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of Ontario



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24 October 2024

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43<sup>e</sup> législature  
Jeudi  
24 octobre 2024

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Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 24 October 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 24 octobre 2024

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prières / Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WORKING FOR WORKERS FIVE  
ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À OEUVRER  
POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS, CINQ

Mr. Piccini moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 190, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 190, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives à l'emploi et au travail et à d'autres questions.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Would the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development care to lead off the debate.

**Hon. David Piccini:** It's an honour to rise for third reading of Bill 190, Working for Workers Five Act.

Speaker, I just want to start by saying thank you for your service. We will miss you. You have been a great mentor, friend, for so many of us and I know, most importantly, for the people you serve, so thank you.

I will be dividing my time with the parliamentary assistant, the great member for Ajax. I look forward to continuing to work with her. I know we've got our critic here today as well. We've got a good team. We'll be talking workers in this great province of Ontario.

I want to acknowledge the support of the member for Ajax and her instrumental role in this bill: her leadership, her advocacy in particular for women in the workplace and, most importantly, for our next generation. She's brought a lot of skill and thought to this bill and in particular the portion on apprenticeships, and I look forward to speaking about that later. But thank you so much for your friendship and leadership on this.

I also want to thank the Premier for his leadership, for always keeping an open door, always returning the calls of workers in this province and enabling our ministry to continue the incredible work that we do. The team: Deputy Meredith and our team at labour, immigration, training and skills development, the incredible public servants who work there every day. And last but certainly not least, my ministerial office, political office team, who have worked many long hours to make this bill possible. I'm very grateful for them.

Speaker, I want to just close on our thanks by acknowledging that this is a team sport and a team effort. We have, as I mentioned, the members for Ajax, King–Vaughan, Brampton Centre, Brantford–Brant, Scarborough Centre; folks speaking to the bill today—Mississauga–Erin Mills, Peterborough–Kawartha, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Mississauga–Malton; and all of the caucus and cabinet colleagues who have contributed to this bill. But most importantly to the workers: firefighters, unions, employers, newcomers, businesses, industry associations and so many more, all of whom are counting on us to do the right thing, who are helping us to deliver better training, better jobs with a bigger paycheque and a better future in this great province of Ontario.

The government is building on the progress we've made in previous Working for Workers bills. As I've often said, we're getting to the point where we've almost had more trilogies than the Harry Potter series, because it keeps getting better and better and better. We're doing this, Speaker, because these first-in-Canada measures that I'm going to speak to today would, if passed, open pathways into the skilled trades, remove barriers to employment, protect front-line heroes and workers and support women at work. This new bill builds on the strong success of our previous Working for Workers bills that this House passed in 2021, 2022, 2023, and again this past March.

The current legislative package contains a number of regulatory amendments that would bring meaningful change to assist people in finding good jobs, increasing worker protection and supporting newcomers in this province of Ontario. It's not lost on anyone that, as I speak to that today, we're set to find out news from the federal government—who have not communicated to us or any of the provinces—on some of the changes that they will be making today. But I look forward to that briefing.

We're introducing new measures that would make it easier for youth and others to get on a fast-track to well-paying careers in the skilled trades, proposing to change and remove barriers to employment. In our Working for Workers Five Act, if passed, we'll include wildland firefighters, we'll include investigators in presumptive coverage for PTSD. Beyond these legislative changes, we have also made regulatory changes to expand presumptive coverage for heart injuries and occupational cancers to wildland firefighters and wildland fire investigators.

Our bill, if passed, would support women at work, especially women who currently represent only one in 10 workers in the skilled trades. This bill would advance overall workplace fairness, discourage employers from ghosting job seekers and increase fines for employment

standards violations to the highest levels in Canada. It would protect job seekers, elevate the common courtesy of fairness and transparency and help get more people into long-term rewarding careers by continuing to put workers first. We can spread opportunity and good-paying jobs, strengthen worker protection and supports across Ontario and tackle the skilled trades labour shortage and promote economic growth.

