

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 144A

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 144A

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Thursday
11 April 2024

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Jeudi
11 avril 2024

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 11 April 2024 / Jeudi 11 avril 2024

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, Bill 185, Mr. Calandra / Loi de 2024 pour réduire les formalités administratives afin de construire plus de logements, projet de loi 185, M. Calandra

Hon. Paul Calandra	8301
Hon. Rob Flack	8303
Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	8305
Mr. Matthew Rae	8307
MPP Jamie West	8310
Ms. Natalie Pierre	8310
Mr. Joel Harden.....	8310
Mr. Rick Byers.....	8311
Mme France Gélinas	8311
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	8311

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Special Olympics

Ms. Patrice Barnes	8311
--------------------------	------

Ark Aid Street Mission

Mr. Terence Kernaghan	8312
-----------------------------	------

Ontario budget

Mr. John Jordan.....	8312
----------------------	------

Domestic violence

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	8312
--------------------------------------	------

Women as Career Coaches event

Ms. Natalie Pierre	8312
--------------------------	------

Education funding

Mr. Chris Glover	8313
------------------------	------

Scarborough Walk of Fame

Mr. David Smith	8313
-----------------------	------

Homelessness

Mr. Mike Schreiner	8313
--------------------------	------

April Monday Matters event

Mrs. Daisy Wai	8313
----------------------	------

Ontario budget

Mr. Matthew Rae	8314
-----------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	8314
Mme France Gélinas	8314
Mr. Will Bouma	8314

Ms. Jessica Bell.....	8314
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	8314
Mr. Chris Glover	8314
Mr. Graham McGregor	8314
Mr. Logan Kanapathi	8314
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	8314
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	8314

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Indigenous infrastructure funding

Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	8315
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	8315

Housing

Ms. Jessica Bell.....	8315
Hon. Paul Calandra	8315

Domestic violence

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	8316
Hon. Paul Calandra	8316
MPP Jill Andrew	8317

Taxation

Mrs. Robin Martin.....	8317
Hon. Todd Smith.....	8317

Education funding

Mr. Peter Tabuns	8318
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	8318
Ms. Chandra Pasma.....	8318

Taxation

Mr. Lorne Coe.....	8318
Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	8319

Electric vehicles

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	8319
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos	8319
Hon. Todd Smith.....	8320

Éducation en français / French-language education

Mme Lucille Collard	8320
Hon. Stephen Lecce.....	8320

Taxation

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy	8321
Mr. Stephen Crawford.....	8321

Health care funding

Ms. Sandy Shaw	8321
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	8321
Miss Monique Taylor	8321

Taxation

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	8322
Hon. Graydon Smith	8322

Ontario Place	
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	8322
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	8322
Mr. Chris Glover	8323
Taxation	
Ms. Patrice Barnes	8323
Hon. Michael S. Kerzner.....	8323
Health care	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	8324
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	8324
Taxation	
Mr. Rick Byers.....	8324
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	8324
Visitors	
Mr. Sheref Sabawy.....	8324
Mr. Aris Babikian	8325
Hon. Nina Tangri	8325
Ms. Aislinn Clancy	8325
Correction of record	
Mr. John Fraser	8325
Correction of record	
Hon. Paul Calandra	8325

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Amendment Act, 2024, Bill 155, Ms. Thompson / Loi de 2024 modifiant la Loi sur l'Institut de recherche agricole de l'Ontario, projet de loi 155, Mme Thompson	
Third reading agreed to	8325
Business of the House	
Hon. Paul Calandra	8326
Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	8326

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Mr. Chris Glover	8326
------------------------	------

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Government Agencies

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	8326
Report deemed adopted.....	8326

MOTIONS

Committee membership

Hon. Stan Cho	8326
Motion agreed to	8327

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Missing persons

Miss Monique Taylor	8327
---------------------------	------

Social assistance

Mme Lucille Collard	8327
---------------------------	------

Hospital services

Mr. Ric Bresee	8327
----------------------	------

Hospital services

Mr. Chris Glover	8327
------------------------	------

Transgender conversion therapy

Mme Lucille Collard	8327
---------------------------	------

Tenant protection

Mr. Tom Rakocevic.....	8328
------------------------	------

Hospital services

Mr. Wayne Gates	8328
-----------------------	------

Hospital services

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	8328
---------------------------	------

Hospital services

Ms. Peggy Sattler	8328
-------------------------	------

Social assistance

Miss Monique Taylor	8328
---------------------------	------

Hospital services

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	8328
------------------------	------

Social assistance

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	8329
---------------------------	------

Nurses

Miss Monique Taylor	8329
---------------------------	------

Hospital services

Mr. Tom Rakocevic.....	8329
------------------------	------

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 April 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 avril 2024

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

CUTTING RED TAPE TO BUILD
MORE HOMES ACT, 2024
LOI DE 2024 POUR RÉDUIRE
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
AFIN DE CONSTRUIRE PLUS
DE LOGEMENTS

Mr. Calandra moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 185, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 185, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It is a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 185.

At the outset, let me remind you that I'll be sharing the time with the Associate Minister of Housing, the member for Perth–Wellington, and the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

It's a pleasure to rise today as both Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Minister of Red Tape Reduction in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, as you know, we introduced a very comprehensive bill yesterday that not only continues our government's actions to make life more affordable for the people of the province of Ontario and make interacting with government easier for businesses and the people of Ontario, but also helps to unleash housing opportunity across the province of Ontario.

This is another in a series of bills, not only on housing but, equally importantly, on red tape reduction. You know that the government has really been focused on reducing red tape given the fact that, when we came to government back in 2018, we inherited a province that was the most overly regulated province in the country. We have often talked about the challenges that we have faced in encouraging business to set up shop in the province of Ontario, given how over-regulated we are.

One of the hallmarks of red tape reduction is that when you are reducing red tape, it is always meant to make life

easier, yes, but you always want to retain items that make our province safer. And we have continued to do that.

As you look through the bill, Speaker, you'll find a number of housekeeping initiatives that make a very important difference for the institutions that have sought our assistance—there's right-sizing of a number of boards.

Many of the items that the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction have identified have been gladly taken up by our partner ministries in the lead-up to the bill. It really underlines the extraordinary work that is done by the team at the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction and public service, who challenge ministries on a daily basis to ensure that we can make our province easier to do business in and easier for people to work with.

It is important to note that, with this bill—I think it's over one million hours in savings of time for those who interact with government, over \$1.2 billion in savings at the same time. So this is, again, another step on the way of improving how people interact with our businesses and with our government, and will ensure that we continue to make Ontario the best place to live, work and invest.

There are a couple of items in there, of course, for the Ministry of Agriculture, like the Line Fences Act, but also with respect to building infrastructure and moving along quicker with respect to relocation of energy or gas pipes under the ground—obviously, under the ground.

There are a number of really important red tape items there, and I want to just thank the team at the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction for their hard work.

At the same time, there are a lot of targeted initiatives with respect to building housing across the province of Ontario. One of the things that we continuously heard is how important it was to target initiatives that we have done. We have done a lot of things, since coming into office, with respect to making it easier to build all types of homes.

We had a number of housing supply action plans which were geared to removing many of the obstacles that were put in the way by the previous Liberal government. As you know, Speaker, the hallmark of that previous government's time in office was not only red tape, higher costs, but we had some of the lowest housing starts under that government. Purpose-built rentals certainly didn't exist. Rental construction didn't exist, frankly.

We certainly weren't building long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario. In fact, the previous Liberal government don't even consider long-term-care homes as homes. They'd rather consider them as institutions, and that's not something that we do. I'm pleased that our colleagues in the official opposition agree with us that a long-term-care home is a home.

So there are a number of initiatives that we have done leading up to this, but the focus on this one really was—and one of the reasons why we're introducing it, through the co-operation and the support of our colleagues at the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, is because we have heard from our municipal partners that all of the things we have done till now have helped us have some of the highest new home starts in the province's history, the highest purpose-built housing starts in the province's reported history, but more targeted measures needed to be taken, given the fact that the high inflation, high interest rate policies of the federal government are certainly having a very negative impact on our ability to get new homes built and to get new home construction under way, and also to give first-time homebuyers the opportunity to buy into the market. So that is what we have brought forward.

Within this bill, you will see initiatives with respect to student housing. We are exempting universities from the Planning Act—as-of-right for student dormitories and student housing. We know, of course, how important it is to build more housing for our students, especially in light of the fact that the federal government has made unilateral cuts to post-secondary education, without consultation with provinces. So we are moving quickly to address that.

We have the University of Toronto, which has been trying for 10 years to build a student dorm, without success. This bill, if supported by the House, will unleash that opportunity for them and get shovels in the ground much faster.

The bill also improves on the efforts that we're doing with respect to infrastructure. As you know, in the lead-up to the bill, we announced one of the largest infrastructure programs in the history of the province: over \$1.8 billion to build sewer and water capacity in all parts of the province; roads and bridges. At the same time, we have one of the largest capital construction projects with respect to schools, the continuing building out of long-term care and hospitals in different parts of the province, and the road construction that we're doing in different parts of the province. What we're doing is building communities. This bill helps unleash that.

0910

We heard from our municipal partners also, in particular, of the need to give them the ability to—given the challenges that we have on infrastructure, given the massive infrastructure deficit that we have inherited from the previous Liberal government, that they needed better tools to allow them to use their water and infrastructure. Often, homes that had been approved sat idle, and water and sewer allocation was captured by an approved development where a shovel was not put in the ground. So we are giving all municipalities legislated approval to reallocate that sewer and water to projects that are good to go, that are ready to go. We heard that from our municipal partners across the board. We're doing that so that we can get shovels in the ground. It's estimated that there are close to 60,000 to 70,000 units that have been held up because of this, so this will unleash that opportunity.

We are making changes to the Ontario Land Tribunal—in particular, we are removing the right of third-party

appeals to the tribunals. Similarly, we heard from home builders and we heard from our municipal partners that delays at the Ontario Land Tribunal were holding back thousands of homes—in between 70,000 to 80,000 units which could come online almost immediately. So we are making that change.

At the same time, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Red Tape Reduction will be chairing something that I'm quite excited about: an expert panel—and she may speak about it more in her remarks—that will look at harmonization of planning processes across our fastest-growing regions. We've heard this time and time and time again, whether it's from plumbers, electricians, architects, engineers: that setbacks in one community are one thing—a setback in Stouffville, a planning process in Stouffville is one thing; five metres across the street in Markham, it is a completely different process, and in Richmond Hill, it's different, and so on and so forth. So we are convening an expert panel which will include municipal partners but will include stakeholders, from engineers, from architects and those who have to interact with our municipal partners on a daily basis, to harmonize those regulations so that we can also get shovels in the ground faster.

The bill also will ensure that as of June 1, we will update the bulletin so that our definition on affordable housing, which, again, was unanimously supported by this House—and I thank colleagues on all sides for that. It's a definition that takes into consideration the unique aspects of communities across the province. As of June 1, that will be fully proclaimed. It also indicates that on July 1, three lower-tier municipalities, Halton, York and Peel, will be completely dissolved. Their planning will be dissolved to the lower tiers. And we anticipate having the entire province devolve to lower-tier planning by the end of this year—again, very, very targeted measures to get things built faster.

We also heard from a lot of stakeholders that the outdated planning or parking regulations and rules surrounding minimum parking around our major transit station areas is something that had to be revised. The costs of these outdated and old regulations, which in many cases date back to the 1970s, could be upwards of \$100,000 per unit. We are eliminating those parking minimums around those major transit station areas, not only in Toronto, where we're making \$30 billion worth of investments in transit and transportation, but in much of the GTHA, where you're having expansions on the GO train network as well as subways—but not just in the GTHA. In communities across the province, they are investing in transit, in bigger transit options, and they have asked us to do this. I think it makes perfect sense. It will help unleash lots of housing and more affordable housing at the same time.

This bill targets our initiatives at things that can help get shovels in the ground faster. I know my colleagues—both my parliamentary assistant at red tape reduction and the Associate Minister of Housing, as well as my parliamentary assistant for municipal affairs and hous-

ing—will expand further on some of those initiatives. As I said, going forward, we intend to utilize as effectively as possible the work that the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction has done across government to help us unleash and unblock some of the challenges that we are facing in housing. They have done tremendous work on a number of other files, and we know now that they can help us on this file, as well.

I also want to touch quickly on some of the modifications of the Development Charges Act. Our partners, both municipally and in the building sector, have said you have to focus on infrastructure—sewer and water, sewer and water, sewer and water. It is the difference between building hundreds of homes and millions of homes, frankly, across the province of Ontario. It's something that we have been asking the federal government to focus on since I was appointed to this ministry. I'm pleased that the federal government has also finally recognized the need to build infrastructure capacity. But the development charges changes that we made reflect the changes in our economic environment over the last number of years with respect to high inflation and the rapidly increasing costs. So it's focused on sewer and water and getting that infrastructure in the ground. We still do, however, tie a freeze in development charges—an 18-month freeze in those charges. It used to be a 24-month freeze; it is now an 18-month freeze. The reason we have done that is, again, to encourage our home builders to get shovels in the ground as soon as possible.

It is a large, large bill with many different facets, but it is a very targeted approach. It is an approach that is framed on the things that we've heard from our municipal partners.

At the same time—I'll just close with this before we move on to other speakers—yesterday, we also released a provincial planning statement which has to be looked at in co-operation with the bill that we've put forward here. It is a document which highlights the importance and makes it easier to build along our major transit corridors, and in co-operation with these two documents and some of the changes that we're making, will help us meet our goal of building 1.5 million homes, if not more.

So I'm very excited by this, and I hope that all members will join us in supporting this bill when it comes back for third reading.

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

Hon. Rob Flack: It's an honour to speak to the initiatives in our government's proposed Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act.

I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Red Tape Reduction for his remarks this morning, and also for his tireless work to create an environment in Ontario where the dream of home ownership will not just be a dream but, ultimately, a reality for all.

I'd also like to thank the parliamentary assistants, the member from Perth—Wellington and the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore, who will be speaking to the bill shortly. It's great to see them here.

As the Associate Minister of Housing, I naturally want to focus on the initiatives in this bill that relate to housing, and I want to break my time into two components: reviewing the performance of our government to date on the housing front, including both the challenges and opportunities we face in this province; and secondly, how Bill 185, the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, creates more pathways, better pathways, for more homes to be built faster in Ontario.

