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Lundi
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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 25 September 2023 / Lundi 25 septembre 2023

Report, Integrity Commissioner

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche) 5039

Working for Workers Act, 2023, Bill 79, Mr. Piccini / Loi de 2023 visant à oeuvrer pour les travailleurs, projet de loi 79, M. Piccini

Mr. Matthew Rae 5039

Mr. Wayne Gates 5039

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong..... 5039

Mr. Anthony Leardi..... 5039

Ms. Chandra Pasma 5040

Mr. Stephen Blais 5040

MPP Andrea Hazell 5040

Mr. Anthony Leardi..... 5042

Mr. Joel Harden 5042

Mr. John Fraser..... 5043

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong..... 5043

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon..... 5043

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy..... 5043

Ms. Christine Hogarth 5044

Ms. Sandy Shaw 5047

Third reading debate deemed adjourned..... 5047

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 25 September 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 25 septembre 2023

Report continued from volume A.

1702

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: a report concerning the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario, received September 25, 2023, with addendum.

WORKING FOR WORKERS ACT, 2023
LOI DE 2023 VISANT À OEUVRER
POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS

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

Bill 79, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi, le travail et d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for his long speech on a variety of things. Some touched on the bill; the vast majority didn't, which is unfortunate, Speaker. But my question is actually related to the bill. The opposition was saying this afternoon that they'd like us to talk to the bill, so I'm going to ask a question related to the bill to the member opposite.

Our government has made it absolutely clear that we'll do everything to protect vulnerable workers in the workplace and to send a message to bad actors. We're proposing to increase the maximum corporate fines under the Occupational Health and Safety Act from \$1.5 million to \$2 million and, as the member from Brampton North mentioned earlier, the highest in the country. Does the member from Niagara Falls support this proposal? Yes or no, Speaker?

Mr. Wayne Gates: First of all, I just want to defend myself. I believe that I did speak to the bill because I was speaking about workers, and I thought that's what the bill was about. It was all about workers. So I think everything I talked about did deal with workers.

On your question: It's enforcement that's the problem, and Fiera Foods is a perfect example right here just outside of Toronto, where we had—I think it was—four people who died. They did nothing after the first death; did nothing after the second; did nothing after the third; did

nothing after the fourth. So you can put it in here, but if you're not going to enforce it and there's no teeth to it, it doesn't matter. And Fiera Foods is a very good example. If you get a chance, look it up.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I know a young woman who's come from Syria. She's a newcomer to Canada and she's studying to be a nurse. We were having a discussion and what was really interesting is, she was shocked at the preparation they teach them about workplace violence. And I say that because the member talked about injuries. What she said is that they're teaching them how to make sure that their hair is pulled back so that their hair doesn't get pulled, they don't get kicked, they don't get punched. She was speechless that this was part of the job, but we hear this every day from nurses on the front line.

So what I want to ask the member here from Niagara is, what is this government doing to protect nurses—we've heard about the violence on the front lines—from injury and giving them the respect that they deserve on the front lines looking after our most vulnerable in the hospital?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I want to thank my colleague for the question. First of all, I'm not in government. That will happen in 2026, so that will be good.

On your question about violence in the workplace, our nurses, our PSWs are constantly being abused in the workplace. I don't believe that the government has taken it seriously. We know that there have been a number of WSIB cases that have been denied over and over again, in particular during COVID.

I can tell you the story: Some of the nurses were parking in the parking lot half an hour before their shift, crying because of what they were going into. So are they doing enough? The answer is absolutely not. Should they do better? Absolutely. And should they put better protections and better enforcement in bills? Yes, absolutely.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Schedule 1 of the proposed legislation proposes to increase penalties for offences under the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act. The legislation proposes to impose fines to a maximum of \$500,000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months—or both—for offences under that act. If convicted, a person could pay a fine of \$500,000 and go to jail for 12 years. Does the member support that, and will he vote for it?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I always appreciate a question from my colleagues from Windsor there. The issue is—and it kind of flows to the question of your MPP over here—the issue of enforcement. I'm going to give you an example, all right? We all saw what happened in long-term care, so we can use that as a good example, I believe. How many of those long-term-care facilities that ended up—in my heart—killing our seniors were shut down? How many have been rewarded with long 30-year contracts since that time?

If you don't do the enforcement, the bill doesn't mean anything. Show me an example when you ask that question of a long-term care facility that was shut down that lost their licence when they know they had bad results with seniors. I can tell you—if you look at me, I can give you the answer: zero.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Thank you to the member for Niagara Falls for those comments and for your passionate defence of workers, as always.