I want to lead off and start first by talking about front-line heroes and workers. In reviewing the details of this bill and complementary measures, there are some important people we must talk about first and lead off: those heroes. These are the people who ensure we sleep safely at night and provide the reassurance when we most need help in our lives. I'm speaking, of course, of those who risk their lives for ours, Ontario's firefighters. They run towards danger as we run from it. In every corner of our province, firefighters, fire investigators and volunteers put their lives on the line to keep our families and keep our communities safe. These front-line heroes deserve a government that values their service and sacrifice. They have more than earned the stronger protection—the more expansive coverage and protection that we are proposing in this bill.

In the time that I've been Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, I have listened to firefighters' concerns. I've heard from municipal firefighters, investigators and volunteers, as well as wildland firefighters and investigators, including concerns about getting the supports they need and deserve if they fall ill from disease. They are at higher risk because of the dangerous work they do to keep us safe—the occupational exposures that they are subject to. That's why our government is proposing to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act that would reduce the duration of employment required prior to the diagnosis for entitlement to presumptive coverage for primary-site skin cancer from 15 to 10 years, once again leading Canada with the lowest duration of time served in the country.

I think it's important to note there, Speaker, because I was recently at a meeting of Ministers of Labour where this was brought up, and they almost said, "You've got to slow down in Ontario because you're making the rest of us look bad." I don't view it that way. I think Ontario leading the way sets a high benchmark for the rest of the country to follow. But we don't do it just because, Speaker; we do it because we're challenged. We're challenged by the great men and women who protect our communities. I want to give a special shout-out to the OPFFA for their incredible advocacy to their members, who are fighting fires across Ontario, and the incredible work that they do to advocate for firefighters, because behind this advocacy is a story of a firefighter fighting a disease as a result of occupational exposure, who, at their core, want to make sure they are supported, and their families—most importantly, their families and their loved ones.

#### 0910

If passed, the changes we're proposing would allow more firefighters and investigators suffering from occupa-

tional cancers to access the WSIB benefits and services they need and deserve—again, serving those who serve.

Growing scientific evidence shows that firefighters, including wildland firefighters, are at increased risk of developing skin cancer because of their exposure to carcinogens and various hydrocarbons found in fireground dust. The proposal builds on the government's progress from four previous Working for Workers acts.

In June 2023, Ontario expanded presumptive occupational cancer coverage for firefighters and fire investigators to include primary site thyroid and pancreatic cancers, making it faster and easier for them to gain WSIB compensation and services.

The Working for Workers Four Act lowered the required employment period prior to diagnosis from primary-site esophageal cancer from 25 to 15 years. That was a very significant and emotional announcement in Welland, and I know how many people were instrumental in that.

I'd like to take the opportunity to again thank the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Kevin Holland, for all of his incredible advocacy and leadership on this file. Not only is Kevin Holland a volunteer firefighter, but he has been a strong advocate for those firefighters. He has had more ministers in Thunder Bay, more colleagues, than I think we could shake a stick at, and he's now a member who has done such a remarkable job to advocate for his community. It's not just about bringing ministers up, it's about bringing colleagues in this place to share the stories of the people you serve, and he has done a remarkable job at this.

In this bill, I'm introducing legislative changes to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act that includes wildland firefighters and wildland fire investigators in the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board presumptive coverage for PTSD. This is further complemented by a regulatory change to the firefighters regulation to include wildland firefighters and investigators in presumptive WSIB coverage for occupational cancers and heart injuries.

Our wildland firefighters need the support they deserve for the heroic work that they do. Over 1,000 people worked as wildland firefighters and investigators during the 2023 wildland fire season. Of course, in March 2024, we announced an investment of over \$5 million to attract, retain and recognize wildland firefighters and their staff. I know everyone in this House today sees the importance of standing with these front-line heroes.