I think we all know the population of this province has more than doubled in the last 40 years. In my opinion, we don't have a housing supply crisis; we have a supply crisis—period—and we need to keep up with the population growth by getting more homes built. We have a lot of opportunities to do that.

Innovation is key, and we'll talk about that today, but we need solutions-based results. We're going to break it down in this bill. That's why I think this bill, again, offers some pathways to better performance and better results to get homes built faster in Ontario, and we'll talk about those today, but I think before we do, we have to put the bill in context of what has happened already with our government on the housing front up to this point.

Let me begin with what we've accomplished. I'll keep reiterating that provinces, municipal governments and federal governments don't build houses; community home builders do. Our job is to create the environment for those people to succeed. The challenges we face require an all-of-government approach to work together so that we can create the conditions that enable community builders to get the job done.

0920

Over the last month, I've had the honour of presenting funds from the Building Faster Fund to municipalities that met or exceeded their targets, whether it was in Chatham-Kent, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Caledon, Brantford—lots of unique communities throughout the province, not just large cities. We've had an interesting experience. I've learned a lot, and I'll conclude on that point at the end of my remarks.

As I've travelled the province over the last six months, I've learned a lot about this file. I want to talk specifically about the ROMA conference in January—the Rural Ontario Municipal Association. I'm going to use one word, and it's going to be “infrastructure.” People have heard me say this as I've travelled the province: Wherever I went, the word “infrastructure” was key in everybody's presentations. Through the speed-dating events we had at ROMA and AMO with municipalities, I think the word “infrastructure” was first and foremost in everything I listened to, every delegation I was part of.

Whether it's in my own riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, whether it's in the Ottawa Valley, northern Ontario, the GTHA, or all parts of southwestern Ontario, infrastructure is key.

And when I look at the 2024 budget that has been presented and is still being debated, I would say, in my humble opinion, this is an infrastructure budget. This government has listened, learned and has now acted to

make sure that we create the environment to get infrastructure in the ground that's housing-enabling infrastructure, again, to get more homes built faster.

We made historic investments that include the \$1-billion Municipal Housing Infrastructure Program that was presented in the budget. We introduced the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund, which was quadrupled to \$825 million. This is in addition to the \$1.2 billion in the Building Faster Fund. So over \$3 billion has been targeted towards building housing-enabling infrastructure.

Speaker, creating the conditions for gentle density in Ontario is key, and building up and building in is important. You are now permitted, in this province, to build up to three residential units as-of-right on most residential lots without needing a bylaw amended in your municipality.

I want to make this point clearly: Every municipality in Ontario is unique; with 444, plus the north, there are a lot of different needs, and they're all unique. That is why each of them can determine their own paths and make their own individual choices about density in their communities. The province is a partner with our municipalities, not an overseer, as some might suggest or try to dictate.

The results speak for themselves. I would note that, in the last three years, there have been more housing starts than there have been since the 1980s. Over the last 10 years of our former government, the Liberals averaged just under 68,000 starts per year. Since our government was elected in 2018, we've averaged 87,000 starts. That's an increase of almost 20,000 starts per year. But we know that more is yet to be done, and that is why we've introduced Bill 185, the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act.

Our government has also set the groundwork for building more rental housing. This is key. We have lowered development charges, and we worked with our federal counterparts on removing the HST on new purpose-built rental construction, and we've seen success—again, up 19,000 starts last year over 2022, or a 27% increase. I am very impressed with those results. In fact, after just over five and a half years in office, Ontario has more purpose-built rental starts under our government than it did in the 15 years the Liberals were in office.

So, again, we're on a clear path to success, but I'll keep reiterating, more is yet to be done. These facts clearly show that our government's actions are working when it comes to building more homes and market housing across the province. And Ontarians recognize we have more to do.

Again, we've talked about listening, learning and acting. We had a housing supply forum back in November 2023, and we had all the stakeholders there, everyone who was involved in the housing continuum. I want to thank them. Their input into this bill has been very important, especially those on the HSAPIT committee—the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team; it's a unique acronym—led by Mayor Drew Dilkens from Windsor. They have a wealth of knowledge, great experience. We appreciate their input, and we see the results of that input in this bill today.

Now I would like to talk about how this proposed bill is going to focus our efforts in getting more houses built faster.

Student housing: I want to hit on not all initiatives, but some of the key initiatives I think are important. First, let's consider some of the proposals for student housing.

I'll tell a quick story. I have a neighbour down the road whose son was going to the University of Guelph. I went to the University of Guelph, and I remember it was easy for me to get into a residence my first year. Housing was—you just didn't even think that it was an issue. This poor guy had trouble finding anywhere to live in Guelph—anywhere. Residences were full. Basement apartments were not available. Finally, after about two or three months, he found a spot to hang his hat and lay his head every night. It's wrong.

That is why in this act we're proposing, we will remove barriers faced by universities when building student housing, that will accelerate approval times for those institutions. The change would enable universities to build faster and better and meet the needs of their student population. This would also ensure that students have access to and are aware of student housing options that are safe, affordable and within an easy commute to campus. Importantly, it's also better for local communities because it frees up housing, creating more supply, which, again, at the end, is the bane of the housing crisis in this province.

Speaker, the building code—I know it's not exciting, but when you think about building codes, I've learned a lot, and I would like to highlight some of our measures that would build homes faster, and at a lower cost.

The building code is being updated. We've also recently completed building consultations on advanced wood construction, like mass timber or encapsulated mass timber, which I think is an important part of our housing supply issue. Although the code is not part of the proposed legislation, its focus on increasing housing supply, innovation and supporting public safety are completely aligned with the goals of this bill.

The building code allows buildings using encapsulated mass timber construction to be up to 12 storeys tall, now moving to 18 storeys—which I think, again, supports going in and going up. The use of mass timber would provide the home building sector with a great opportunity to build innovative new housing. It's a great opportunity to lower our carbon footprint, and it will be a great boost to our northern economy in this province.

We also have Ontario's Forest Sector Strategy, which offers significant opportunity to shift housing construction off-site and into factories—like modular homes. This would support even more efficient and rapid construction processes, using renewable forestry resources grown and harvested right here in Ontario, by Ontario workers and for Ontario families. Our province is blessed with abundant natural, renewable resources and a highly skilled forestry sector, so let's put these magnificent assets to work.

Improving consultation and providing municipalities with greater certainty to get homes built faster is key, and this is a part of the bill I really, really like. When home

builders start a project, they may be obligated to provide financial assurance to put infrastructure in the ground to support the homes they will be building—infrastructure such as sidewalks. This financial assurance is commonly provided through a letter of credit or cash. We will be consulting on a potential regulation that would enable landowners to specify the instruments municipalities may use to secure obligations that are municipal conditions of land use planning approvals. I know it's a lot of words. You can think about it. It may not be exciting, but this is key. This will include pay-on-demand surety bonds.

Speaker, wider acceptance of surety bonds by municipalities could help free up money, free up cash, free up capital for home builders so they can pursue additional home building. It would also make some projects, which currently can't obtain financing, more viable. So, again, it's another tool in our tool box to allow us to get more homes built faster, more shovels in the ground in a better way.

These targeted changes will have a far-reaching impact on increasing our housing supply.

As you see, Speaker, our government has been working hard to help get shovels in the ground faster and lower the costs of building new homes, and the red tape reduction part of this bill is going to be key. I know the parliamentary assistant to red tape reduction will be speaking about that shortly and will do so very eloquently. A lot has been done. A lot needs to be done.

0930

Let me just finish with a story or two that I think complements what we're trying to accomplish on this side of the House with respect to getting more homes built faster.

I was amazed, as I've travelled the province, met at ROMA, met with the mayors, met with those that received cheques from the Building Faster Fund, those that earned the funds based on meeting or exceeding minimal targets of 80% of their housing target—again, communities over 50,000. Every one of them was so appreciative, because that money is going to be invested into water, waste water, roads—whatever infrastructure they need. It's key. It's important to get things done.

What I found interesting as well is, in the last month, I've had many members come to me and, as I travelled the province, many municipalities talked to me, phoned me and said, "I don't think the numbers were right. Can you go back and check the records? Can you go back and see? Because I really think we qualified for some funding in the BFF." And of course, we did our due diligence and took a look at it effectively. We have a standard across the province; CMHC does the adjudication.

The point is—it reminds me of my business days—that when you incent people effectively, properly, with the right tools, they listen and they watch; they're measured, and they want to be accountable. What I found exciting was that in the whole process of handing out these cheques, people want to earn these funds.

We didn't hand out our proportion of the \$1.2 million—all of it—this year, but it's important to note that what's left over, what municipalities didn't earn, they can apply

for to get some of those infrastructure dollars, again, for waste water, water, roads, whatever it may be, to support infrastructure in this province. It is the one constraint we have in Ontario to get more homes built faster—it is the biggest constraint we have, bar none.

I'm excited to go back and talk about the budget, the "infrastructure budget," as I call it—the \$1 billion added for infrastructure, the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund, \$825 million; and the Building Faster Fund, over the next two-point-odd years as we move forward.

Speaker, everyone deserves a roof over their head. It is crucial for everyone, wherever you are in the housing continuum, whether it's affordable, whether it's attainable—and we'll talk about that in a minute—or market-based housing. One of the things I've been tasked with is to look at the whole attainable portion of housing, whether it's modular housing or factory-built housing, and I'm pretty excited about the opportunities that we have there.

People often say, "Define 'attainable'"—well, we can do like we did with "affordable," and we will define it based on community. What "attainable" means in northern Ontario versus, say, Kenora, versus London, versus Hamilton, versus Toronto, versus Brockville, versus Renfrew—it's different everywhere. But I see it simply as, "attainable" means you do not qualify for affordable housing because you make too much money, but you don't qualify for a mortgage because either you don't have enough of a downstroke or down payment to qualify, or you can't cash-flow the mortgage rates.

We would put a call out to the federal government to continue to advocate for getting these interest rates lower, to take a look at the indexing of interest rates that CMHC has put on—maybe taking a look at reducing that. But ultimately, we need to repurpose some surplus lands we have in this province, surplus lands municipalities have, and look at new and innovative ways to get shovels in the ground faster so everyone can get a roof over their head.

We're not just talking about first-time homebuyers; that's important. We're also talking about seniors who want to downsize. In my own community of Dorchester, I can tell you there are a lot of people who would like to downsize to a smaller home. I think my wife and I would be on that list; we don't need the house we have. But to find a smaller home at the right value—that inventory doesn't exist.

Again, if we can create the environment—like this bill supports and concludes—I think we can see those results in the coming weeks, months and years ahead.

Speaker, I will conclude here. Thank you for your time. I yield the floor to my honourable friend from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Further debate? I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Red Tape Reduction and the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's nice to see you in the chair today.

I'm happy to join in this debate. And it is an honour for me to take on the role of parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Red Tape Reduction.

I want to thank both the minister and the associate minister for their remarks this morning.

Red tape is extremely important to all of us—business owners, corporations, individuals. We want to make sure we create the best environment so people will create jobs here in Ontario and make Ontario the best place around the world to live, raise a family and create a business.

It's my pleasure to share some of the non-housing items in our spring red tape reduction package and how they're going to make a real impact on the lives of people across Ontario. But first, I'd like to start off with a quick reminder of why this work is so important.

Speaker, we know that red tape causes frustration, expenses, needless delays and complications for everyone—people, businesses, not-for-profits, municipalities, and the broader public sector. Regulatory burdens are a barrier to the province's productivity, innovation, economic competitiveness, and development, and the costs of failing to act are high.

That is why, since 2018, it has been our government's mission to make life better for the people and businesses of Ontario by putting forward burden-reduction initiatives to save them time and money and to improve government services. We know that more common-sense changes are needed, and they're needed now. That's why we're focusing on reducing red tape and creating the conditions to help people and businesses thrive. We're doing this while maintaining and strengthening the important rules and regulations that keep people safe and healthy and protect the environment, and we're doing this all while modernizing or getting rid of the rules and regulations that no longer serve their purpose, are unnecessarily costly, or are simply out of date.

Speaker, when we formed government in 2018, we inherited the most heavily regulated province in the country. Businesses were packing up and leaving, and they were taking with them the innovation and talent that this province needs to thrive. We knew that things had to change, and they needed to change right away, and we set out to make this happen.

We have taken over 500 actions to cut red tape for the people and businesses across all ministries. We have reduced the number of regulatory compliance requirements affecting businesses and other regulated entities by approximately 6%. And we've passed 11 high-impact pieces of red tape reduction legislation, so far, introducing packages once each spring and once each fall; today, we are debating our 12th.

Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. Along with the measures we're proposing today, we're saving people, businesses, and the broader public sector over \$1.2 billion and 1.5 million hours every single year. That's time and money that can go back into families, businesses and communities, where it should be.

We are grateful for the ideas shared by stakeholders, people across this province, and our ministry partners who have worked tirelessly to streamline processes and modernize outdated practices across government. In fact, my colleagues and I wouldn't be standing here today with

this bill in our hands without the assistance of my colleagues and their staff who put red tape reduction at the centre of everything they do.

To everyone who has played a part in making this latest red tape reduction package possible, I want to say thank you.

Our latest package, which includes the proposed Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, also includes proposals for initiatives that improve all aspects of life and business, such as:

- providing Ontarians with better access to health care, by making it faster and easier for internationally educated health professionals to start working in Ontario;

- automatically validating vehicle permits for owners in good standing, to save them time and money;

- reducing delays and costs for utility relocation projects to build roads and transit faster;

- attracting municipal investment by streamlining incentives to enable future investments by large-scale investors and create jobs; and

- setting service standards for permits and licence services delivered to businesses, while creating a single window for businesses and entrepreneurs to track the status of their applications.

0940

Madam Speaker, when I talk about reducing red tape, know that our government acknowledges the importance of having robust rules and regulations in place. They help protect public health, safety and the environment. They keep our children safe when they're at school. They protect workers so they can come home to their families each and every day. And they ensure our environmental protections remain among the best and the strongest in the world.

Our goal with the burden reduction initiatives we're putting forward today is to ensure that we no longer rely on rules and regulations that are burdensome, inefficient or outdated, and that the ones we do rely on are current and enforced properly, predictably and consistently.