One of the things that we know is very important to collective bargaining is that there's no interference in the process, and that allowing employers to bring in replacement workers ends up dragging out the process and taking away the incentive for employers to actually negotiate and reach a fair arrangement with workers, and this government has consistently refused to do that.

In Ottawa, the IBEW 636 members, who thankfully just voted to accept a collective agreement, were fighting for better health and safety protections, and their employer brought in replacement workers and the government did nothing about that. I know the member is a passionate defender of anti-scab legislation, but if you could elaborate a little bit on why a government that actually cared about workers would have included anti-scab measures in this bill.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a really good question from my colleague from Ottawa. It's probably the worst bill that's out there, and I'll tell you why. A lot of people don't know this: Most collective agreements are settled without a work stoppage—98%. So all you're doing is protecting those scumbag employers, that 2% that will bring in scabs. And I use that word because the last minister used that word, so I thought it was fair and reasonable to say it.

What you need to do is get rid of this anti-scab legislation—put it in the bill. We've asked you every time. It's been raised not only here by my colleagues; it's been raised at committee. By the way, I believe IBEW is electricians, if I'm not mistaken; the very skilled trades that you say you're fighting for. Yet you left them out on the picket line, and you did absolutely nothing as they brought replacement workers in to replace their jobs. You did nothing on that. Put it in the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

1710

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's an honour to be here tonight to ask a question of my friend from Niagara. It's always a

pleasure to hear him get up and speak in the Legislature. He's very enthusiastic, has a flair for the dramatic and likes to go on and talk about any number of subjects. And we're all, I think, better educated as a result of him offering his opinion on these subjects.

I'm wondering, Madam Speaker, if the honourable member would indulge me in using approximately a minute or two of time to expand on his thoughts on what's not included in this bill, and how the government might do more work to benefit workers in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Well, first of all, I have to thank you for the kind words that you said. I'm sure that your leader probably wrote that out for you—just saying.

I think I've already talked about what's not in the bill. What's not in the bill is sick days. As a matter of fact, in one of the first bills that the government put in, they took the bill and got rid of sick days. That's for sure. They did that.

I just talked about allowing scabs and replacement workers into our thing. But one I haven't touched on, and I apologize—probably the biggest one—is agency employees. Agency nurses are going into long-term-care facilities, retirement homes, our hospitals, and the corporation is charging \$150 to \$300 per hour for that nurse. Where is that money coming from? It's coming out of our publicly funded system. That should be going to care. Agency nurses should be outlawed. It should be put in this bill that you can't use agency nurses. That's for sure.

I don't know if they're going to give me the full two minutes. Bill 124: We've talked a lot about that. I think everybody in here has talked about Bill 124. I know my colleagues have. I know the independents have. The Liberals have. Do you know who hasn't talked about 124 today, when you're talking about Working for Workers? Does anybody know? The minister or any one of my colleagues on that side. Not one of you has come out and said, "We should get rid of Bill 124." We found it illegal in the courts. We know that. You went to court once and you lost. You went to court twice and you lost. But you don't care, because do you know who's paying for the lawyers?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Taxpayers.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Taxpayers. Taxpayers are paying for it. And what's the result? On the day that you brought a labour bill into this House today, 5,000 people were on the lawn protesting that you don't respect workers, that you don't stick up for workers. They're upset. They're very upset, just like we're upset about the greenbelt, just like we're upset about "Working for Workers." I'm going to tell you, when workers stand united and workers stand together, we'll never be defeated.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

I recognize the member from Scarborough—Guildwood, who I understand will be giving her inaugural speech.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to stand before you and speak for the first time in this auspicious venue.

Since today is the most sacred day in the Jewish calendar, I wish our Jewish friends and colleagues a blessed Yom Kippur.

Please permit me to introduce myself. My name is Andrea Hazell, and I've been elected to represent Scarborough–Guildwood. First off, I must thank my predecessor, Mitzie Hunter, for her gracious support and years of service to the province of Ontario.

I would not be standing here today without the love and support of my family. I have enlisted their help in so much of my volunteer work. They are accustomed to my 24-hour, seven-days-a-week schedule out in Scarborough. I've been truly blessed to have such a wonderful husband and awesome kids, who always maintain their sense of humour and their patience with me. I love them so much. I love you. I love you. I love you so much.

I would also like to thank all the lovely volunteers. And when I talk about volunteers, real volunteers who came out in support of me. They knocked on thousands of doors to get the message out, and boy, did they deliver. Together, we were a force to be reckoned with.