My mission, and that of our entire government, is to build a province that leaves no one behind. This was the motivation when we created our ability to super index WSIB benefits above the annual rate of inflation so sick heroes can get the support that they need and focus on their health and not struggle with the cost of living.

This cost of living is something we hear about so often at the doors, and really drives the motivations of this government to put more money back into people's pockets. It's a fundamental belief that when you empower people to do more with their hard-earned dollars and put more

money back into their pockets, we can drive a thriving economy.

It's not lost on me, or anyone, I think, when we look to the progress as a government, that by putting \$8 billion back into the economy, we have grown revenue to over \$214 billion from just over \$150 billion. That's truly remarkable. When we do that, we can do more for workers—because every worker deserves to come home safely at the end of their shift.

I want to acknowledge, on the firefighter work that we've been doing, the partnership. This is a team piece and a team sport. I'm so grateful to have this opportunity, but it has been made special because of the people I've gotten to know as a member and as a minister.

Some of those special people I want to recognize: Greg Horton, Bob McCutcheon, Gavin Jacklyn, Dan Worrall and so many more. Their leadership to stand up for firefighters, to take the time to educate the people of this place to the unique challenges they face—they deserve recognition. Thank you for your leadership.

Behind their leadership are stories in our own communities. I'm looking forward to hosting, on Monday, here in this place, if passed—I look forward to bringing colleagues from my own community. I think to Rick Ash, a volunteer firefighter in Hamilton township; Jeff Briggs, who is the OPFFA union rep in Cobourg who has been working with Rick battling on occupational exposure. These are the stories. I first met Rick at the fish ladder in Cobourg, volunteering his time, teaching a next generation the importance of angling—I didn't know this at the time. We're grateful for our volunteer firefighters in Northumberland county, Peterborough county and beyond, and I want to thank Rick for his service, and I look forward to having him here at Queen's Park.

In addition to protecting front-line heroes, one of perhaps the most rewarding things I've gotten to do in the ministry, working with the incredible team at MLITSD, has been opening pathways to the skilled trades. I want to talk now about another everyday hero: men and women in the skilled trades. For too long—too long—skilled trades, construction and manufacturing were viewed as a sort of plan B. Not anymore. Under the leadership of this Premier, we are promoting multiple career pathways, because when you have a job in the trades, you have a career for life—a career for life.

They are the heroes building the stronger province we want: the hospitals, the schools in communities like mine, the new hospital we're fighting for in Campbellford, new schools that we so desperately need, new roads, highways, bridges, public transit—I mean, just stop and think for a second—the tunnelling going on right now on the Ontario Line, the largest low-carbon public transit project in North America—the largest—happening right here in our province, the largest-ever investment—the largest investment—in public transit in Ontario's history.

Talk to the skilled trades men or women, for example, who are working on that tunnel project taking home six-figure salaries. At the age of 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, you can be earning six figures. You can be economically self-

sufficient. You can have agency, purpose, stand on your own two feet and drive a meaningful career. Not only that, but you can look back and be part of a generation that can proudly stand back and say, "I built that. I built that important piece of Ontario—part of the fabric that makes this province great."

I'm grateful for those who came before us. Why are we pushing people into pathways into the trades? Because one in three—one in three—journeypersons are retiring. We stand on the golden generation of those men and women in the skilled trades who came before us, who built this building, who built this province.

I think to my own family story. There's nothing special about my own story, but my own grandfather came here and worked in the trades, built a life and a family for his son and now his grandson who stands here in this place. That is the story of so many in Ontario and in Canada.

Our government is taking policy and legislative measures to attract more young people in the skilled trades. Building on the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, OYAP, we're creating a new stream called the focused apprenticeship into the skilled trades, or FAST. It will allow students in grade 11 and grade 12 to participate in more apprenticeship learning. Most importantly, it will allow the learning that they do in that apprenticeship, those hours, to count toward their level 1 C of Q—those levels that you take before becoming certified in the skilled trades.