That's why every time the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction considers a new idea for a red tape reduction package, we draw on the seven guiding principles that consistently direct our efforts to reduce red tape, as enshrined in the Modernizing Ontario for People and Businesses Act.

The first principle is aligning standards, when possible, because it reduces the time and cost required to adhere to certain regulations. A good example of this is the proposed amendments to the Line Fences Act from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, which would align it with the Municipal Act, 2001, and the City of Toronto Act, 2006. The Line Fences Act—and as we're government, we always have to have an acronym; it's called the LFA—is one of the oldest pieces of Ontario legislation and has legislative and operational parameters that are outdated and that could be modernized. Aligning this act with the Municipal Act and enabling the digitization of certain processes will save municipalities that use the LFA time and money.

The second principle is that small businesses should have less onerous compliance requirements when compared to larger businesses. The Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks will be consulting with stakeholders on updates to Ontario's producer responsibility framework, which makes producers responsible for collecting and recycling their products and packaging at end of life. The ministry is considering changes to the regulations to reduce red tape for producers and allow them and their service providers to comply with regulatory requirements more easily. These changes would reduce burden, increase flexibility, and provide better ways to oversee the market.

The third principle is that any entity subject to regulations should be provided accessible digital service whenever possible. In 2024, we shouldn't be asking people or businesses to fax things or fill out long paper forms—and I just ran into that when I was trying to change the name of my home with the city of Toronto. You had to mail it or you had to fax it, and I couldn't find a fax machine. Some updated rules really do save some time. The Ministry of the Solicitor General's proposal to amend the Coroners Act to enable efficient, effective and representative jury selection is a perfect example of this streamlining. The changes would require the Ministry of the Attorney General to provide additional information—including phone numbers, email addresses and language preference—from the jury roll to help reduce the time and effort by the coroner when selecting prospective jurors. This change would not only improve communications with prospective jurors, but it would also ensure that the Office of the Chief Coroner is able to conduct inquests efficiently and effectively.

The fourth principle is that regulated entities—like businesses, services, and broader public sector organizations—that demonstrate excellence and compliance should be recognized. For example, the Ministry of Transportation's proposal for automated vehicle permit validation is a great example of this. In the spring 2022 red tape reduction package, the government eliminated licence plate renewal fees for passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds, saving vehicle owners \$120 per vehicle per year in southern Ontario and \$60 a year in northern Ontario. This is money in people's pockets. Building off this initiative, we are proposing changes to the Highway Traffic Act that would allow for a transition to automated renewal of licence plates for drivers in good standing. This saves people time.

The fifth principle is that unnecessary reporting should be reduced and steps should be taken to avoid requiring regulated entities to provide the same information to government repeatedly. Nothing—and I'm sure we all hear this—is more frustrating than filling out the same form over and over again and having to repeat the same story multiple times to multiple ministries at different levels of government. We need to do better, and we are. Consider the Ministry of Energy's proposed amendments to the Ontario Energy Board Act. For construction projects that require the relocation or reconstruction of a hydro-

carbon pipeline, we're proposing that if the pipeline is the same size or smaller and does not require new land, then the government would provide an exemption from leave to construct. This means that the number of projects required to undergo a leave-to-construct proceeding at the Ontario Energy Board will be reduced, saving people time and money.

The sixth principle is that instruments should focus on the user by using clear communication, setting reasonable response times, and establishing a single point of contact. That just makes common sense. This is straightforward. People and businesses should be able to understand the requirements imposed on them by government. That's why the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery is proposing a regulation to develop service standards for permits and licence services delivered to businesses. And we're creating a single-window approach for businesses and entrepreneurs to access information about required permits, as well as track the status of their applications. Again, this just makes sense.

The seventh principle is that a regulatory instrument should specify the desired result that regulated entities must meet, rather than the specific methods used to attain the result. Good outcomes are what we are concerned about, and we recognize that there are many ways to get the same outcome. A great example of this is through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's proposal to amend the Municipal Act, 2001, and the City of Toronto Act, 2006, that would allow the province to more quickly enable municipal incentives so that our communities can attract new investments and create new jobs.

Speaker, these are just a few examples of the initiatives in the proposed Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024, and in our broader spring 2024 red tape reduction package.

As I've said before, we are incredibly grateful for the ideas that we have received from stakeholders and people across the province, and from our ministry partners. Their efforts are helping to streamline processes and modernize outdated practices across multiple areas of government. We encourage people and businesses to continue to reach out, to share their comments and their best ideas to reduce red tape through Ontario's dedicated red tape reduction portal on ontario.ca.

I look forward to working with this ministry as we continue to do the great work.

I'm now going to pass it off to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Housing to conclude our remarks today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's wonderful to rise this morning to talk about our most recent red tape bill and ensuring that we get more homes built across Ontario. I hear often in my riding that we need to do more to help the people of Ontario have a home that meets their needs and their budget, and I want to present some of the details about these various themes in our proposed bill, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, as well as some targeted housing measures in that piece of legislation.

To begin, I'd like to touch on some additional aspects of this bill and supporting initiatives that address our goal of building homes faster at a lower cost.

Our government continually seeks ways to help reduce the cost of building new homes, whether it's through the most recent legislation the Minister of Energy has brought forward or whether it's ensuring that we are proposing building code amendments that ensure costs remain low for our builders, ensuring that they continue to build the homes we need.

That's why we're proposing to remove requirements to have at least a minimum number of parking spaces for developments in certain areas near most major transit stations.

0950

The proposed changes to the Planning Act would apply to the lands, buildings or structures that are located within certain areas near transit called protected major transit station areas. It would also apply to areas where municipalities choose to accommodate more housing around subway, rail or bus rapid transit stations, which is what we mean when we talk about higher-order density.

Instead of mandating minimum parking requirements, our proposal would let homebuyers and home builders decide for themselves, based on the market needs, the number of parking spaces for new residential development near transit. I think this is a very important proposal, a very good proposal, from a Progressive Conservative government—letting the market decide how many parking spaces would be needed around a major transit area.

Importantly, this proposal, if passed, could remove construction costs of between \$2,000 and \$100,000 per parking space per project, helping to make more projects viable.

I know we are in very challenging economic circumstances with the high interest rates, and I was discouraged to see the Bank of Canada not choose to cut interest rates yesterday. Our Premier continues to call on the Prime Minister to do more to lower interest rates as soon as possible.

We will continue to take action to ensure that we reduce the costs of building homes and apartments near transit, and this initiative, if passed, would do just that. Under existing requirements in some municipalities, this could save \$50 million for a 500-unit development and make it cheaper to build and purchase new homes near transit. It will also make transit more accessible for the people of Ontario.

In keeping with the same theme, we're also proposing changes to the Planning Act that, if passed, would help eliminate barriers to building additional residential units. We would do this by providing authority for regulations related to ADUs. Our proposed regulation-making authority would support the creation of additional residential units such as garden, laneway or basement suites. The importance of these additional suites cannot be overstated. Even in rural Ontario, which I have the honour of representing in this place, these additional residential units are a way for our seniors to downsize. I know a common

term is “over-housed individuals”—who may live in a larger house but have nowhere to downsize within their community. Having these additional residential units gives them that option to remain in the community that they helped build, be close to their children and grandchildren potentially, and to enjoy their golden years. These basement suites, laneway suites and garden suites are just ensuring that we have those options for a variety of housing that our government continues to support being built across Ontario. We will enable future regulations that can eliminate municipal barriers such as maximum lot coverage and limits on the number of bedrooms allowed per lot.

I have the privilege of serving on the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, and we were travelling recently across Ontario for regional governance review and that study. We heard very often from our municipal partners on a use-it-or-lose-it policy. I'm pleased to see our government bring forward this aspect in this bill before this place right now. It is important to prioritize the infrastructure for ready-to-go housing projects, and that's what this use-it-or-lose-it policy will do.

We have heard many times from our municipal partners, as I mentioned, that stalled development and unused service capacity can be a barrier to meeting provincial housing targets. For example, seven municipalities have reported that over 70,000 housing units with planning approval have remained inactive for at least two years. For that reason, we're proposing a use-it-or-lose-it process. This process will help address stalled developments and support efficient allocation of housing-enabling infrastructure, such as water and sewage servicing capacity.

If passed, our proposed changes to the Planning Act, Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act would enable municipalities to adopt policies setting out how sewage and water servicing capacity can be allocated or reallocated to developments that are ready to proceed. This will result in fewer barriers and fewer delays prior to construction—or put another way, this will get shovels in the ground faster.

I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing spoke earlier. We meet often with AMO and ROMA as well as many other municipal associations in Ontario, and they have stressed the feedback to us around addressing stalled development.

Consulting with our municipal partners was very important with this legislation, and so we are enabling municipalities to better use existing revenue tools to pay for the development of housing-enabling infrastructure and other needs. We would do this through our proposal to eliminate the five-year phase-in of development charge rates.

Speaker, let me remind you that development charges are fees that municipalities can apply to a new development or redevelopment to help pay for the capital costs of infrastructure that may support this new growth.

Our proposal to eliminate the five-year phase-in would apply to development charge bylaws passed on or after

January 1, 2022. For municipalities that have to amend their development charge bylaws to remove the phase-in, we are proposing that they be able to do so using a streamlined approach.

What's more, this June 1, Ontario will bring into force exemptions and discounts on municipal development charges for affordable residential units. I think we can all agree in this place that it is important that we do not levy development charges on non-profit—the good work that Habitat for Humanity does. They were here a few weeks ago in Queen's Park, meeting with a variety of members, and they told us time and time again, "Thank you for removing the development charges on Habitat for Humanity homes." That is helping them get more homes built for those who need it in our communities, and I know our non-profit sector appreciates that—in ensuring that our affordable residential units do not have those charges levied on them. This would provide incentives to build more affordable housing across the province.

Speaker, obviously, this bill looks at amending the Planning Act, a document that I have the pleasure of reading often. I'm not sure if my colleagues in this place read it as much as myself and the minister and the associate minister. This time, we're proposing to amend the Planning Act under the theme of improving consultation and providing municipalities and builders with greater certainty to get homes built faster. This proposed change would streamline certain third-party appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal to help communities get quicker planning approvals for housing projects. This would help reduce building costs and, in some cases, reduce project delays by up to 18 months. That could mean getting shovels in the ground a full year and a half earlier, meaning people and families will move in even sooner to new homes, faster. To put that into perspective, between 2021 and 2023, approximately 67,000 housing units were subject to third-party appeals of official plans and rezoning. This simply cannot continue.

We're proposing further changes to the Planning Act, and these would allow appeals when a municipality refuses an application or simply does not make a decision within the statutory timeline or a settlement boundary change that would accommodate future growth outside of the greenbelt.

We know that times change, and along with that, so have the methods for consulting on and communicating land use planning changes. That's why we're proposing a regulatory change to enhance public engagement on new planning applications and other Planning Act matters. We would do this by modernizing public notice requirements to enable municipalities to give notice on their website if there is no local newspaper available. Unfortunately, in many rural communities, there are no local papers still present. So this provides an opportunity for our rural municipalities, in particular, to have those public consultations on their website or through a newsletter they may mail out with their property tax statements, for example, giving them that flexibility to be even more accessible to the residents they serve.

Similar regulatory changes are proposed under the Development Charges Act. If our bill is passed, we will work with our municipal partners to develop best practices for modernizing public engagement and consultation. This could include expanding our reach to include multilingual notices. Ontario is a very large province, a very diverse province, which is wonderful, to see the variety of cultures represented in Ontario—but ensuring that our consultation process and our municipal consultation process around development is accessible to all. I look forward to having those consultations with our municipal partners as we move forward.

1000

Our fourth and final theme is related to building more types of homes for more people. Under this theme, our proposal is to get shovels in the ground faster for priority projects. Under the Planning Act, municipalities can make decisions that determine the future of their communities. This includes making decisions on official plans, zoning bylaws, plans of subdivision, and site plan control.

We know a new development may require many municipal planning approvals before construction begins. Unfortunately, some Ontario priority projects have encountered delays when navigating the planning approval process. To solve this, we will consult on a new expedited approval process for community service facilities. We'll be starting that with, for example, K-to-12 public schools, potentially extending in phases to long-term-care facilities and hospitals.

I know our government has put forward an ambitious infrastructure plan, which was announced in the budget a few short weeks ago—whether it was the over \$1.8 million in housing-enabling infrastructure; whether it's the Building Faster Fund that we announced last year at AMO, \$1.2 billion; whether it's the doubling of our capital budget for our schools, which I know was very well received across Ontario. We have many growing communities. I know this government is committed to ensuring that we build complete communities with schools, child care, hospitals, and ensuring that those planning approvals get done as quickly as possible, ensuring that those processes are seamless. That is what our goal is through these consultations—to ensure these priority projects are moving forward.

Speaker, we're also moving forward with our consultations around the PPS, or the provincial planning statement, ensuring that we are putting forward a provincial planning statement that will get more homes built faster and sets out the rules for, obviously, land use planning in Ontario.

I know this is a very ambitious piece of legislation—ensuring that we work with our municipal partners who we heavily consulted with and with our home builders and our other community builders across Ontario; ensuring that we build the homes that Ontarians need, whether it's the home for a grandma and grandpa, or whether it's a home for a new family or a new Canadian to our shores. It's ensuring that we have those places for those individuals too—it's not just a building; it's a place that they can build a

community, they can raise their family, they can enjoy those golden years. That is what our government is focused on—ensuring every Ontarian has the opportunity and the ability to achieve home ownership and an affordable place to rent.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It is now time for questions.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the minister and his parliamentary assistants for speaking about this bill.

There are lots of conversation about homes recently—and I was reminded yesterday of the motion about intimate partner violence. We had nearly 200 advocates here. One of the things that we heard very clearly from them was that one of the reasons that people can't escape violence at home is because of the affordability of housing, and rental housing, in particular.

It has been almost six years of the Conservative government being here. During that time, it has never been more expensive to rent in Ontario. I didn't hear anything about rent in here. I think this is something we need to address, not just for students, not just for everyday people renting—but people fleeing violence deeply, deeply need that deeply affordable rental housing. Could the minister comment on that?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's a very good question. It's twofold.

We've been removing obstacles so that we can get more purpose-built rental housing built in the province of Ontario. We have done some excellent work on that. We have the highest level of purpose-built rentals.

