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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 June 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 juin 2024

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PREVENTING UNETHICAL PUPPY SALES ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA PRÉVENTION DE LA VENTE DE CHIOTS CONTRAIRE À L'ÉTHIQUE

Mr. Kerzner moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to amend the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, 2019 / Projet de loi 159, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2019 sur les services provinciaux visant le bien-être des animaux.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll recognize the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm honoured to rise today to speak on Bill 159. I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General, the member from Brampton North, and the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Today's third reading of Bill 159 is part of our government's commitment to public safety. It is a road map that our government is very proud to talk about. It is a road map, as I've spoken many times, that confirms our government's commitment to public safety in all of its forms and to say that we've never had a government or a Premier—our Premier, Premier Doug Ford—who has led by example and has prioritized public safety every single day.

I'm delighted to talk about the bill today and to give a perspective of why public safety matters. I use every opportunity that I can to thank our police officers and our firefighters. I want to thank the special constables and the auxiliary officers, civilian and sworn; our correctional

officers; our probation and parole officers; the amazing 911 call operators; and the animal welfare inspectors as well.

Today, Bill 159, the third reading which we will talk about, is important because it goes to the incremental steps that our government has taken in public safety, and it's very important. I believe the reason that we are here today is to make a difference in the lives of the province. Every day, we can do something important. Every day, we can make a difference in a person's life.

This is what our province represents, a diversity of peoples that have come here, regardless of how they got here. They all have an equal right to live safely and to succeed and to flourish. The government's responsibility is to do absolutely everything we can to make the lives of Ontarians something that they can go about in a safe environment.

Monsieur le Président, les raisons de leur service : ils peuvent faire une différence dans la vie des gens lorsqu'ils ne s'y attendent pas—et parce que nous croyons en notre province et en notre avenir.

Mr. Speaker, this is important. When we look at the communities that we have, there are many components that we take for granted because we go about our lives each and every day, never really understanding how important it is that the network of people who keep us safe, the people that I just gave a shout-out to, are there to ensure we can live our lives, and it's very, very important.

Today, as we take a further step, another incremental step in animal welfare, we do so understanding where we have come from: the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, or as we like to call it, the PAWS Act. I want to specifically thank the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Health and member from Dufferin–Caledon for having the foresight to bring this bill, the PAWS Act, into force in 2020. It was passed in 2019. It modernized, it educated, and it set a standard for animal welfare. The Deputy Premier deserves a lot of credit for having the ambition to move in that direction. It has actually been transformational when we look at animal welfare today.

The PAWS Act came into force, and as a result of the PAWS Act, the assembly of animal welfare inspectors, the training of animal welfare inspectors, the setting up of the division came into being. I have seen these animal welfare inspectors in training myself. In fact, I was there with the member from Brantford–Brant in his own riding, and we went and we saw them in action. The member from Brantford–Brant and myself spoke to them about their commitment and their passion for wanting to make sure that the

job that they will do throughout Ontario will be a fulfilling job for them, something that they will be able to look backwards in their lives to say, “We made a difference in animal welfare.”

The PUPS Act, which is Bill 159—the nickname of the bill is the PUPS Act—deals with filling the gaps that were as a result of learning from the PAWS Act. Now we’re filling the gaps of the prohibitions of buying, selling and breeding dogs in an unethical way, and I think it’s very important that we, again, look retrospectively as to where we have been so we understand where we are today.

I also want to mention that this is not the next incremental step since the PAWS Act came into force in 2020; it was actually Bill 102, which I was proud to speak on and help see move forward. Bill 102, as an example, did further strengthen animal welfare, including debt collection of fines, which is important.

So here we are today, and I want to speak about Bill 159, the PUPS Act, that will help crack down on puppy mills and the negative impact they have in the province. Premier Ford has made it clear that all over Ontario people need to feel safe. That’s exactly what I said in my preamble and that’s why we’re here today. The government’s oath and duty is to protect our communities so we can live safely, but it also means the care and welfare of animals is so important to the cornerstone of our society.

As I’ve travelled the province and listened to stories in this Legislature, we hear the stories of our own pets that are part of our family. They are in every way so essential to our families, to our raising of our children and our grandchildren, and to having these pets be part of our lives. It’s very important that Ontario’s consumers understand that they should feel comfortable in purchasing or in adopting an animal.

0910

Our government is stepping up, and our government has stepped up. As I said, this is now the third iteration that I am so happy to support. The Deputy Premier brought the PAWS Act in. I helped shepherd Bill 102, and we’re here today for Bill 159. These foundations that we’ve laid are very, very important. It is our government, under Premier Ford, that built the division of good and bad actors around the legislation from the ground up. This was our initiative to ensure that any animal has the right to be treated fairly in Ontario.

Madam Speaker, this is not only about animal rights. Of course, most of this proposed legislation expresses compassion for our current and future pets. It also sets a precedent for how our societies operate and the tone we take to all forms of life in Ontario.

I want to talk about what owning a puppy should mean. It means bringing home a puppy that will be joyful for the members of our own families, the opening of our arms when we hold our puppies and our dogs, and to see these adopted animals as part of our own family. From the moment this happens, there is this overwhelming sense of excitement and happiness and tenderness. Watching the puppy exploring its new surroundings with curiosity brings excitement to everyone.

I have to say, Madam Speaker, especially during the pandemic, we’ve heard story after story as to how having our pets—our puppies, our dogs, our rabbits—in our lives made such a vital difference in a time that we had no precedent for.

Amidst the joy of having and being fortunate to have puppies, there is also a sense of responsibility. This is also very important. If the puppies were raised under perfect conditions by good actors, then that’s great and we’re happy about it. But that’s not what we’re here to talk about today. We’re here to identify why we needed to come forward with this legislation now: because we need to create legislation that denounces the operation of unethical puppy breeding, because it happens, unfortunately, much too often.

I want to preface my remarks about unethical breeding, because it’s very, very important. Right here in Ontario, puppies who are being bred cruelly and taken from their mothers too soon, and undernourished and displaying biological behavioural issues or diseases and lack of care, is a problem. This act of criminal behaviour—trying to finesse the province with cruelty—is something we will not stand for. We will not stand for bad breeders and bad actors, and as long as we are here in government, we will do something about it. Because when you’re dealing with a puppy mill operator, the transaction of faith must be acknowledged as something that is sacrosanct, which means that the transaction of the adoption must be something that will lead to a wonderful outcome for the family and the loving animal as well.

We have a problem when we look at the bad actors that are the problem. That’s why. We care about this province, we care about the people in the province, and we care about the pets that share our own homes. That’s why the PUPS bill is essential: because these puppy mills are a scourge on the rights of animals themselves and the peace of mind for those who have every expectation that the adoption process will be something that they can take a lot of pride in. When we’re dealing with bad actors, that’s not always the case.

The bad actors: Let me give you some examples of how they are and who they are. They deploy cruel breeding practices of poor nutrition and overcrowding; that’s absolutely true. They reduce the public’s trust in the dog-breeding industry; true. And they are the largest distributors of sick and diseased puppies in the province; true again. It’s time to put an end to all of this. Each day that goes by without this legislation is allowing these places to keep going, and we don’t want that to be the case.

The PUPS Act, if passed, will help deter the operation of puppy mills completely; ultimately, by extension, improving the health and welfare of dogs bred in Ontario. For the first time, this province would have an act that clearly denounces puppy mill operations and the horrific distress that results from them.

I can’t stress enough how important it is to understand the incremental approach, the thoughtful approach that our government, led by Premier Ford, has taken with public

safety. This intersects absolutely with animal welfare. That's why we're moving forward with the legislation.

I would like to take a minute to tell the House now why we have to go through the modus operandi of puppy mills—and this can also be referred to as the measures—through which the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act proposes to end. This includes but is not limited to the deplorable practices. My parliamentary assistant, my friend from Brampton North, will fill in more of the details, but I'd like to give the House some broad spectrum of this.

I want to say thank you to the responsible dog breeders in Ontario who do provide families with happy, healthy and well-cared-for dogs and puppies.

And to the puppy mills that are an abrupt departure from such responsible practices: We will come after you. I'm putting you on notice. We are coming after you.

Madam Speaker, the most important question that people ask—the members from the other side have asked it; people in Ontario have asked it; we've asked it: What actually is a puppy mill? This is where we start to get into more details. Operators of puppy mills devour and take for granted Ontarians' love of animals. They prey on the desire to welcome new puppies into a household. The term "puppy mill" is generally used to describe a place where dogs endure horrendous treatment. They are subjected to poor breeding practices, inadequate care and immense suffering, but you don't always know it when you legitimately want to adopt your furry friend, your dog; you don't know the behind-the-scenes story. That's exactly the point: Where there is this lack of basic needs for the puppies, an unforeseen person wouldn't see that; they wouldn't know that. Potential buyers often don't get to see the conditions of the operations because puppy mill operators won't let them nearby. It's obvious. Why would a bad actor want to show a wholesome family, an honest family, a caring family who wants to adopt a dog, a puppy, what's really going on behind the scenes? They don't. Owners of the puppy mills do not think that we have a right to see how the puppy was raised, because it would completely ruin their income. It's part of an unethical breeder's business model, and this model is unacceptable.

Unethical puppy breeding is an unethical transaction that usually occurs in a staged area away from a boarding kennel. What's worse is the illusion of the staged area isn't even the worst part. Some breeders are making excuses to meet in an abandoned parking lot, straight out of a car or a van, or deliver the animal directly to your home—anywhere but where the dog was bred and where the dog was born. This legislation is to send out a red flag to a potential buyer that they're not dealing with an ethical seller.

0920

I'm sure many of us in this House have heard similar stories from constituents about these awful circumstances. If the customer was to be given a look behind the veil, they would be repulsed and sickened by what they saw. We hear stories, Madam Speaker, of dogs which are crammed and locked in cages, and treated badly and undernourished. Many mill kennels have no heating in the bitterly

cold winters and no air conditioning in the hot summers. Mother dogs are often covered in their own waste, emaciated and suffering. It would be apparent to a person who would see it, because it would be so horrific, but we don't get to see it. Nobody wants to take us behind the curtain.

And there are cases of inbreeding between sibling dogs and inbreeding between a parent dog and a dog of one of their litters. These breeders are breeding female dogs prematurely while they're not physically able to breed or care for the litter. These are common practices that can lead to significant health issues for puppies. It's absolutely sickening. It's sickening to everyone here.

But, Madam Speaker, there are many more things that we need to talk about, and that is because we need to make change. It's because puppy mills are churning out dogs with little or no regard to their health and their well-being.

I want to talk for a minute, Madam Speaker, about puppy mills versus responsible breeders. Breeding puppies isn't a game. It's not a game that you can cheat on either. So I want to compare the practices with valid, honest and responsible dog breeders, and to those, we say thank you.

Proper dog breeding comes with a significant cost. There's a conscientious dog breeder that prioritizes the long-term care of the animal over the quick buck. And it's not how fast they can take someone's money; it's more about raising a good-quality dog. So when it comes to leaving with their family on the day that somebody picks up their furry friend, they want to make sure that that dog is healthy, and that dogs that are given homes were raised in well-built, comfortable kennels with amenities like heat, air conditioning and electricity. Things that we take for granted should be no different for the people raising dogs. These dogs have had a nutritious diet. They receive regular exercise and they undergo health evaluations and visits. I want to give a shout-out to the veterinarians who help keep all of our pets safe in Ontario.

Responsible breeders dedicate ample time to caring for the new mother. This ensures they receive proper nourishment and attention. What's so amazing, Madam Speaker, is that a good actor, a good dog breeder, a legitimate dog breeder will proudly open their kennels to a prospective buyer, and they will make sure that there is a good match between the buyer—the family—and the dog that will soon be adopted. The difference is that they will be able to showcase their operation and be proud of it.

I want to talk about the toughness of identification, because that's also very important. Madam Speaker, it's not always easy to pin down the exact number of puppy mills lurking in our province. We know this because many are hidden in plain sight. This can be on a property, such as a backyard, or even in a basement. Most of the tips my ministry receives on the location of puppy mills come from members of the public. That's very important to know. Because we have the animal welfare hotline, the value of the public's concern is very important.

Online advertising on platforms such as Craigslist, Kijiji and Facebook Marketplace have made it easy to

expand the business of unethical puppy mills. By providing an easy avenue for dog breeders to unload puppies, unsuspecting families are that much more susceptible to come into contact with them. Again, that's why we need to act now.

This act, the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act would, if passed, help stop harmful dog breeding practices, impose new minimum penalties and make sure that dogs across Ontario receive the care and attention they deserve. Consequences are important because they impose accountability, helping these unethical people understand the impact of their actions. They reinforce learning and growth by providing clear feedback on behaviour and choices. Consequences that this legislation will contain are set to help maintain social order and fairness by ensuring the rules and the norms are respected when breeding. And they will also encourage responsible decision-making, promoting a sense of responsibility across Ontario.

So let's talk for a minute about the consequences of minimum penalties. I want to reiterate: Owners or custodians of dogs are already subject to all measures in the PAWS Act—that's the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act. This includes prohibitions against causing distress and general standards of care that apply to all animals covered by the PAWS Act. But there are no prohibitions in the act related to the key facets of what constitutes a puppy mill—until now.

Puppy mills can leave no footprints when dog sales are conducted solely through online platforms. We're sticking a red flag and putting a notice on these types of operations. Through this proposed legislation, Ontario would become the first jurisdiction in Canada to explicitly include the term "puppy mill" into law, because it is the puppy mills that are giving dog breeders a bad name.

The proposed legislation, if passed, will target individuals who benefit from assisting puppy mill operators. This includes actors that may not directly operate the puppy mill themselves. Puppy mill operations can be complex, and they cover multiple properties and vigorous sales channels. Those who enable the suffering caused in puppy mills will be held accountable, regardless of their role. Guilt by association in this case will catch the divisions of good and bad actors in communities and perpetuate justice. Because not only does our government, on this issue, care so deeply about what we're doing, we are also proud to implement measures to prevent it from happening in the first place. I think that's very important.

The minimum penalties are important. The \$10,000 penalty for anyone operating a puppy mill is important. The minimum penalty for anyone assisting or benefiting from a puppy mill is important. A proposed minimum penalty of \$25,000 for anyone who has the audacity to cause or permit a dog to be in distress in relation to the breeding or selling of dogs is important.

Again, Madam Speaker, I want to be completely clear that the proposed legislation does not target responsible dog breeders. It's aimed solely to go after the bad actors who breed dogs too early or breed them in a substandard

condition. It is aimed at the bad actors who sell puppies in an unethical manner.

0930

Madam Speaker, we know how important pets are in our lives and we want our Ontario, in every forum of public safety, to be recognized as a jurisdiction that is the pre-eminent, that is the mark of excellence, that is the gold standard for us to live our lives. To see our kids off to school in the morning, to check in on our parents and our loved ones, to go to work, to come home at the end of the day, to play in the park and to shop and to pray: We must do this safely, because this is our inherent right. Having our pets, our adopted furry friends in our lives, plays an important role. The standard, the expectation, of how we care for our animals is important.

I started my remarks, Madam Speaker, as a retrospective journey of why this is so important, why it's important to me. Pour moi, c'est personnel. Rien pour moi, en tant que solliciteur général, n'est plus important que la sécurité de notre province. And I'm proud of this. I'm proud of taking this personally.

I'm proud of standing with Premier Ford every single day and having the opportunity to do my part as the minister responsible for seeing this legislation go to third reading and seeing it hopefully be approved by this Legislature, to send a message of how important public safety is in Ontario, that it is not a singular dimension. It's not just this and it's not just that. It encompasses so many components.

Speaking today on Bill 159 is important to me. It reaffirms our government's commitment, a commitment that is absolute and constant, that is day and night, that we will take the public safety of all Ontarians and our animals very seriously.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has been an honour to rise on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next, I recognize the member for Brampton North.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I think all colleagues of the House should just give a round of applause to the Solicitor General. I know he's been a dog on a bone on this issue—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Quite dogged.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Well, you know what, some of the opposition members might have thought our government was barking up the wrong tree, but I really hope that the opposition House leader decides not to muzzle their members and allows them to vote yes for the PUPS bill. I suspect, in the summer, if they go back to their ridings and they don't vote for this bill, Speaker, they're going to have a "ruff" time.

Okay, thank you for the long leash this morning, Madam Speaker. I'll get back to my prepared remarks.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He's going to the kennel now.

Mr. Graham McGregor: I'm going to the kennel now.

It's an honour to be here, as always, on behalf of my constituents in Brampton North and today in my capacity also as a parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General. It's a responsibility, a privilege and an honour to serve the people in this way and a job that we all have to take

seriously every day. This PUPS Act, if passed, will support our government's public safety priorities by targeting puppy mills in Ontario.

I, like many members of the House, am an animal lover, and I am saddened and disgusted, as we all are and all must be, when we see images of severely emaciated, crated dogs on television or online every time a puppy mill gets busted. Dogs are often found in filthy conditions sitting in their own feces—sitting in their own feces, Madam Speaker—which is absolutely heartbreaking.

No true animal lover would operate a puppy mill. No dog lover would knowingly buy from one unless they were seeking to stop the suffering. People are buying these sick and mistreated dogs unknowingly, while operators are cashing in on such abusive practices. Experts have told us that online advertising and sale platforms—the minister mentioned Kijiji, Craigslist, others—and the greater demand for puppies during the pandemic has contributed to an increase in puppy mills and high-volume breeding. Whatever is driving the growth in puppy mills, it must end, which is why we are here today debating the PUPS Act.

If passed, the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act will make amendments to the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, the PAWS Act, to help stop harmful dog-breeding practices associated with puppy mills.

Failing to keep a dog with a contagious disease away from other dogs or animals and failing to keep the dog's environment sanitary would also be prohibited.

Finally, if passed, the proposed legislation will create new regulation-making powers so the province can set conditions that must be met to sell a dog and require the keeping of records through future regulations.

Speaker, I would now like to do a deeper dive into the prohibitions of the proposed PUPS Act. If passed, some of the prohibitions proposed in this legislation will come into force upon royal assent, while others will come into force at later dates.

The prohibitions that will come into force if the bill is passed upon royal assent are those that seek to immediately prevent the spread of disease and ensure that dogs are kept clean and living in sanitary conditions. They will also prohibit people from supporting or benefiting from the operation of a puppy mill.

I should stress that while the legislation is aimed at combatting puppy mills, the provisions being proposed within the PUPS Act will apply to the dog-breeding sector writ large.

Good breeders and others involved in responsible operations should be able to comply with these prohibitions immediately. They shouldn't affect their day-to-day operations.

Other provisions that will come into force at a later date will be supported by record-keeping regulations.

As has been previously mentioned, owners or custodians of dogs are subject to all measures in the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, the PAWS Act. This includes prohibitions against causing distress—and general standards of care that apply to all animals covered by

this legislation. But there are no prohibitions in this act related to key facets of what constitutes a puppy mill.

That is where the proposed legislation comes in—and the problem we are looking to solve.

If passed, the PUPS Act will prohibit harmful dog-breeding practices common in puppy mills. These include prohibiting inbreeding between sibling dogs or between a parent dog and a dog in one of their litters. This practice can be common in puppy mills, especially where breeding is largely unsupervised. This can result in puppies that can suffer their entire life due to inherited health problems.

Another prohibition coming that will come into effect, if passed, is breeding a female dog at too early of an age. Dogs need to be physiologically capable of breeding and raising a litter. Some pre-breeding health tests such as hip dysplasia screening can only be done once a dog is 12 months old. Giving dogs a little extra time allows a breeder to get to know the temperament and behavioural traits of the animal and will help in making better breeding decisions.

Another prohibition that's coming in is breeding a female dog too early in its reproductive cycle. Many dogs' first estrus or heat cycle is unlikely to allow for successful breeding. It is industry best practice to wait until the second or even third heat cycle before breeding. It's also just the right thing to do for the dogs in your care.

The proposed act will also prohibit allowing a dog with a contagious disease to interact with other dogs or animals or to use the same objects, such as food or water containers. Isolation of dogs with a suspected or confirmed contagious disease is obviously critical to preventing the spread of illnesses that can be fatal, such as parvovirus, which is a virus that attacks white blood cells and the gastrointestinal tract of dogs and can damage the heart muscle.

Another prohibition: Breeding dogs in an environment that is unsanitary, such as failing to prevent an accumulation of waste that would pose a risk to a dog's health. I talked earlier about finding some of these animals sitting in their own feces. These kinds of conditions around sanitation can be disastrous—the spread of disease. They can cause infections, parasites. And it's just plain gosh darn gross.

Another prohibition we're bringing in will be the failure to address severely matted fur, visible parasites or emaciation. This is to ensure that in addition to the spread of contagious diseases and cleanliness of a dog's environment, which is already addressed in the proposed act, the breeder can be charged with the offence of operating a puppy mill if conditions such as severely matted fur or visible parasites and emaciation are not addressed.