As someone who came to Canada from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, a small nation in the Caribbean with a population of 100,000 people, I'm humbled to stand for Scarborough–Guildwood, such a diverse, vibrant and hard-working constituency of roughly 103,000 people.

Politics is new to me. Working hard is not new to me. When asked why I entered this arena, I can honestly say, because the people of Scarborough–Guildwood needed me. It's also the reason I've done so many things in my life. When I'm needed, I tend to answer the call. I strive to make a difference, to bring people together and make lives better. Up until now, I've been doing it one person at a time, but now I stand on this much larger stage. Just imagine what I can do.

I must thank the interim Ontario Liberal leader, the very persuasive member of Ottawa South. He knew just what to say to help me see the possibilities and inspire me to embark on this mission. Thank you, John, for believing in me and for your patience and savvy advice. And to my new Liberal colleagues, thank you so much for welcoming me so generously into the family. I thank you. I love you.

I am deeply grateful to the people of Scarborough–Guildwood for their confidence and trust in me. It is a profound privilege to represent them here at Queen's Park. I will never take this responsibility lightly—no way. I will not do that. I will carry it with me wherever I go.

Scarborough–Guildwood is my heart, my strength, my home. For those of you who are unfamiliar with my community, let me tell you: It's a wonderful place. From the bluffs that rise so majestic and resolute above Lake Ontario, we head north to the never-ending hustle and bustle of Highway 401. We all know how congested that highway is. We have Markham, Bellamy and McCowan Roads on our west side and Morningside Avenue on the east.

Ours is a diverse, thriving community rich in history, culture, education and innovation. For example, on September 13—on my birthday—Centennial College opened

Canada's first LEED Gold, zero-carbon, mass-timber, higher-education building, which establishes a new gateway to Centennial's flagship Progress Campus and supports Indigenous ways of being and teaching. By the way, just to let you know what LEED is: LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, and it's the most widely used green building rating system in the world. Well done, Centennial College, right in my riding.

The iconic Guild Inn Estate has been renovated and serves as a beautiful venue for weddings, cultural, social and business events. It's perched right on the bluffs and the views are magnificent.

The Guild Park boasts a collection of over 60 historic architecture fragments rescued from various demolished Toronto buildings. The Greek stage there is a favourite for live theatre, concerts and for TV and movie shoots. The stunning new Clark Centre for the Arts offers over 80 accessible arts programs.

In Scarborough–Guildwood, food, arts and culture carry a big weight. Actually, in Scarborough, it carries a very big weight—some of the best Jamaican, Pakistani, Afghan, Gujarati, Sri Lankan and more. The members of this chamber represent every corner of this province. If you are ever feeling hungry and you are in my neighbourhood, the best place to visit is in my riding. Come on over. We'll grab some lunch.

We have the Guild Alive with Culture Arts Festival, Family Fest and the Poplar Road Strawberry Festival, so bring your families and enjoy and see what a family gathering is all about.

Aside from the Guild Park, we have the massive Morningside Park, where every summer you will see lovely families holding hands, barbecuing, coming together and supporting what a good family structure looks like.

1720

We also have sacred ground. The Tabor Hill Ossuary is believed to date back to the 14th century, making it one of the earliest ossuary sites in Ontario—so significant. This Indigenous burial site has been given cemetery designation and is recognized under the Ontario Heritage Act.

As I take office and prepare to get to work, one of my first objectives is to help build trust in our community and the ability of political leaders to affect real change for the better.

We are seeing a concerning decline in voters' turnout. Has this body so disenchanting the people that they no longer believe their vote matters? We have to reverse this trend. I ask you, all of you, to help me to get people reengaged, particularly our youth. They are our future. The future is theirs. They need to take part. Volunteering can be immensely fulfilling. We must lead by example and bring back faith in our political process, not with discontent and fearmongering, but with hope and goodwill.

Pounding the pavement from morning to night, meeting and sharing with people of my community during my campaign, I gained a deep understanding of what they care

about and I share those same values. I bet you all are familiar with these values.

We value universal publicly funded health care. People from all over Ontario come to Scarborough Health Network for treatment. As a supporter of community health care, I have helped to raise much-needed capital for Scarborough Health Network and I've mobilized all my resources to champion health care initiatives.

Our health care should never be used as a means to make profit. We must listen to our medical professionals; learn from them so we can make the best decisions going forward. The people have spoken. I have listened. I will always be listening to the people of Scarborough–Guildwood.