The definition of affordable housing, which is something that we all agreed upon in this House—implementation of that. As of June 1, we'll remove development charges across all of that sector. That is also good work.

We are also in the process of, hopefully, being able to conclude an agreement with the federal government with respect to the National Housing Strategy. As the member knows, Ontario has done some really, really good work on that. We remain committed to funding Ontario's portion of the National Housing Strategy, which identifies homes for victims of intimate partner violence. We will continue funding that program.

Ultimately, we're trying to remove the obstacles that will get more types of homes built across all sectors, because the number one challenge is that not enough homes are being built. High interest rates are a challenge on that as well. This bill is targeted to get more shovels in the ground.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I speak to many parents of university students who tell me that their children have made the decision to live at home and commute an hour each way due to the increased cost of renting.

In my riding of Burlington, we're fortunate; students are able to attend the world-class colleges and universities in the city of Toronto, Hamilton, Oakville, Guelph, St. Catharines.

Can the member please inform both the students and the parents in my riding what our government is doing to help through this piece of red tape legislation?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you to the member for the question.

This has been a growing problem across Ontario and, frankly, across Canada. As I mentioned in my speech, the federal government made some unilateral cuts to post-secondary education which facilitated the need to build more homes, student dormitories, very, very quickly in all parts of the country.

We are one of the first provinces to move to as-of-right student dormitories, student housing on our university campuses—I would say long overdue. We have instances where universities have been waiting—in the University of Toronto's instance—10 years to build a student dorm. That's too long. Every dorm that we build is another home that is available in the community. Our campuses across Ontario will benefit from this. Frankly, if I'm being honest, I hope that across Canada, all provinces will do the same thing. I suspect we will be leaders nationally on this, as well.

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

Mr. Joel Harden: A question for the minister responsible—one of the things that I know he cares about, from previous discussions we've had about the need to speed up housing, is what happens sometimes when processes aren't quite right. The minister intervened when the urban boundary expansion impacting my city of Ottawa led to some very questionable decisions with respect to how developments took place. To his credit, he took action on that front. But it disturbs me this morning, as we debate Bill 185, to read some advocates in the sector worried that this could repeat. There could be the repetition of, according to Environmental Defence, more "greenfield scandals" if we don't ensure proper protections are in place that make sure that further development isn't only sprawl development of single homes stretched onto wider terrains.

The government knows that everybody in this House wants housing to be built. We're here to collaborate with developers, particularly for non-market housing.

I'm worried, and I'm wondering if the minister could respond about whether or not the processes that are now going to be set in place with this speedy development could tumble us into more problems that we'll only have to correct later.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, another fair question.

I suspect the member is more specifically talking about the right of appeal to a tribunal with respect to boundary expansion, where a municipal partner is either unwilling to respond or responds in a fashion that the proponent doesn't agree with. We thought it the best approach to remove it exclusively from the hands of a municipality and from the minister's office and to put it to an impartial third-party adjudicative body, as was done in the province of Ontario up until 2003. As I said, I believe this is the fairest way of doing it; it's a more open way of doing it. All the parties will be able to provide evidence on this, and

a third-party adjudicator will make that decision, removing it from the exclusive domain of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank all the speakers for their comments on the red tape reduction bill and the housing-related—it's very, very exciting legislation, and I like the way the associate minister phrased the budget as the “infrastructure budget.”

My question, because I think this is such an important part of the program: The \$1.8 billion that we propose, if the bill is passed, to have implemented—I was in the infrastructure world; I know how important it is to get these important assets financed. The great thing about water and waste water infrastructure is that there are revenue streams attached.

Municipalities have borrowing limits that are very restrictive. So I wonder if we could further hear from the associate minister on the impact this huge new program will have on getting those projects started that otherwise would not be started, and the impact it will have on the housing market.

1010

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you to my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

I'll give you a quick example, and I think you could probably relate to it in your riding—similar to mine. Dutton Dunwich is a community of 3,200 people. In 2019, they wanted to put in a new waste water system, upgrade it. It was going to be about \$3.5 million. They decided not to do it, to postpone it. Here we are in 2024. They got the bill to do the very same project: \$13.3 million. So it overwhelmed them. They had to stop the ability to build—it's a growing community.

I believe our waste water enabling fund, along with the infrastructure dollars put in the budget, along with the Building Faster Fund, which is available for small communities as well, is going to go a long way to help these communities—I've got 10 of them in my riding; I'm not sure about the member's. It's these smaller communities that really are at a crossroads when it comes to waste water management, waste water—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: In northern Ontario, we are very interested in getting rid of red tape for government-owned homes that need to be put up on the market.

I have given the example of Gogama. Three years ago, I wrote to every single minister to say, “There are 11 homes in Gogama that are owned by the government. There are 1,800 workers across the street who sleep in bunkers, who want to buy those homes. Please put them up for sale.” They told me they had to go through due process. I wrote back two years later and got the exact same letter—they have to go through due process.

When are we going to get rid of the red tape that keeps this government from putting the houses in Gogama, in

Foleyet—all over my riding—that they own up for sale? People in northern Ontario want to buy those homes.

Hon. Paul Calandra: It warms my heart; I never thought that I would be here and hear the NDP wanting me to privatize anything, so I thank the member.

I honestly do not know the specific homes that she's speaking of—although I suspect it's probably an infrastructure-owned program.

I do agree with the member opposite on this. I think what she's getting at is how important it is to build homes in northern Ontario, especially given the economic importance of northern Ontario to the success of southern Ontario. There are very unique challenges in the north, absolutely, no doubt, that require additional supports that aren't required in southern Ontario. This bill helps unleash some of that, as well.

The more important feature, I think, is really the infrastructure piece, the \$1.8 billion in infrastructure which will help unleash a lot of this development that has been stifled, as well, in northern Ontario—even more so than in southern Ontario, in many instances.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, that is all the time we have for questions. It's now time for members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Ms. Patrice Barnes: On February 27, Calgary welcomed athletes from across the country to the Special Olympics winter games.

I'm honoured to rise today to recognize Ella Robinson, Alex Cappuccitti and Rebecca Osmond, three competitors from my constituency of Ajax. The Special Olympics provides athletes with intellectual disabilities an incredible opportunity to showcase their talents and shine in a world that can often be challenging. Through these games, barriers are dismantled and new heights are reached. The accomplishments of these three champions are a testament to this, as they collectively brought home a total of nine medals. Ella secured first, second and third place in three race categories. Alex impressed with bronze medals in all four of his speed skating competitions. And Rebecca added to the team's success by placing second in five-pin bowling.

As we watch Ella, Alex, Rebecca and all these athletes experience the joy and camaraderie of victory, we are reminded that this event transcends the boundaries of the playing field. It is an event that forms a community and fosters friendships that last a lifetime.

My heartfelt congratulations to Ella, Alex and Rebecca for representing Ajax with strength, unity and determination.

A special thank you to Donna Edwards, who has been an amazing coach and leader in Special Olympics for many years.

ARK AID STREET MISSION

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I recently had the opportunity to tour Ark Aid Street Mission's Cronyn-Warner site.

I'd like to applaud the city of London and all of the phenomenal service and community partners working on the whole of community health and homelessness strategy tables.

It was rather cold as we walked down Dundas Street from Ark Aid's main location, punctuated by our entry into the warm Cronyn-Warner location. I want to thank the Diocese of Huron and the board at Warner Place for providing the location at a fraction of the market rate to care for the marginalized people in our community.

Ark Aid has served 900 unique people this year. We heard from Rob, who struggled with accessing health care while homeless. He was proud to tell us about his improvements and his future goals. None of this would have happened without Ark Aid and housing.

Funding for these spaces and others like SafeSpace and many more will end on May 31 this year. Homelessness in London will not end on June 1. If funding doesn't flow, 100 dedicated and caring staff will be unemployed; 120 resting places will become vacant—vital and necessary, but vacant. I was shocked to learn that the providers will have to warehouse all the mattresses while people sleep rough.

I call on government members to listen to their conscience and fund these beds now. Think of the people who are rebuilding their lives and whose hopes and dreams will be much further away without the basic human necessity of housing.

We have the space. We have caring people ready to help. All that is needed is political will. Housing is foundational, housing is fundamental, housing is a human right, and housing is health care.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. John Jordan: Ontario's 2024 budget revealed this government's plan to rebuild the economy while continuing to invest in health care, housing, infrastructure and more, without raising costs for families.

In long-term care, the \$155 million in funding in 2024-25 will allow for continued progression on building 58,000 new and upgraded long-term-care beds across the province—like the completed homes in Carleton Place and Almonte, and the Broadview long-term-care home in Smiths Falls currently under construction.

We're investing just over \$3 million to assist up to 3,500 people in connecting to primary care in Perth, Ontario, and \$4 million to help up to 10,000 people at the Periwinkle site in Kingston. This budget also green-lit the reconstruction of Princess Street in Almonte and the reconstruction of Battersea Road in South Frontenac.

Access to high-speed Internet and mobile service is a necessity of modern life. That's why we're investing \$71 million through the Eastern Ontario Regional Network to

continue getting more communities online faster than ever before.

These are only a few of the highlights of the 2024 budget, which is supporting economic growth in Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston and across Ontario.

Our government is committed to creating stronger communities for the future, improving Ontario's productivity growth, and building prosperity for generations to come.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: In Ontario, yesterday's acknowledgement that intimate partner violence is an epidemic, spurred by the Ontario NDP's Bill 173, is a step forward. It is encouraging to see the government finally support this recommendation. However, the result must be genuine action, not more delay tactics.

Speaker, 18 months ago, I urged the government to review and to act on the Renfrew triple femicide inquest's 86 recommendations to eradicate this violence. Leadership is about facing these truths, and the truth is, the government is acting too slowly. This Conservative government has a plan by experts that has been on their desk for over two years. It is concerning that the government committed to an in-depth study. The time for studies is over. The time for action is now.

In Niagara, we endured a tragic femicide only a few months ago, and while we have the best service providers anywhere in the world, they need our help right now. We need immediate, robust solutions: education and training within our criminal justice system; comprehensive and permanent funding; bringing forward an Ontario Clare's Law; and secure funding for survivor services.

Let us honour those who have suffered and those fighting for change by committing to immediate, decisive action on gender-based violence—not another study and not another delay.

1020

WOMEN AS CAREER COACHES EVENT

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Once again, this year, I had the pleasure of attending the Halton Industry Education Council's 20th annual Women as Career Coaches mentorship event. Congratulations to the team at HIEC for reaching this milestone and for your continued efforts bringing together women and mentors.

For 20 years now, this annual event has brought together young people and adult mentors for an impactful, inspiring and uplifting evening. During the evening, guest speakers share their career journeys and advice with youth who are just starting to think about potential careers. Career coaches sit at tables with young women, engaging in lively conversations, answering questions and offering encouragement. Throughout the evening, a lineup of inspiring speakers talk about their journeys and career paths, and youth have an opportunity to participate in a panel discussion. The evening is designed to provide the next generation with the opportunity to discover a wide

range of potential career paths and perhaps think about new career opportunities.

Working together, we can inspire youth to feel confident and optimistic about their futures and their place in the world of work.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Chris Glover: In the early 1990s, I was a high school teacher, and I can tell you, at that time, our schools were well funded; our buildings were well maintained. There was money for sports teams, extracurriculars and special education. And every child had a textbook for every subject that they took.

In the early 2000s, when my kids were in school, the government of the day started making cuts to schools, and I joined the Toronto Parent Network to fight those cuts.

In 1995, the government took control of our education taxes in Toronto, and since then, in almost every year, they've handed the Toronto District School Board a funding shortfall.

This year, the funding shortfall is \$28 million, and the TDSB trustees are being asked to make drastic cuts to staff programs and services in order to balance the books. More important than that, there's a \$239-million ongoing funding shortfall for programs that this government is simply not funding—and this includes special education; it includes money for textbooks, and it includes money for sports and extracurriculars. And now the TDSB is considering cutting seniors' daytime programs. They're considering cutting grade 6 outdoor education trips and more. This is absolutely reprehensible—to be making cuts to our schools, particularly for this generation of students, who have survived through the pandemic and need more supports, not less.

I'm calling upon the government today to reinstate the funding for the Toronto District School Board and for every school board across this province, so that our students do not face another round of cuts.

SCARBOROUGH WALK OF FAME

Mr. David Smith: I'd like to applaud the Scarborough Walk of Fame, which has been around for over 20 years. This organization promotes community togetherness and regional distinctiveness by commemorating Scarborough's many well-accomplished icons.

The walk of fame celebrates Scarborough's rich cultural mosaic and inspires future generations by revelling Scarborough's natives in the diverse domains of arts and culture, community, education, environment, entertainment, fitness, health and science, and sports. Additionally, it stimulates economic activity and visitor influx in Scarborough and the surrounding area. Contributing to Ontario's reputation as a vibrant and inclusive province, the Scarborough Walk of Fame enhances the province's cultural diversity as a cultural landmark.

I would like to thank the chair of the committee, Mr. Glenn De Baeremaeker, his colleagues, sponsors and a

strong team of volunteers on an exhilarating exhibition of the Scarborough Walk of Fame, 2024. It was wonderful to be there amongst my colleague MPPs and other dignitaries who have seen the showcase of the inductees yesterday.

I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to bring this message.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Guelph's efforts to address homelessness show what a caring community we are.

Shortly after I was elected in 2018, I met with Dominica McPherson, director of the Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination, to strategize how we could implement their vision to end homelessness in Guelph. We started working to bring people together. I'm proud of the way that all three levels of government, city and county staff, social service agencies, private developers, health care leaders, community funders, and citizens have worked tirelessly to successfully build three permanent supportive housing projects in five years.

The community's efforts culminated with the announcement of operational funding for supportive housing in last month's provincial budget.

Securing first capital and then health care funding for supportive housing have been top priorities during my time here at Queen's Park.

We have a long way to go to end homelessness, but I want to celebrate the progress we've made by celebrating those people who have got us here: Sheila Markle, Daria Allan-Ebron and Leisha Burley from Kindle Communities; Melissa Kwiatkowski and Raechelle Devereaux of Guelph CHC; Kristin Kerr, Stonehenge; Gail Hoekstra, Stepping Stone; Kristen Cairney, Wyndham House; Helen Fishburn, CMHA; Emmi Perkins, Guelph OHT; Mark Walton, Guelph General Hospital; Jason Ashdown, Skyline; Glenna Banda, United Way; Chris Willard, Guelph Community Foundation; Luisa Artuso, Wellington county; Shakiba Shayani and Michael Keegan, Guelph chamber; Mayor Cam Guthrie; MP Lloyd Longfield; Dominica McPherson, and many others in our community.