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As noted, the proposed act would create new penalties on bad actors, including a minimum \$10,000 fine for operating or facilitating the operation of a puppy mill, and a minimum penalty of \$25,000 for anyone who causes or permits a dog to be in distress or exposes a dog to risk of distress in relation to the breeding or selling of a dog. These new measures would make Ontario the first

province to introduce minimum fines for the operation of a puppy mill. Depending on the number of charges laid, the fine amount could become substantial and exceed the minimum amount in more severe cases.

I want to talk about some personal points to this. In my debate during second reading, I talked about Georgia, who I got to spend time with on Friday last week—a wonderful dog that was rescued from the most deplorable conditions. I know dog animal rescue services across Ontario are working morning, noon and night, 24/7, to rescue as many dogs from vile conditions as they can. Previously in my life I was able to caretake a rescue dog from Texas.

I note that in committee we had many witnesses come, including Brampton Animal Services, and they do fantastic work in the city of Brampton to keep dogs safe. If you haven't seen their recent reel of their potential adoptees, Madam Speaker, I suggest you check it out. I thought Bodhi and Butter Ball were particularly cute on the Brampton Animal Services' Instagram page.

I want to note something the minister mentioned in his remarks that this isn't a bill intended to go after just bad breeders. All of the prohibitions that I outlined earlier in my speech are things that are common sense for good, decent, honest, ethical people. There are dog breeders that either do it for the love or for the money—many times more love than the money—but they're in it because they love dogs, they love what they do and they breed in an ethical capacity. But when we have situations like puppy mills where they're not taking care of their dogs, they're not providing sanitary conditions, they're not establishing strong minimum ages for breeding and preventing sibling dogs or parent-child dogs from breeding—when they're not caring for these animals, that's when it is our moral obligation as a government, as a society, to crack down on these people and hit them with fines of \$10,000 or \$25,000 in more severe cases.

Another change that's being proposed in the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act includes a clarifying change relating to enhanced debt collection tools. The Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act included amendments to build on the PAWS Act to make it stronger, and one of those amendments improves the recovery of costs incurred by animal welfare services through greater specificity on the types of recoverable costs when providing care to animals that are in distress or have been removed by animal welfare services. These costs are itemized in a statement of account.

A statement of account is an invoice served to an animal owner or custodian for costs incurred by animal welfare services while providing necessary care for an animal that had to be removed from a distress situation or due to concerns for care. Under the current law, the Ministry of the Solicitor General can only enforce the collection of the debt through standard collection tools such as call-outs and follow-up letters. But in order to build a more robust system and activate the enhanced collection tools under the Ministry of Revenue Act, the PAWS Act must be amended, and, if the PUPS Act is passed, an amendment is included therein to the PAWS Act which would

authorize the use of these mentioned enhanced debt collection tools which would support the collection of debts owed, resulting in higher levels of reimbursements of government funds and improving the cost-recovery rates for animal welfare services.

The proposed PUPS Act introduces measures that will enable the province to zero in on puppy mills, their operators and their facilitators, including making Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to explicitly include the term “puppy mill” in law. To assist with the enforceability of the new prohibitions and future regulation-making authorities and offences, the legislation also proposes new definitions for the term “dog” and “transfer.” A “dog” would be defined as “canis lupus familiaris” or any domesticated descendant of the wolf. It would include an animal which is a cross between a dog and another member of the canis family, including a wolf or a coyote. The definition of “transfer” would be specific to future conditions related to the sale or transfer of a dog and includes such practices as trading or bartering a dog. It would not include gifting.

Substandard conditions and unethical sales practices are the currency of these dog breeders. It is what keeps puppy mills in business and puppy mill operators turning enormous profits. No Canadian province has specific prohibitions on operating a puppy mill. Ontario is leading the way by proposing tougher rules to hold those who abuse dogs to account. If passed by the Legislature, this act will make the necessary changes to the PAWS Act to help stop harmful dog-breeding practices associated with puppy mills with proposed legislated minimum penalties that will give real teeth to this act—the \$10,000, \$25,000 fines I talked about previously.

Colleagues, think about what this means. This means that dog breeders will have to clean up their act. Unsanitary kennels will be prohibited. That means cracking down on kennels rotting with feces and other waste.

Changes in this act will allow the province to establish record-keeping regulations to help animal welfare services inspectors investigate potential puppy mills, and establish conditions that must be met to sell or transfer a dog in Ontario, to help stop unethical sales practices. This also means less pressure on municipal animal shelters and veterinary clinics. I gave a shout-out to Brampton Animal Services earlier. This will be very, very good for the day-to-day workers who do such a great job at Brampton Animal Services. This act will also mean greater trust in reputable dog breeders whose industry has often been tainted by bad actors.

We're coming for those people who think these breeding practices are acceptable. Enough is enough.

This is part of our government's broader package around public safety. This is a government that, under the leadership of the Solicitor General, the past Solicitor General, the Premier, the PC caucus—who vote in favour of every single bill. This is a bill that has done away with the tuition for the Ontario Police College—not reduced it; done away with it altogether, because we understand we need more boots on the ground, more police in our

neighbourhoods to keep our neighbourhoods safe, to keep people safe in our communities. This is a government that invested half a billion dollars in correctional facilities to make sure that they're held to the right standards so that when people do a bad thing, when they're put in jail—and make no mistake: They're put there for a reason. But we need to make sure that we have the right conditions in place—a half-billion-dollar investment, 2,000 more correctional service officers hired in the last few years, under this Solicitor General's leadership. This is a government that just launched the fire prevention grant, a \$30-million investment for fire services all across Ontario, to make sure that no matter what corner of the province you're in in Ontario, you're kept safe.

This record of public safety is something that we need—and with this act, we are doing, bringing—to help and protect our furry friends as much as we are protecting humans and people in our neighbourhoods.

I'd like to give a little shout-out to some of the witnesses we had at committee. This is a bill that has gone through some fine-tuning in committee, and we couldn't have done that without help from the community. We saw the city of Brampton, Brampton Animal Services—I'm partial to them. We also saw Animal Justice Canada: Camille Labchuk, the executive director, came and gave excellent testimony on where we need to go with the bill. The Animal Shelter Professionals of Ontario: We saw Lindsey Narraway come and testify. We saw Humane Society International, with Ewa Demianowicz. We had Donna Power from the Humane Initiative. We had John Atkinson and Pamela Bruce from the Canadian Kennel Club.

I'll give you an example of something where the committee did some really good work, Madam Speaker. You see, on this side of the House, in the PC government, we believe in parliamentary democracy, and we believe that Parliament can be a force for good and should be a force for good. One of the gaps that we put forward in the bill—initially, we had \$10,000 fines for the puppy mill owners; we had \$25,000 fines for the egregious cases, but we didn't include a fine for people who facilitate a puppy mill. Like, if I owned a basement and somebody else runs a puppy mill, but it's in my basement, and I'm facilitating and aiding in that crime—those people are just as guilty. They are guilty by association, and they are doing wrong, harmful things to animals in Ontario. Those people should pay a big fine.

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I give credit to my other colleagues on the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. That's something that, through clause-by-clause, we actually amended and we actually fixed and has been included in third reading of this bill.

This is a chance for Ontario, for the Legislature, for colleagues on both sides of the aisles to stand up and say that animal welfare matters and matters in a real way. It's a first-of-its-kind legislation in Canada to actually codify puppy mills and the definition of a "puppy mill" in law in Canada. It's something that's never been done before. And full credit to the Solicitor General and the team at the

Ministry of the Solicitor General: Thank you, sir, for bringing this bill forward. This is an important bill and a historic opportunity for all members of this House to stand up and say that the safety and well-being of dogs matter.

Now, we know there is more to do. We know there is more that can be done. In the same way, Madam Speaker, that this PC caucus will never stop fighting to do more to get more boots on the ground, to get more police into our neighbourhoods, we'll do more to get more correctional services officers to make sure that we have more capacity, proper capacity; to make sure that our first responders have the mental health supports that they need—a \$45-million investment in first responder supports; \$3 million for the families of fallen first responders who died either on the job or because of the job. This is part of a track record of this government of putting public safety first and saying that public safety matters, which is a message out there in Ontario, certainly in my riding, certainly in places that I visit, that people really need to hear right now.

This is an important bill. This is an important step forward. I commend the minister for bringing it forward. I certainly will be voting in favour of this bill. I encourage my PC colleagues to do the same, and I encourage all members of this House to please vote in favour and pass third reading of the PUPS Act.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore to continue debate.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: What a great day in Ontario. I think I speak for all of us in this House when I say we all care about what happens to animals. None of us—it doesn't matter what political stripe we are—want to see any animal harmed, mistreated, unfed, unwatered, uncared for. This is something that hits us all in our heart, and I want to thank the Solicitor General for making sure this bill came forward. I want to thank the House leader for ensuring that we are having third reading and debate on it. I want to thank the new parliamentary assistant for his work on this bill.

This goes back to when I first was elected in 2018. This was one of my passions, to bring forward an end to animal cruelty in the province of Ontario and of course our amazing country we live in. I did bring forward a private member's bill, which was passed unanimously by the House at the time, to end puppy mills, to stop them. We all have reasons for running and this was one of the reasons that I wanted to run: to do better.

Growing up in a house with rescued pets—my mom volunteered at the humane society, as did my sister, when I was in school. We've always had rescue dogs in our house—oh, my goodness, we could name them all, but there's numerous of them right now. We have all heard about my pets, Bruce and Edward. Edward is a cat that was found in a backyard, so a feral cat. She hasn't destroyed too many things, just one stair, but we still love her. And my dog, who has many, many issues—he was given up just because he just had so many medical issues, like allergies. He is at home today, desperately needing a haircut, so when we rise, guess who gets the haircut first?

That would be Bruce. He won't be happy about that. I can't actually give him a bath myself; he likes to bite my hands, because I'm his mom, not the master. I have to learn how to be the master, but I'm the mom of the house. We certainly love our pets, and I think that goes, as I said, for everybody here.

I'm certainly, certainly proud to be part of this government and part of this Parliament that is going to, hopefully, vote in favour of this bill, the Preventing Unethical Puppy Sales Act. I know there's many advocates out there who we've talked with over the years who have been—and I'm sure they came to committee. I don't sit on the justice committee, but I'm sure many of them came to the justice committee to share their stories. I want to say thank you to all those people who rescue animals. They spend their money. They spend their time trying to house animals, not just in our own province, our own communities, but across the world. People rescue animals and try to find them their forever home.

And that's just a reminder, if you're ever looking for a pet: Make sure it is their forever home, that it's not just a, "I think, this summer, the kids need a dog." Well, that's not the right reason to get a pet. You have to make sure you want to have that. It's a lifelong commitment and we want to make sure those pets, when you get them, are safe. We want to make sure they were treated well. We want to make sure that they are disease-free, and that's why it's important to end puppy mills.

Many of these dogs in puppy mills, as we've heard, they're matted. They do not have a life of their own. They are caged. They're very matted. Sometimes they don't get proper food and water—nutrition. They don't get the love, and that's what makes a really good pet, that love and that companionship—sociability. And you certainly don't want to pick up a pet that may not last, because it's terrible for the pet, but it's also terrible for the families to have to go through something like that. So ending puppy mills will stop some of these horrible situations from happening.

One thing we're really proud of is our hotline that we put forward when I was working with Minister Jones as Solicitor General through our PUPS Act. It's the animal cruelty line. High fines—the highest in Canada. I was very proud of that: the highest in Canada for animal cruelty in our province. And if you ever see an animal in distress, please call the line. It's 1-833-9-ANIMAL, which is 1-833-9-ANIMAL. We have an icon that we put on our social media, and maybe my staff, if they're listening, can add that to my social feeds today.

Also, this summer, make sure that we don't leave our pets in the car. Sometimes, you say, "I'm just running in to get groceries," "I'm just running in to pick up the kids," or there's a baseball tournament or a soccer tournament. Don't leave your pets in the car when you're grocery shopping; it's really hard on them. Just like you wouldn't leave your kids in the car—but sometimes people need to be reminded of that, which is fairly sad. But don't leave animals or children in hot vehicles, because it's against the law. It's against the law and it's actually a really terrible act.

Once this legislation is passed, Ontario would become the first jurisdiction in Canada to explicitly include the term "puppy mill" into law. When I first looked at my private member's bill, you couldn't see the term "puppy mill" anywhere. It meant different things in different places. I checked in the States, what they had. We have backyard breeders, but the puppy mill was never a defined term, so this legislation is actually going to define it and make it a law. That's a huge step forward. Because we talk about it, but just because we talk about it, it doesn't mean it's actually a law. So this is great.

As I mentioned, I was passionate about animals and the work that we're doing in the Solicitor General's office. We have heard horror stories. I know the parliamentary assistant mentioned some stories. I was in committee this morning, so I didn't hear the minister's full speech; I just saw him on TV while we were debating in committee. But there are some horror stories—we all know them and we've all heard about them—about the treatment of animals in precarious positions.

I think I've told the story about my sister's dog Billie. When my sister—it was a rescue for bulldogs. My sister has a bunch of bulldogs. One is crazy; the other two are pretty good. When she first got Billie, she couldn't walk on her back legs, because all she had done her whole life was give birth—small cage. She couldn't walk on her back legs. She recently passed away, just a couple of months ago. She had a good life after, but her start to life was pretty sad. All she did was give birth. As soon as she gave birth, she gave birth again. That dog didn't get to walk around, didn't get to feel the grass, had a dirty cage. I'm not sure if she was fed or watered, certainly not loved—but got a lot of love after. But we don't want to see these types of things happening in society because we can do better in how we think of animals. They're part of our family now. We need to do better, and I'm very happy that today, we are going to do better with the support of, I'm sure, everybody in this House. I shouldn't be presumptuous, but I know everybody here has been supportive in the past of helping out animals and telling the stories of their own pets and the work that they do to make sure that their pets are looked after.

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We talked about the cruelty inside some of these barns. We heard about malnutrition and starvation. We talked about puppy profiteering. That's another thing when you're looking at purchasing a pet: Make sure that the breeder interviews you. Usually, very good breeders ask you to come in and have an interview. Sometimes, they check references.

When I took over ownership of Bruce, I applied. It was actually a friend who found him at a rescue, and we had to apply, even though she knew me very well—talk to my vet, talk to my friends, talk to a couple of people just to see if we would be good puppy parents—he wasn't really a puppy; he was four—because they want to make sure these animals get forever homes.

For anybody out there who's looking for a pet, if you're meeting in a parking lot and you found it online, just be

careful, just be cautious. Think of where that pet came from. There are excellent breeders out there, and they do a very good job of making sure that the animals are healthy, they're vaccinated, they're cared for.

Once you take ownership of an animal, it is your responsibility to look after that pet, just like you would a kid. You have to make sure that they're fed, they're watered, they're looked after, and they're loved because I'll tell you, they'll love you back even more. The best thing I ever did was get my dog—and I inherited a cat, but that's because my sister moved into a house and there was a family of cats. I was allergic to cats, and she said, "Take a cat," and I said, "Oh, I can't take a cat." Anyway, I ended up with this cat. I thought it was a boy and got everything ready for this allergy. I knew my allergies were going to go crazy. Then, I get this cat, and it's a girl. Well, the name stuck, so Edward is a cat, and it's a girl, and she doesn't care what her name is. She doesn't know, but she runs the house right now.

They are great family assets, so let's pass this bill today. Let's protect our pets and give them their forever home.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to questions.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Solicitor General: I appreciated the comments that he made in his lead-off. Could he tell us how this law will be enforced and what sort of funds will be allocated to ensure that the desired outcomes actually take place?

Mr. Graham McGregor: I want to thank the member for the question. This will be enforced by the animal welfare inspectors, the same way as always. Some of the important provisions that we're putting in are allowing them to do their jobs.

I want to caution: The members opposite have a tendency to try to poke holes in our bills to find excuses to vote against them. This isn't a very good bill to vote against. This is the kind of bill that I think the members should be supporting. We're bringing in minimum fines: \$10,000 if you're operating a puppy mill or facilitating a puppy mill, \$25,000 if that results in the death of a puppy. These are tangible tools that we're giving our animal welfare inspectors and our front-line workers, resources they need to hold these bad actor puppy mills accountable.

So I'd caution the members: Don't do what you normally do and vote against this just because you're opposition. This is a good bill. You should vote in favour of it.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is actually to the member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore. Her and I have obviously shared the commitment to adopting and raising as our own fur babies those that have come from shelters. I can tell you, we adopted in the 2011 election a five-month-old baby dog that was born without any eyes and was taken back to the Ottawa Humane Society, because nobody wanted to raise her because it was too difficult.

Fast-forward to when I was heritage minister and I went to visit with Todd Smith in Belleville, he took me to their

humane society, which was in dire need of an upgrade. He said one thing to me: "Lisa, I don't want to deal with Joe when you take home a cat or a dog." Of course, I took home a massive cat that had been abandoned.

The reason I'm asking you this question—it may not necessarily be in the bill, but I think, from one animal lover to another, it seems to me our biggest challenges can often be at the humane societies or at the shelters, who do not have enough support. I'm wondering, in your experience as former PA to this area but also as a pet lover, what your thoughts are in order for us to be better able to serve those shelters.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: It's a great question, and congratulations on being a pet owner. I know you would make a great pet mom. I don't know about who is the master in your house when it comes to the pets, as I'm learning.

We have the Etobicoke Humane Society. I visited the London humane society, which does a really good job. The humane societies do really great work. They have vets coming in. They can actually help with some of the vaccinations in advance to make sure that these pets are in good shape before someone will adopt. They do some homework. They do research. They will also interview people. Just because you're walking in doesn't mean you're going to get a pet, which is great, because we shouldn't just be giving them away.

I have to give a shout-out to the member from London. Your humane society does an amazing job, so congratulations to that. They're growing, so donations to the humane society, if anybody is interested.

They do a really great job of incorporating vet and vet tech training into the humane society. So this is a way that vet techs—and I think, with our new legislation about vets, we can use more of the vet tech help to make sure—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you for the answer.

We'll move to the next question.

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'ai une question pour le solliciteur général.

Vous savez, moi aussi, dans ma famille, on a une petite chienne, Eevee—l'animal à ma fille—qu'on adore et qui fait partie de la famille, comme tout le monde qui a des animaux qu'on aime tellement.

Ma question est surtout sur le renforcement, qui m'inquiète parce que, vous savez, ma région est très grande, très vaste, sans mentionner les communautés qui sont au Grand Nord. Vous l'avez même mentionné dans vos allocutions que quand les « puppy mills » sont là, ce n'est pas là que les familles vont chercher l'animal. Ils vont aller le chercher à une place qui est beaucoup plus propre et où ça ne paraît pas d'où ils viennent, les animaux. Et avec une région comme la mienne qui est tellement grande, tellement vaste, très souvent, ils vont se cacher—éloignés. C'est sur le renforcement que ma question est, pour comprendre comment on va pouvoir reconnaître mais aussi prendre ce monde-là qui prend avantage des animaux, qui fait souffrir des animaux.

J'aimerais vous entendre là-dessus. Comment peut-on renforcer ça pour protéger ces animaux-là?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): To reply, the Solicitor General.

L'hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Je voudrais remercier mon collègue pour cette question pertinente.

And he's right: Ontario is large. It's very large. But the purpose of why we're here today for third reading is to show our government's absolute commitment in moving forward with animal welfare protection legislation that sets a tone and a standard of animal welfare, and this is exactly the next iteration.

To my colleague, I respect very much the fact that northern Ontario is very large. The answer to his question is that we will continue to move forward incrementally and to build out animal welfare services, just as it started with the Deputy Premier when she was Solicitor General. We are going to continue to build it out.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you, Speaker, and, through you to the parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General: In committee, we had a lot of discussion about enforcement, and there were new amendments that were brought forward at the last meeting. Can the member from Brampton North talk about how the PUPS Act gives more enforcement mechanisms to the animal welfare inspectors, please?

Mr. Graham McGregor: Thanks to my colleague for the question. The member is right: This bill, if passed, will give animal welfare officers more tools that they need to actually enforce the provisions within.

One of the important ones is around record-keeping. Bad actor puppy mills won't have the ability to say, "Oh, I don't know how old the dog is. I didn't keep a record of it." We'll have record-keeping provisions maintained within, that they have to maintain or else face a fine—the \$10,000 fine for having a puppy mill, \$25,000 if resulting in a death.

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But I want to say that my colleague believes in parliamentary democracy just like I do, just like every member of the PC caucus does. This is a case where we have amendments in the bill through the committee process that are really, really quite strong. That \$10,000 for assisting and facilitating a puppy mill was something we didn't bring forward in second reading, a gap that we knew that we had. We brought the amendment forward, the committee did the right thing, and we hope all members do the right thing by passing the amended bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Chris Glover: This government is quite famous for talking tough on crime—they're going to get tough on crime; they don't want criminals walking the streets—yet this government has so underfunded our court system that at least 124 cases were thrown out in 2022, some of them involving sexual assaults.