We value public education. I mentioned countless students I have mentored and helped to find jobs with potential for growth. They are out there. We need safe, inclusive public schools and smaller class sizes. We must respect and listen to our teachers, because Ontario's future is in their hands. Our children are at stake.

We value our environment. The greenbelt must remain protected. It safeguards vital resources that clean our air and water, reduces flood risks, provides a home for many at-risk species, and ensures communities have green space to explore and learn from.

We need to restore funding for fire prevention programs. We can never again spend a Canada Day choking on smoke and wildfires.

We must also once again embrace green technology and stop ignoring it. Let's learn from the mistakes of the past.

We value our economy. Throughout the years, I've had the privilege to work with remarkable people and organizations in Scarborough.

In January 2020, I opened my own small business. Two months later, the pandemic struck. I guess you could say the pandemic helped to shape me, and that's part of why I am here today. I decided to use the tools at my disposal to help as many people as possible. I dedicated my position as president of the Scarborough Business Association so I could help businesses in the Scarborough I love withstand the ravages of the pandemic crisis. Strong businesses create good and strong opportunities.

My team and I arrange weekly online seminars and networking sessions to help businesses pivot and become more innovative while they struggle through the pandemic. How can we forget that? This initiative helped to foster economic growth, provided resources to help local businesses survive and kept thousands of people connected and engaged. Our motto in Scarborough became—and I made that motto—"We Are Stronger Together." We will never be defeated.

We value support for the most vulnerable. In recent years, I established a not-for-profit organization that empowers and uplifts women entrepreneurs, creating opportunities for success. One of the driving forces behind my decision to start my own business was to empower women entrepreneurs and help newcomers coming to this country to succeed.

Statistics still prove that in their lifetime most women will make less than a man. They will also find it harder to get financing and support from financial institutions. This has to change. We can do better.

I stand before you all with a full heart today. You all inspire me. I'm overwhelmed with the feeling of optimism and purpose, and I hope that's what I'm going to be leaving for my Scarborough–Guildwood riding, and I hope you can help me to deliver on that commitment.

As I look around at my new colleagues, I pledge to you all my energy, my integrity and determination. I trust that we want the same things. I hope we can work together to solve the best interests of this province. I never give up. I'm never defeated. I'm eager, as I said, to get to work to realize the promise of Ontario. I'm ready to ensure that the people of Ontario find fulfillment and achieve success, because of the decisions we make, not in spite of them. Thank you.

Applause.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I want to welcome the new member to this chamber. She made reference in her speech to her background and her family members, and I would like to invite the member to tell us a little bit more about her background and her family members.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Response?

MPP Andrea Hazell: For myself, I have over 30 years of experience in the private sector. That's where I have gained a lot of leadership strength and muscle, but I'm always a community advocate.

I travelled from my country in 1988 and I am blessed. I am the first generation of my family to be in politics, so today I am making history for my country and my family. My mom and dad are deceased, but I know this is what would have made them very proud today.

I have three children; they're all in university. My eldest is doing his PhD and that is why I count myself blessed and I count myself lucky. And that is why I will forever be a community advocate, because I want the immigrants of this country to understand how great this Canada can be, and you just have to seek out your opportunities.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The government House leader has a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I apologize to the member. I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 9(f), when the house adjourns today it stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m. tomorrow, September 26, 2023.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 9(f), when the house adjourns today it stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m. tomorrow, September 26, 2023. Agreed? Agreed.

Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member for her passionate address. I want to endeavour to ask you a

question borrowing from your speech and the bill before the house today.

I had occasion recently to stop in your beautiful community, Scarborough, on a bike ride from Ottawa to Toronto. I stopped in at Variety Village, which is a wonderful place that helps people with disabilities, and one of the things that I heard there was not just concerns people had about crossing the street or getting around Scarborough safely.

There's been some tragedies in Scarborough, as you know better than me. They were talking about the conditions of work, which is what this government is talking about, Working for Workers—how hard it is to find gainful employment and how people feel trapped, often newcomers to our country, in occupations that don't respect their credentials. I'm wondering if you have any further thoughts given that this is your community. And, by the way, welcome to this place.

MPP Andrea Hazell: In Scarborough itself, we do have concerns with that, but there's a lot of organisations that actually come together, meet at the table and have conversations on how to skilfully develop the new immigrants that are coming into the country.