APRIL MONDAY MATTERS EVENT

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Today I rise to highlight a crucial initiative that we organized to support our community in understanding the three levels of government in Canada. Richmond Hill is home to a growing number of immigrants who may not fully comprehend the intricacies of our political landscape, as well as the system. We usually do not meet in person, but this time, instead of a virtual meeting, we have an in-person meeting so that we can facilitate the communications between the speakers and the attendants.

Recognizing the challenge, I'm proud to have April Monday Matters on April 22. This is a non-partisan and educational initiative designed to empower our residents with the knowledge they need to engage effectively in our democracy. This initiative will provide a platform for the

constituents to learn about the three levels of government and understand their roles and responsibilities.

We're honoured to have former politicians, including former parliamentary secretary and MP for Willowdale Mr. C.S. Leung; former minister and MPP Mr. Steve Gilchrist; and former mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville and chairman and CEO of York region, Mr. Wayne Emmerson, to share their insights. We trust that residents in Richmond Hill will benefit, to effectively participate in this democratic process.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's wonderful to rise to talk about some important investments that our government is making, through our recent provincial budget, across Ontario, whether it's the \$1.8 billion for housing-enabling infrastructure, critical infrastructure to get more homes built across our province, whether it's the \$1.2 billion in the Building Faster Fund; \$200 million for recreational facilities over the next 10 years; \$15 billion to build new schools, doubling the amount of funding for capital this year in our provincial budget for our schools; and, of course, \$50 billion over the next 10 years for hospitals across this province, from Toronto to Windsor, to the north and to Ottawa. We're investing in Ontario, investing in the people in Ontario.

I know it was important to see the \$50 million for stabilization of health care capacity in our northern and rural communities. It was also great to hear that we're going to make the clinical extern program permanent. I know this is very important to our rural hospitals.

1030

It was also great to see our government continue to build on our historic investments in primary care. Over \$500 million will be invested to expand primary care across Ontario to ensure more people can get care closer to home.

Unfortunately, all the members of the opposition voted against the provincial government. They voted against primary care expansion. They voted against victim quick response programs. It is shameful.

We will continue to stand with the people of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us today, in the Speaker's gallery, a delegation visiting here from Australia. Joining us are the Honourable Greg Piper, Speaker of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly; Helen Minnican, Clerk of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly; and Speaker Piper's wife. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Also with us in the other Speaker's gallery today are members from the Standing Committee on Justice from the Parliament of Norway. Please join me in warmly welcoming these guests to the assembly today.

I'm also very pleased to say that, in the Speaker's gallery, we have a former member of provincial Parliament for Burlington during the 38th and 39th Parliaments, Joyce Savoline. Welcome. It's great to have you back.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Everybody in this House knows Kathy Parker, the hard-working, friendly protective service officer from Levack in my riding. Well, today, I have the pleasure to introduce you to her mom and dad: Joan Parker and Ray Parker, from Levack in my riding.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for all you do.

Mr. Will Bouma: I just want to give a quick shout-out to page Ryder Harris, who is page captain today. For those people watching at home, he's doing an incredible job. It's very incredible to have him here.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'd like to introduce my daughter, Ayla, who will be joining me at Queen's Park today.

Hon. Kinga Surma: I'd like to welcome Jeff Dobbs, a guidance counsellor from Michael Power-St. Joseph High School in Etobicoke. He brought his grade 12 politics class here. They're visiting Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome to the House, from the Toronto Schools Caregiver Coalition, Katrina Matheson, Elena Basile, Caroline Harvey, Alexandra Merrick and Sandra Huh; and from the Save the Minden ER group, Patrick Porzuczek and Cathy Mauro. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I'd like to introduce two guests we have here today: Thomas Vaughan and Kathleen Sharpe from the Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to welcome two important members of the Tamil ethnic media to Queen's Park: Mr. Logan Logendralingam, editor-in-chief of Uthayan newspaper of Canada, and Mr. Shankar Sivanathan of Uthayan newspaper of Canada. Welcome to the Legislature of Ontario.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: She has already been introduced—but it has never stopped me before. It's really great to see Joyce Savoline in here, the former member from Burlington. As you'll recall, Speaker, when we would sit over there, I used to call her my mother. And now I'm the mother of some here.

So meet your grandchildren: Sam Oosterhoff, Stephen Lecce and Vijay Thanigasalam. I adopted them, so you now have even more grandchildren than Olivia.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to wish my husband a happy 19th anniversary—since we met on that airplane 19 years ago.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak during private members' public business today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Agreed? I heard a no.

QUESTION PERIOD

INDIGENOUS INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.* This week, the Chiefs of Ontario released their Ontario-specific Closing the Infrastructure Gap report. The report stated that it will cost \$59 million to ensure infrastructure in First Nations is on par with the rest of the province by 2030. The gap is one of the widest in Canada. If these gaps aren't closed, First Nations health and well-being will continue to fall behind.

Is Ontario going to continue to grow its wealth at the expense of First Nations who continue to go without? Yes or no?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Well, of course, the answer is no. We look forward to the opportunity to move forward on a number of key infrastructure projects, especially with respect to those isolated, remote First Nations communities.

This member knows that we have met in the past couple of weeks alone with key leadership in communities and on behalf of Indigenous organizations in NAN territory about road access—road access that would allow and provide for the province to develop other legacy infrastructure into the north: electrification, getting communities off diesel, building bridges so that we can have communities access places like Red Lake and come down to the southern part of northern Ontario for other programs and services and create better access into the north.

Those are the things that we're interested in working on, and I've heard from Indigenous leadership in northern Ontario that this is the right way to go.

The question is, will the member support those initiatives?

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: In Ontario, \$26 billion is needed to close the housing gap on First Nations.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation covers 49 First Nations. They need more than 7,500 homes built now to ensure people are housed.

1040

I urge Ontario, as a treaty partner, to improve its approach to housing by listening to what is needed and to quit using jurisdiction as an excuse to do nothing. Will this government act? Yes or no?

Hon. Greg Rickford: It's unfortunate that the federal government has not lived up to its infrastructure opportunities in those communities. This isn't about jurisdiction; this is about a commitment from the province of Ontario to build the kinds of roads that can create an opportunity to build state-of-the-art infrastructure in those communities. That's what this is always about.

Every time we've tried to have those kinds of discussions with the member opposite, the answer has been, "I'm not sure if we can support that."

They're in the budget.

We've had conversations with Indigenous leadership about building roads. Our winter roads have been compromised—this winter, in particular. It's very clear that First Nations leadership understands that in order to have state-of-the-art waste water infrastructure and other essential infrastructure in their communities, they need road access. We're prepared to move on that. The Premier has said that explicitly to Indigenous leadership in the north.

Will the member opposite support those initiatives?

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: In 2020, the Ontario Auditor General reported that funding for off-reserve Indigenous housing is cost-shared between Canada and Ontario.

What this government has spent on programs for Indigenous off-reserve housing is grossly inadequate, and there is nothing in yesterday's housing bill that addresses this.

What progress has Ontario made in building the 22,000 affordable units needed to meet the housing needs for Indigenous people living off-reserve?

Hon. Greg Rickford: In fact, resources for off-reserve housing have increased under this government.

We have some very capable partners across northern Ontario, in particular—including here in the city of Toronto—who have done a fantastic job of creating off-reserve housing and working in full partnership so that we can accommodate for what is a serious trend, and that is First Nations people moving off reserves into towns and cities across this province, across northern Ontario and here into Toronto.

Again, these are pieces that have been in our budget, and every single time that we advance that, that member opposite and the NDP have voted against it.

Do they stand for off-reserve housing or not?

HOUSING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, the government introduced a housing bill that is both unambitious and underwhelming. The government has chosen to ignore the top recommendations from its own Housing Affordability Task Force, including legalizing fourplexes in towns and cities.

What is stopping this government from showing leadership and doing more to build homes in neighbourhoods people want to live in?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The number one issue facing communities across the province of Ontario is sewer and water capacity. That is why we have been talking about this for months. That is why, of course, the Minister of Infrastructure has come forward with a \$1.8-billion fund to unilaterally, without the support of the federal government, put those services in the ground, so that we can unleash not hundreds of homes, not thousands of homes, but millions of homes across the province of Ontario.

That is what the bill from yesterday does, as well. It targets action so that we can get shovels in the ground faster. It targets those communities that have shovel-ready projects good to go. That is what we do.

I suspect that the opposition will support us in this measure, and I encourage them to read the bill and support what we have brought forward, because it is the best way to get more shovels in the ground and more people into homes.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: The reason why municipalities have difficulty paying for infrastructure is because of this government's Bill 23.

When I read this bill, I've got to say, I think this government is a sucker for punishment, because the Conservatives are once again looking at making it easier to build sprawl on farmland. The last time the government did this—they launched a criminal RCMP investigation into your own activities.

My question is this: Why do you keep trying to find new ways to pave over farmland?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Actually, the number one obstacle to building homes in the province of Ontario is the lack of infrastructure and the infrastructure deficit that we inherited from the previous Liberal government.

The other obstacle, of course, is the lack of transit and transportation, which we inherited from the previous Liberal government.

The other problem that we have is the carbon tax, which is making it very difficult for those people who actually build the homes to build homes.

The other issue that we're having is the high inflation and high interest rate policies of the federal government, which are making it more expensive to get a shovel in the ground, and which were pricing out thousands of first-time homebuyers from the market.

That is why we are constantly doing everything that we can to target the investments that we're making, make housing more affordable, remove obstacles, get shovels in the ground. And we are doubling down on the biggest investment in infrastructure in the province's history. We're doing it in the absence of a federal government commitment. We'll continue to do that.

I hope that they'll support this bill.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: The Conservatives have had six years to fix the housing crisis, and it has never been more expensive to rent or buy a home. That is this government's legacy. That is on you.

The worst thing about yesterday's bill is what is not in it. There is nothing in this bill for renters. There is nothing to lower rent. There is nothing to stop illegal evictions. There is nothing to fix the Landlord and Tenant Board.

My question is to the Premier. Why does this government keep leaving renters behind?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, nothing could be further from the truth. The policies of this government to reduce costs have us at the highest level of purpose-built rentals ever—ever. We have never hit this level.

Moreover, we're going a step further, because we're also saying that because of unilateral cuts made by the federal government, we're going to do even more to ensure that students have affordable housing, as well. That is why we are making as-of-right student housing available to our universities. Do you know what that does, Mr. Speaker? It puts thousands of rental units back on the market for our communities.

We're removing the development charges on affordable housing. We are coming forward with an attainable housing program.

I hope that the opposition will support us in these measures, which make housing more affordable, which get shovels in the ground quicker, which deal with the infrastructure gap left behind by the previous Liberal government.

We're getting the job done for the people of the province of Ontario.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, this government supported my Bill 173 at second reading to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic in Ontario. But I want to be very clear. The very first recommendation of the Renfrew inquest was one simple sentence—and so was Bill 173: "The government of Ontario shall recognize that intimate partner violence is an epidemic in Ontario."

The declaration does not need another study at committee—data proves too many lives lost and impacted. The work has been done. The Renfrew inquest recommendations are there. This government has had two years to implement them, and yet they've refused. There is absolutely no need for the government to delay declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic.

So my question to the Premier is this: Will the government do the right thing, implement the first recommendation of the Renfrew inquest, and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the members to please take their seats.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think Parliament did the right thing yesterday when it supported that declaration.

1050

I encourage the members opposite to consider participating in this committee, which will look at all aspects of how we deal with intimate partner violence. We have committed to a whole-of-government approach that builds on the incredible work done by Minister Parsa and Minister Williams on this. If the opposition wants to

absent themselves from that work, that is a decision they can make, because I know Progressive Conservatives stand ready to do whatever it takes to ensure that the services that we provide victims—and the services are available to the providers so that they can provide those victims and their families with the best possible options. It includes the minister of addictions and mental health; it will include the Solicitor General; it will include the Attorney General. And we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that we have the best possible response. I encourage them to participate; if they don't want to, that's a decision they make.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question. The member for Toronto—St. Paul's.

MPP Jill Andrew: Speaker, yesterday this Conservative government said they will support Bill 173, which calls for this government to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic across Ontario. Of course, once an epidemic is declared, we would expect resources to flow.

Naming IPV an epidemic is an excellent first step and validates the lived experiences—the trauma—of countless survivors, their families, and the service providers, frankly, who have been working understaffed and underpaid, under this government, for years to support survivors. It will help honour those who are no longer here. I want to know when the government plans to do this.

My question is to the Premier.

Survivors can't wait any longer for your committees, your public hearings, your consultations. They have been consulted. The experts have been heard. They shouldn't have to recount the worst moments of their life.

It's one word: "epidemic."

Will this government declare and push through, fast-track, Bill 173 for survivors and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic today?

Interjections.

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

The government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, it's not just this government; it was this Parliament that supported that motion yesterday.

I've received many messages from victims, survivors, who have suggested that they want to participate, that they have suggestions on how we can make services better for them. I've heard from service agencies over the last 24 hours that say that they have more that they can contribute. I've heard from First Nations partners who have said, "We have specific recommendations for our communities. When can we participate?" I've heard from the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. I've heard from the Solicitor General, the Attorney General. I have heard from Minister Williams and Minister Parsa—children and community services, and women's issues. All of them have said, "We are doing a lot, but we can do more." The only ones who think that more can't be done now seems to be the NDP.

We have supported it as a Parliament, but what we will do is the next phase: the work that is needed to properly

support victims. It's not about virtue signalling. It's about getting the work done properly for them—

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

TAXATION

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Our government continues to call on the federal government to walk back their disastrous carbon tax measures. This is a tax to which farmers, small business owners and Ontario families have repeatedly said no.

While we are steadfast in making life more affordable for individuals and families in our province, Bonnie Crombie's Liberals and the opposition NDP keep working against us. That's not what their constituents elected them to do. But rest assured, Speaker, our government will continue to have the back of Ontarians, even if the opposition won't.