This bill is something similar. This is about animal abuse. It's about puppy mills. The response from the government is to increase the fines, but if there's nobody to inspect and enforce those fines, then the fines never get laid and the animals continue to be abused.

The report in the media is that the PAWS needs more than the hundred inspectors who are available right now to cover our province. Our province is a million square kilometres, so we need more inspectors. How will this government enforce these increased fines? How will you actually make the animals safe?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: You know, here she is: The Deputy Premier is here. She's the one who had the foresight to bring in the Provincial Animal Welfare Services Act, to see it passed in the Legislature in 2019 and move it forward.

We started at ground zero. We are making incremental progress every day. We have built out a team of very responsible, trained and educated animal welfare inspectors. And the most important thing is that we've set a standard, an expectation and a tone that started with the Deputy Premier when she was the Solicitor General, which I continue to do today. We're going to continue to do just this. Everything that our government has done in public safety sends a message: Public safety matters.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. That's time for this portion of the debate.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

WEARING OF PINS

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Before we move to members' statements, I recognize the Deputy Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to wear pins in recognition of June being ALS Awareness Month.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Deputy Premier Jones is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to wear pins in recognition of June being ALS Awareness Month. Agreed? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to use my time this morning to pay tribute to the people in my riding of Simcoe-Grey and across this great province who enrich our communities through their dedication, commitment and generosity. They are our volunteers, Speaker, and the work they do every day in our communities to improve and enrich the lives of so many residents, young and old, goes beyond words.

Next month, the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards will be handed out. Started in 1986, this great program is an opportunity for us to thank and recognize the many,

many volunteers who give their time and expertise selflessly, groups such as:

- the Tec-We-Gwill Women's Institute, founded in 1947;
- the Beaver Valley community outreach, founded in 1982;
- the Lions Club of Wasaga Beach, which recently celebrated 60 years;
- the Collingwood Salvation Army, which recently celebrated 140 years;
- Wasaga Beach Royal Canadian Legion Branch 645, which was just constituted last month;
- the South Georgian Bay Community Health Centre;
- the Clearview Public Library Board; and
- the Stevenson Memorial Hospital Auxiliary.

To all those who will receive an Ontario Volunteer Service Award next month, I want to congratulate you on behalf of the residents of Simcoe–Grey. And to all the many organizations in Simcoe–Grey and the incredibly dedicated volunteers who serve, I want to thank you for your service and for your willingness to help your neighbours and make our communities so much stronger, more resilient and compassionate.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Six years after the Conservatives formed government, Ontario still doesn't have a strategy to address hate and racism. This is an embarrassment and another failure on this government's tarnished record.

Not only does Ontario lack a comprehensive anti-hate strategy, but we also have a Premier who evokes racist tropes from behind a government podium. Just last week, without any evidence, the Premier speculated that “immigrants” are behind the shooting at a Jewish girls' school. It is a shockingly racist comment to scapegoat immigrants for this senseless act. The police who are actually investigating the crime had to distance themselves from the Premier's comments.

This is the same Premier who blamed COVID-19 on immigrants. He blames Ontario's housing crisis on international students—the same Premier who vilified Umar Zameer and called for the jailing of this brown, Muslim man who has now been found innocent by the courts.

The Premier has denied the existence of systemic racism and cancelled Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate, including its committees on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism. It seems like the Premier could use the directorate's advice now more than ever before.

Ontario cannot combat racism if this Premier does not recognize that it exists. Naming it is the first step to dismantling its hateful power.

I feel like I have to say this every day in this House. All forms of hate are interconnected and have the same goal: to divide us as people, to make us afraid, to have us not trust each other and to distract us from building stronger communities that actually care for each other. Ontario needs a comprehensive—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Next member's statement.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Stephen Blais: Residents in Orléans and across Ontario are asking if the convenience of buying a beer at the corner store is really worth \$1 billion. The answer, of course, is no. So why the rush?

We have a teacher shortage, Ontario schools need billions in repairs, and this government has cut \$1,500 in per-student funding since they were elected in 2018. But there is \$1 billion to accelerate corner store beer sales by a year.

Two million Ontarians don't have a family doctor. Imagine: Not a single person in these combined cities of Ottawa, Windsor, London, Kingston and Guelph have a family doctor, but there is \$1 billion to accelerate corner store beer sales by a year.

Instead of cutting education and health care further, perhaps this government will do what they always do, which is just take on more and more debt. Madam Speaker, it's not what we need.

If this government were to auction off the new liquor licences, it could net nearly \$300 million in additional value to taxpayers. This is what the Conservative governments in Alberta and Saskatchewan did, netting a small fortune to fund education and health care.

And since this government is refusing to follow the lead of fiscally conservative governments, I have to ask: Which friend, supporter or crony is going to benefit at the expense of students, teachers, nurses, doctors—at the expense of all of us?

In the end, this government cares little about fiscal responsibility, having increased the debt by over \$100 billion under their watch, the largest debt of any subnational jurisdiction in the world. This—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Next member's statement.

HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's my pleasure to rise today to highlight the incredible inductees into the Haliburton Highlands Sports Hall of Fame for 2024. Created five years ago, the hall of fame has been a source of local pride and honour. At the induction ceremony, we celebrated the incredible achievements and dedication of our local athletes, coaches and builders, who have made significant contributions to the community.

A total of 10 individuals and two teams received awards across multiple sports, including the Haliburton county Red Wolves becoming the first recipients of the outstanding achievement award. Part of Special Olympics Ontario, the Red Wolves help athletes and supporters connect through sports like bowling, curling and golf.

The Red Wolves bowling team has competed locally, provincially and nationally since it was founded in 1997.

I'd like to recognize one of the Red Wolves and a hometown hero of mine, the late Carrie Crego, who was selected to compete at the 2006 national games in Brandon, Manitoba, and brought home a bronze medal in bowling. Thank you, Carrie, for your passion and dedication to our community and for making your hometown of Kinmount proud.

I encourage all of you to stop by the Haliburton Highlands Sports Hall of Fame and visit their website for tributes of each inductee—you can see first-hand how Haliburton county works hard and plays harder.

1020

PETITES ENTREPRISES

M. Guy Bourgouin: La Maison Verte est un producteur essentiel pour le reboisement dans le Nord. Elle fournit des millions de semis à nos forêts chaque année.

Malheureusement, elle est gravement menacée par la hausse marquée des prix de production. La Maison Verte fait face à des problèmes de revenus à cause, entre autres, des dépenses liées aux projets pendant la pandémie et à l'augmentation des coûts opérationnels. Les difficultés sont à leur sommet avec la domination de grands fournisseurs comme PRT en Colombie-Britannique, rendant presque impossible pour les petits fournisseurs de faire compétition à ces multinationales.

Monsieur le Président, il est profondément préoccupant que les petites entreprises comme la Maison Verte se fassent avaler par des multinationales d'autres provinces sans protection adéquate de la part de notre gouvernement. Les petits producteurs ne peuvent tout simplement pas survivre.

Depuis l'ouverture de la Maison Verte, le nombre de petits producteurs similaires est passé de 39 à seulement huit dans la province, une diminution alarmante qui nécessite notre attention immédiatement. L'absence des règlements pour protéger les petits fournisseurs est un problème. Par exemple, la Maison Verte fournit de cinq à sept millions de semis à la forêt de Hearst, tandis que les entreprises comme GreenFirst ne fournissent que 800 000 à un prix compétitif.

Monsieur le Président, en réponse à ces défis, nous devons envisager des règlements pour assurer un marché plus équitable. Il est crucial que nous soutenions les petits producteurs comme la Maison Verte pour assurer leur survie et la santé continue de nos forêts et des entreprises d'ici.

J'appelle tous mes collègues à se joindre à moi pour relever ces défis et soutenir nos fournisseurs locaux avec l'urgence qu'ils méritent.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Ms. Donna Skelly: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. I am so very proud to rise this morning to recognize our government's recent investment in Hamilton. The Ontario government is investing up to \$2.5 million to support the construction of Kemp Care Network's new 10-bed chil-

dren's hospice, which will help families connect to comfortable and dignified end-of-life care, close to home, in my city of Hamilton.

Keaton's House-Paul Paletta Children's Hospice will offer families comprehensive palliative care for children and youth living with progressive life-limiting illnesses. Mr. Speaker, the hospice is expected to open in 2026 and will include a number of features and services, including 10 bedrooms for children where family members can stay with their child, and space for day wellness programs and therapies such as massage, movement, recreation and music.

Through the 2024 budget, our government is adding up to 84 new adult beds and 12 pediatric beds, bringing the total to over 740 planned beds. Once these beds open, the Ontario government will invest up to \$2,268,000 in annual operational funding for Keaton's House-Paul Paletta Children's Hospice to support the delivery of nursing, personal support and other end-of-life care services.

I am so proud of our government for taking action to connect Ontario families with the care they need close to home. I am also proud of organizations in my community, such as Kemp Care Network and McMaster Children's Hospital for making this expansion of Keaton's House-Paul Paletta Children's Hospice possible.

D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You will know that the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion will be marked on June 6. All Canadians should remember that 14,000 Canadian soldiers landed at Juno Beach in France on June 6, 1944, as part of a massive Allied invasion. The invasion led to the liberation of German-occupied France and was pivotal in ending the Second World War.

Victory in the Normandy campaign, however, came at a terrible cost. Canadians suffered the most casualties of any division, more than 5,000 Canadian troops dying in the invasion and the Battle of Normandy that followed. We all owe these brave men and women an immeasurable debt of gratitude.

As the years pass, sadly, the number of veterans who fought in the campaign declines. They are from a resilient generation who endured many hardships and experienced the unimaginable horrors of war.

We recently were able to celebrate Hamiltonian Jack Frederick Finan, a 104-year-old Canadian veteran who served with the Royal Canadian Air Force. Many dignitaries were on hand, including the Governor General, when the French ambassador awarded Jack Finan's highest military honour, the French Legion of Honour.

I'd like to remark that hundreds of Canadian aircraft were in the air on D-Day, including the legendary Lancaster bomber, and that Mr. Finan is Canada's oldest living pilot of the Lancaster bomber.

There are many celebrations across Canada to help commemorate the 80th anniversary of the pivotal D-Day invasion. In Hamilton, you can visit the Canadian Warplane

Heritage Museum that has one of the last flying Lancaster bombers.

I encourage all of us—let's take a moment to pause and pay tribute. We will remember them.

WOODMAN PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE AND POOL

Mr. Will Bouma: I am pleased to rise this morning to speak about the wave of excitement that washed over Brantford–Brant last Saturday. The Woodman pool opened for the first time this past weekend and welcomed a capacity crowd of swimmers of all ages. The new pool's opening was eagerly awaited by the Brantford–Brant community, ever since the old pool closed in 2020.

While the pool's official opening is still slated for June 29, these summer weekends have been too beautiful to waste, and Mayor Kevin Davis has called for the pool to be opened every weekend in June while the finishing touches are being completed.

The pool is part of the newly revamped Woodman Park Community Centre, which keeps Brantford entertained year-round. Once the Woodman project is completed, it will include a community garden, accessible playground equipment, games tables, walking paths and shade structures.

This project represents the great things that we can achieve when all three levels of government work together, as the pool was funded by both the provincial and federal governments alongside the city of Brantford.

I am proud to represent a government that places a high importance on community recreation projects such as this one. By ensuring the people of Ontario have state-of-the-art facilities to enjoy, our government continues to make Ontario the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Lorne Coe: Two new schools are going to be built in west Whitby, thanks to our Minister of Education, the Honourable Stephen Lecce: \$30.5 million for an elementary school at Maskell Crescent and Coronation Road, creating 634 student spaces and 49 child care spaces; and \$23.4 million for a new elementary school at Cisco Drive and Limoges Street, creating 634 student spaces.

On May 17, the Minister of Education also announced funding for new schools and one school expansion across Oshawa and Clarington, which will result in the creation of 3,155 new student spaces and 98 child care spaces. This was an historic day, as the overall investment was \$139.5 million and is the single largest in Durham history.

We are working to ensure Whitby children have access to state-of-the-art schools close to home that give them real-life job skills to succeed in the future. Our government is getting it done once again for hard-working families in the region of Durham.

PROACTION COPS AND KIDS

Ms. Jess Dixon: On Saturday morning I went to the Westin Harbour Castle hotel in Toronto, signed in, went up the elevator and up some stairs to the very top of the building, about 400 feet up, and stepped off the edge. I was, luckily, attached to some fairly strong harnesses at the time, but that doesn't really make it any less unnerving, because the one thing your body doesn't want you to do when you're on the edge of a building is jump off of it, which I did.

I did this to raise awareness of a fundraising campaign for ProAction Cops and Kids, which is an incredible charity that I became aware of in my work as an MPP. ProAction Cops and Kids has five chapters: Toronto, Durham region, Hamilton, Halton and Peel. Essentially, what it does is it allows kids who are under-resourced to connect with police officers who donate their time to run sports programs, baking programs, sailing etc., and ProAction covers all the costs of equipment and facilities. I became involved because I am so incredibly passionate about the idea of community policing and prevention-based policing, which is about building strong relationships between the community and police, particularly children.

1030

A huge thank you to ProAction team members Jean Milligan, Michelle Marchetti and Nicole Benoit—I know you all worked incredibly hard—and to all of the officers and kids who participated in going over the edge with me on Saturday morning.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I would like to introduce three of my interns who are here visiting today. From the ministry office, we have Alex Bullen and Alex Jones, and from the constituency office, Kayleigh Aitken.

Welcome to Queen's Park, guys.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to extend a warm welcome to members of Disability Without Poverty here today, including Sabrina Latif, Lisa Presutti, Vienna Psihos, Rabia Khedr, Janet Rodriguez, Hossam Khedr. I am looking forward to meeting with them later today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's a great honour and a pleasure to be able to welcome John Whitehead here from St. Catharines. He is a diabetes advocate from Niagara.

Thank you for all your hard work that you've done over the years. Welcome to your House, John.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. It's always a pleasure to be here in the chamber with you, and especially today, when I welcome such amazing Bangladeshi community leaders from the east end of Toronto. They're up there in the gallery: Hydari, Islam, Hosne, Sanjoy, Afia, Sayed and Jalal. They really make the city a more vibrant, livable, beautiful space.

Thank you for coming. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: June is ALS Awareness Month, and I'm delighted to welcome Tammy Moore and Ilayda Ulgenalp from the ALS Society of Canada back to Queen's Park today. Welcome.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd like to welcome a good friend of mine, Janet Rodriguez. Janet is an incredible advocate for people with disabilities.

Welcome to your House.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to wish a warm welcome to my incredible OLIP intern, Evan Cameron, who's up in the public gallery today.

MPP Lise Vaugois: I would like to welcome the members of Disability Without Poverty to the House today. I'm looking forward to seeing you later at your reception.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I have a couple of introductions. First off, I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park MPP Crawford's Oakville student youth council: Aiden Pinto, Elliott Dixon, Sakeena Iqbal, Mariam Naboo, Anbo Yuan, Ahmed Anjum and Tianyang Jiang. We're honoured to have you here today and advocating for financial literacy.

Second, I'd like to welcome the group from Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving to Queen's Park today. With us today or joining us shortly are students from Niagara Catholic District School Board schools, including Denis Morris, Blessed Trinity, Saint Francis, Saint Paul, Saint Michael, Holy Cross, and Notre Dame College School; from the board office, Camillo Cipriano and Aldo Parrotta; and school staff Patricia Beck, Nikki Royer, Ana Krlin, Carey Bridges, Chaundra Collin, Sue Sparks and Brandy Delaney.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I would like us all to welcome Caleb Smolenaars, who is an intern who actually resides in Oakville North-Burlington. He is currently interning for myself in Toronto Centre and for the great member from Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Today I want to welcome Rabia Khedr from DEEN Support Services. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: We have some family here of my EA, Athena, from Whitefish River First Nation: Mariette Sutherland and her daughter Violet Sutherland.

Also, from Grassy Narrows: Chief Rudy Turtle; council members Arnold Pahpasay, Little Bear Copenace, John Clint Kokopenace; Melissa Bunting; Maka Fobister; Zuri Joseph; Zaagaate Bunting; Keewayten Bunting. Meegwetch.

Hon. George Pirie: I just want to welcome students from Roland Michener Secondary School from my hometown, South Porcupine, who are visiting today. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): With the agreement of the House, I'd like to continue with the introduction of visitors. I heard a no.

That concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore the afternoon routine on Wednesday, June 5, 2024, shall commence at 1 p.m.

I'm going to recognize the member from Don Valley West on a point of order.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the Speaker to immediately put the question on second and third reading of Bill 195, the Cutting Taxes on Small Businesses Act, without debate, to provide immediate relief to Ontario's small businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley West, Ms. Bowman, is seeking the unanimous consent of the House for the Speaker to immediately put the question on second and third reading of Bill 195, the Cutting Taxes on Small Businesses Act, without debate. Agreed? I heard a no.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. People have a right to know what their government is doing on their behalf and with their tax dollars. It's why we have strict rules around things like government communications and record-keeping. It's why emails of senior government officials are subject to freedom-of-information laws.

But this government and this Premier don't seem to think that that kind of transparency matters. We've seen a disturbing pattern of government members and senior staff using their personal accounts for government business. On Friday, the Premier himself confirmed that his chief of staff regularly uses his personal email for government business. My question is, why?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I've answered this question a number of times for the Leader of the Opposition. If the leader has additional information—or any information whatsoever—that she would like to provide to the commissioner, I encourage her to do so, Mr. Speaker.

I and members of this government, we're not investigators, although we do have many former police officers amongst our ranks. That is not our job, Mr. Speaker. So if she wants to raise those issues, I encourage her—as opposed to bringing it up here in the Legislature, she could provide that information to the commissioner and allow the commissioner to do the job that we as a Legislature empower him to do.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll just repeat my question. My question to the Premier was, why?

Let me try to tell you why, because there's only one reason why this government would repeatedly be using personal emails to avoid detection. These aren't just emails about upcoming staff meetings; we are talking about major government decisions that impact the public. We're talking about the greenbelt. We're talking about secret meetings. We're talking about code words and government business that was being done on massage tables in Vegas. They did everything they could to cover their tracks.

1040

Now, the Premier himself is doubling down. He's saying his chief of staff did nothing wrong when he repeatedly gave false testimony to the Integrity Commissioner. So does the Premier think he or his chief of staff are above the law?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's the drive-by smear from the NDP. They have no relevance in this place at all. It is obvious that the people of Ontario have overlooked the NDP and have completely forgotten about them as an effective opposition party. The evidence of that, of course, is the fact that in the last two by-elections, "other" received more votes than the NDP.

They have absolutely no policies when it comes to the economy. They understand that their continuing support of the federal Liberal Party that supports a carbon tax puts them offside of the Canadian people, including the people of Ontario who have said loud and clear that they do not want a carbon tax and that it is harming them. So they're offside on that.

They're offside on law and order. This is a party that opposes the police at every step of the way. They're offside on the infrastructure funding that we're bringing in place. They're offside on the reforms that we're doing in the education system. They are a party that is increasingly irrelevant to the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, you know when you're getting close to the truth, because you get a desperate response like that. That's the truth. Multiple independent officers of the Legislature have warned this government about avoiding disclosure rules. Explosive reports from the Auditor General, the Integrity Commissioner, the Information and Privacy Commissioner and RCMP criminal investigation under way into this government—it all shows the same thing. This is a government that wasn't just deleting emails related to the greenbelt. They were also using their personal emails to avoid detection.

The Premier himself conducts his government business on his personal devices and refuses to disclose the details of those phone records to the public, even though it's required by law. When the Liberal government got caught covering up their gas plant scandal, you know what happened? Someone went to jail. Why is the Premier fol-

lowing the Liberals down the same path of code words, cover up and criminal investigations?

Interjections.

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

Member for Brampton North come to order. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke come to order. Government House leader may reply.

Hon. Paul Calandra: When the Liberals of course broke the law and somebody went to jail, it was the NDP who quickly stood up and supported them to maintain them in office. That's actually what happened.

Now, colleagues, I don't know about you. I don't feel very desperate. I don't feel very desperate. I'm actually happy. I'm happy, because we have a government that is moving in the right direction for the people of the province of Ontario, out of the ashes of the Liberal and NDP coalition that put this province in the ground. What are we doing? We're investing in health care. We're investing in infrastructure. We're investing in hospitals in all parts of the province. And do you know who agrees with us, Mr. Speaker? The people of the province of Ontario, who elected two Progressive Conservatives in two by-elections, while at the same time sending a message to the Leader of the Opposition that they prefer "other" than they do the leader and the NDP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Hamilton Mountain come to order. The member for Waterloo come to order.

Leader of the Opposition, next question.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This year we see that wildfires are already up from this time last year. Last year was one of the worst fire seasons on record.