I want to use my own experience or that of Raven and Phoenix that I met at St. Mary's in Cobourg. I think back to my own experience, I could take a course that would count towards a dual credit, count towards my university degree. If we're going to say a life in the trades, a career in the trades, is as important as all of the other equally as rewarding job paths, then why can't we offer those same experiences for those who pursue their passions in the trades.

#### 0920

Today, if this bill passes, we will be able to do that in the province of Ontario, and I'm optimistic that, in 2025, we're going to see this happen. I've got a feeling this place is going to pass this bill. I don't want to presume it, but I know because we've been working with members of the opposition on this bill, we've been working with members all over this House. This piece, for our next generation, surely we can put our partisanship aside and support this.

Graduates would receive a new seal on their Ontario secondary school diploma to signify their successful completion, recognize their dedication to learning the skilled trades. It's part of the Premier's 2023 commitment to expanding options for students entering the skilled trades.

I want to give a special shout-out to Principal Barker, Alex Duketow, Mr. Kightley and the incredible team at St. Mary Catholic Secondary School in Cobourg. I was just there last week—two weeks ago, I think—to see the great work that they're doing with junior achievement—John McNutt, Wayne Snow and the great team empowering youth. I referenced Raven and Phoenix, two young

women. I want to take a moment to pause—women in the trades. We cannot build the things we want to build ignoring 50% of our workforce, and these two young women, boy, if the look on their face and the quality of that handshake would dictate their future, they are set up for success. They had purpose in their eyes and that incredible team at St. Mary's was moulding the hearts and minds of our next generation and setting them up for success.

We'll make it easier to find apprenticeship opportunities for those young girls by launching a new online job-matching portal for potential apprentices, because it's more than just the big environments we see in the GTA, it's the incredible job union partners are doing, college partners are doing in rural Ontario. When I think to Devries in Brockville, in Kemptville, that I visited with the member for Leeds–Grenville. When I think to Henderson Construction in my own community, I think to contractors, to the small electrical shop, a one-, two-, three-person operation—how are they going to succession plan if they don't take on apprentices and mould that next generation? With our new online job-matching portal, we can match those apprentices seeking employer sponsors with those employers seeking apprentices. This will be a game-changer and a first in Ontario because we don't have a dedicated provincial system to match those apprentices with employer sponsors today, but we will thanks to the leadership of this Premier.

We're proposing additional measures to increase access to apprenticeship training for individuals who cannot meet academic entry requirements to register as an apprentice. This would create alternative pathways. When I talk about academic credentialing, I'm not talking about those in high school today. I'm talking about those who are here, for example permanent residents, Ukrainians, people who fled war-torn countries, who didn't stop to say, as bombs were dropping, "Oh, I've got to bring my diploma, my degree." I couldn't tell you, if I had to leave Ontario today, where mine is—I'm embarrassed to say that, I should know. We have to have alternative pathways to acknowledge competency. One of the biggest challenges we face with respect to our GDP and lost opportunities is not leveraging the talent of those who are in Ontario today who are under-employed.

In an effort to tackle that, we are making changes and future regulations under the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act to launch pathways so that those who have skill sets and competencies can better join the ranks of the men and women in the skilled trades who we so desperately need in Ontario.

To meet this challenge, not only are we making these changes, but we've made the largest investment into the skilled trades in this province's history: a \$1.5-billion investment with the Skills Development Fund, both the training and the capital stream. For the first time ever, we're investing in this province in training halls, in union training centres and we're building a bigger coalition as a result.

Premier Ford had a number of building trades endorsements in the last election because they know that their

paycheque, their job and their future success depend on a government that says yes to building, yes to getting shovels in the ground, yes to having the difficult conversations and attention we so desperately need from all partners—municipal and federal, and regulatory bodies—to get those shovels in the ground and to get men and women into the workforce, working, taking home a paycheque.