The federal Liberals need to scrap this tax so that hard-working Ontarians can keep money in their pockets, where it belongs.

Can the minister please explain to the House how the Liberal carbon tax burdens families and businesses across Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock for a second.

I'm going to ask the member for Ottawa South and the Minister of Energy, who are engaged in, I'm sure, a very interesting conversation across the floor of the House, which makes it harder for the Speaker to hear the member who actually, rightfully, has the floor and wants to ask a question—as well, there have been a number of members on this side of the House who have been heckling quite loudly. I would ask them to stop doing that.

Start the clock. The Minister of Energy can reply. He has the floor.

Hon. Todd Smith: We were having a very interesting discussion. I'm still baffled at the member for Ottawa South's support for the federal carbon tax. Of course, the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, his leader, supports that carbon tax, as well, which is driving up the cost of everything in our province.

We hear from fruit and vegetable growers and grain farmers; we hear from construction workers who are making their way from the suburbs into downtown Toronto, where we're building brand new subway lines like the Ontario Line, building new roads and highways; and those parents who are taking their kids to school and driving them to their hockey playoff games and off to baseball and soccer, which are starting this year—it's making the cost of living more expensive for all of those people.

This morning, I was at a really great press conference with the mayor of Toronto, Olivia Chow—it was a great clean energy announcement down at the Portlands Energy Centre. She was asked, "Why is Toronto one of the most expensive cities in North America?" And part of the

answer was the carbon tax, which is driving up the cost of everything, not just for the people of Toronto, not just for the people of Ontario, but the people right across—

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

Mrs. Robin Martin: Again, thank you to the minister for that response.

There are better ways to reach climate targets without jeopardizing affordability for hard-working families and individuals. Unfortunately, the federal government is unwilling to listen to what provincial leaders and, more importantly, what Canadians have to say.

When Bonnie Crombie was a federal Liberal, she was one of the earliest supporters of the carbon tax. And now, as leader of the Ontario Liberals, one of her first orders of business is to call for higher taxes, which is the usual Liberal pattern.

We know that the last thing that people need right now is another expense on their bills.

Ontarians cannot afford the federal Liberals and the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie.

Can the minister please explain how Liberal policies like the carbon tax are costing Ontarians?

Hon. Todd Smith: It's certainly clear that the queen of the carbon tax is not just supportive but happy with the federal carbon tax that's driving up the cost of everything in our province and right across our country—

Interjections.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's Liberals, like the one who's heckling me right now, who were here from 2011 to 2018, who tripled electricity rates in the province of Ontario, forcing people to choose between heating and eating. It's those same Liberals—let's be clear; they're the same bunch who were here during the Wynne-McGuinty era, who have moved up to Ottawa and are working with Prime Minister Trudeau and the team up there to drive up the cost of everything again with this harmful, brutal carbon tax.

The queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, is clearly supportive of making life more expensive. As a matter of fact, her first edict upon becoming the leader of the Liberal Party was to have her party raise a million dollars to help pay her salary.

We don't need the queen of the carbon tax running our province. It would be just too expensive for the people of Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: Earl Grey Senior Public School in my riding is supposed to offer extended French, but because of cutbacks and disrespect for teachers, we have a severe teacher shortage. That has meant that students in extended French have gone without teachers for months at a time. This is increasingly a problem in many of our schools.

Why won't the Premier provide the funding to Toronto schools to actually have teachers in class?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is an ironic question from the members opposite, who have voted against 3,000 additional teachers in Ontario classrooms today. In TDSB, a board that has 10,000 fewer students relative to 2018, they have \$120 million more. We've hired additional education staff, and we passed a bill to do it quicker.

I would have hoped that the members opposite would have worked with government, like other parties did, to support acceleration of certification, as we cut the timelines by half. That was our commitment. We did it alone, without support of members opposite.

And we launched a recruitment action plan specific for French educators in Ontario that has yielded over 400 new French-language graduates last year—1,000 additional French-language candidates registered relative to the year prior.

We know there's more work to do. But let's work together to ensure all children have access to a certified teacher, an issue that is of contrast where the members opposite do not want retired educators in the front of class.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary: the member for Ottawa West–Nepean.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Three hundred and twenty million—that's how much more the TDSB would have this year if funding had just kept pace with inflation. The Minister of Education likes to use the word "historic" a lot, but what is actually historic is the largest cut to education funding in the history of our province: \$2.7 billion less this year alone. So instead of hiring EAs and child and youth workers and lunch supervisors and social workers and French teachers, school boards are being forced to cut them.

Why does the Premier think our children do not deserve these essential supports?

1100

Hon. Stephen Lecce: It is not going to be surprising to Ontarians to hear members opposite defend the bureaucratic incompetence that takes place in many school boards in this province. But members opposite seem to believe it is acceptable for a board that is the largest real estate holder in the province of Ontario, responsible for \$20 billion of assets, that sits on \$300 million of unspent maintenance funding, that has \$150 million of proceeds of dispositions sitting in cash—they've tripled the amount of sunshine list workers.

It's about time school boards get a simple message to work to advance the interests of children instead of the interests of administration. Our message is clear: Balance your budgets and do what every school board in this province will do.

TAXATION

Mr. Lorne Coe: My question is to the Associate Minister of Transportation. Hard-working families and business owners in Whitby tell me that the federal government is choosing to ignore the challenges Ontario residents are facing. At a time when our cost of living

continues to rise, the federal Liberals doubled down and hiked the carbon tax yet again, by 23%.

Increases in fuel costs make life more expensive for everyone in our province, including the hard-working men and women in the trucking industry. Ontario's truckers play a critical role in transporting the goods we all need in our daily lives. They should not be burdened with additional costs. Speaker, can the associate minister please tell the House why the carbon tax is hurting Ontario's truckers?

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to the member from Whitby for that question. I am proud to represent hundreds of hard-working truckers who live in my riding. Every day, they ensure we have the goods that they deliver, and they tell me all the time that the carbon tax adds unnecessary costs to each delivery that they make. This only makes the cost of everything more expensive. The truckers are not asking for a free ride; they are asking for a fair one. Their commitment to our economy is not phased with a penalty.

According to the Ontario Trucking Association, the carbon tax of 17.4 cents per litre increases the cost for a long-haul truck between \$15,000 to \$20,000 per truck per year. It is clear the carbon tax is hurting the economy and making life more expensive. The federal government and Minister Guilbeault are out of touch. We call on the federal government to axe the tax.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the associate minister for his response. Our government recognizes and appreciates the hard-working men and women in our trucking industry who keep goods moving in Ontario. It's unfair for our truckers to have a carbon tax forced on them by the federal government. It's unfair that the cost to fuel the trucks to transport the goods is passed on to consumers. Life is already expensive enough. The trucking industry cannot afford more Liberal carbon tax hikes, and neither can every resident, the hard-working families in this province.

Unlike the out-of-touch NDP and Liberals, who continuously fail to support Ontarians, our government is taking every necessary step to make life easier and more affordable. Can the associate minister please tell the House how our government is standing up once again for truckers in Ontario?

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: The NDP and Liberals claim the carbon tax is designed for other transition options. But when it comes to long-haul trucking, there are no other options. We need to rely on them to keep our economy moving.

The carbon tax is only a tax on hard-working people who fill up their cars, heat their homes and rely on truckers who deliver their goods. I invite Minister Guilbeault to come to Scarborough to meet the hard-working men and women who deliver our goods. They will tell him that the carbon tax is making it harder for a family to put food on the table and to heat up their homes, Speaker, and adding to the inflation.

Only this government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, and with this transportation minister, we will fight for businesses and families. The Progressive Conservative government will stand up against the carbon tax.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. The Ford Motor company is pumping the brakes on its Ontario-built electric vehicles, delaying the start of manufacturing from 2025 to 2027. This news has left the more than 5,000 auto workers at Oakville Assembly and throughout the supply chain with an uncertain future.

The last built-in-Oakville Ford Edge will roll off the line in the weeks ahead. Oshawa auto workers know a thing or two about uncertainty. This government has been taking credit for this Ford deal. I would be very surprised if a two-year delay was part of the deal.

So my question is: Staring down a two-year delay, what is this government going to do to secure an EV future for auto workers in Oakville?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the parliamentary assistant and member for Oakville North-Burlington.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you to the member opposite for that very important question. For years, we've watched as the Liberals, propped up by the NDP, drove away hundreds of thousands of jobs—manufacturing jobs, well-paying jobs—south of the border. But all that changed when we got elected.

In the last three years, we've seen \$28 billion in new auto and EV investments, resulting in the creation of thousands of good-paying jobs. Last year alone, more than 180,000 good-paying jobs were created in Ontario. And just last month, Ontario was leading the nation in job creation with 26,100 new jobs added to the province's economy.

Ontario is the number two auto producer in North America, building over 1.2 million vehicles annually. We have heard from Ford Canada that they are working closely with Unifor to ensure employees at the Ford Oakville site are taken care of.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: We will all be proud to build electric vehicles right here in our province and proud of the good jobs and the auto workers who will build them, but Ontario needs a real plan so we can charge them and drive them.

Speaker, we are not EV-ready, and we are falling behind. We need a serious EV strategy to grow development, manufacturing and the charging infrastructure. So my question is, what specifically will this government do to make sure Ontario auto workers build the electric vehicles of the future, and where is the EV infrastructure so we can actually drive them?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Todd Smith: It is our work that's been done in all sectors of government, but particularly at economic development and on the Ministry of Energy file where we are securing the power that we're going to need for the electric vehicle implementation, which we know is coming, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're investing in new nuclear facilities in that member's own region, the clean energy capital of Canada in the Durham region, with not one but four small modular reactors, the newest technology. And we're leading the world when it comes to the development of that technology. We're ensuring we have five gigawatts of new development at a Bruce C power plant over on Lake Huron, Mr. Speaker.

The NDP, if they were in charge, are against nuclear power and the 76,000 people that work in that sector in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the NDP thinks the power is going to come from. Maybe they think we can continue to power our electric vehicles with intermittent wind and solar. We don't believe that. That's why we're making the investments in the energy infrastructure for the future and are powering Ontario—

Interjections.

Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott): La députée de Vanier.

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Ma question, en français, s'adresse au ministre de l'Éducation. La population des écoles francophones est en forte croissance depuis des années, surtout comparée aux écoles anglophones, mais la construction de nouvelles écoles ne suit pas le rythme. Je dirais même que c'est très loin de là.

1110

Dans son dernier budget, le gouvernement a annoncé la construction de 1 022 places en français. Mais selon le Bureau de la responsabilité financière de l'Ontario, ça ne suffira même pas à couvrir l'augmentation des inscriptions juste pour cette année, donc encore moins à rattraper les importants retards.

Le 4 avril, le ministre de l'Éducation a annoncé la somme de 1,3 milliard de dollars pour la construction et l'agrandissement de 60 écoles. Donc, ma question au ministre est très simple : combien d'écoles francophones seront-elles construites avec ce financement?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member opposite for the question and the partnership as we work together to build schools across Ontario.

We are absolutely committed to building more schools. It's why I was proud to stand with the Minister of Finance, on behalf of the Premier, to announce the historic more than doubling of funding to build more schools faster in this province for the people of Ontario. We're talking about over \$1.3 billion of investment; it was historically at \$550 million. This will yield more than double the number of schools we build per year.

For French-language education, we have invested a quarter of a billion dollars to build roughly 18 new schools

and 16 school additions. We've created over 7,000 spaces within our schools, and likewise, over 900 licensed child care spaces—affordable child care spaces for French-language families.

We know there's more to do. It's why our government has stepped up with a historic investment to build, to invest and to grow our French-language school system.

Le Président (L'hon. Ted Arnott): La députée d'Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Je suis vraiment intéressée à savoir ce qui s'en vient. Par contre, merci pour les investissements.

Monsieur le Président, les écoles francophones en Ontario souffrent non seulement d'un manque de place, mais aussi d'une importante pénurie de personnel qui dure aussi depuis longtemps. C'est une crise de recrutement et de rétention.

En 2021, un groupe de travail a publié un rapport sur la pénurie de personnel enseignant dans le système d'éducation en langue française de l'Ontario, ce qui a mené le gouvernement à élaborer une stratégie de recrutement pour les années 2021 à 2025. Nous sommes maintenant en 2024 et le problème est très loin d'être réglé.

Le dernier budget du gouvernement n'a même pas mentionné une fois la pénurie importante de personnel enseignant dans nos écoles francophones. Alors, comment le gouvernement envisage-t-il de réussir à recruter et retenir le personnel nécessaire pour combler les nombreux postes d'enseignant nécessaires dans nos écoles francophones si on ne fait pas d'investissement?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I do appreciate the concern of the members opposite. Indeed, there is, across the country, a French-language education teacher shortage. It preceded our time, but we announced—actually, through Bill 98, the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, that allows for additional French-language educators to be hired with more latitude to school boards, and a reduction in certification interprovincially and around the world as we attract French-language teachers from the broader Francophonie.

The Minister of Francophone Affairs and I have worked together to cut through the red tape and to attract, and we're seeing some result: 1,000 additional French-language candidates registered on the recruitment portal just last year; 151 additional internationally trained French-language teachers, newly certified by the college of teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I was proud to stand with the Minister of Colleges and Universities to more than double the amount of teacher placements in University of Ontario français and the University of Ottawa.

Together, this is going to make a difference till we bridge the gap and ensure all children have access to a qualified teacher in Ontario.

TAXATION

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Speaker, I hear it in the House and I

hear it across my riding of Newmarket–Aurora: The carbon tax is making life more and more unaffordable. During this challenging time, families and small businesses in all communities need to feel supported, not penalized. That's why it is disappointing to see the federal government refuse to scrap the tax.

To make matters worse, the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, and her Liberal caucus continue to stand behind their federal colleagues. Ontario cannot afford Bonnie Crombie and the Liberal carbon tax she supports.

Our government will keep fighting this regressive carbon tax and putting more money back in the people's pockets. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is combatting the negative impacts of the carbon tax?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, the member for Oakville.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the great member from Newmarket–Aurora for a really good question. We have been clear: Now is not the time to be raising taxes and making life more unaffordable for the people here and across this great province.

Unfortunately, it seems like the Liberal plan to tackle affordability is to actually make life more expensive for the people of Ontario and Canada. We saw Liberal members refuse to support a motion to eliminate the carbon tax which makes goods and services more affordable in this province.