So far this year, there have already been 94—four fires just this week. But inexplicably, the budget to fight those wildfires is down 37.5%. And you know what, Speaker?—

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: While they blather away over there, I'm talking about an issue that is going to affect many, many, many people in many communities across this province. So they should be listening. Wildfires are going up. Money to fight wildfires is going down. So my question to the Premier is, can the Premier tell us how that makes any sense at all?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, you can't make this up. I have offered to cross the floor once in awhile and write questions for the NDP so that they can do better. But I can't read budgets for them; I assume they do that.

The Minister of Natural Resources has actually increased funding to fight forest fires by 92%, colleagues. That is what we have increased the budget by to fight wildfires. Of course, Liberal and NDP math would suggest

that a 92% increase is actually a decrease. But do you know what the good news is? The good news is that we're making those investments. The bad news for the people of the province of Ontario is that these two opposition parties, both irrelevant to the people of the province of Ontario, but the NDP historically irrelevant—they always vote against all of these.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: She just called me a “mad dog.” Do you know what I am? I'm a dog with a bone, because I want better for the people of the province of—

Interjections.

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

The House will come to order.

Start the clock. Supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the government can shrug off these concerns, but the fires are still coming. The concerns are coming from an increasing number of townships and cities, from First Nations that have been evacuated in previous years—and some are already being evacuated now, especially in northwestern Ontario. It's coming from farming communities, where they have to contend with poorer air quality, with less productive days. And importantly, it's coming from the front-line wildland firefighters themselves. They're worried that they may not have the fire crews that they need this season.

So I'm going to ask the Premier, who's sitting in his seat right now, if he could stand up, answer this question: Can he explain why he thinks this is enough when those who fight the fires are telling you it's not?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw her unparliamentary remark.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The government House leader may reply.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, it is precisely because of the seriousness by which we take this is that we have increased funding by 92% to fight those fires. We have done that in every community across the province of Ontario, and we're not doing it in isolation. We work, of course, with the Minister of Northern Development to help us highlight some of those areas. We work with the Solicitor General to ensure that in many of the communities that did not have fire protection before, they actually have fire protection, and in some of the unincorporated areas so that they could actually participate in this.

We've made the investments. Imagine that when we came to office, this sector was so underfunded by the previous Liberal and NDP coalition government across the province of Ontario that we've had to increase it by 92%. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition and the Liberals voted against those increases—because you know what happens: When the camera is on, they say one thing, but when the camera turns off, they do something completely different. We're consistent. We're always there for the people of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I believe this is the final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: “Consistent”? Consistently underfunding, cutting, leaving people desperate and alone with a fire season before them. Speaker, we are down as many as 200 firefighters in Ontario—that's the truth—with as many as 40 wildland firefighters being laid off just since May. That's the truth. Fires are raging right now. That's the truth. And this government hasn't backed up those firefighters with the resources that they need to keep people safe and communities safe while fires are raging in this province. It is time to do right by the firefighters.

I want to be very specific with my question to the Premier: Will the Premier assure Ontarians that there will be fully staffed crews and planes for every single region that needs it?

Interjections.

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

1050

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, that is why the Minister of Natural Resources has brought forward a plan that saw an increase in funding by 92%. That is why the Solicitor General brought forward a program to ensure that we had fire services in unincorporated areas, so that they could participate. On both occasions—

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: —the NDP and the Liberals voted against those supports.

We've increased support for new technologies by over \$20 million. In fact, Ontario is such a valued partner that we are called upon to participate and to assist other provinces and internationally whenever we can, Mr. Speaker. That speaks to the professionalism of Ontario's fire crews, it speaks to the investments that we have made and it speaks to why, again, the NDP and the Liberals have become so irrelevant in the province of Ontario: because for a decade and a half they underfunded it, and it took us to bring those resources so that we could fight fires not only in Ontario, but around the world—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next question. Once again, the Leader of the Opposition.

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, the Deputy Premier just said, “It's raining,” so I guess none of us have to worry. Boy, I tell you, that is—

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I did not.

Ms. Marit Stiles: You did.

Anyway, this question is for the Premier. Grassy Narrows—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I did not.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Hansard caught it.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: That's a lie.

Ms. Marit Stiles: She just called it a lie.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let's stop the clock, first of all.

Secondly, as the member is aware, unparliamentary language cannot be permitted. I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier to withdraw her unparliamentary comment.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I will withdraw my unparliamentary language, but the official opposition also—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health to withdraw, without reservation, her comment.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Withdraw. I—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, no. The Minister of Northern Development and Minister of Indigenous Affairs will come to order.

The Minister of Health will please withdraw her unparliamentary comment.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I withdraw.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry will come to order. The member for Mississauga–Malton will come to order. The Minister of Health will come to order.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Speaker.

This question is for the Premier. Grassy Narrows has been searching for justice for generations. They are living through one of Canada's worst environmental and human rights catastrophes. They are now suing Ontario and Canada. Judy DaSilva, a grandmother from Grassy Narrows, has a simple ask which I'm going to read out today to the government. She says this: "Stop poisoning us, let us protect our land and our people and we will be healthy again."

So my question to the Premier is, will this government stop the ongoing poisoning of the people of Grassy Narrows today?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Northern Development and Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: The member opposite knows that one of the first actions we took upon forming government in 2018 was to actually index the mercury disability benefits to inflation after not being increased for inflation since the inception of the mercury disability fund. As a result, most beneficiaries saw their monthly payments nearly double, Mr. Speaker. The mercury disabilities investment fund was then replenished with over \$127 million, based on a triannual assessment that we received in June 2021. These funds will ensure that the mercury disability fund is resourced to provide benefits to beneficiaries for many years to come. The next actuarial assessment is expected in June of 2024.

In June 2022, the Mercury Disability Board marked the opening of its new clinical space in Kenora, along with the successful launch of reformed assessment clinics. We're working with communities—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Perhaps the minister didn't hear my question. It is the responsibility of a government, surely, to ensure that the people are not being actively poisoned by the fish they eat or the water they drink, right? The lawsuit that we're talking about doesn't prevent anyone on the other side, the Premier or his cabinet, from taking decisive action to stop the ongoing contamination of the river today, tomorrow and every day after that. They're the government; they have the power to do the right thing right now.

So, back to the Premier: How can they knowingly allow this terrible poisoning to continue on their watch?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Northern Development and Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Our world-class resource development sector is matched only by their compliance to the highest environmental protection standards out there, and we enforce it. But in the situation of Grassy Narrows, as I said earlier, we came on to this file in 2018; even the former Premier of what is now the non-affiliate Liberals, or whatever they're called, admitted to me that it was high time we took action. In 2018, that's exactly what we did.

We're taking good care of those beneficiaries from Wabaseemoong and Grassy Narrows First Nations. The mercury disability fund, having been replenished, will ensure that all people currently on that registry are going to get the benefits that they deserve for those historical damages.

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: My question is for the Minister of Energy. People in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and across the province are facing hard times. As this federal carbon tax continues to drive up the cost of living, families cannot afford ever-rising grocery and gas prices. My constituents, who rely on their cars for their primary form of transportation, are being punished with high fuel costs driven by this punitive tax. They need relief.

The governor of the Bank of Canada has stated that the carbon tax contributes 15% each year upwards on inflation and that scrapping this tax altogether would lower inflation. It is clear to every Ontarian that this carbon tax is not helping them, it's not delivering the environmental gains the Liberals claim it would and it's costing all of us.

Can the minister please explain how, unlike the Liberals, our government is achieving our energy objectives without introducing a costly carbon tax?

Hon. Todd Smith: I'm delighted to talk about our energy initiatives and how they're also helping the environment and keeping costs low in our province so we can see record investment in Ontario of the types that we have been seeing, multi-billion-dollar investments.

Now we're announcing the development of new, clean, affordable, reliable energy generation, like our nuclear facilities in the clean energy capital in the Durham region, the first small modular reactor in the western world; refurbishing the Pickering nuclear generating stations; continuing with refurbishment at Darlington and at Bruce, building out new nuclear power at Bruce, as well; and new clean energy storage, the largest procurement in Canadian history, just happened a couple of weeks back. We're not going to go back to the Liberal ways of providing energy to our province where electricity prices triple under their watch.

Now, I heard the leader of the Green Party this morning saying he wanted to go back to the ways of the Green Energy Act—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South will come to order. Order.

Member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, supplementary.

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: It's reassuring to see our government continue delivering affordability and fight the terrible carbon tax as we roll out our real, practical solutions to make Ontario's electricity grid not just more affordable but cleaner and more reliable.

Our province boasts one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world. However, rather than bolstering our energy endeavours, the federal government prioritizes taking money from families by forcing them to pay a carbon tax. Their provincial buddies, led by the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie, continue to prop up this failed tax policy.

1100

It's time for the Liberals to face reality and acknowledge that this tax only hurts the hard-working people of this province. My constituents in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and all other Ontarians want to see the end of this carbon tax today.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House how the government is fortifying Ontario's economy through our clean energy advantage without the use of a carbon tax?

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, the leader of the Liberal Party, is ebullient in her support of Justin Trudeau's federal carbon tax, which is going up every April 1, including two months ago, with a whopping 23% increase that is affecting the price of groceries and gas and home heating, as the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex mentioned. The Liberals and the Greens and the NDP, their leadership was having a press conference this morning, and they want to go back to the ways of the Green Energy Act, where we paid over-market prices for energy and electricity generation in our province.

We brought in a new way of doing business, Mr. Speaker. It's competitive procurements that are driving down the

cost of energy in our province. Bills like Bill 165, keeping energy costs low, is what our Premier and what our government believes in. And the result is massive, massive multi-billion-dollar investments in our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member will take his seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Beaches–East York will come to order. The House will quieten down, please, so I can hear the member who's answering the question or posing the question.

The next question.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Every parent's worst nightmare is receiving a phone call that something has happened to your child at school. On May 14, Landyn Ferris's mother received that phone call. Landyn was left alone at school despite having a seizure disorder and was found unresponsive.

Landyn should have come home safely to his mother that day. We want every child in Ontario to come home safely at the end of the day. But parents of children with special needs are warning that this could happen again if we don't address the funding shortfall and the lack of resources for special education.

Will the Premier address that gap today and ensure that we are doing everything we can to protect our kids?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The loss of a child is indeed an unspeakable tragedy, and I believe all of us are deeply saddened by what has transpired at the Trenton High School—the loss of this young man. All of us express condolences to his family.

Now, there is an active coroner's investigation, police investigation and school board investigation into the circumstances of what led to this tragedy, and I would ask all of us to responsibly allow that process to carry forth with the commitment that the coroner will inevitably bring forth recommendations to learn from this and to ensure it never happens again. That is our obligation. It's the sombre obligation we will fulfill for this child and every child in this province.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: School boards are spending tens of millions of dollars more on special education than what they're getting from this government and they still don't have the resources they need to keep our kids safe. Kids who should never be left alone are being left alone at school every single day in Ontario.

We don't need to wait for the results of the investigation into Landyn's death to take immediate steps to make children safer in our schools. We could properly invest in

special education today and make sure that children have the caring, qualified adults around them that they need to stay safe.

Will this Premier make that commitment today so that no one else receives this awful phone call?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The answer, Speaker, is yes, we will continue to make those investments. This year, in special education, funding is up over \$100 million when compared just to last year. There are 3,500 additional EAs supporting kids with exceptionalities. There are 9,000 additional education workers hired because of our funding. We've increased special education funding by over half a billion dollars when compared to when we started in 2018.

Now, we recognize there's more to do, which is why in budget 2024 we increased in-class supports for children with exceptionalities by an additional \$10 million. We announced more funding for students with disabilities to pursue co-operative education, more training of our staff.

It would be irresponsible to draw conclusions at this point on what transpired, but be assured, we take this seriously. We'll continue to invest, we'll continue to hire, continue to do everything humanly possible to ensure the safety of children within our care.

TAXATION

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Residents in my riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore and across the province are seeing the devastating impact of the federal carbon tax. Families are cancelling their summer vacation plans because they cannot afford the high fuel costs, and small businesses are stretching every dollar on a tight budget.

It is concerning that the NDP and Liberal members in this House are choosing to ignore the hardship people in our province are facing as a result of this carbon tax. As our government works to build a healthy future for Ontarians, we are also continuing our efforts to fight against this regressive Liberal carbon tax.

Can the minister please explain how our government is strengthening Ontario's environmental protection without imposing a costly carbon tax?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, the member is absolutely right: At a time when families are trying to get a little relief to enjoy their summer with their kids and their family, now is not the time for a job-killing carbon tax.

The carbon tax has proven that it is a tax policy; it is not an environment policy. But under the leadership of this Premier, we've been able to prove that we can protect the environment, grow the economy and create good-paying jobs without a carbon tax.

We're working with industry, not against industry. For example, take green steel in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie.

We're creating electric vehicles made here in Ontario, creating high-paying jobs, while using our green steel. Instead, the Liberals, with carbon Crombie, would drive manufacturing jobs—and we've seen it: 300 manufacturing jobs out of this province.

Instead, Speaker, our government is balancing the environment while creating good-paying jobs and creating the right economy that will spur economic growth.

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

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Under the leadership of this Premier and this government, we are creating jobs and economic growth right across this whole province. But the carbon tax undermines this progress as it raises the cost of living at a time when many people are struggling to make ends meet. The 23% increase to the carbon tax has only made things worse.

The Liberals haven't met a tax they don't like and that's why they are reaching their hands deep into our pockets. The federal government must scrap this costly tax that does nothing to protect the environment.

Can the minister please tell the House how our government is keeping costs down while preserving the health of our environment?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Just look to our great transit projects. Not only are we building more transit projects, but we've introduced One Fare, making transit more affordable for Ontario families so they can discover Ontario this summer. And if they want to discover more of Ontario's beautiful parks, it's this government that's creating the first Ontario urban provincial park and creating new parks, something that hasn't been done in 40 years.

Do you know what else is going to help those families get to discover their beautiful province? It's the 10 cents off of gas that we're giving them in relief. Those Ontarians can enjoy their summer in an affordable fashion. But if it was up to the Liberals and the opposition, they'd continue taxing Ontarians, making their summer holiday plans more expensive. Perhaps that's because Bonnie Crombie would rather go glamping in her Maserati.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

MPP Lise Vaugeois: In April, Premier Ford said, "We're there to retrain the workers, find them new opportunities, new jobs," but workers in Terrace Bay have still heard nothing.

Quoting from a letter received this week: "The government has forgotten the north and continues to give money to conglomerates with no accountability. Our families are being torn apart looking for work that doesn't exist."

Premier, we need you to answer two questions: Is a deal for the mill imminent? And if not, what training will you provide for those with family responsibilities who cannot leave home for weeks at a time to work?

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Ajax.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: This government is laser-focused on empowering our workers. We understand that workers need to be reskilled and retrained, and that is why we continue to invest in our workers, especially through our SDF funding. We commit and continue to commit to supporting our workers to get in well-trained jobs as they move forward in their new positions.

We continue to do pre-training programs that provide \$28.3 million from 2022 to 2023 and the \$1.25-million In-Class Enhancement Fund to support delivery of quality retraining programs.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I did not hear an answer that responded to the Terrace Bay situation, but I'll continue.

Speaker, this government is failing to use all the tools at its disposal to keep people working at the Alstom plant in Thunder Bay. American manufacturing contracts must have at least 70% American content, yet you lowered local content rules to a mere 10% and gave the Ontario Line to a Japanese corporation—\$9 billion paid by Ontario taxpayers, with not one of the trains built in Ontario.

We have the expertise, facilities, skilled workforce and supply chain. What we're missing is a commitment from this government to keep people in northwestern Ontario working.

Premier, will you commit to the maximum possible local content in all future contracts?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: There has been no other Premier in the history of this province that has been committed to more Ontario jobs than this Premier—over 700,000 more people are working today because of Premier Ford and this government's policy, including building transit across this province.

That member knows how many of those investments are supporting communities all across the north and all across this province—thousands of workers employed because of this government's plan to build transit all across this province. It's because of this Premier that we're building in the north, whether it be the Ring of Fire, Highways 11 and 17, supporting transit workers in Thunder Bay. It's because of this Premier that we have over \$40 billion worth of new foreign direct investment into this province, and because of this vision of this government, \$70 billion are being invested into public transit to help support—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: The government has been very busy over the last week defending their latest blunder: the billion-dollar booze boondoggle paid for by Ontario

taxpayers. They could have waited for about a year for the deal with the Beer Store to end. Instead, they keep the gravy train chugging along by wasting taxpayer dollars to cancel the deal today.

While small businesses struggle, this government gives money out hand over fist to big-box stores and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member will take her seat.

The House will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Start the clock. Member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Do you know the last time small businesses got a tax break? In 2010, under an Ontario Liberal government. Speaker—

Interjections.

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

I cannot hear the member for Don Valley West. Okay. The warnings are starting next time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener—Conestoga is warned.

Start the clock. The member for Don Valley West has the floor.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, this Premier has yet to keep two big promises, maybe because they don't relate to beer: a middle-income tax cut and a corporate tax cut. Both of those would help small businesses.

My question to the Premier: Will he help fix his broken promise today by passing Bill 195, the Cutting Taxes on Small Businesses Act?

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

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I don't know where to begin on this one.

Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite had read some of the budgets passed by this House that her party voted against, she'd know that we cut the small business tax in our first mandate. She would know that we also accelerated the capital cost appreciation to help small businesses invest in capital.

It boggles the mind. In fact—boggle, boondoggle—the only way you can get to the Liberals' numbers on alcohol is if Bonnie Boondoggle increased taxes and increased fees.

Mr. Speaker, this party is reducing fees, reducing taxes, helping small businesses so they can compete across the province and provide more consumer choice and convenience.

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

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Speaker, I asked the government a simple question about a bill. It's too bad they won't answer it.

Small business owners need help from this government. The CFIB wants Bill 195 passed. The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario wants Bill 195 passed.

The CFIB has said that for every dollar spent at a local small business, 66 cents stays local, versus with multi-nationals, like some of those benefiting from the billion-dollar booze boondoggle, only 11 cents stays in Ontario.

Bill 195 is not complicated. It cuts the effective tax rate on small businesses in half, from 3.2% to 1.6%, and increases the income threshold for this deduction from \$500,000 to \$600,000. It will reduce taxes on small business by up to \$17,900 a year. It will help them.

Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: What will it be, yes or no, to helping Ontario small businesses by passing Bill 195?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Well, Mr. Speaker, let's start off with the CFIB and their quote about the alcohol: "Speeding up the process to allow more Ontario small retailers to sell beer and wine is a very positive move for entrepreneurs and consumers." It's so positive for the economy that small craft brewers are going to see an increase of \$800 million to \$1.2 billion more. This is creating over 7,500 new jobs that didn't exist before—compared to the Liberals, who signed the worst contract I've ever seen in business in my entire life.

It's all about taxation when it comes to their leader, Bonnie Crombie. That's all they believe in, is taxing. We don't believe in taxing. We have never increased a tax in six years. We've decreased taxes. We've given money back to the people. We've given over—

Interjections.

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

The Premier will take his seat. The members will please take their seats.

The member for Ottawa South is warned. The member for Hamilton Mountain is warned. The member for Brampton North is warned.

Start the clock. The next question.

TAXATION

MPP Zee Hamid: The question is for the Minister of Energy. The federal carbon tax is a tax that farmers, small business owners and Ontario families have repeatedly said no to. While our government continues to deliver measures to make life more affordable, the Liberals and NDP fail to empathize with Ontarians who are struggling. They have no problem seeing this carbon tax triple over the next six years—triple.

While the cost of living is at an all-time high, it is beyond disappointing to see opposition members fail to do the right thing and hold the federal government accountable.

Speaker, can the minister please tell the House why the Liberals must stop playing politics and finally scrap the carbon tax once and for all?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to our amazing member from Milton. It's great to be able to take on this question, especially in the moments after the last question from the Liberal member over there.

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Now, I know a leopard can't change their spots and neither can a Liberal. The Liberals love to tax. Bonnie Crombie, the queen of the carbon tax, is happy to support Justin Trudeau's federal carbon tax, which is driving up the price for everyone and every business in Ontario. Anybody who gets anything trucked to them is paying more because of Justin Trudeau and Bonnie Crombie's carbon tax.

We're not in favour of a carbon tax. We've lowered taxes. We've lowered fees. We've cut red tape. As a result, our economy is thriving with multi-billion-dollar investments from Windsor to Umicore in Loyalist township and into the north. And we're not done yet.

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

MPP Zee Hamid: Thank you to the minister for his response. Our government knows that we can build a growing economy, produce clean energy and make the transition to Ontario-built EVs without jeopardizing affordability for people in this province.

Unfortunately, the federal government is unwilling to listen to provincial leaders and Canadians on this topic. Speaker, when Bonnie Crombie was a federal leader, she was one of the first to support the carbon tax. Now, as the Ontario Liberal leader, she continues to side with her federal buddies on this punitive and regressive carbon tax.