1730

In my riding, I'm actually being proactive in moving forward and meeting with those organizations, to get things moving for my riding.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. John Fraser: I just want to take this opportunity to welcome the member. I didn't get to do it other than just at the table here this morning. We're so glad that she's here. You're so full of enthusiasm and hope. It's taking some of the rust and the stuff that wears us down out of all of us.

Speaker, I want to ask the member about health care workers in her riding. I know that she met with a number of health care workers in Scarborough. There are a lot of women and men who work in health care: PSWs, nurses, RPNs. I wonder if she has anything she would like to say about those folks in her riding.

MPP Andrea Hazell: That's correct. In my riding, I had a lot of opportunities during the campaign to speak to a lot of PSWs. They want a better-quality way of life at work. They're looking for a better salary, better working conditions. They're doing the job, but they're not benefiting from the work that they're doing, and they have safety issues as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to congratulate the member from Scarborough–Guildwood for winning an election. Quite frankly, what a time to be elected right now in this Legislature, over the summer of all the hullabaloo around the greenbelt. Of course, your energy that you presented here today and, I'm going to say, your fresh outlook—I hope that takes you along your path and you never lose that, because that's something that I think—sometimes we do get kind of jaded being in this place.

While you were on the campaign trail, you talked about young people and getting people engaged in volunteerism. But I wanted to ask you: What are some of the things that young people have talked about that stop them from getting involved in politics specifically?

MPP Andrea Hazell: That is something very near and dear to my heart. What I've seen in my campaign is they're very disengaged, because they do not think their voice matters, and so they do not get involved.

And so, what I have been doing is actually forming political young leadership groups, just to make sure that they are our future leaders and just show them. Now we have 10; we're thinking of growing by 50. It's "each one teach one." That's the concept that I am trying to encourage the young political leaders.

It starts from my children, because they were disengaged, but because I was on the campaign, now they feel part of it. Now they are with it 24/7. They're even turning on the news channel and updating me on what I need to know before I come to Queen's Park. And so, when they feel part of it, they will become part of it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It's absolutely enlightening, and such an enthusiastic delivery. We're lucky to have you in this chamber. I'm your neighbour in beautiful Beaches–East York, and when I first met you, you said, "Scarborough–Guildwood is the beating heart of Ontario." You caught me at that, and you've invited us to come and explore your beautiful riding.

I wonder what a day, a visit, would look like if we were to take you up on that. You've offered us different venues for lunch and arts and culture. If you could just take us through where you would take us, your favourite spots. There are so many, I'm sure.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Well, first I will take you to a lady in my riding who has been living at the same house for 60 years. That's where I will star, because that's how beautiful Scarborough–Guildwood is. Once you get there, it seems as if you don't leave. It's generation after generation after generation living in those homes.

But I will take you in the life of Andrea Hazell, which means I will take you and help you to know the small businesses and where they are located. Small businesses are the backbone of the economy. Let's give them their respect.

Then I will take you to some museum sites, but then to our restaurants. It's the food and arts culture of Scarborough. So it will take you more than a day to come out to my riding. It's not a day experience.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the new member for Scarborough–Guildwood. Congratulations to you and welcome to the chamber.

My question to you: I was very interested; you were talking about women entrepreneurs and the work you were doing there. My background is an entrepreneur. I'm just curious, what kind of things were you doing to bring

the women together to talk further, and the support mechanisms for women entrepreneurs?

MPP Andrea Hazel: When I became a female business entrepreneur, there was a couple of hardships that meets a new immigrant who comes to this country. We are limited to begin with, and so the experiences that I experienced, it just pushes me to support a lot of women who look like me and feel like me.

Number one, resources are not easy to reach. So what I worked really well with, because I'm the president of the Scarborough Business Association, is the city of Toronto, their small business enterprise. I've connected with them. They've got a lot of programs for women in business. It's given women the confidence, the willpower, to succeed and push their dreams forward.

And for newcomers who come to this country with a dream of establishing and opening up their own business, I pour out my confidence and my motivation and connect them with anyone who they need to be connected with—it could be the bank, it could be people with technology, it could be someone to write up their business proposals with the city of Toronto—to get them established and win with opening and establishing their business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: First of all, I would like to welcome both new members to the House. It is such an honour to serve. You will love coming in here every day. Every time, still, I have a smile on my face working in this beautiful building. Please feel welcome. You are part of a very large, extended family now, so good luck to you both.

Before I begin, I also want to applaud our new Minister of Labour, Minister Piccini. I want to thank him for his work he's done for the environment. We had a spill in my riding with Humber River, and you know what? He was on the phone to me immediately, helping me out, talking to my constituents, talking to our councillor, and making sure that we had what was needed. His ministry was there to get the job done for a cleanup. So I just want to thank for his work.