To date, we've helped people with better jobs, better training, bigger paycheques: over 92,000 manufacturing workers; 66,000 construction workers; 36,000 PSWs; 27,000 mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction workers.

This bill includes measures to make it a bit easier to get into the trades, but we're not stopping there. Another important measure is the tech ed requirement to earn your Ontario secondary school diploma, again led by my colleague the Minister of Education. I want to acknowledge the work that has been done there. You will hear more about that from the member from Ajax, but this is a remarkable new move, bringing shop class back to high schools, mandating a tech ed class.

Common sense isn't all that common, but imagine a next generation that are actually learning to use their hands, learning in a tech class, learning financial literacy. God forbid we learn how to write cursive again, Speaker. These are the common-sense changes that we're bring back into the classroom to empower a next generation to be more self-sufficient. I will take you back to St. Mary's in Cobourg and those young students I saw on a lift, learning how to use their hands. This is a generation that will be self-sufficient.

My wife constantly reminds me that when we have issues around the house, I'm useless. I'm going into training centres as Minister of Labour and I'm learning a thing or two. I think we can all acknowledge that teaching our next generation to be a little more self-sufficient is a good thing.

I want to just close on the work being done to support women at work, to build what we want to build. It's an all-hands-on-deck approach. We know that an economy that doesn't work for women does not work at all. For the first time in Canada—in Canada—we are making changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to require that we have a number of things, like proper sanitary schedules in washrooms. We are mandating menstrual products to be provided on larger construction sites, properly fitting PPE, safety equipment, for women on the job site.

I was recently at a meeting of Ministers of Labour, and we heard from a power worker, a technician, an electrical worker, a woman who was wearing coveralls that were down to her knees, working twice as hard just to keep up to her male counterparts, because she is wearing PPE, personal protective equipment, that doesn't fit. Surely, we can do better. We can have properly fitting protective equipment for all body types and sizes. That is why we are proposing these regulatory and legislative changes to require constructors and construction sites to ensure that the washrooms they provide are kept clean, bringing the



same expectations on Bay Street to main street, ensuring that women are protected on the job site.

This is a direct response to advocacy from tradeswomen and other sector stakeholders, and it has been welcomed by leading employers like EllisDon, just to name one—a big shout-out to our Prevention Council and to the work that Steve Chaplin from EllisDon is doing. He has introduced now a number of women on job sites who have been such remarkable advocates. I think to Lindsey, a young woman I met at Local 27 in Toronto. I think to Local 183 and some of the young women I have met there who are taking that next step, becoming self-sufficient.

I think to Oaks Revitalization, partners we are partnering with, giving people a second chance, people who have been in a revolving door of justice. Some measure success of those individuals by how much more we can spend as a government on either Ontario Works or on various programming and services; we measure success by helping those people, giving them a second chance and teaching them to be self-sufficient.

0930

It's been a remarkable opportunity meeting some of the women, like Lindsey, who came up to me—Lindsey is with Local 183—at Mattamy Homes, on health and safety day. She has been a justice-involved individual and now stands as one of their health and safety ambassadors. I met her in Oakville at a project—real story—through Oaks Revitalization. I want to thank her for her advocacy for so many women in the trades.

We are doing so much more in this bill, removing barriers to employment and ensuring that those who have come to this country are able to practise. The old adage, “My cabbie or Uber driver is a doctor”—we're working with the Fairness Commissioner to ensure pathways to working, and that healthy tension with regulatory bodies to make sure they have a plan and a pathway to credential. We're making sure that it's time governed from six months—we'll be making changes soon to lower that to three—and working to ensure those regulatory bodies have a plan.