The last thing people need right now is another expense on their bills. Ontarians cannot afford the carbon tax, and they cannot afford the carbon tax queen, Bonnie Crombie. Can the minister please explain how the Liberal taxes are killing businesses and draining Ontario families' household budgets?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks again to the member for Milton. It's no surprise to anybody from coast to coast in our country, especially here in Ontario, the impact that the federal carbon tax which is fully supported by the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, is having on residents in our province. It's driving up the cost of everything from groceries to gasoline to home heating.

Now, we've taken a different approach here under the leadership of Premier Ford and our team. We've cut taxes. We've cut fees. We're keeping energy costs low. You'll remember not so long ago when the Ontario Liberals were in power, our electricity bills tripled under their watch. It chased jobs out of our province by the thousands—300,000 jobs left our province. Now this morning, I was astonished to hear that Mr. Green, Mrs. Green and the Liberals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, I'm sick of that. We're going to start referring to members by their riding name or their ministerial title.

Hon. Todd Smith: The member from Guelph and the member from Kitchener Centre were out in full support of the Green Energy Act, which drove up the cost of electricity, tripling it. They want to go back there, and we know what will happen if the Liberals were ever, God

forbid, be coming to power. They would do the same thing to our energy sector—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Take your seat.

The next question.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. In Toronto, 523 people died from opioid overdoses. Toronto's public health officer, Dr. Eileen de Villa, had this to say: Overdose is "more than a public health issue—it's a human tragedy that" requires a response filled "with empathy, care and compassion." Experts are calling on this government to take an effective and evidence-based approach to addressing the opioid crisis, an approach that includes harm reduction, overdose prevention, along with housing, health care and mental health supports.

My question is to the Premier: How many more people have to die before this government properly addresses our opioid crisis?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Mr. Speaker, our government is the first government to have in place a minister responsible for mental health and addictions, because we take opioids and all addictions very seriously. Our government is the first government to make investments of \$525 million annually and \$3.8 billion over 10 years, and to build a system of care.

If you listen and look at the Roadmap to Wellness, you'll see that there's a continuum of care that's being built throughout the province of Ontario to ensure that people are able to access services where and when they need them. That means giving them treatment, low-barrier access to withdrawal management, accessing those services through mobile crisis response teams, through paramedicine that is now being incorporated into that continuum of care and giving people, after withdrawal management, the opportunity to get into treatment and with that treatment then reintegrate with social supportive housing.

We are building a system of care and ensuring that everyone is getting the treatment when and where they need it.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the minister: People are not getting the treatment that they need; 523 people died of an opioid addiction in Toronto last year alone. That is 523 people too many. My riding has been very hard hit by the opioid crisis. The Neighbourhood Group in University–Rosedale has a memorial board of over 25 people in the community who have died from overdoses: people like Patty, a staff person who worked hard to save people in the community. These people have family. They have friends. They contribute to the community. They are loved. These are preventable deaths, Minister.

This is my question: When will this government take meaningful action to stop people needlessly dying?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Once again, I have visited your community, and I've visited pretty well every community in the province of Ontario to understand the specific needs of those different communities. We are building a system of care that's community-based, that meets the person where they are, and we are assisting everyone.

Even a single death is one death too many, and I take those deaths very, very seriously and make sure that we do build these continuums. We've invested in opening over 400 beds. That's 7,000 treatment spots that didn't exist before this government came to power, and we're going to continue building a system of care and meeting people where they are.

But we're not only looking after the individuals who we know are in greatest need in marginalized communities, with investments in the Black community, in Indigenous communities, in remote communities, in rural communities; we're building mobile health units that are moving around the province, as well, to assist wherever we can in meeting people and giving them the supports they need, regardless of—

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

TAXATION

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. All seniors in Ontario deserve to be treated with dignity and to receive the quality of care they need. The previous Liberal government failed to invest in long-term-care facilities and services. This led to unnecessary hospitalizations and, in some cases, forced seniors to move to a long-term-care home outside their community. Now, the provincial Liberals are supporting a tax that is burdening existing long-term-care homes with higher costs of operation while making it more expensive to build new homes.

Our government remains focused on helping seniors get the right care in the right place. We're building more homes faster, and we won't stop calling on the federal Liberals to scrap the punitive carbon tax. Can the minister please tell the House how our government is improving long-term care for seniors despite facing challenges from the Liberal carbon tax?

Hon. Stan Cho: Thanks to the amazing member from Burlington. I've got to—

Interjections.

Hon. Stan Cho: Thank you for all your hard work, yes.

But, Speaker, I've got to say very honestly, I absolutely hate talking about the carbon tax, and I'll tell you why—

Interjections.

Hon. Stan Cho: You see, the Liberals over there groan, and we groan every time we talk about it, too, but we groan for different reasons. We groan because, as the member stated, this has made it very difficult to build long-term care in Ontario. They groan because they are sick of

hearing of the carbon tax and refuse to do anything about it. In fact, Bonnie Crombie doubles down, stays silent when the federal Liberals triple this tax. What does that result in? Higher construction costs, higher operating costs for long-term care in this province.

When will the Liberals finally do the right thing, stand up to Bonnie Crombie, stand up to Justin Trudeau and say, “Get rid of this tax. It’s costing our seniors in Ontario”?

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the minister for the response. It’s shameful that for over a decade, the previous Liberal government neglected this sector. Now, rather than supporting the people of Ontario, they’re throwing their support behind a tax that makes life more unaffordable for Ontarians. As Premier Ford has warned since day one, the carbon tax is raising the cost of everything.

At a time when families are already struggling to make ends meet, it’s unfair and unjust for the liberals to keep hiking the carbon tax, just like they did on April 1. Unlike the Liberals, our government will continue to speak up for Ontarians, continue to fight for our seniors and continue to deliver real affordability. Can the minister tell the House what our government is doing to combat the negative effects the carbon tax has on our long-term-care sector?

1130

Hon. Stan Cho: Mr. Speaker, we’re doing a lot, and we were doing a lot before the pandemic hit. We were doing that after the carbon tax was tripled—and keeps going up. And what are we talking about? Well, in the latest budget, what did we do? We introduced another \$155 million for a construction funding subsidy to offset those increased costs. But we also did more. We increased, to the highest level ever—\$353 million, for a 6.6% increase to operational costs. Why, Speaker? Because long-term-care homes are paying more for everything: to transport food to the homes, to transport seniors, to transport food itself, to transport equipment itself. But we went further: a one-time, \$202 million in funding, \$2,543 per space, in every single one of these members’ ridings, to offset those increased costs, the pressures associated with the carbon tax. I wish we didn’t have to do that, because that could go to better outcomes for seniors.

Stand with us. Stand with our seniors—

Interjections.

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

I am standing, I’ll say to the minister, and I’ll ask the members again to make their comments through the Chair, not across the floor of the House like that.

Start the clock. Next question.

by a drug named Pemazyre. The drug is approved by Health Canada; Quebec and other provinces are close to funding the drug; and it is the standard of care in the United States, United Kingdom and China, yet not covered here.

Noor’s family applied for funding under the CBCRP program but were denied. Having access to this treatment could mean more time for Noor to spend with her 18-month-old daughter.

So my question for the minister: With Noor’s doctors and experts asking for approval, why are Noor and others with this rare cancer being denied access to this life-saving drug?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I’m happy to look into the individual case. But I will say that Ontario has led Canadian provinces and territories. When Health Canada receives and gives approval for new drugs and new therapies, when it goes through the pCPA pricing process, and when there is an assessment on when the drugs are appropriately used in the population, Ontario actually leads Canada in getting it on the drug formulary and making sure that we have access here in Ontario.

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

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I really appreciate your attention to this, and I know it means a lot to Noor and her family.

Again to the Minister of Health: While some drugs save lives, there are others that have no place in our ORs. For example, desflurane, also known as des, is an anaesthetic gas that is being banned in jurisdictions across the world and in Canada because of its negative environmental impact and the availability of more cost-effective alternatives. Several hospitals in Ontario have banned this gas. Health Sciences North in Sudbury saved \$250,000 last year, and Trillium Health in Mississauga saved \$125,000 last year, all while slashing emissions.

My question for the Minister of Health: Will you take an important step today, ban desflurane and save hospitals thousands of dollars, cut emissions while also ensuring good patient outcomes?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I want to go back to the member’s original question and highlight some of the drugs that, actually, Ontario was the first to list—Trikafta, of course, for cystic fibrosis being the one that comes to mind immediately.

The member opposite is inserting herself and her party into clinical decisions that should best be left to clinicians and to hospital leadership, and I will continue to let them lead.

HEALTH CARE

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: My question today is for the Minister of Health. Today, I’m asking for support for a constituent of mine, Noor Ayesha. Noor has a rare form of cancer, and her doctors have told her it can only be treated

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

LONG-TERM CARE

M. Guy Bourgoïn: Ma question est pour le ministre des Soins de longue durée. Aux élections de 2022, vous avez dit que Kapuskasing recevrait 60 nouveaux lits de soins de longues durées pour 2025. Ils ne sont pas construits.

J'ai parlé à Extencicare et je vous ai écrit deux lettres. Cette compagnie privée ne voit pas cette construction comme priorité et dit qu'elle ne va pas construire, malgré les subventions du gouvernement. On parle maintenant de deux ans d'attente pour des lits de soins de longue durée.

Monsieur le Ministre, allez-vous construire les 68 lits de longue durée à Kapuskasing, tel que promis?

Hon. Stan Cho: Thank you for the question from the member opposite. I have received your letters requesting an update on this project in Kapuskasing, because Kapuskasing—like everywhere else across this province—has a similar problem, and that problem is that we have a shortage of long-term-care spaces in Ontario. That has been a problem that's been developing for a long time now.

This government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, came along in 2018 and said we're changing that: \$10 billion, the biggest capital expansion ever into long-term care; 58,000 new and upgraded spaces; until this point, 18,200 homes built or with shovels in the ground—and more to follow.

Now, the speaker asked about the 68 allocated to Kapuskasing. Our message to Extencicare is very clear: You have an allocation. We expect you to get shovels in the ground. We are here to help support that. As I said, we will be reaching out to the company as well to make sure that that is followed through on.

But I appreciate that the member understands the similar problem that we face across this province. Seniors took care of us; it is our turn to take care of them. Let's build these homes.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: Extencicare veut une extension. Ils veulent se retirer de leurs responsabilités.

Votre gouvernement a promis 33 000 nouveaux lits de longue durée d'ici 2025.

Monsieur le Ministre, allez-vous retirer le contrat à Extencicare et le donner à des partenaires qui ont la volonté de construire? Nos citoyens méritent mieux.

Hon. Stan Cho: Great point by the member: If you're holding an allocation out there, we expect you to build. Let's make that very, very clear. And we have put supports out there to that end.

What supports are we talking about, Speaker? In the latest budget passed by our fine finance minister just a few short months ago, there was \$155 million for construction funding subsidy in those tough and expensive-to-build areas. But we went further, Speaker: 6.6% increase to level-of-care funding. That's operational support for things like staffing, for food for residents. We went even further: \$200-million one-time funding for deferred maintenance, for capital costs. All of these supports are meant to make it easier to get shovels in the ground.

We understand the pandemic presented challenges. We understand the neglect by the Liberals presented challenges to long-term care. We are going to get over those hurdles, and my message to Extencicare once again is clear: Get shovels in the ground. Let's get these built in

Kapuskasing. In fact, let's get this built all over our great province. We owe it to our seniors.

TAXATION

Mr. Aris Babikian: My question is for the Solicitor General. It is clear to everyone but the federal government and their provincial buddies that the Liberal carbon tax is hurting Ontario's economy. As the Liberals impose one tax hike after another, it is costing more for a police cruiser, fire truck or an ambulance to fill up their tank.

Speaker, individuals and families across Ontario rely on police and firefighters to keep their communities safe. It's imperative our first responders have the resources they need to do their job. The carbon tax is impacting the very institutions that provide essential services for Ontarians. We need the federal Liberals to listen and remove this tax.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General please tell the House how our government is ensuring Ontario's safety by fighting against the carbon tax?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank the member for the question and for the great work he's doing in Scarborough—Agincourt.

Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of going down to Windsor and meeting with fire chief Stephen Laforet. I spoke with him on the amazing work he's doing, and I want to congratulate the member from Windsor—Tecumseh for representing his community with a concern for public safety.

It is absolutely undeniable: Bonnie Crombie, as mayor of Mississauga, saw the fire department bill for carbon tax as part of the fire department budget for Mississauga fire. And you know what? She approved it. She approved it with the line for carbon tax.

She was wrong for Mississauga, she was wrong for not saying she knew what was going on with the bill for carbon tax and she's wrong for Ontario.

1140

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: Thank you to the Solicitor General for the response. The public safety of Ontarians is of paramount importance. That is why we are calling for the removal of a tax that only adds more obstacles for the front-line workers who keep our communities safe.

But, Speaker, the same cannot be said for the NDP and the Liberal members in this Legislature. They continue to ignore the harmful effects the carbon tax has on our day-to-day lives. Unlike the opposition members, our government is standing firmly behind our first responders. We won't stop fighting until this tax is abolished.

Can the Solicitor General tell the House why the federal government must scrap the tax?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: It's simple, Mr. Speaker: Every dollar to fuel a vehicle in public safety—and public safety is very important to this government; it's important to Premier Ford morning, noon and night, and it's a priority for this government.

When you look at the numbers, 18 cents per litre for gasoline is just the carbon tax portion. If you look at the fact that an average SUV for public safety is 100 litres, you multiply it per year and it's a minimum of \$6,500.

When I met with Chief Jason Bellaire, also last week in Windsor—a great police service that keeps Windsor safe—the chief told me that the bill for their fuel is almost \$1 million. That means with the carbon tax portion, they could put another constable on the road to keep Windsor safe. Bonnie Crombie—

Interjections.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Kitchener Centre has given notice of their dissatisfaction with the answer to their question given by the Minister of Health regarding desflurane. This matter will be debated today following private members' public business.

VISITORS

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order. The Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I do want to welcome Pat Daly, along with his beautiful family, who are with us: Carol, Michael, Kyle, Monica and Robyn.

Pat has served for 39 years as a school board trustee, of which 31 years were as the chair of his school board and the last six as the president of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. This man is a leader in Ontario.

He is joined by the bishop of Hamilton, Bishop Crosby. I want to welcome you, and Lorena and Nick and Anne and your family. Thank you for your leadership for the people of Ontario.

RECEPTION

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Very quickly, I would just like to invite everybody to Diabetes Canada. They're in 230 today and they would like to see as many of you as possible.

PRIDE MONTH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order. The member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I would like to invite all members of the House to join us at the ceremonial flagpole today at 12 o'clock for the raising of the Pride flag.

I should also comment that there will be the provision of a celebratory lunch as well as a live performance from Singing Out, Canada's largest 2SLGBT choir. They will be here with us today.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to welcome a former member who served in the 41st Parliament: Glenn Thibeault, member for Sudbury. Welcome back.

There being no further business at this time—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to say this once again: If a member has a point of order and wants to raise a point of order, I need them to say so.

RECEPTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order. I recognize the member for Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I just wanted to let members know that Disability Without Poverty also has a reception at noon today. So there are many places to visit over the noon hour today. I hope you can make it.

VISITEUSES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay, I believe, on a point of order.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Merci, monsieur le Président. Je vois en haut mon interne qui était ici, Kaitlin Gallant, qui va finir bientôt; mais aussi, mon assistante qui va nous laisser bientôt aussi et qui s'en va travailler ailleurs. Merci pour tous les services que tu m'as faits et tout l'ouvrage que tu as fait pour la législation. Encore, merci d'être ici.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1146 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have some special guests with us in the House today from the municipality of Chatham-Kent; specifically, Dresden: Brian and Beth McCabe.

Welcome to the Legislature. We're delighted to have you here today.

MPP Jamie West: I see that, over here, my friend Lisa has come to join us. I'd just like to welcome Lisa Arnott to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I say to the member for Sudbury, she'd let you do that, but she wouldn't let me.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AFFORDABLE ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND ACCESSIBLE CHARGING ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 POUR DES VÉHICULES ÉLECTRIQUES ABORDABLES ET DES BORNES DE RECHARGE ACCESSIBLES

Mr. Schreiner moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 206, An Act to establish an electric vehicle strategy and to make related amendments to the Building Code Act, 1992 / Projet de loi 206, Loi pour établir une stratégie relative aux véhicules électriques et apporter des modifications connexes à la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Guelph like to briefly explain his bill?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: This bill enacts the Affordable Electric Vehicles and Accessible Charging Act, 2024. The act requires the Minister of Transportation to establish an electric vehicle strategy that aims to increase the affordability of electric vehicles and the accessibility of charging stations.

The bill also amends the Building Code Act to provide that no person shall construct a building for residential occupancy unless they ensure that charging stations for electric vehicles are installed in accordance with the building code.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm so eager to present this petition. I received it from Sally Palmer. She's a professor at McMaster University, and she's very passionate about OW and ODSP. With the cost of living, it's so much more important, more than ever, for this petition.

What it's asking for is that they want the rates for Ontario Works, because they have been frozen since 2018, and their small increases in the Ontario Disability Support Program—it has really left recipients struggling well below the poverty line. So they're advocating for doubling of the ODSP and the OW rates. That's what they're asking this government to do.

I have a lot of signatures on this petition, and I want to thank Sally Palmer, the professor at McMaster University, for sending these through and making this a very important issue in this Legislature.

I fully support this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Jasnoor to deliver to the table.

CAREGIVERS

Mr. Ted Hsu: This petition comes from a small business person who lost his business during the pandemic because he paid his workers too much and can't restart it because he's working 24/7 to take care of his parents. He's a family caregiver.

This petition calls on the Ontario government to support 24/7 family caregivers, including through financial compensation, so that those who are caring for their loved ones can have some relief from financial distress and the resulting mental stress.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Clarke from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. The petition is called "Improving Broadband in Northern Ontario."

As you know, Speaker, people, students, businesses rely on the Internet to go about our day, whether it's for your business to conduct your business, for students to study, for people to communicate with their community.

Unfortunately, the program that the government has put into place is a program that is 100% privately delivered. The government gives the private sector a lot of money to build infrastructure and run Internet. This does not work in many parts of northern Ontario, where there are no providers who want to set up shop. It doesn't matter how much money the government wants to give them; they do not want to set up shop in northern Ontario because there is no money to be made. But the people of northern Ontario, we need Internet access, just like everybody else. We want it to be affordable and we want it to be high-speed. We want to be part of the connection that the Internet brings.

So I fully support this petition. I think it's very much needed, and I will ask my good page Myah to bring it to the Clerk.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: This is a petition that a number of people in my riding brought into my constituency office to support access to spinal care in Ontario.

The petition raises significant concerns about the number of people waiting for complex spinal surgeries and also raises concerns around the compensation formula to access spinal care in Ontario.

The petition is calling on the Legislative Assembly to address the increasing wait times and to make complex spinal surgeries available in a more timely manner. It also calls on us to improve access to surgery for complex spinal conditions and to immediately address the inefficiencies and inequities in the OHIP compensation process for complex spine cases, and to resolve it in a fair and timely manner.

I support this petition and will ask the page to bring it to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This afternoon, I'm presenting, yet again, a petition entitled "To Raise Social Assistance Rates."

We know, as all of the people in Ontario are struggling to afford to put groceries on their table, the people that are living on OW and ODSP are struggling even more. They are living well below the poverty line. Those rates have been frozen in time, and it's well beyond time that we address the kind of suffering that those people and families that rely on this income are struggling—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry. I have to interrupt the member and remind all members that, under the new standing order, I would ask you to briefly summarize the petition; indicate, if you wish, the number of signatures on it; as well as indicating, if you wish, whether or not you support the petition. But we can't have additional editorial comment because the standing orders prohibit it now.

I'll come back to the member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas to continue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that reminder, Speaker.

This petition to raise social assistance rates has been signed by thousands and thousands of people across Ontario. We have been presenting them here. They're the hard work of the Hamilton Social Work Action Committee and Dr. Sally Palmer.

We think that these rates that have been frozen in time are unfair. People are struggling, living well below the poverty line, so I agree wholeheartedly that we need to address this injustice. We need to raise the rates and we need to help people that are struggling, including children living on social assistance and ODSP.

1510

Thank you very much. I'm going to give it to page Victoria to take to the table.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of one of the caring parents in my riding who, regrettably, has become a victim of an apparent contradiction in some of the rules in our province.

On the one hand, anyone is entitled to adequate time to unload themselves or passengers from a vehicle. But at the same time, if a vehicle is struck while the door is open by another vehicle, the parked vehicle with the open door is the one that is found to be at fault. This becomes deeply problematic for people who are unloading children from car seats in the back of their vehicle, and, indeed, this caring parent was a victim of that.

So the following petition, supported and signed by over 4,000 people and which has received significant media coverage, calls for an amendment of the legislated fault determination rules in our province to ensure adequate protection for parents in parked vehicles as they buckle and unbuckle their children so that they are not inappropriately found at fault.