We even heard the Liberal member of Kanata–Carleton say that “the vast majority of Ontario households are better off with a carbon price,” in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

Speaker, it's time for all parties in this House to unite and join us and agree that this federal carbon tax needs to be eliminated now.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Independent members, come to order.

The supplementary question.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for his response. We have heard it from experts, from governments and from the people of Ontario: The carbon tax hurts our well-being, and it hurts the economic growth of our province. Under the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, the independent Liberals have failed to stand with us against a tax that is driving up prices and hurting individuals and families in our province.

They have chosen to ignore the concerns of the people that elected them. That's not fair. At a time of economic uncertainty and an affordability crisis, let's not tax Ontarians more.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please tell the House what our government is doing to fight the carbon tax?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you, again, to the great member from Newmarket–Aurora for that follow-up question. This government will continue to call to scrap the tax. But, Speaker, we know we can't wait around for the

Liberal Party to finally do the right thing, and that's why we are taking action here, to drive down the price of gas for the people of Ontario.

That's why, only a few weeks ago, we announced a new extension of the gas tax cut, providing direct relief to the people of Ontario at the pumps. This cut means hundreds of dollars in savings for the average Ontario household and billions of dollars across the province.

Our government acted early on affordability, and we aren't stopping now. We will continue to drive down prices and we will make life more affordable for the people of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the Premier: We learned yesterday from the Financial Accountability Office that Ontario spends the lowest per capita on health care than the rest of Canada, almost 16% below the Canadian average. We are last in Canada.

Currently, 2.3 million Ontarians are already without a family doctor and another two million are projected to lose access in two years. Two weeks ago, I stood in this House and asked the question: Why are you allowing 60,000 Hamiltonians to go without a family doctor? This financial accountability report gives us the answer. You are short-changing Ontario's health care spending and funding. Why?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: With the greatest of respect, wrong, wrong, wrong. We have made historic investments in our health care budget and our health care system, whether it is expanding primary care, multidisciplinary teams—over a half a billion dollars that we are investing in primary care multidisciplinary teams. Whether it is capital projects that are happening in our hospitals across Ontario, over 50 capital projects that are happening right now across Ontario, new expanded and renovated hospitals, including, of course, in the Hamilton region.

We continue to invest in our health care system. We know that Ontario leads Canada, whether it is attachments to family physicians or primary care docs, whether it is the lowest wait times in Canada that are happening here in the province of Ontario, we will continue to do that work to make sure that we build up a system that, frankly, previous governments have ignored for decades.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Not even two weeks ago, I asked the Premier about a fraction of the funding the Greater Hamilton Health Network is going to receive as one-time funding. This is an Ontario health team who brought many expert voices to the table to build a plan which, if fully funded, would provide 55,000 Hamilton-area residents with a family doctor, a health team that has innovative strategies, dedicated home care professionals and team-based care close to home.

1120

The minister talks a good game but is leaving people without a family doctor. Premier, why are you under-

mining and underfunding the very same groups that you created?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: So let me get this clear: We have expanded primary care multidisciplinary teams in the amount of over a billion dollars since February. That equates to 78 new primary care health teams, multidisciplinary teams, community health centres—yes, including in the Hamilton area and the Niagara region.

We are making those investments. So, respectfully, to the member opposite and the members of her party: Why did you vote against those investments yesterday?

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Every industry in Ontario is negatively impacted by the carbon tax. This punitive tax adversely affects our businesses, economy and Ontario workers, including those in the natural resource sector. Not only does this federally imposed carbon tax make raw materials more expensive, but it also impacts the entire supply chain, resulting in higher costs for everything and everyone.

While the federal government, supported by the independent Liberals and the opposition NDP, is content to pass these costs on to individuals who are already financially struggling, our government knows that Ontarians deserve better. That's why we will continue to call on the federal Liberals to scrap the tax once and for all.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the carbon tax is negatively impacting industries in the natural resource sector and consumers across Ontario?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you to the member from Oxford for that great question.

You know, I'll give the Liberals this: They're consistent—consistently on the wrong side of supporting affordability for Ontarians, because their leader, the queen of the carbon tax, just wants to double down and say no all the time: no to northern Ontario, no to affordability measures, no to building homes and key infrastructure, no to reducing emissions while creating jobs.

Mr. Speaker, we know what the Liberals are all about. They had years and years and years to get something done. Instead, they drove manufacturing jobs out of this province by the hundreds of thousands. They neglected to build long-term-care beds. They certainly neglected to support northern Ontario. Well, we support northern Ontario in this government, and we support getting rid of a carbon tax that is nothing but punitive to northern Ontario and the natural resources sector.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the member for Brampton North and the member for Ottawa South to come to order.

The member for Oxford: supplementary question.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I thank the minister for the response.

The federal Liberals and their provincial counterparts are out of touch with how the carbon tax is negatively

impacting individuals and families across Ontario. Recently the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that most households will lose income due to the federal carbon tax. Specifically, the report states that 60% of households in Ontario and other provinces will pay more in carbon taxes than they receive in rebates.

Speaker, the hard-working people and business owners who power our economy have had enough. They want to see this tax scrapped now. The federal government must eliminate the carbon tax. Can the minister please elaborate on how our government is delivering relief to the people of Ontario as we fight the carbon tax?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Again, thanks for that great question from the member from Oxford.

I know the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, won't listen to us about the carbon tax—again, consistency; I'll give them that. But maybe she'll listen to the federal Parliamentary Budget Officer, who said that Ontarians will pay \$478 more per household because of the federal carbon tax. They said in the year 2030, the average financial loss for Ontarians would be close to \$2,000 per household.

It's a shame the members opposite are putting politics ahead of Ontario's families and businesses. Our government cut the fuel tax by over 14 cents a litre. Our government supports innovation in creating jobs and reducing emissions. Our government is creating more jobs, putting more money in people's pockets, and our government is delivering relief for people here in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the answer is clear. We need to support Ontarians in an affordability-challenged time. The Liberals need to stand up and scrap this tax.

ONTARIO PLACE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. Ontario Place for All has released a comprehensive audit that shows the Therme mega spa project cannot succeed without hundreds of millions of dollars in public taxpayer subsidies. Therme was just recently at risk of bankruptcy. We still don't know the source of their financing, but they have a secret 95-year lease for prime Toronto waterfront.

The public deserve to know what you've signed us up for. Premier, why won't you release the details of the lease with Therme?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, I can't believe that I'm actually responding to the question and I have to educate a colleague of mine on the other side who does not understand what an audit is and who conducts an audit. An audit is conducted by a certified accountant. What we saw yesterday was not, in fact, an audit. It was a presentation that I'm pretty sure grade 7 and 8 students from schools in my riding could do a better job of. It was a joke, in fact.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue with our redevelopment plans at Ontario Place. We are attracting an investment of hundreds of millions of dollars to build 50 acres of public realm space, a brand new stage, a wellness and water park

facility for the public to enjoy after 30 years of neglect of the site because of the Liberals.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question: the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: Mr. Speaker, if this is such a good deal for Ontario taxpayers, then release the lease.

These are the tax subsidies for Therme that we know about: parking garage, \$450 million; infrastructure, \$200 million; science centre moving, \$400 million; an apparently free 95-year lease on public parkland; and the maintenance of a portion of Therme's roof.

That report from Ontario Place for All yesterday suggested that they may not be able to attract enough customers to actually pay for their business model to turn a profit.

So, the question is, if they go bankrupt, as they almost did in 2019, what does the secret lease say? Are Ontario taxpayers going to be stuck with a billion-dollar boondoggle on the waterfront, or will we be stuck subsidizing Therme's failed business model for the next 95 years?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Mr. Speaker, I will not be taking the advice of a political activist group that has no experience conducting an audit or building infrastructure.

What I will do is I will work with Infrastructure Ontario, a world-renowned agency that is leading the development of all of our critical and most complex projects in the province. Whether it's highways, whether it's hospitals, whether it's schools, long-term care or correctional facilities, they are leading that work. We are working in partnership with Infrastructure Ontario to bring the site back to life.

Mr. Speaker, we have two options: We could do what the Liberals did and not do anything and let the site fall apart and let it continue to flood, or we can attract hundreds of millions of dollars of investment to the site for a water park, a brand new stage, 50 acres of public realm space, a brand new marina, food and beverage so that Ontarians can enjoy the lands once again.

TAXATION

Ms. Patrice Barnes: My question is for the Solicitor General. Despite opposition from provincial leaders of all political stripes, last week the federal government hiked the carbon tax by another 23%. Ontarians are now forced to pay an extra 17.6 cents per litre on gas. We know that the impact does not stop only on gas, Speaker. How is that right?

The federal Liberals, much like their provincial counterparts, don't seem to care about the impact this punitive tax has on various sectors in our province.

Speaker, I've heard from people in my riding who are concerned about affordability issues and how this additional tax bill will affect our public safety.

Speaker, can the minister please explain the implications of the carbon tax on front-line workers who keep Ontario safe?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank the member from Ajax for the question. She knows how hard first

responders and police officers and firefighters work, and everyone that keeps Ontario safe.

1130

Mr. Speaker, last night, I attended the Toronto Police College to watch people receive awards for doing heroic acts. They work hard every day, but like everybody else in Ontario, like everybody else on April 1, they're now paying 3.3 cents more a litre on fuel and on diesel. Let me put this into context: An average police car, an average vehicle in public safety, is now paying over \$2,000 more a year just for the increase on April 1.

And do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Bonnie Crombie served on the board of the Peel police service board. This is absolutely true. She should come clean with the people of Ontario and say, "I'm not going to support this tax."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Thank you to the Solicitor General for that response. It's encouraging to hear how, unlike Bonnie Crombie's Liberals and the opposition NDP, our government stands up for the hard-working men and women who keep our communities safe.

Last week's hike is one of the many planned increases from the federal government. The federal Liberals actually want to exponentially increase what they call "a price on carbon" until 2030. Enough is enough. We know that front-line workers deserve to have the support and resources they need to protect Ontarians instead of paying for additional fuel costs because of the carbon tax. It is time to scrap the tax.

Can the Solicitor General explain the effects of the costly carbon tax on our public safety system?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: The carbon tax is paid on everything that's involved in public safety. Mr. Speaker, let me be specific, because it's important for the people who live in Milton, as an example, to know that Halton police service has to pay the carbon tax on their vehicles—and they can call Chief Steve Tanner if they want to know—and for the people living in Strathroy, they can call Chief Mark Campbell.

But I want to give another fact to the Legislature. Bonnie Crombie, as the mayor of Mississauga, knew exactly what the fire department budget is there. So let her know this: Because of the 3.3 cents that went into effect on April 1, on this regressive tax, an average fire truck now has to pay over \$2,000 a year just for the latest increase. She's out of touch with reality. She should come clean with the people of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. For years, my constituents have been contacting my office looking for help to find a doctor. Over 2.2 million people in Ontario are without a primary care provider. The government has made announcement after announcement, but yet, we haven't seen doctors.

My constituent Kathleen has not had a family doctor for over nine years. She has MS and has recently lost her

doctor who specializes in MS care and cannot find another neurologist. Can the Premier tell people like Kathleen where she can find a doctor?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Absolutely. The first thing I hope you have recommended to your constituent is that she sign up for Health Care Connect. It's a little-known fact that, in fact, individuals who are on Health Care Connect and have signed up to get connected with a primary care physician have a 90-day-or-less matching rate, so there is an existing process there.

In terms of expanding primary care, I want to remind the member where we were. Under the previous NDP government, your government actually cut medical residency seats by 10%. The Liberal government, when they were in power, cut residency positions by 50 seats per year. What has that put us into? A position where we are building the health care system.

We are expanding. Last week, we had an incredible announcement in Vaughan with the Minister of Education, announcing a brand new medical school that is coming to Vaughan. This medical school will actually focus on training primary care family physicians. That's what we're—

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Health Care Connect should be called "health care disconnect."

Kathleen, along with millions of Ontarians, had been languishing for years on Health Care Connect. They spend hours calling every doctor in London. As soon as the word gets out there's a new doctor taking patients, they're inundated with applications. People with pre-existing conditions find it even harder to access primary care.

Doctors are telling you that they need help with increased workloads, so they can take on more patients. Premier, will you implement the NDP's health care strategy today to increase the number of staff supports for doctors so they can spend time treating patients instead of pushing paperwork?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I have to ask: Why, why, why have the NDP not supported a billion-dollar investment in primary care expansion, some 178 new expanded satellite and new facilities where we are connecting patients with multidisciplinary teams? It was said very eloquently: When you need a family doc, you will see a family doc in these multidisciplinary teams; if you need to see a nurse practitioner, you will see a nurse practitioner in these family teams.

I have to give a shout-out to one of our members. Minto township, in fact, has already hired a nurse practitioner and they are already seeing new patients from a February announcement. These are the changes that are happening in our communities across Ontario, and we'll continue to get it done.

TAXATION

Mr. Rick Byers: My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development.

Individuals and families across Ontario, especially in northern and Indigenous communities, face unprecedented economic challenges due to additional costs arising from the Liberal carbon tax. Residents in the north rely more heavily on their vehicles for work and for other everyday essentials; it's not fair that they're being hit the hardest at the gas pumps.

Unlike the opposition members and independent Liberals, who remain silent even after last week's 23% hike, our government will continue to stand up for all Ontarians and call for the end of this tax.

Can the Minister please share with the House the negative impacts of the disastrous carbon tax on the northern and Indigenous communities?

Hon. Greg Rickford: As the former Liberal MP Bonnie Crombie stood resolute with Prime Minister Trudeau as the carbon tax received royal assent, that would make her the queen of the carbon tax.

The NDP's position has been a little bit more higgledy-piggledy. It's not clear. They support it; they're against it. We don't really know.

I went on a zettetic exploration to understand from the people in Sudbury how they felt about this. One owner of a roofing company said that the carbon tax has made its way into every aspect of building materials, making it more expensive to repair homes and making it more difficult for people to decide to repair those homes.

Another fellow, Richard Diotte, the owner and president of Barné Building, said the cost for residential upgrades and repairs has gone out of control. He puts it squarely on the carbon tax. That's not good for families, as the member for Kanata–Carleton said—

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

That concludes our question period for this morning.