I also want to extend thanks and congratulations to Monte McNaughton. Certainly, he is a gentleman. He is a family man. I thank his wife, Kate, and his beautiful daughter, Annie, for sharing her dad with us. They came down to my riding for the Taste of The Kingsway to see the Taylor Swift act. She was just beaming with pride. He texted me to say, "I am here with my daughter." He's a dad first, so I just want to wish Monte the best success and thank him from the bottom of all of our hearts for his public service to his province.

You know, it is a privilege to speak on the Working for Workers Act 3. Over the summer, I had the opportunity to visit the main street and a lot of our industry in the community of Etobicoke-Lakeshore. The number one thing I heard across was we need more bodies. Where are the people? We need more people to work.

So our government has been working hard to attract people to Ontario, building a community, building a province, where manufacturers will come to invest their money

and create jobs, because it's not for government to create these jobs, it's for the government to create the environment so people will move here and invest. That's why we need to keep our taxes low. We need to build more housing. We need to make sure we have hospitals. We need to have health care that's good for everybody in our growing economy and our growing province. So, all the work we've done to date is just here to set up so we can make sure that our province continues to grow and we continue to have people working in these jobs because, as I'm sure you all heard as you went out and about this summer, we don't have enough workers.

1740

So, on to this little bit of legislation. We talked about our future, our past—we talked a little about our future of Ontario, but let's go a little bit back about the past. In the spirit of the Working for Workers Act 3 amendments, they hearken back to the era where our forebears were building this province. You think of figures like John Graves Simcoe, Upper Canada's first Lieutenant Governor, who presided over the explosive growth of this region by American expatriates after the Civil War; Sir Adam Beck, who pioneered our hydroelectric system; and, in a different age, the late Progressive Conservative Bill Davis, who opened hundreds of public schools and built out our community college system.

But, Speaker, it goes without saying that I'm told millions of Ontarians anonymously built—and they still do—our province into the cultural, social, and industrial dynamo it is today. We're thinking about the factory workers, our skilled trades people, our front-line retail workers, our transit, our truck drivers, our engineers, and many others. Those who get up every morning to make their contribution and to keep Ontario on the move. These people deserve our respect and they deserve our support, especially now at a time of historical high inflation, ballooning interest rates and the ever-rising cost of things like housing, groceries and other basic necessities.

This, to me, is the spirit of these proposed amendments to the Working for Workers Act 3. It is to recognize our history as an industrializing province and the sheer hard work put in by so many to bring us to where we are today, as the envy of much of the Western world. The intent of these amendments is to ensure we maintain our position and to ensure its contribution for the benefit of generations yet to come, which brings me to the question of what the changes can do and how the changes will work. In sum, it's threefold.

The first: These amendments seek to achieve this goal by making workplaces more attractive, which includes reflecting on the reality of modern work. This would be accomplished through a number of measures. We would amend the Employment Standards Act to require written information to an employee on his or her first day of work that specifies, in writing, the employee's work location, salary or wages, and hours of work. We would further amend the ESA to ensure that employees who work remotely all the time are included in the count for the purpose of mass termination provisions. And for military

reservists, we would expand provisions in the ESA to include physical or mental treatments in recovering for rehabilitation related to military activity.

Secondly, these amendments would make sure vulnerable workers are safe, protected and treated fairly. They would amend firefighter regulations to add WSIB benefits entitlements for primary-site thyroid and pancreatic cancers.

And we talked about this earlier today: how important it is we look after our first responders. That's one of our stakeholders in the portfolio that I represent, good men and women out there. And over the summer, when the Solicitor General and I both visited numerous fire stations and fire halls, they just said thank you—thank you for helping them out; thank you for having their back; thank you for protecting them. And I say thank you to them for their service to the people in their communities.

Further, this act would amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to increase the maximum fine for corporations convicted of an offence under this act from \$1.5 million to \$2 million. That's the highest in Canada and something we should all be proud of. They would amend construction projects regulations to explicitly require that personal protective equipment fit each individual properly. This is something we probably never even thought of because women weren't in the workplace; they weren't in these types of jobs. But when you say, "Why should we be left out?" well, we shouldn't be. You know, we have the skills. Women can do these jobs just as good as men, so let's make sure that they feel comfortable in their protective gear. To me, that's something easy and should have been done a long time ago. How do you get women into this workforce if they're not treated fairly?