I fully support this petition, am pleased to sign it and to hand it to Paige.

TUITION

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Fight the Fees!" It talks about the increases of tuition since 1980, going up from 215% for undergrad and by 247% for domestic grad tuition. They also say that it takes almost 10 years to repay that debt after students graduate.

They talk about international students, as well, where their average tuition is over \$14,000, compared to just over \$3,000 for domestic students and the need for student financial assistance. They also want to ensure that students have legislation to protect their rights to organize, and funding for student groups.

The calls for action they have are: (1) free and accessible education for all; (2) grants, not loans; and (3) legislate students' right to organize.

I want to thank the students from Canadore College and Nipissing University who collected these.

I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and provide it with page Myah for the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'd like to thank Sally Palmer and the group from McMaster University, and I think it would be fitting, today of all days, on Disability Without Poverty day, to read this petition. It's a petition asking us to double OW and ODSP rates.

During the COVID pandemic, CERB, basic income was found—the income to survive was \$2,000 a month. People are living in legislated poverty, and it's time we recognize this and double ODSP and OW rates and stop the clawbacks.

I support this petition. I will sign it and hand it to page Grace.

BLOOD AND PLASMA DONATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Louise Laplante from Hanmer in my riding for this petition. It is called "Blood and Plasma Donations Not for Sale."

Speaker, you will remember, in the 1980s, 30,000 Canadians got infected by HIV and hepatitis through blood products; 8,000 Canadians died. There was a Royal Commission of Inquiry led by Justice Krever, who made recommendations. His number 2 recommendation was to make sure that we never pay for blood and blood product donations.

In Ontario, we passed the Voluntary Blood Donations Act that forbids the privatization of blood product collection and payment. But right now, Grifols has a contract and is opening up pay-for-plasma donations in Ontario, which will not only supposedly help with our supply, but they also sell Canadian plasma, Ontario plasma, back to the States. I think this goes completely against the Voluntary Blood Donations Act of Ontario,

and so do the people who have signed the petition asking us to respect our own laws.

I fully agree with this petition, and I ask my good page Sophia to bring it to the Clerk.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Mr. Ted Hsu: This is a petition that comes from high school students in my riding of Kingston and the Islands and asks the government of Ontario to provide mandatory standardized training for all employers and employees regarding anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in the workplace, as well as understanding Judaism and Islam.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jamie West: I'd also like to thank Sally Palmer for these petitions to raise social assistance rates. I know that she's been sharing with all of our colleagues. Basically, in a nutshell, it talks about how OW for a single individual is \$733 and the Ontario Disability Support Program would be, for a single individual, \$1,308. When we compare that to CERB, for example, that supplement was \$2,000 a month, which would be more than double what you would receive on OW. The call, really, is to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP to move these people out of poverty. I think that's a wonderful idea.

I support this petition, I'll affix my signature and provide it page Jasnoor for the table.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: This is a petition signed by university and college students in the Waterloo region. It's entitled "Stop Bill 166." It's discussing the drastic underfunding of colleges and universities and making a call to request funding for mental health supports and anti-hate supports. They also ask that the government bring back the Anti-Racism Act and re-establish the committees as a way of fighting the very hate that this bill intends to address. They want to also ask the government to stop the political interference in colleges and universities, believing that this is a pillar of our democracy.

I support the "Stop Bill 166" petition. I will sign it and hand it over to page Tristan.

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier M^{me} Julie Boucher de Chelmsford dans mon comté pour ces pétitions : « Soutenez le système d'éducation francophone en Ontario. »

Comme vous savez, monsieur le Président, les francophones de l'Ontario ont le droit constitutionnel à une éducation dans la langue française. La demande pour des écoles françaises continue d'augmenter et ça fait qu'on a besoin de près de 1 000 nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes à chaque année. Malheureusement, le système en Ontario n'en éduque que 500 par année.

Il y a une étude qui a été faite et un rapport qui a été rendu au gouvernement pour aider avec ces défis. Donc, ils demandent au gouvernement de financer le rapport du groupe de travail sur la pénurie des enseignants et enseignantes dans le système d'éducation de langue française, et de travailler en partenariat avec eux pour résoudre le problème pour que tous les enfants francophones de la province aient accès à une éducation de langue française de qualité.

J'appuie cette pétition. Je vais la signer, et je demande à Farhan de l'amener à l'amener à la table des greffiers.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Mr. Ted Hsu: This is, again, from high school students in the riding of Kingston and the Islands and asks the Legislative Assembly to modify section 11, subsection (1), of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act to include hate crime prevention and response as a function of adequate and effective policing and to take other measures against hate crime in Ontario.

LABORATORY SERVICES

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Privatize Public Health: Keep Our Community" Public Health Ontario "Labs Open." There were originally 9,000 signatures. I think this is the tail end that has been sent into me.

Basically, the people who are signing this who are literally from across the province are concerned with the closure, or potential closure, of six of the 11 Public Health Ontario labs. They point out the inequities in northern Ontario and rural Ontario as well, and that the cost of water testing would be \$150 if these labs were to close.

As well, they point out the important work that Public Health Ontario labs do for medical testing, which helped us keep up with demand during outbreaks. They would like to prevent the public health labs in Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton, Peterborough, Kingston and Orillia—their asks are to stop the closure and to invest more in public health.

I support these petitions. I will affix my signature and provide it to page Maya for the table.

1520

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1828469 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2024

Ms. Ghamari moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr45, An Act to revive 1828469 Ontario Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

1828469 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2024

Ms. Ghamari moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr45, An Act to revive 1828469 Ontario Inc.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 3, 2024, on the motion for third 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): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. And I just want you to know that I will be sharing my time with the member from Humber River–Black Creek.

I cannot tell you how happy the people of Nickel Belt were when the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act was announced. They actually promoted it. There was a clip on the local television to talk about it, and everybody thought, “Yes, finally, we will be able to get more homes.” Because, you see, Speaker, the demand for homes in my riding is really, really high.

I was really proud, last Wednesday morning, to attend the grand opening of the Iamgold Côté Lake gold mine, which was just across the street from the community of Gogama in my riding. The Minister of Mines was there, and many dignitaries from all over. People from Japan, people from all over were there. There are over 1,800 workers who come and work at this mine and all of them are looking for housing. Right now, they sleep in bunkers. I don't know if you've ever had the pleasure to sleep in bunkers; it's not exactly desirable. But they go to Gogama, and they see that there are many, many beautiful homes that nobody lives in. I have pictures here. I'm aware that I'm not allowed to show you those pictures, but I can talk to you about some of those properties.

There's the home at 52 Conrad Crescent that has been there. It has a beautifully treed backyard. There is the home at 8 Low Avenue—a beautiful white home kind of up on a hill—that is available, that is empty. There's the home at 56 Conrad Crescent, a nice little bungalow with huge parking. There's about a dozen or so—one at 11 Low Avenue, a very nice home with a nice balcony. We have 34 McGowan Street. We have many, many empty houses.

You know, Speaker, that those houses are empty because there used to be a huge Ministry of Natural Resources office in Gogama, so they had houses for their employees to live in. They also had lots of garages and lots of infrastructure for them to do their work. The ministry

comes with big trucks and a place to fix them and all of this. And all of this sits empty and belongs to the province.

In many parts of the north, we have no municipalities. We have what is called a local services board or a local road board, but they do not have the power of a municipality. So when a property such as a house sits empty—people don't pay their taxes; it just sits there—then the property, if you were in a municipality, would go back to the municipality. But given that you're in northern Ontario and we have no municipality, the property goes back to the province.

In September 2020, I was really proud when we did the sod-turning ceremony for the Côté gold mine. The Premier was there, the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines—anyway, the names of the ministries have changed since, but there were, like, six or seven ministers from the Ford government who came to the sod-turning ceremony.

Understand that this gold mine was being developed, that it would create hundreds and hundreds—really, thousands—of jobs to mine that gold that they had found at Côté Lake, that it was just across the street from Gogama, that there were lots of empty buildings that belonged to the provincial government in Gogama that people could buy. I made sure that I mentioned all of this to all of the ministers who were there, to make sure that they would quickly be up for sale. I guarantee you, if you put them up for sale today, they will be sold by the weekend. But nothing happened. So on January 6, 2021, I wrote a letter to Premier Doug Ford and to his chief of staff—that was Jamie Wallace at the time—to tell him:

“I am writing to you about the economic potentials of Côté gold mine for my constituents and for the community of Gogama. Gogama is a beautiful, small, isolated northern community in my riding of Nickel Belt. It was once home to 1,200 residents.” There are now many empty homes, and I named the homes, and I gave them the pictures and explained to them how those homes became the property of the provincial government and asked him if he could quickly put those homes up for sale.

This government says that they are for police, but not in northern Ontario. They closed the police forces, two of them, in my riding. The OPP does not have an office in Gogama anymore, so the police station is closed, and the homes where the police officers used to live just next to the police station are beautiful, beautiful homes with a stone fireplace and nice big trees—anyway, beautiful homes. They also sit empty since the Ford government closed the OPP station in that community. I explained all of that to the minister and said, “People need homes. Please put those homes up for sale.”

That was on January 6, 2021. But I also—on January 7; it took me one more day—wrote to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, basically telling her more or less the same thing. I also wrote to the Minister of Finance, because apparently, when the houses are first repossessed, they could belong to the Ministry of Finance. But people didn't know for sure, so I also wrote to the

Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. I also wrote to the Minister of Infrastructure, because I figured those are infrastructure and it will be the Minister of Infrastructure who will eventually put those houses up for sale. I wanted to make sure that everybody knew.

The grand opening was in September 2020. I wrote to all of those people in 2021, and it took a year and a half before I got an answer back. The answer back came to say, “Estimated timeline is a minimum of 12 to 24 months, due to the complication with resolving” the issue of who owns what property.

1530

So I had written in January 2021. They’re telling me it’s going take 12 to 24 months, so 12 months later, I wrote back to all of those good people and heard nothing. Twenty-four months later, I wrote back to all of those ministers and said, “Are those homes going to be up for sale?” And on August 11, 2023—so you’re talking three years after the sod-turning, two and half years after I had written to everybody, followed up 12 months later, followed up again 24 months later—I got a letter from the Ministry of Infrastructure, signed by the Minister of Infrastructure, telling me that the “Estimated timeline is a minimum 12 to 24 months” to put those homes up for sale. We are now in June 2024 and none of those homes have been put up for sale.

How much red tape exists in government? It is so hard to understand. The government owns those properties. Some of those properties, like the property that the Minister of Natural Resources used to use, have not been used for 11 years. The OPP station has been closed for four years. The rest of the homes that people have abandoned, they were abandoned in, I would say, early 2012. They’ve all been empty for 12 years.

Don’t get me wrong, the government pays to maintain them. They pay people to come and cut the grass and trim the trees. They pay people to come and shovel the driveways. They pay people to make sure that the home, the water pipes and all this are taken care of.

The government knows that they own these properties, they pay to maintain them, and yet, after writing to all of those people, after there are 1,800 people across the street that are looking for a home, there is too much red tape to put those homes up for sale.

We’re not talking million-dollar homes here. In my riding, most of those homes would go for, I don’t know, \$250,000. How could it be that they can make decisions about billion-dollar greenbelt homes in three weeks’ time, and they cannot make a decision to put 12 homes that they own, that they maintain in Gogama, up for sale in four years? If that’s not red tape, I don’t know what to call this—that they don’t care about northern Ontario? I think they do.

I was at the grand opening of the gold mine. I got to try to lift the first gold nugget that came out of the mine. Did you know, Speaker, that a gold nugget about that big—I couldn’t even lift it. It is very heavy. I was pretending that I was going to lift it and put it in my pocket—you know, gold. I couldn’t even lift it. I had to ask the member from

Sudbury to come and help me lift it so I could take a picture pretending.

Anyway, that being said, the Minister of Mines was there; he gave a beautiful speech. He knows about this situation. Anybody I talk to on the other side knows that those homes should be put up for sale, and yet, four years later—I stopped counting the number of letters that I have written, but we are over 30 letters that I have written about this, pictures that I have sent. How many times have I spoken about this in the House, and yet nothing has been done?

So my view of the Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act is that people have to realize that the province is not only southern Ontario. Northern Ontario is beautiful. Northern Ontario is part of Ontario. When you put a piece of legislation forward that talks to something that is really, really pertinent to northern Ontario, you have to make sure that we are included in this.

But I would say the present legislation, Bill 185, Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, the way it is written right now, it’s not going to help northern Ontario. We face housing issues the same way that everybody else does. As I said, when you open up a new mine, when 1,800 new workers move to a new mine, they move their family. They need a place to stay. They need a place for their spouses and their kids to go to school, and all of this is available right there, belongs to the provincial government, and I cannot get them to put it up for sale. All I get is more or less the very same letter that was sent to me in 2021, 2022 and 2023, but there has been a change of minister—I mean, it’s still the Minister of Infrastructure. There’s a new Minister of Infrastructure on the different answers that I get, but it is the same answer—copy and paste from one year to the next. How could it be, Speaker? Those people matter.

They fully agree that mining is important to northern Ontario. Well, mining means that when you open up a new mine—were there a lot of people at Côté Lake before? No. There were five camps, one of them in pretty poor shape. There were a few people with trailers around Côté Lake. That was it; that was all. Now it is a fantastic facility. You wouldn’t believe it.

There are trucks that are—how can I explain? Bigger than—oh, I don’t know how many feet up, but they are huge, huge trucks that you have never seen. I got a picture of myself beside the tire. I’m not even 25% of the size of the tire, never mind the truck. All of those are self-driving. They go 50 kilometres an hour down to the drilling. The drilling, again, is directed off-line. There are no workers there. Everything is done remotely. It is a fantastic gold mine.

They still need workers. Workers still need a place to live. Don’t get me wrong; many of them live in Timmins, many of them live in Sudbury and travel, but many of them come from Gogama, come from Mattagami First Nation, from Biscotasing, Westree, Shining Tree, areas around there. They want to be able to rent those homes. They want to be able to buy those homes, and the government has so much red tape that they cannot put them up for sale.

I know that I was sharing my time with my good colleague, and I'm sorry I took too much of my time, but I'll sit down now.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I thank my friend and colleague for her speech. Of course, there's not a lot of time left to say—but any kind of legislation we have here to talk about housing has to include tenants, because the reality is, this government shows little to no interest at all. They talk about—they brag, in fact, saying that they're leading in terms of rental housing starts, but I think it's really patently obvious why that would even happen. It has nothing to do with them; it's more of a chicken or an egg thing, because if the average cost of rent is \$2,500, \$3,000 a month, all of a sudden, a landlord can make tons and tons of money doing that, building more rental units that nobody can afford. The relief addressed by supply and demand might be a correction in five, 10, 15, 20 years, but it doesn't bring relief to tenants who are being evicted right now in this affordability crisis.

On the subject of the affordability crisis, this government is not interested whatsoever in that. I'll tell you what they're interested in: beer. They're interested in beer. I couldn't get my head around it, why the common theme in the last six years—every once in a while, we would be debating beer. First, it was tailgate parties at football games. It was a buck-a-beer that never happened.

I'll give an example of where I think it really comes from, because if you can't fix a person's problems—and this government really can't; in fact, they're making problems worse every day with legislation they continue to introduce here—what can you do? Well, I can think of something: Get them drunk. Get everyone drunk. We'll put them to sleep with a good glass of wine on a hot Sunday afternoon. You might want to go to sleep after that.

1540

So how do we get people drinking? Well, imagine going to the grocery stores. You're trying to purchase things. You're like, "Oh, my God, look at the price of this. I can't afford this. I can't afford that. Oh, look, there's beer here. That's new. Oh, my God—a bottle of wine. You know what? I'll just take this home and have a drink." And guess what? Forgot about the problem of groceries. But it's not enough, because people start to wake up and they say, "Oh, my God, it's really—it's unaffordable." What do we do? Well, let's bring beer a little closer. Let's put it in the convenience stores, and you know, we've got lots of convenience stores around the province. So now you're going in there to do what you needed to do, because you couldn't make it to the grocery store. Guess what? There's beer there.

What's it going to cost the taxpayers? A billion dollars, a year early? I mean, this contract is ending anyway. What's the rush to take \$1 billion of taxpayers' money to put beer in corner stores? How is this a priority for this government?

The final thing I have in the last minute is this carbon tax. Do you know what? I finally heard a minister get up today. Do you know he said? "I'm sick of talking about the carbon tax." Hi. I mean, half of every question period is about the carbon tax. You want to get them to talk about other federal issues, like, I don't know, talk to auto manufacturers about making cars harder to steal. "No, we can't talk about that." But 30 minutes every morning about the carbon tax. Do one question, man—one question. We get it. Everyone gets it. The penguins in the Antarctic get it. Martians get it. We get it. You can't change it. Talk about something else. You say you're proud of doing things to change the province of Ontario, but all you want to do is talk about the same thing.

I'm commiserating with you. I know it's hard. It was really good to hear the minister say that. I wanted to give him a hug after, because I know it's not easy to meet your hundred-times-a-day quota. But, look, you have more to offer. I know you do. You've got fabulous members over there. I want to hear about something else, okay?

Thank you very much, Speaker. Have a wonderful afternoon, everybody.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to questions.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I want to thank the member opposite for his comments, but I do want to pick up on the grocery shopping and the LCBO. As you know, the Liberal government 10 years ago signed an agreement that has been costing this province over \$500 million annually. We're moving proactively to transition, and we anticipate the point of sales will increase government revenues by about \$300 million. We'll create 7,500 new jobs. So, why not move forward with it now? That's my question.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I appreciate it. It wasn't a question about the carbon tax; thank you.

So the solution is: Instead of paying \$500 million, you're going to pay \$1 billion to cancel the contract. Again, you know what? When I go and purchase a bottle of wine or a bottle of beer, I go to the LCBO public workers. And the money goes back into government coffers directly. It doesn't go indirectly. It goes directly there to pay for things like health care, reconstructing roads and other things like that.

But there is an absolute religion on this side to privatize everything and at any cost. So I understand how it goes in line with their brand and their ideology, but we are spending \$1 billion when we have record deficits and massive priorities that we need to be spending on countless other things. But no, let's put beers in corner stores and spend a billion bucks to do it. Come on.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member from Nickel Belt and the member from Humber River–Black Creek for their debate this afternoon. In Hamilton, we have close to 1,900 people who are homeless. Visible homeless is in the hundreds. We can drive through our city at any time, and there are encampments of tents everywhere.

We have lost 16,000 low-income rentals that were under the \$750 mark. We are currently losing. For every one house we build, we are losing four to the private rental market. This is an absolute crisis. With numbers continuing to decline in the rental market, there's no hope in sight for so many people who cannot afford to pay the rent.

Do you see anything in this bill that will provide relief and a remedy to the absolute crisis that we're seeing in our communities?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The direct answer to your question is: no. There is nothing in this bill that will protect anybody from illegal evictions. There is nothing in this bill that will make it more affordable to rent a place. There is nothing in this bill to help renters.

The situation you describe is very similar to the situation in my community, where there will be encampments this summer—everywhere.

The number of people facing homelessness is increasing. Many of them have mental health and addictions issues. The number one step to be able to help them is to be able to house them. All of this is becoming out of reach. It is a crisis. It should be recognized as a crisis, but it is not even mentioned in that bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Brian Riddell: I was so impressed with the member from Humber River–Black Creek that—he was talking about the carbon tax. We do talk about the carbon tax a lot in this House because it's so important to the people of not only Ontario but Canada.

I would just like to ask the member what his opinion of the carbon tax is. Maybe—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): To respond, the member for Humber River–Black Creek.

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank the member for the question. I love talking about the carbon tax. In fact, we have voted against the carbon tax and many factors. I've been in the chamber actually voting against it in many ways.

I want to talk about something. Let's pretend this is question period in the morning and I'm in the government. Do you know who likes Justin Trudeau more than the federal Liberals themselves—because I don't think they like him very much right now; I think they're having a little bit of buyers' remorse. It's this government. Can you imagine if Justin Trudeau wasn't there—that they could just focus all the venom and hatred in that one direction and jump on any train to lead there? What would they talk about, honestly? We're sitting here, in the most cynical moments ever of this government, constantly talking about this. I want you all to go home, if you have a faith that you follow, and say a moment of prayer to him and just thank him that he's there in Ottawa so you can direct all your venom towards—because do you know what? In the last couple of years, you guys were working really well together, I can tell you that.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

M. Guy Bourgoin: Ma question est pour ma collègue de Nickel Belt. J'ai écouté vos paroles, puis moi aussi, quand j'ai vu le projet de loi 185 de réduire le « red tape », j'étais encouragé, mais disons que ça n'a pas duré longtemps. On a commencé à regarder le projet de loi, puis on réalise que ça ne répondra pas aux besoins du nord de l'Ontario.

