I'll tell you this: Every single consumer advocate, everyone going through or suffering from a new home that has gone wrong, said that this legislation didn't go far enough. Do you know who liked what your government was doing? Just one: the representative of the development industry. They said, “Keep the status quo.”

The Auditor General—and again, I get it; it’s not easy to get those reports, right? The Liberals didn’t like it. You probably don’t either. She pointed out—it felt like literal absurdity—the level that the development industry was controlling the regulator of the time. I mean, think about this. I travelled to Ottawa, to a subdivision that is still experiencing difficulties to this very day. People who bought new homes as a dream—beautiful homes, when you looked at the brochure. I went into a person’s home, a family’s home; their entire basement was ripped up. It looked like a bomb had gone off in their home.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars of repair, fighting Tarion, trying to get lawyers, all of it—it’s so many people, and when people do this, because this is a huge investment on your part, it’s a big risk. Because when you go and tell everyone, “My home is in bad shape,” what do you do? Some people see it and sell, and another person picks that up, and they’ll never know until, years down the road, something absolutely terrible can happen.

There was an opportunity to change it. Still, I sat in on the last Tarion board meeting, and it’s same old, same old: the same old complaints. And so when I hear targets that the government talks about, I can only hear them as aspirational: “We’re going to fix home warranties. We’re going to build these homes. We’re going to fix it.”

Long-term care: Now, all of a sudden, because it’s a big issue—I’m not going to get into all of what we’ve heard recently. Of course we have concerns. Where are you sending people? You’re now, all of a sudden, going to

charge them for a bed unless they get out of hospital? Why do you think, under this system of long-term care, people want to stay in a hospital?

I brought up the question of a gentleman named Vibert. I brought it up last year, before the election: a poor gentleman in a hospital bed. The only person advocating for him is his dear sister. He had bedsores that looked like horrific wounds. I brought images—they were very difficult to see—and I shared them with some of the ministers on your side. Months later, it’s the same situation, if not worse, and where is Vibert? In and out of the hospital. People there don’t have time. They don’t have the luxury of time to wait. They need solutions now. It’s life or death for them.

And I get it. We bring it up; don’t throw a dart at me and put it on my back and blame me. I know you don’t want to hear it, but it’s life or death for people. People don’t need aspirational targets in a year or two, three, four, five or six years. They need the help now.

I’m the critic for consumer protection, and the last thing I’m going to talk about is this: I don’t believe there’s the kind of consumer protection that we need in Ontario, that people here deserve. If you face—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Seeing the time is now 6 o’clock, this House stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m., Monday, August 29, 2022.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
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
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
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	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
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	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
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	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
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
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
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	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
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
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
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	