Also, when I was meeting with the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, we met with a group of young women in my riding and we were talking about why they're staying in the skilled trades or why they leave the skilled trades, and 50% of them were leaving, and one main piece they brought up was the bathrooms.

We've all driven down the highway and seen bathrooms on construction sites, and none of us would probably go near them. It seems like a simple fix. I remember when Minister McNaughton brought it forward, somebody said to me, "I can't believe your government is talking about bathrooms." And I said, "Yes, I can't believe that today we're still talking about bathrooms." It is a right for a woman to go on a job and have proper facilities if they want to work. These are simple fixes that should have been done a long time ago, but it took Minister McNaughton to come up with that solution. It came up in our consultations with numerous women—to find out that this is what is needed to have to keep women in the workplace. Why should they be left out? They shouldn't. And our government is making that change. It's called dignity for all workers.

Interjection.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: And inclusion.

This bill, if passed, will also increase the maximum fines for employers and recruiters convicted of taking a retainer for foreign nationals' passports. Individuals would be liable for a fine of \$500,000 or 12 months in prison. Corporations would be faced with a fine of up to \$1 million. If passed, this act would amend the ESA regarding licensing to applicants who show evidence of compliance before his or her licence is refused, revoked or suspended.

The third point: We need to build a competitive labour market. As I mentioned earlier, as we look at our ridings and what is wrong and what is missing, it's people. These amendments would build a more competitive labour market by increasing our labour supply and attracting new workers to Ontario. They would help address current labour market challenges in Ontario by encouraging regulated professions to consider labour market needs in their credentialing. They would also require the same regulated professions to eliminate Canadian experience as a requirement for registration. They would ensure that no arbitrary barriers to the acceptance of foreign-trained professionals are maintained. And they would help ensure that ODSP and Ontario Works clients and those who are otherwise unemployed will be put on an accelerated path to re-employment.

Speaker, there are other non-legislative measures backing this initiative, such as consultation with the skilled trades unions and the relevant ministries about changing the academic requirements for entry into apprenticeships and to encourage more entrants into the field, which we urgently need.

As we heard today, there are numerous reasons why this bill is important. These changes will help increase employment and help all of our workers and find more people to fill these jobs that have been missed or left behind.

Ontario is an amazing place to live. We are all so fortunate to live here, and we want to encourage others to have that same opportunity we have. They also need homes to live in, so we want to make sure that we are building those 1.5 million homes, so we can make sure that when people move here they have a place they can call home, just like we do. And if they can't have a home just yet, we want to make sure there's a place to rent.

I'll tell you, over the last six years is the most rental starts you've ever seen in this province. You can see cranes everywhere building rental units. Some of the policies we have brought forward have enhanced that, so we now have purpose-built rental here in Toronto and all across the province so people can have a place to call home.

When you look at other things this government has done for workers, the work that has been done over the years is pretty amazing.

I've been able to travel with the minister and his parliamentary assistants when we were at the Ontario Food Terminal throughout COVID, making sure that they had vaccines, to make sure that they were looked after early on in the pandemic. I was actually with the member from Mississauga–Malton and the Minister of Labour at

the time when we did an announcement at the food terminal about the washrooms for women or washrooms for truck drivers when they are on the road.

1750

When you think about it, it's a simple thing to ask: "Can I use the washroom?" And the answer to so many of these drivers was, "No." This is just a common decency that we needed to ensure that we allowed our workers and our drivers to have. People don't realize how many truck drivers come through my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, when we have one of the largest food terminals in North America right here in the middle of our city. We want to make sure that our drivers and our labour market are protected. We want to make sure that they're safe on the roads. We want to make sure they have the tools they need to do those jobs, and we want more.

Anywhere you go, you see ads: "Do you want to drive?" There's a sign on the back of every single truck. Why? Because there's a labour shortage out there. So the more work we do to enhance our policies and to make sure that Ontario is the best place to live, we will attract those people. We'll attract those drivers. We'll attract those people because we need to get our goods and services from A to B. The more we can do with passing this legislation will encourage people to move to Ontario to create some of these jobs.

We talk about the historic labour shortage, with nearly 300,000 jobs going unfilled in December. At the same time, more than 800,000 people rely on social assistance. Some of them are looking for a second chance and others just want to get a fresh start. I was meeting with different people from Community Living, with our New Haven group. They're looking for these jobs so that they can help people who have different abilities get into the market. How do you do that? We have to make sure that we have those jobs available for job seekers, especially those on social assistance, to help them find the better jobs and earn bigger paycheques, because they want to support themselves and maybe one day have a family and support their families as well.