VISITORS

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I would like to welcome to the House Mrs. Phoebe Wasfy, the principal for Philopateer Christian College, which is celebrating 25 years of excellent education in Mississauga. She is here today with Gloria Doss, the school registrar. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park and congratulations on your 25-year anniversary. I wish you many years of success to come.

Mr. Aris Babikian: I would like to welcome to the House a long-time friend, publisher of the Uthayan Tamil newspaper and member of the National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada, Logan Logendralingam. Welcome to the House.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I'd like to welcome today—she's actually just stuck in traffic, but here shortly—Sumeeta Kohli, a constituent of mine. It's also her birthday today, so happy birthday, Sumeeta.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Do you have a point of order? I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre on a point of order.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'd like to welcome Tiffany and Scott and their family, parents of Lyra, a page. They join us and visit us from my riding of Kitchener Centre. Welcome to your House.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Do you have a point of order?

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Ottawa South on a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: In my question on Monday, I made an error. When I was talking about the Premier's office budget, I said \$6.9 million. What I meant to say was \$6.96 million.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members can correct their own record on points of order.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On the same point of order? Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I do want to correct my record. When speaking to an answer earlier in the week, I had said that the Liberals had lost 300,000 jobs. In fact, it was greater than 300,000 jobs that were scared away in the province of Ontario by the Liberals. And, in fact, it's actually over 700,000 jobs that have come back to Ontario since we were elected and not the 699,000—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Your first part was valid. The second is not.

DEFERRED VOTES

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE AGRICOLE DE L'ONTARIO

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to amend the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Act / Projet de loi 155, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Institut de recherche agricole de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the members to please take their seats.

On April 10, 2024, Mr. Leardi moved third reading of Bill 155, An Act to amend the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario Act.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harden, Joel	Rakocevic, Tom
Babikian, Aris	Hazell, Andrea	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Sabawy, Sheref
Blais, Stephen	Holland, Kevin	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Hsu, Ted	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bourgouin, Guy	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Bowman, Stephanie	Jordan, John	Saunderson, Brian
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Kanapathi, Logan	Schreiner, Mike
Bresee, Ric	Karpoche, Bhutla	Scott, Laurie
Byers, Rick	Kernaghan, Terence	Shamji, Adil
Calandra, Paul	Kerzner, Michael S.	Shaw, Sandy
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, David
Clancy, Aislinn	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Graydon
Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Laura
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Collard, Lucille	Mamakwa, Sol	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	Martin, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	McCrimmon, Karen	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Flack, Rob	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Michael D.	Mulroney, Caroline	Tibollo, Michael A.
Fraser, John	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
French, Jennifer K.	Pang, Billy	Vanthof, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Wai, Daisy
Gélinas, France	Piccini, David	West, Jamie
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Glover, Chris	Pirie, George	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gretzky, Lisa	Quinn, Nolan	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 95; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to next recognize the government House leader under standing order 59.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I thank all members for their productive week on behalf of the people of Ontario.

On Monday, April 15, in the afternoon we will continue debate on Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act.

On Tuesday, April 16, in the morning and in the afternoon we will concentrate on Bill 185 again. At private members' business we will have the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler's private member's motion number 85, reducing distractions in schools.

On Wednesday, April 17: Bill 159, Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act; in the afternoon, third reading of Bill 151, Improving Real Estate Management Act; at 6 p.m., a private member's bill standing in the name of the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Bill 177, the Test Your Smoke Alarm Day Act, 2024.

On Thursday, Bill 155, Improving Real Estate, we'll continue with that; Bill 159 in the afternoon, the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act; and at 6 p.m., we will have private member's Bill 179.

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

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Oshawa has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to their question given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade regarding EV charging infrastructure. This matter will be debated on Tuesday following private members' public business.

There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to welcome back to the Legislature Patrick Porzuczek and Cathy Mauro from the Save the Minden ER group. Welcome to your House.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated April 11, 2024, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Stan Cho: I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Bailey replaces Mr. Harris and Mrs. Martin replaces Mr. Leardi; and

On the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Mrs. Martin replaces Mr. Cuzzetto, Ms. Dixon replaces Mr.

Kanapathi, Mrs. Wai replaces Ms. Smith (Thornhill), and Mr. Ke is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Ms. Barnes replaces Mr. Byers, Ms. Hogarth replaces Ms. Pierre, Mr. Harris replaces Mr. Smith (Scarborough Centre), and Ms. Bowman is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Mr. Bouma replaces Ms. Hogarth, Mr. Riddell replaces Mr. Bailey, Mr. McGregor replaces Ms. Kusendova-Bashta, and Mr. Blais is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Ms. Pierre replaces Mrs. Martin, Ms. Smith (Thornhill) replaces Mr. Jordan, Mr. Pang replaces Ms. Gallagher Smith, Mr. Grewal replaces Mrs. Wai, Mr. Shamji is removed, Ms. Brady is removed, and Ms. Clancy is added; and

On the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, Mr. Bresee replaces Mr. Grewal, Mr. Smith (Peterborough–Kawartha) replaces Mr. Coe, Mr. Byers replaces Mr. Pang, and Ms. Clancy is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on the Interior, Mr. Jordan replaces Mr. Bresee, Mr. Cuzzetto replaces Mr. Riddell, Mr. Dowie replaces Mr. McGregor, Mr. Holland replaces Mr. Smith (Peterborough–Kawartha), Ms. Gallagher Murphy replaces Mr. Sarrazin, and Mr. Schreiner is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, Mr. Fraser is removed; and

That the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair; and

That all the changes enumerated above shall come into force at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, April 12, 2024.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the minister to reread the section on the Standing Committee on Social Policy to make sure we have it correct at the table, if you would.

Hon. Stan Cho: I could read it all back to you if you would like, Mr. Speaker, but:

On the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Ms. Pierre replaces Mrs. Martin, Ms. Smith (Thornhill) replaces Mr. Jordan, Mr. Pang replaces Ms. Gallagher Smith Murphy—oh, sorry, Ms. Gallagher Murphy; just added a “Smith,” excuse me—Mr. Grewal replaces Mrs. Wai, Mr. Shamji is removed, Ms. Brady is removed, and Ms. Clancy is added; and.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Long-Term Care, Mr. Cho, has moved that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Bailey replaces Mr. Harris and Mrs. Martin replaces Mr. Leardi—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense. Is there any debate?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I'm not that surprised that this motion is being tabled. I am, however, questioning its validity. I thought that the committee organization and membership was to be discussed at the procedure and House affairs committee, so I would definitely request that

this be clarified and if this motion is actually in order or out of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): With respect to your question as to whether or not the motion is in order, the motion is in order. Any further debate?

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

MISSING PERSONS

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm proud to be able to introduce this petition which has been floating around for more than a few months now, since the introduction of Bill 74, vulnerable persons alert. This bill was created to create a vulnerable persons alert to help police and community in a time where a vulnerable person goes missing.

It started, unfortunately, with the death of Draven Graham a young boy with autism who went missing in his community and, unfortunately, was found deceased when they actually were able to find him, as well as Shirley Love, a senior in the Hamilton community who had dementia and was missing for days before she, unfortunately, was found deceased also.

The missing persons alert would help the community have the opportunity to see first-hand when a person goes missing in their geographical area and help the police aid in ensuring that a vulnerable person comes home safely to their loved ones in a very timely manner.

So I wholeheartedly support this bill, will affix my name to it and give it to page Simon to bring to the Clerk.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members that standing order 42(b) reads: "A member may present a petition in the House during the afternoon routine 'Petitions.' The member may make a brief statement summarizing the contents of the petition and indicating the number of signatures attached thereto but shall not read the text of the petition."

Again, I'd ask members to keep the presentations with regard to the petitions as brief as possible.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I have a petition here that was handed to me by Dr. Sally Palmer. It's signed by 54 Ontarians. The petition asks the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP. It outlines a few reasons for this, including the fact that the current rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line, and it describes how small increases to ODSP have still been insufficient to lift people above the poverty line, particularly given the rate of inflation in recent years and the rising cost of food and rent.

I agree with the petition, will affix my name to it and give it to page Erwin to bring it to the table.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm pleased to present a petition with regard to the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare board of directors, from the people, that requests that the director's request to the Ministry of Health be disregarded at this time.

I share this petition with Shivanshee, and I will pass it in.

1310

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Chris Glover: It's an honour to rise in the House to deliver this package of petitions with some 4,006 signatures, added to the 10,797 that were brought in September, for a total, with other petitions as well—there have now been 38,622 signatures asking this government to reopen the Minden ER.

Just about a year ago, on June 1, 2023, without notice, the emergency room in Minden was closed, and this has caused a number of problems. The main one is that the nearest emergency room is 20 minutes away, and so people have to travel in an emergency situation an extra 20 minutes by road, often in the winter.

What this petition is asking is that—they're saying this closure is jeopardizing lives, and they are asking this government to reopen the Minden emergency department as soon as possible in order to save the lives of the residents of Minden and the surrounding community.

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and pass it to page Armaan.

TRANSGENDER CONVERSION THERAPY

M^{me} Lucille Collard: This petition is about transgender. This petition is about the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, which was funded by both the federal and provincial ministries of health. It describes how patients who presented themselves to the institute for help with transitioning were then subjected to the harmful practice of conversion therapy and treated as seriously mentally ill sexual deviants.

The close to 3,000 people who signed this petition are asking for the Legislative Assembly to issue a formal apology to all transgenders who were subjected to this mentally tortuous process.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Tom Rakocvic: I'm presenting a petition from ACORN Canada entitled "Petition for Full Rent Control." This is so important to be heard now at this time of absolutely unaffordable rents paid by tenants across all of the province and certainly in Humber River–Black Creek.

This petition asks this government—in fact, demands the government—to apply rent control to all units, to end

vacancy control and, certainly, to close the loophole that allows for excessive rent hikes above annual increases.

It's an honour to sign this, and I'll be presenting it to page Duncan.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Wayne Gates: I am giving a petition that now has a total of 38,620 signatures on it. It's about the Minden hospital that close to a year ago—their emergency was closed without any notification. We're asking to reopen it immediately and have the health minister use the power that is given to her under the Public Hospitals Act to immediately reopen this hospital and to save lives in that community.

I'll sign my name to the petition.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I, too, would like to present a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calling on this Conservative government to reopen the emergency department at Minden hospital. It was closed without any public consultation. Communities need emergency rooms. If there was a life-threatening event, residents of Minden would have to travel over 20 minutes. Sometimes—it can take longer in the winter, and they do not have a local emergency room.

This petition here is signed by residents not only of Minden but residents from across Ontario, because we all understand the importance of having an emergency room in our communities.

I will affix my signature to it and join the calls from the people of Ontario to ask the government to immediately reopen the Minden emergency department.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to present a petition to this Legislature that is signed by over 4,000 residents of the area around Minden. They add to the more than 30,000 total number of people who have signed petitions to reopen the Minden emergency room.

The Minden ER was one of those 1,200 emergency rooms or urgent care centres that had to close in 2023. I hear from a lot of the hospitals in my community outside London how important those small emergency rooms are to prevent people having to come into the city to access emergency care. I certainly stand with and support the people of Minden in their urging the government to use their powers to immediately reopen the Minden emergency department.

I affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Armaan.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: Once again, I would like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for sending in these petitions and

her endless work on ensuring that people on social assistance in the province of Ontario have their rates doubled.

We know that people on social services are living well below the poverty line. Quite frankly, it's legislated poverty: people on Ontario Works, \$733, no increase in over a decade; for people on Ontario Disability Support Program, a very meagre increase took them to \$1,308. This does not leave enough money for rent.

This petition states that there are 230 organizations that wrote a letter to the Premier and to the minister urging the government to double the ODSP rates so people have quality of life in the province of Ontario.

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I'm going to affix my signature to it and give it to page Ryder to bring to the Clerk.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to join the voices of nearly 40,000 people calling on this government to reverse the decision by the board of directors at the Haliburton Highlands Health Services, where they, without any consultation with the community, closed down the Minden hospital ER. As we've heard from my colleagues, as we've heard from the people who have signed the petition, the people who are here today, this deeply impacts their community, to be forcing them to travel—it could be 20 minutes or more, depending on the weather—outside of their community when they have an urgent situation.

We know that if there is a case of cardiac arrest or other instances of medical emergencies, every second counts when it comes to saving lives. We know that because of underfunding of the publicly funded, publicly delivered, not-for-profit health care system, we have seen many cases across the province where hospitals in different communities are shutting down emergency departments. It is absolutely shameful that that is happening in this province, risking people's lives.

I join those 40,000 people who are calling on the Minister of Health to use her powers to reopen the Minden ER and to properly fund public health care in this province.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have a petition here titled "Raise Social Assistance Rates." It calls on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP. Recipients of Ontario Works receive only \$733 per month, and those on the Ontario Disability Support Program receive \$1,308 per month. This is legislated poverty. No one can survive with these amounts, especially given the unaffordable housing crisis. Certainly, in areas like Toronto, where the cost of a one-bedroom is over \$2,000, they're rates that people cannot survive on.

The Ontario Works rate has been frozen for over two decades. For Ontario Disability Support Program, it has only increased by 3%, Speaker. It's time to double the

social assistance rates. I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

1320

NURSES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that was sent with thousands of signatures from the RNAO, the RNs of this province who are desperate for a plan to be able to retain and recruit nurses. The vacancies are—we would need 24,000 filled positions to be able to make up the difference of shortfalls that we're seeing within our nurses and RNs, who are feeling the burnout, are feeling the stress of not having enough support on the floor of our hospitals and their workplaces to be able to keep Ontarians safe. It needs to be a priority for this government.

I wholeheartedly support this: ensuring that there are enough RNs in the province of Ontario to ensure a healthy society. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Duncan to give to the Clerk.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I have before me 210 signed petitions that are part of over 38,000 demanding that the Minden emergency room be opened. This has been the case since June 1 of 2023, and the substance of this petition is literally life and death, because in an emergency, minutes matter. This petition demands that the emergency room be reopened. It's the right thing to do. It is necessary and, in some cases, it's life and death.

I'm definitely signing this and giving it to the page.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Edith Dumont, OOnt
Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day
Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,
Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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 Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
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	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
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	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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 législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
		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
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 (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
		Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
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, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
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	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
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	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
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	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Vacant	Milton	