Moi, j'ai des communautés—j'en ai parlé souvent, que 65 %, 70 % de la communauté de Hearst, ils n'ont pas de médecin de famille. Mais même si on en trouve un, je ne sais même pas si on est pas capable de lui trouver un logement ou une maison. Ça n'existe pas. On a une pénurie. Mais aussi, on a une pénurie pour des domiciles abordables, des domiciles subventionnés et des domiciles avec de l'aide.

Montrez-moi dans ce projet de loi où ça va répondre aux besoins des communautés du Nord pour répondre aux besoins qu'on a dans nos communautés.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Je ne donne pas de faux espoirs à personne. Il n'y a rien dans ce projet de loi qui va aider les petites communautés du Nord qui font face à une pénurie de logements. Tu peux nommer n'importe quelle petite communauté du Nord. Nous, aussi, on a des problèmes de logement. Nous, aussi, on a des familles entières qui ne savent pas où ils vont demeurer, et ça, ça a un impact sur toutes—toutes—les communautés.

Je parlais d'une mine qui vient d'ouvrir. Comment tu fais pour attirer des travailleurs? Les travailleurs viennent. Ils sont intéressés dans l'emploi. Ils savent comment faire ça. Mais ils ont un conjoint, une conjointe; ils ont des enfants. Ils ont des besoins, et il n'y a pas de logements.

Il n'y a rien dans le projet de loi qui a été présenté qui va aider les petites communautés du Nord à faire face à la pénurie de logements à laquelle on fait face en ce moment.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

1550

Mr. Matthew Rae: My question is for the member from Humber River–Black Creek. I know we heard often at committee from a variety of stakeholders, and we heard from the Ontario home builders and the greater Ottawa home builders. They said the number one concern they had was increasing costs, was the high interest rates of the federal Liberal government and also the high cost of the carbon tax increasing the cost of building materials and homes.

I know the member has said he has voted against it in this place, and I appreciate he is willing to vote against the carbon tax. But will he call his federal NDP colleagues, who are supporting Justin Trudeau, and ask him to scrap this tax?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: To the member: Listen, when you go home tonight, just take a moment for Justin Trudeau and just thank that he's there so that you can talk about him and his carbon tax. Please do that. Take a moment to do that.

And I want the member, after he leaves, to go back and say to his team, "Guys, you know what? We're doing stuff here, okay? We're actually doing some stuff"—I'm not

going to say it's great. "We're doing other things. Can we just ask one carbon tax question in the morning so that we could talk about something else?" Because all we hear about from this government, by and large, is just beer and carbon tax. And then, when it's not about the carbon tax, it's beer, and then it's more carbon tax on top of it.

Please. There are probably millions of people watching the legislative network. We know that, right? And they're getting tired of hearing the same things. It's almost as if the government of Ontario is doing nothing but complaining about carbon tax—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We don't have time for another back-and-forth question and answer, unfortunately.

We're going to move to further debate.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak about Bill 185. It has a pretty serious impact on my region, the region of Waterloo. I'm grateful to see the member for Cambridge and the member for Kitchener South—Hespeler here.

We, as a region, rely solely on groundwater. We are not attached to a lake. We rely solely on groundwater. If we run out of groundwater, it will cost \$2 billion at today's estimates to build a pipeline to a lake to get more groundwater. So, by removing regional planning, we remove hydrogeologists from looking over our approvals. We remove the view of the watershed when we think about the land used for development. For example, recently, with the expanded boundaries put forward by lower-tier municipalities, we will now pave over the water recharge area. What that means is, this type of land is full of gravel and it helps our water from the sky replenish our groundwater to ensure that we have water for the generations to come. What I worry about is that that water will be scarce as we pave over the water recharge area and we create sprawl development, and we don't have this level of oversight by the region to ensure that we have sustainable water resources going forward.

Also, our regional official plan: The region of Waterloo put a lot of time and energy into creating a plan that protected our countryside line, that recognized the Waterloo moraine and environmentally sensitive areas. Now, with that regional planning gone, we will jeopardize the protection of our farm economy, as well as our environmentally sensitive spaces that sequester carbon, that filter water and are important for our biodiversity.

I truly believe that this focus on sprawl development will actually hinder housing. If you ask any construction worker—I talked to a friend of mine this weekend and he said, "We are already building at 110%. We can't double what we're doing right now. We are maxing out our capacity." We know there is a lack of labour, that we face labour shortages, and we also know that we face supply shortages. We have a construction price index problem, so our inflation rates have gone down, but our construction inflation has not, which needs addressing.

Sprawl development, we also know, is two and a half times more expensive for municipalities to service than density, and so we look to see more double-digit property

tax increases going forward because of this focus on sprawl development. And we know that tall-and-sprawl only benefits a small group of developers, rather than the missing middle development that opens up the possibility of construction of more units to many more people, which is why we believe in ending exclusionary zoning.

In the region of Waterloo alone, in greenfield developments, we have over 38,000 units that have been approved that have not been built. We know that focusing on greenfield development will not get us further to our housing targets.

Our farming sector, the OFA in my area, has asked and written and sent emails. Our experts in the farming sector in my region have asked us today to not pass Bill 185. They know that we are losing 319 acres of farmland every day and that we can't eat money. The price, because of speculation, because of this government's focus on sprawl development and zones going out and then in and out and then in have not only delayed housing development in the region of Waterloo by two years—our regional official plan came out in the summer two years ago—because of flip-flops, all of that housing has been put on hold.

In addition to that, we know that farmers are struggling to buy land because now we know that—I could name about five developers who are buying up farmland only to sit on it. This leads to a lack of development. They are not going to put barns. They're not going to invest money into the soil, because they're renting it from developers who are sitting on it, waiting for the prices to go up, waiting for the right moment to flip it or sell it or turn it into something else.

So I beg that this government focus on density, focus on all kinds of housing, not just sprawl, because this will lead to better transit access. It will lead to more affordable housing, and it's a better, more efficient way to use the scarce resources we have to put more units on the market. Instead of building big mansions, we can build multiplexes, and that will service a lot more people in the province of Ontario.

I hope you will not support Bill 185, because I want to see water and food for my kids going forward.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to go to questions for the member.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I'm delighted to respond to the remarks from the member opposite. I know she comes from a great career in municipal politics. Certainly, I have beloved memories of my own time. So I know municipalities like to decide or are the ones to decide where buildings should or should not go. But as you'll likely know, and likely experienced this, as I did, the permissions process takes a long, long time with the advent of public consultation. Our government does, through Bill 185, want to speed up the process, especially for important projects such as housing, but also for schools. So we're looking at ways to adopt projects faster to help communities grow.

My question to the member opposite is whether you still see the value in speeding up approvals to help with

housing, help with schools, help with university residences for your riding. I just wanted to get your perspective.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I think my recommendation going forward to be—I know that there has been some consultation now as opposed to Bill 23, which didn't get consultation from municipalities. When I joined council after Bill 23, it caused utter chaos. Our planning departments in the municipalities are experiencing utter, utter chaos because of the constant regulatory changes that are coming from this government. It's affecting our staffing levels; it's affecting morale; it's affecting workloads.

So, yes, I agree with speeding up the process, but I think we really need to be keyed into the labour issues we're facing in our planning departments. One way we could speed up approvals is ending exclusionary zoning. To be honest, we wouldn't have to bring these small and medium-sized builds even to council at all if we got rid of exclusionary zoning. When we're building a subdivision, let's just allow schools to be built. Instead of—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We'll have to go for a next question.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you very much to the member from Kitchener Centre. Really, this all begs the question: Who's in charge of planning in this province? Because we know it's not the planning departments of municipalities across the province, it's most likely developers that are leading planning. It's most likely the OLT that's going to make the decision on planning. It's not going to be the people who live in communities, who have no say now because they do not have any longer a third-party right to appeal any decisions that are made on land that could be theirs, in fact.

So my question to you is, do you think that the chaos you're talking about is simply a function of the fact that this government has taken planning out of the hands of expert planners and put it into the hands of speculators, land speculators and developers and their OLT that they are stacking with their friends and—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Back to the member for Kitchener Centre for the response.

1600

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I think you make good decisions when you base it on data. What I would like to say is that I don't think it's all developers, because we had a lot of delegations in one of the earlier bills and they support density. This was an Ottawa home builder; our member over there would get to know these home builders. It's not all home builders that support this bill.

I think if we really want to get home building done, we need to talk to all developers and all home builders, and leaving out stakeholder groups like environmentalists is nearsighted. I worry about some of the sensitive areas and if we don't have expertise from biologists, hydrogeologists etc. and we don't even allow them to speak, I think we will go very far in doing harm by not including many perspectives on what good planning actually means.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We have time for another quick question.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member from Kitchener Centre's eloquent defence of her region and the financial and environmental cost of low-density sprawl development. I'm wondering if the member can tell us what are the financial and environmental benefits of intensification through gentle density and missing middle housing.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I think we know that we need to move away from car dependency. We hear all the time how much gas costs, so why are we building homes so far away from where people live, where people's families are, when we could be building it close to transit?

We know we have a scarcity of building supplies. If you talk to anyone, cement is the number one most expensive thing that we can use right now. So these gentle density houses in the middle of town, we can use wood and sustainable resources and reduce our cement dependence.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to further debate.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I move the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Ms. Khanjin has moved that the question be now put. I'm satisfied that there's been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House as there's been over six hours of debate and 18 members have participated. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Orders of the day?

Hon. Jill Dunlop: Point of order: If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 6? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

PATIENT-TO-NURSE RATIOS FOR HOSPITALS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LES RATIOS PATIENTS-PERSONNEL INFIRMIER DANS LES HÔPITAUX

Mme Gélinas moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 192, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act with respect to maximum patient-to-nurse ratios / Projet de loi 192, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé en ce qui concerne les ratios patients-personnel infirmier maximaux.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to standing order 100, Ms. Gélinas has 12 minutes for her presentation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The bill is quite simple. It gives the number of patients that a nurse can be responsible for for one shift. To give you an example, if a patient is in intensive care on a ventilator, the law would say you need one nurse to one patient. On the flipside, if patients are admitted to the rehab unit on a nightshift, then you would have one nurse to seven patients, and there is a list that is given for people in ICUs, specialist care, in-patient, palliative care, rehab etc. that are listed in the bill.

I brought this bill forward because our health care system is in crisis. From Chesley to Wingham, from Marathon to Hawkesbury, from Red Lake to Carleton Place, we have seen over 1,000 emergency room closures in our province. Ontario has never, never seen that before.

If you look at the reason behind the closure of emergency rooms, the closure of important hospital services in different hospitals, up to permanent closures of hospitals, the number one reason why this is happening is always a lack of staff, and the number one reason why we have nursing shortages is burnout. Our nurses are burnt out.

I want to quote quite a few nurses. The nurses are watching right now. They know that I'm bringing this bill forward, and many of them are hoping that things will change, so they sent me quotes.

First: "I believe a legislated ratio is the single most important factor that would improve my own willingness to remain at bedside and within the nursing profession."

Another quote: "I left a direct-care role in the hospital due to poor patient-to-nurse ratios and constant understaffing. Many times I felt unsafe and overwhelmed due to the short-staffing and increased patient needs."

Third quote: "Higher wages would attract more nurses and better ratios would stop burnout and address nurses leaving the profession."

Another quote: "I think wages and better staffing ratios would keep RPNs in Ontario."

Another quote: "We should be implementing standard ratios. Education has them. Why not health care?"

Another quote: "I left direct patient care due to increase in violence ... and increased patient ratios."

Another quote: "It's increasingly difficult to provide quality care for patients when your patient ratio keeps growing."

Another nurse: "We're still working in unsafe nurse-patient ratios so often. Our workplace environment impacts the care that the people in the province receive."

Another nurse: "It's disappointing, stressful and exhausting. Nurses deserve better than what we have been provided for staffing and for patient ratios currently."

I could go on, but I know I only have 12 minutes.

I would like to quote from WeRPN. They did a review called *The State of Nursing in Ontario*. They found out that nearly 48% of their members intend or are considering leaving the profession. When they asked what would sway them to remain, 72% of them said better nurse-to-patient ratios.

It's not only nurses and RPNs; nurse practitioners also are watching this bill. They said, "The introduction of improved patient-to-nurse ratios is an important step towards addressing the deepening crisis in our health care system, acknowledging the overwhelming evidence seen first-hand by nurse practitioners in the field. Simply put, proper nurse-to-patient ratios improve patient outcomes and reduce nurses' burnout." I fully agree with them. Research is showing us that between 34% and 54% of nursing personnel are showing signs of burnout. The number one reason? Workload.

I was able to identify thousands of peer-reviewed publications dealing with the nursing ratios and how they can help address the burnout in our nurses. You do not have to take my word for it, Speaker. Go on your phone. Any of you, go on your phone right now and google articles dealing with nursing ratios in peer-reviewed medical journals, and you will see over 3,000 articles will come up. Let me quote from a few of those.

The National Academy of Medicine—this is a USA journal—looked at nurses' well-being and found that 54% of nurses exhibited substantial burnout symptoms. The report from the National Academy of Medicine cites higher nurse-to-patient ratios as a factor associated with nursing burnout.

1610

I then looked at some of the reports from Australia. Why not? They published this: *Effects of Nurse-to-Patient Ratio Legislation on Nurse Staffing and Patient Mortality, Readmissions, and Length of Stay*. Just so you know, Speaker, in 2016, Queensland, which is in Australia, implemented minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in their hospitals. After a few years, they did a study. They looked at 231,902 patients and found that the ratio that they had implemented—in addition to producing better outcomes, the costs avoided due to fewer readmissions and shortened lengths of stay were more than twice the costs of the additional nurse staffing.

The hospitals in Queensland implemented the very same ratios that I have in my bill. In 2016, they did a study. They reviewed 231,000 patients, which was basically every patient who came through, and found that they produced better outcomes, fewer readmissions and shorter lengths of stay—length of stay is how long you stay in the hospital—and it cost them half as much as the cost of having those extra nurses. "Minimum nurse-to-patient ratio policies are a feasible approach to improve nurse staffing and patient outcomes with good return on investment."

I also looked at *The Lancet*. How can you look at health care and not look at *The Lancet*? They have been there since 1832. It is a leading journal in the medical field. They have a landmark study showing that a patient's risk of dying after surgery varied by the number of patients for whom each nurse had responsibility. They looked at over a million patients in nine European countries. They found that each additional patient added to a nurse's average workload was associated with 7% higher odds of the patient dying. The evidence showed that better hospital

nurse staffing is associated with better patient outcomes, including fewer hospital-acquired infections, shorter lengths of stay, fewer readmissions, higher patient satisfaction and lower nurse burnout. That comes from *The Lancet*.

Another study, this one for the International Council of Nurses, representing national nursing associations worldwide, “issued their position statement on evidence-based nurse staffing, concluding that plenty of evidence supports taking action now to improve hospital nurse staffing, echoing Nightingale’s”—you all remember Nightingale, one of the first nurses—“call to action over 150 years ago, that if we have evidence and fail to act, we are going backwards.”

Two minutes left; I still have many, many reviews, some of them from the US, where they have staffing ratios. I want to name that Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Texas and Washington have staffing committees. They publicly report in Illinois, in New Jersey, in Rhode Island, in Vermont. Staffing ratios are not new to the States, not new to Australia, not new to the UK.

I have a study here from India, who also implemented staffing ratios, and I want to quickly read their conclusion: “Considering Indian resources”—that’s from India—“best international norms and Indian research evidence, we recommend following nurse-to-patient ratio in each shift for Indian hospitals.”

Same thing with the British journal that’s in the UK—but I won’t have time to share that.

The European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing says the same thing: If you want to recruit and retain a healthy workforce, the easiest way to do that is to implement nursing ratios.

Anybody who follows health care will know that the NDP in British Columbia is in the process of implementing staffing ratios in the hospital. So yes, I was partly inspired by our colleagues in British Columbia, but also by the hundreds of thousands of nurses here in Ontario who are burnt out, who are on sick leave, who are on long-term disability because they cannot cope with their workload anymore.

The body of evidence is there. It’s a win-win. It is safer for patient outcomes, number of deaths, number of long-term stays. It is better for nurses if you look at the overburden and the burnout of nurses and it is better for hospital budgets. They will actually save money. So it’s a win-win-win: hospitals supported, our nurses supported.

It is time that Ontario takes a serious look at putting in place nursing ratios. It exists throughout the world. There are over 3,000 peer-reviewed papers that looked at the effect of nursing ratios. They all say the same thing: better for patients, better for nurses, better for hospital budgets. I hope people will see fit to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: In hospitals, primary care, public health, home care, long-term care, hospices and in the community, nurses provide the people of Ontario with exceptional care and support when they need it most. Our

government recognizes how important nurses are to communities in every corner of this province. We sincerely appreciate their tremendous dedication to patients and families and their integral contributions to our health care system. And under the leadership of Premier Ford and Minister Jones, our government is taking bold action and making innovative changes to grow and support the nursing workforce, now and into the future.

The year 2023 was another record year, adding 17,000 more nurses registered and ready to work in the province, as well as 2,400 new physicians and thousands of personal support workers. Since 2018, nearly 80,000 nurses and more than 12,500 doctors have joined our health care system and another 30,000 nursing students are currently studying at Ontario’s colleges and universities, providing a pipeline of talented health care workers for the future. Our government continues to build on this progress and our actions taken to date.

We are implementing a broad range of initiatives and are making significant investments to ensure Ontario maintains a high-quality nursing workforce. With an investment totalling more than \$225 million over four years, our government is expanding nursing education in universities and colleges by increasing enrolment by 2,000 registered nurse, 1,000 registered practical nurse and 150 nurse practitioner seats. With these investments, thousands of additional nurses will join the health care workforce in the years ahead, and this is in addition to our government launching the largest medical school expansion in over 15 years.

In our 2024 budget, *Building a Better Ontario*, our government invested \$743 million over three years to further address immediate health care staffing needs and grow the health care workforce. This is the same budget that the NDP and Liberals voted against.

By making the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership program permanent, up to 1,500 internationally educated nurses each year will become accredited nurses in Ontario. More than 4,200 nurses have participated in this program since its inception in 2022 and over 3,300 internationally trained nurses are already fully registered and practising in Ontario.

Our government has broken down a number of barriers for internationally educated health care professionals, including nurses, to make the process to begin working in Ontario faster and easier. Regulatory changes are allowing internationally educated nurses to register in a temporary class, to begin working sooner while they work towards full registration, and our as-of-right rules allow nurses and other health care workers from other provinces to start working as soon as they arrive in Ontario, without having to first register with a regulatory college. We reduced redundant language proficiency testing as well and are providing financial support to temporarily cover the costs of examination, application and registration fees for internationally educated and retired nurses.

Health regulatory colleges are now required to comply with time limits to make registration decisions, while, in

some instances, are prohibited from requiring Canadian work experience for the purpose of registration.

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We are also helping to recruit and retain health care workers in smaller, remote and rural communities like my own, through our expanded Learn and Stay grant, where up to 3,700 eligible post-secondary students enrolled in priority health care programs such as nursing are provided with upfront financial support to cover educational costs in exchange for a commitment to work in the region where they studied for a term of service.

Through the Community Commitment Program for Nurses, over 4,000 nurses hired in 2022-23 and 2023-24 will receive incentives of up to \$25,000 in exchange for a two-year commitment to work in a hospital, long-term-care home, home and community care agency, primary care service provider, or mental health service provider in a high-need area of Ontario.

The Bridging Educational Grant in Nursing, which is jointly offered by the Ministry of Health and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, provides tuition support to registered practical nurses and personal support workers to pursue further education to become registered nurses and registered practical nurses, respectively, in exchange for working in home and community care, acute care or primary care.

Our government also continues to create new pathways to connect more people to high-quality care across the province, including the Clinical Scholar Program, which pairs an experienced front-line nurse as a dedicated mentor with newly graduated nurses, internationally educated nurses, and nurses wanting to upskill. Over 100 hospitals are participating in the Clinical Scholar Program since its launch last year, and 435 experienced front-line nurses have provided more than 17,000 mentorship touch points to new graduate, internationally educated or upskilling nurses. This is another way we're recruiting and retaining nurses and ensuring that they have the support they need to confidently transition into the nursing profession.

Emergency departments are also being supported through ongoing and increased investments to bolster and stabilize the emergency department nursing workforce through incentives and removing barriers for nurses who are interested in working in emergency nursing, while also focusing on retaining emergency department nurses and nurse leadership. In collaboration with Ontario Health, education and training for the development and standardization of emergency department skills and competencies is being offered to nurses working in smaller, rural and northern hospitals. Through this initiative, over 3,000 training grants were allotted to nurses last year, and we expect that close to 9,000 nurses will access training or grants this year.

We also expanded the scope of practice for registered nurses, as well as for midwives and pharmacists. Registered nurses who complete additional education requirements approved by the council of the College of Nurses of Ontario are now able to prescribe certain medications and to communicate a diagnosis. These registered nurses can

prescribe medications for conditions such as immunization, contraception, smoking cessation and topical wound care, as well as prescribe over-the-counter medications.