As Ontario is expanding its new employment services to five more regions, such as London, Windsor-Sarnia, Kitchener-Waterloo-Barrie, Durham and Ottawa, we're helping more people move toward meaningful and purpose-driven careers close to home. By the end of 2023, every corner of Ontario will be rolling out these new services so that more people can start in-demand careers they are proud of.

That's the important thing: Everyone deserves to have a job that they're proud of. What helps you get up in the morning? When you're out of the job market, sometimes you're thinking, "Oh, maybe not today." We need to find these people; we need to connect them to the right jobs. That's why you have this credentialing and making sure that people are getting to the jobs that are out there.

Our education minister is doing a great job making sure that our curriculum looks at the jobs of the future to make sure our students are prepared for the future. We have a

job to do here, to make sure that those workers are looked after for the long term.

I want to talk a little bit about our firefighters and the expanded coverage for them. Sometimes when we meet with our firefighters, unfortunately, many have died at a rate of up to four times higher than the general population. On average, 50 to 60 firefighters die of cancer yearly in Canada, and half of those are from Ontario. That's why our government is making it faster and easier for those front-line heroes and their families to access the compensation and support they deserve.

As I mentioned, I was in Thunder Bay not too long ago with the Solicitor General, and we met with all the firefighters and the fire chiefs. They applauded our government's efforts. They thanked the Solicitor General for the work that he has done. They said that they have never seen a government that has been behind our firefighters and done so much work for the safety of our fire-fighters. I applaud the work that this Solicitor General has done and our previous Solicitor General has done under the leadership of Doug Ford, who always has front-line workers at the front of every statement that he ever speaks about.

Claims for the thyroid and pancreatic cancers will be retroactive to January 1, 1960. I know my colleague from Brampton mentioned earlier that date of 1960. The changes would apply to full-time, volunteer and part-time firefighters, firefighters employed by the First Nation band councils, and fire investigators. These regulatory amendments are part of a comprehensive whole-of-government strategy that expands on the ground-breaking actions in the Working for Workers Act in 2021 and 2022. That's already helping millions of people, so I applaud the ministers for this information and this work to help out our first responders, because when we're in need, they're there for us; we need to be there for them.

May I suggest that, if you have some comments on the firefighters, maybe reach out to your local firefighting team, because I have reached out to mine and I have reached out to them across the province. They are very pleased with this change, and they work very closely with us to make sure that we will continue the great work that this government is doing.

As my last topic, I'll just talk about the reservist leave. Of the 40,000 Canadian soldiers deployed in Afghanistan, nearly one in seven developed a mental disorder attributed to the mission. These brave men and women put their lives on hold to protect our freedom. They deserve the peace of mind not only that their job will be protected when they're away, but that time to recover also should be there. So our government is working for workers by introducing new legislation that would guarantee military reservists can return to their civilian jobs after deployment even if they need additional time off to recover from physical and mental injuries.

In addition, Ontario would be among the first in Canada to provide job protection to reservists who respond and deploy to domestic emergencies immediately after starting a new job.

Lastly, our proposed change would make reservists eligible for job protection leave when deploying abroad or upgrading their military skills after just two months, as opposed to the current three. These changes also build on the successes of our Working for Workers Act.

Overall, I just want to applaud the minister, the new minister, the parliamentary assistants for their work and everybody for their comments today and their speeches. This government is going to get it done. We're going to get it done for workers. We're going to get it done for our first-line responders. We're going to get it done for newcomers, because we're going to build houses so people will come to the best province in the world.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The member for Etobicoke–Lake-shore said that we should reach out to first responders. How about my cousin, Captain Craig Bowman, who died from esophageal cancer without being covered under presumptive legislation?

You talk about promises—empty words and promises. The former minister talked to my cousin Craig's widow,

Alisen, and he promised to get this done. He promised that this would be in this legislation—on his deathbed. And so now that Monte is gone, is his empty promise going with him?

Your government is full of empty promises. No one trusts you on any of this. You can talk about it, but it's not in the bill. You do not stand behind first responders, and your words are empty and hollow and everyone knows that.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I do thank the member for her comments, and I'm very sorry for your loss. Any loss is one loss too many, and that is why we need to protect our workers. That's an example of why we need to move forward with legislation that actually protects our workers and makes life better for the future.

So I suggest that you support this bill, you vote yes for this bill, and let's do it for the workers.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): It is now 6 p.m. The House is adjourned until tomorrow at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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