Our government also invests more than \$46 million annually to fund nurse practitioner-led clinics, with Ontario being the first jurisdiction in Canada to implement this innovative model of primary care. These clinics provide comprehensive, accessible and coordinated family health care services, serving more than 80,000 people who might otherwise face challenges in accessing primary care. These clinics are also supported through our government's recent significant investments in interprofessional primary care teams. This will connect more than 328,000 people to primary care teams in areas where it's needed the most and add more than 400 new primary care providers and 78 new and expanded primary care teams across the province, which will include family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics, community health centres and Indigenous primary care health organizations. In our 2024 budget, we are building on this investment with a \$546-million investment over three years to connect approximately 600,000 people to interprofessional primary care. Again, this is the same budget the members opposite voted against.

Speaker, our government has a plan, and it's working. But we are not stopping there. We are making record investments in health care and building a stronger, patient-centred health care system that is focused on providing people with a better health care experience and better health outcomes. We are growing and supporting our health care workforce, including recruiting, retaining and supporting a strong, stable nursing workforce, to ensure that they have the tools and resources to provide patients with the connected and convenient care they need and deserve, when and where they need it.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I'm more than honoured to rise today in support of my colleague from Nickel Belt's bill, a bill to improve patient-to-nurse ratios in hospitals in Ontario.

Speaker, our health care system is in crisis. You know it. I know it. Everyone in Ontario, apparently except the government, knows it. And do you know who knows it more than anyone? It is the nurses that are working currently in Ontario.

Things aren't getting better, despite the words that were just read to us. There are longer waits in emergency hallways. We have more code zeros, which means that the ambulances aren't available at any given time. There are 2.4 million people who don't have a doctor in Ontario, and there are hospital closures. We have Minden, now Durham—permanent hospital closures, and this year Ontario saw over 1,200 emergency departments shutting down, in large part because of a lack of nurses.

So, Speaker, and to my colleagues, what comes to mind when you think of a nurse?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Caring.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Caring, professional, dedicated—

Miss Monique Taylor: Compassionate.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Compassionate. They come in early; they leave late. But unfortunately, now when you talk about a nurse, what's the first thing that comes to your mind right now?

Interjection: Burnout.

Interjection: Exhausted.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Burnout, PTSD, exhausted—they are working under incredible, incredible conditions. They are heroes for staying there despite this government's complete disrespect of this profession.

There's an organization called WeRPN that represents 59,000 regulated health professionals, and they identified that 48% are considering leaving the profession—no wonder—and 72% identified patient-to-nurse ratios as the key issue.

So if this government is actually concerned or is actually listening, here's your solution, because the first step in any problem is admitting that you have a problem, which we do in Ontario: better patient-to-nurse ratios. It's a win for nurses, it's a win for patients and it's a win for hospitals. Improving patient-to-nurse ratios will benefit nurses because they won't be overloaded, it reduces stress levels, and it makes them less likely to be sick or go on long-term disability.

I can only imagine the anguish experienced by urgent care nurses when they're expected to go from caring for one patient to handling up to five very sick patients simultaneously. It's a win for patients who receive treatment with better care and have a better chance of recovery. It's also a win for hospitals because not only will they have better patient outcomes, there is compelling data to say that they will reduce costs. A recent study revealed that a nurse-to-patient ratio of 1 to 4 would prevent over 1,500 deaths yearly while saving hospitals \$117 million per year.

It doesn't matter how many beds you say are open or how many hospitals are open. Without nurses, a hospital or long-term-care beds are just furniture; they're just buildings. And don't say we don't have the money. We're spending a billion dollars on beer in this province. We need to spend it on our health care.

I'm hoping this government will finally listen to the stories we're telling you and finally admit that there is a problem in health care, in nursing, and here is your solution.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Quand l'année a commencé, les infirmières étaient déjà claires. On pouvait lire dans les médias que les syndicats des infirmières avaient conduit des sondages. Les résultats des sondages : 90 % des travailleurs dans les hôpitaux du nord de l'Ontario disaient qu'il manquait de « staff » et près de 50 % pensaient à quitter leur emploi dans les prochaines années à cause du stress, de l'anxiété, de la fatigue.

Ce sondage-là avait été fait sur plus de 750 membres de CUPE et inclut des infirmières praticiennes, le personnel de support et les autres travailleurs de nos hôpitaux. Ce n'est pas normal, ces chiffres-là.

On parle des institutions qui représentent 50 000 employés au total à travers l'Ontario. L'article ne s'arrête pas là. On découvre aussi, sans grande surprise, que le secteur perd des employés qualifiés à cause des conditions de travail pénibles et de « burnout » qui en découle. Ces chiffres me rentrent dedans. Je viens de Kapuskasing. J'ai grandi à Dubreuilville. J'ai de la famille partout dans le Nord.

Je vous l'ai écrit dans une lettre ouverte, il y a à peine un mois. Dans le Nord, on manque de tout. On ne peut pas laisser notre système de santé continuer à s'effondrer. Pendant que les infirmières quittent le secteur public pour gagner le salaire et les conditions du système privé et que le gouvernement paie la facture en double, le Nord en arrache.

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Je salue l'effort constant de ma collègue la députée de Nickel Belt, France Gélinas, qui ne passe pas un jour sans amener des solutions pour le système de santé. Aujourd'hui, c'est simple ce qu'elle apporte, mais ça aurait un impact tellement important. Amener un quota d'infirmières-patients, ce n'est pas censé être controversé. C'est déjà le cas dans plusieurs provinces et d'autres pays, et ça marche. On ne réinventera pas la roue. Dites-moi, comment peut-on continuer de faire fonctionner nos cliniques et nos hôpitaux sans personnel qualifié? Soulignons-le : le gouvernement n'a actuellement aucun plan de rétention du personnel, mais ma collègue la députée de Nickel Belt en propose un aujourd'hui et j'espère sincèrement qu'on va se rallier derrière sa motion.

Il y a un autre article, cette fois-ci, dans le Timmins Today. On lisait que 81 % des infirmières rapportent un stress élevé et que 58 % d'entre elles se sentent malades à l'idée d'aller travailler. C'est urgent. Il faut changer la donne. Il faut supporter la motion 192, un quota d'infirmières-patients.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Merci. Further debate? The member for Toronto–St. Paul.

MPP Jill Andrew: This Conservative government must support our Ontario NDP legislation and pass the Patient-to-Nurse Ratios for Hospitals Act. Thank you to our health critic from Nickel Belt. This act is a life-saving piece of legislation. There are simply not enough nurses in our hospitals to take care of patients with often complex needs.

As we once said, we need at least 22,000 more nurses here in this province. This government spoke of nurses as “health care heroes” during the pandemic, yet they didn't even ensure they had the appropriate PPE to keep all of them alive. Some of our health care professionals died on this government's watch. In fact, nurses were taken to court by this government. And I don't need to reiterate the disaster that was this government's Bill 124 on nurses—racialized and women, predominately, in that sector, I might add—and other public sector workers.

This government has sat idle while over a thousand emergency room closures last year happened. This is simply not good enough. Over 3,200 different studies have been conducted proving that a lower nurse-to-patient ratio

is necessary to save lives and prevent burnout of our nurses. This piece of legislation is a win-win. It's a win for the government, it's a win for the official opposition, but most importantly, it's a win for the nurses, their patients and their families.

One such report was WeRPN's latest survey of over 1,300 registered practical nurses. The 2024 report found that "unsustainable workloads, wage compression, pressured working environments and a lack of support have continued to drive RPNs out" of the profession. The current nurse-to-patient ratio directly impacts patient care. Today, this government can turn the page and do something positive for a change that will directly impact all of our nurses, all of the nurses who have been advocating day in and day out over the last six years, begging this Premier to stop his privatization-of-health-care schemes.

I want to thank Joyce, my local community member and an RPN, for expressing her concerns to me via email. I echo every single one of them:

- introduce nurse-to-patient ratios to reverse deteriorating patient care and ensure workplace safety for nurses and patients;

- pay nurses what they're worth;

- establish a fair and professional level of compensation for RPNs that reflects their knowledge; and, yes,

- reduce reliance on for-profit nursing agencies that are siphoning out our nurses, yet another way of prompting up this government's privatization scheme.

So absolutely, we need this patients-to-nurses ratio legislation passed today.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Further debate? I recognize the member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to begin, as the member of Toronto–St. Paul's just did, by thanking the member from Nickel Belt. The member from Nickel Belt is the best Minister of Health this province is yet to have, but I see a day coming soon when this member is going to sit on that side of the House, and we are going to make sure we do what she is proposing today: make sure there are livable, attractive working conditions for every single health care professional in this province.

Do you know what we call people like the member from Nickel Belt back home, Speaker? We call them solutionaries. That's what we call them, because it is easy for us, given the havoc in the health care system, to talk about all of the problems and we need to assess them, but we need to also celebrate the moments when someone puts forward a viable solution that people are doing elsewhere.

As my friends in government are talking about how "everything's fine, there's nothing to look at here," I want to remind them that we are breaking records in hospital services closing. I want to note the fact that there were 1,199 instances in the past year where health care services were closed. That includes 868 emergency rooms. Those are not the kinds of records we want to break in the province of Ontario. Who suffers when the workplace ratios are so bad? Patients suffer, nurses suffer, the staff

suffer, and there's no amount of gloss you can put on this picture, Speaker.

I want to zoom in on Winchester District Memorial Hospital's birthing unit. They have been unable to fill a vacancy for two RNs since 2007, and because of that, they've had to close this birthing unit for 763 hours in recent years. This is alarming. Can you think of the joy that families experience when their child is coming into the world? Can you think of the stress put upon that family when they have to go further afield to a different birthing unit? And it's unnecessary. Just like the billion dollars we are paying to private nursing agencies, like Canadian Health Labs, that is putting hospitals in deficit positions under this government as they talk about how wonderful the situation is.

I want to thank people like Rachel Muir from ONA Local 83—hi, Rachel, if you're watching this—who leads the Ottawa Hospital nursing unit. She remembers a time when she got into the nursing profession in the 1980s when you could count on having a patient-to-nurse ratio of four to five, but now people are getting upwards of six, eight, nine, 10, and we're burning people out, and we don't have to burn out.

If deputy ministers in this government can get 16% pay raises, if we can pork-barrel out money to beer companies, we sure as hell can give money to nurses who work hard in this province. Thank you, member for Nickel Belt.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to stand and rise today and support Bill 192 from the member from Nickel Belt and congratulate her again on bringing forward a sensible, thoughtful bill. These essentially are international standards. These are things that are accepted across the world.

I come at this from—I'm the son of a hospital nurse. She worked at National Defence Medical Centre for 33 years on the floors. I used to pick her up at work when my dad was away. Here's the thing I knew: If my mom finished shift at 11 o'clock, I didn't need to get there at 11 o'clock. I should probably get there around 20 after and then, maybe by a quarter to 12, she'd be coming out. That's because she stayed to make sure that her job was fully done, and she had good ratios back then.

This isn't going to work—and I want it to work—if you don't have the nurses to fill it, to fuel it, to make it work. When I hear arguments from the government like, "You voted against this," "You voted against that budget," I could list off a bunch of things like the Nursing Graduate Guarantee that your party voted against; the late-stage nursing program to keep nurses in the profession—you voted against that.

It's not about that. We don't have enough nurses, and things like Bill 124 that essentially take away nurses' rights to bargain—nurses' rights to bargain. The thing I remember about that is, there was a whole bunch of people who could still bargain. They were mostly men. Nurses are not exclusively women, but they're mostly women, but you took away their bargaining rights. It's a total lack of respect. If you want to keep people working for you, you

need to respect them, and the Premier's wrong-headedness and the Minister of Health's wrong-headedness of continuing with Bill 124 did more damage than anything else.

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The second thing is, you've got to pay them. That's the other thing about Bill 124, but right now, you've got to pay them. Why are nurses leaving to go to work for private agencies? The pressure they're feeling at work, not enough staff to help them—they feel like they can't do what they are taught to do, what they desire to do for their patients. They don't have enough time. Why did my mom stay for 45 minutes? Because she wanted to finish the job. They want to finish the job, but they have to have enough people. That's the point.

The government needs to look at how they can do more not just to train more nurses but to retain more nurses, because that's the problem. And unless we do that, unless we retain what we have and train up as much as we can, we're not going to get to where we're going to be able to do this. So I would hope that the government would vote for this today and support it, even though we know we can't do it today. Because what it does is, it sets a standard that we have to achieve and that we all want to achieve.

We're talking a lot about nurses. That's what this is about. It's about patients. It's about the care that patients need and deserve so they can get well. That's why the member is putting this forward.

I'm going to say one last thing about priorities: How is it that spending \$1 billion to get beer and wine at the corner store a little more than a year earlier is more important than nurses and their patients, is more important than 2.3 million Ontarians who don't have access to family medicine? How is it more important than people having to use their credit card instead of their OHIP card so they can get basic services? Those things are the things that are happening here in Ontario right now, and to spend \$1 billion to make booze a priority over health care is just simply wrong.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Back to the member for Nickel Belt for a two-minute reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: The bill is quite simple. I have shared with you testimonies from many, many nurses. Our nurses are burnt out. Many of them are out on sick leave. Many of them are out on long-term disability. Many of them are choosing to stay home. And 35,000 of them actually are choosing to not work in nursing. The number one reason for that is burnout.

We have an opportunity to help those nurses right now. This is something they have been asking for for a very long time. This is something they are telling us: "I will come out of retirement. I will go back to bedside nursing if you put in nurse-to-patient ratios."

It exists throughout the world, from Australia to the US to the UK to India. It has been proven it works. It exists in Canada. Go out west. The NDP government put it in place in British Columbia, and it works. Nurses appreciate it, patient care improves, length of stay improves, the number

of deaths decreases, and it's cheaper for our hospitals. It's a win-win-win.

On a l'opportunité aujourd'hui de faire un grand changement. On a l'opportunité d'écouter les infirmières et de s'assurer qu'on répond à leurs besoins. En répondant à leurs besoins, on va s'assurer que les patients reçoivent des soins de meilleure qualité. On va s'assurer que les infirmières et infirmiers se sentent appuyés et ont une charge de travail décente. Et on va s'assurer, en même temps, que les hôpitaux épargnent de l'argent. C'est gagnant-gagnant-gagnant. J'espère que tout le monde va appuyer nos infirmières.

I hope that everybody realizes that there are hundreds of thousands of nurses that are watching how we're going to vote on this. They need the boost. Vote yes.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Députée Gélinas has moved second reading of Bill 192, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act with respect to maximum patient-to-nurse ratios. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, we now have a late show.

Pursuant to standing order 36, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

HEALTH CARE

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Kitchener Centre has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Health. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the government may reply for up to five minutes.

I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: I really appreciate the time to talk about this issue today. Not many people know what desflurane is, so I totally understand why this circumstance came about, but I look forward to the opportunity of talking a bit about it and why it is the lowest of low-hanging fruit in terms of reducing emissions and saving money for our health care system.

The World Health Organization says that climate change is the biggest health threat facing humanity, and what we're noticing is that people don't always understand the impacts of climate change on their day-to-day lives, but we see more and more how it's affecting our health

with increased emergency room visits from slips and falls, extreme heat days, smoke inhalation, increasing rise in asthma and other health consequences.

I'm sad that the member from Cambridge—he's interested in this topic. There is a glacier called the Doomsday Glacier. It is enormous and it's sitting on the edge of a bowl, ready to go into that bowl, which will lead to a massive sea level rise across the planet. So I'll look forward to hearing what he has to say about that.

Desflurane is not commonly known outside of medical circles, but more and more, the health sector has been moving away from this gas. I know the minister was curious what experts had to say, so I am here to share that today.

The Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society recommends not using it. Ontario's Anesthesiologists also support eliminating des from our hospitals. It's also being banned in the European Union, Scotland and other jurisdictions around the world. So we know that experts in this field recommend banning des from our operating rooms. Why? Well, it costs more; it costs a lot more. In Health Sciences North, the hospital in Sudbury, they saved \$250,000 by banning desflurane. In Mississauga, Trillium Health Partners saved \$125,000 by banning it.

Not only is it good financially for hospitals to ban this, but it's also a good way to reduce emissions. Des makes up about 5% of the carbon emissions of our hospitals, and if hospitals were a country, they would be the fifth-largest emitter worldwide. So that's a benefit not only financially but also environmentally. So I hope that we can look forward to the government banning this anaesthetic gas.

Environmentally speaking, for example, the carbon emissions saved by Health Sciences North equated to driving to the moon and back four times. This is how much carbon emissions were reduced simply by banning desflurane.

One might ask: Well, why aren't we banning it already? Good question, because there is an alternative, sevoflurane, which is 26.8 times less carbon emissions, and it's cheaper. So we already have anaesthesiologists using the alternative. The companies who produce desflurane also produce the sevoflurane. It won't have a negative impact on our economy. And so it makes a lot of sense. So if we don't do it based on the reduction in carbon emissions, we should do it just based on the reduction of our budget to hospitals, the savings that they would see.

It's part of a bigger work, though. I'd be remiss if I didn't say that the Ontario Medical Association is looking for changes as part of a bigger work, like creating an office of sustainability. Yes, banning desflurane is a first step in reducing emissions in hospitals and saving money, but the OMA is looking to create a bigger, more holistic approach to reducing waste, reducing emissions in hospitals and saving more money in our hospitals sector.

1650

We've seen since COVID the rise of single-use plastics and single-use apparatuses. Some of the stories are quite alarming of just throwing things out. A lot of newcomers who work in our hospitals sector are aghast at the amount

of waste that we create, and I think if any of us has spent time in hospitals, we're alarmed at the amount of garbage that's going out the backdoor.

To say a few more words about that, at the Trillium health network, for example, using inter-surgical circuits saved \$37,000 in one year; bring-your-own reusable bags saved \$19,000; using Stryker sustainability services, they reduced their budget by \$145,000; using reusable gowns—they don't have a number, but they saved 15 tonnes of waste; and addressing the HVAC optimization saved \$4,400.

I haven't even mentioned a lot of the other types of waste and CO₂ reductions—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That's time.

To reply, I recognize the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: To answer the member's question: The use of desflurane is a clinical decision that should be best left with the clinicians, experts and the hospital leaderships, and our government will continue to trust medical experts on the best clinical tools to be used for patient safety.

But, Speaker, if the member opposite is interested in climate change and the environment, I am more than happy to talk about our government's initiatives and actions of our health care partners.

Let me first tell you about Niagara Health System and the steps they have taken to be more energy efficient. The innovative design features at the St. Catharines site and recent investments across their other sites aim to lessen the footprint on the environment and lower long-term operating costs. The St. Catharines site is one of the first hospitals in Ontario designed to achieve certification under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, classification, the green building rating system.

Niagara Health also invested approximately \$10 million across all sites through an energy retrofit project that reduces energy use and operating costs. These improvements will save substantial amounts of natural gas and electricity for years to come.

Speaker, let me tell you about another great example at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Sunnybrook has five key environmental programs: energy conservation, waste management, sustainable transportation, procurement, and an awareness and education campaign. Their green initiatives include the Harry Taylor Solar Energy Wall; gas scavenging in the operating rooms; composting and biodegradable food containers in the cafeteria; the Honeywell Energy and Facility Renewal Program; and the Green Task Force.

According to the hospital, their energy improvements will save \$2.6 million and reduce CO₂ emissions by 8,965 tonnes annually. That's the equivalent of taking 1,410 cars off the road.

Speaker, I am not quite done yet. The medical imaging team at the Toronto General Hospital provides high-quality care, diagnosis and image-guided intervention. The hospital actively works on energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives.

Additionally, Haliburton Highlands Health Services has implemented a geothermal upgrade to improve energy efficiency.

As the government of Canada is set to miss one of its own climate targets, under the premiership of Premier Ford, Ontario is on track to meet our Paris agreement and is responsible for 86% of Canada's total emissions reductions. This achievement is only possible because of our government's efforts, alongside my colleague the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, to build Ontario. This includes:

—making Ontario the global leader in electric vehicle production;

—working with the industry instead of against them, such as our government's investments in green steel at AM Dofasco in Hamilton, which will see the equivalent emissions reduction of taking one million cars off the road;

—our historic investments in conservation through the Greenlands Conservation Partnership, which already has

protected over 420,000 acres of land, an area two and a half times the footprint of the city of Toronto;

—holding polluters accountable by introducing new fines and tough emissions performance standards for large industrial emitters; as well as

—historic investments in the critical infrastructure to get Ontarians to where they need to be, such as the Ontario Line, which takes 28,000 cars off the road every day.

Again, Speaker, to answer the member's question, these are clinical decisions that should be left with the clinicians and medical experts. Under the leadership of Premier Ford and Minister Jones, our government will continue to ensure a strong and robust public health system for all Ontarians for years to come.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There being no further matter to debate, pursuant to standing order 36(c), I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, June 5, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1655.

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	
Hamid, Zee (PC)	Milton	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
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	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, 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	