Behind all of these changes are people, again. I want to especially thank all of those who've opened their doors to me, whether it's the settlement agencies, like the newcomer centre in downtown Toronto, Sara Asalya and her team; whether it's the OCASI team where I just spoke; whether it's our union training partners all over this great province; mining companies in the north; Indigenous communities that I've been invited into to hear about challenges and pathways; the new mobile training that we are bringing into communities to help people get better training, better jobs with bigger paycheques. That is at the heart of this bill, to empower workers in the province of Ontario, because as this province changes, we need to ensure that we have a workforce with the skill sets and the mobile and nimble training to support them to build a better province that we call home, Ontario.

There is so much more in this bill, Speaker. I've riffed a bit off into stories from my own riding that really are a driver—and I know the driver of everybody in this place:

the people we serve. It has been an absolute honour to work with all of them on this Working for Workers bill. Again, like Harry Potter, like the trilogy, it keeps getting better and I'm proud to turn my time over to the great member from Ajax.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to everyone in this House who has been a part of this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** As the minister is sharing his time, I recognize the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you to the minister for the lead-off on this. I am pleased to rise for third reading of Bill 190, Working for Workers Five Act, 2024, alongside the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

I want to once again acknowledge the leadership of the minister and the work of the entire team at the ministry to support workers across our province. Every day, I witness their dedication and the devotion of the minister to getting things right for workers across this province.

I want to take a minute to do a shout-out to all the different organizations, unions and associations that we consulted with. I just want to give a shout-out to the police association; the Ontario firefighters' association; the Ontario Chamber of Commerce; the various unions, such as LIUNA, Unite Here, OPCMIA, sheet metal workers, IUPAT, UA, heat and frost insulators; and the medical association. Of course, this bill was also posted publicly on the public registry for input, which was amazing, to get some of the feedback on that. We've also reached out, when we were consulting about the health piece on critical illness, to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, as well as the OFL. I'm so glad that we have had the opportunity to speak to these organizations, unions and associations to get feedback to put into this bill.

I'd also like to, once again, thank Premier Ford for his leadership and support of our government's action and trail-blazing legislation for Ontario workers. He truly leads by example, working for workers to make sure we help to make Ontario's dream a reality for others.

I've had the opportunity, in this portfolio, to meet some amazing women that are doing great things within the trades. I want to give a shout-out to Rok from the carpenters' union who has moved up through the ranks, and now has spent a great amount of her time getting other women into trades and being a leader and really mentoring young women. I'll also give a shout-out to Kristi Slade with IUPAT. She also started out as a union member and she is also now, as a representative in downtown, really inspiring and mentoring other women in trades.

Our government's fifth Working for Workers Act will support women in skilled trades, protect job seekers and improve access to skills development. As a woman and a working professional, I'm proud of the proposal we've introduced to further support the women of this province at work. Our government is committed to the growth and success of women in the workplace—and so are we. We're prescribing regulatory requirements for menstrual prod-

ucts on certain job sites, expanding current requirements for clean and sanitary workplace washrooms to all places to which OHSa applies and proposing to expand what is considered workplace harassment in an effort to encourage more women to join the labour force.

Canadian research, as recently as 2022, has clearly shown that women are more likely to be subjected to workplace harassment, including online harassment, than other workers. We know that people who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination—like gender, race or disability—are more likely to be harassed. This includes online harassment as workplaces change and more people work from home. Many workers now telecommute, they work from home, either all or part of the time or a lot simply take work with them to meet deadlines and get things done.

Virtual workplace harassment is something we increasingly need to make sure we are protecting workers from. That is why, as part of this bill, we are proposing to modernize the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include virtual harassment. Our government's proposed amendments would add virtual harassment to the definitions of workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment in the act, ensuring that workplace policies to address harassment in the workplace also cover online harassment. We are acting to reflect the realities of the modern workplace in our legislation and to better protect workers no matter where they perform their jobs. Our planned consultations on more potential changes to prevent and address complaints and incidents of workplace harassment will help to ensure this protection remains current and effective. Harassment is unacceptable. Whether it's online or face to face, our government's message is simple—we need to stop it, and we are working to ensure just that. Addressing virtual harassment is a timely and important change for all workers, especially women.

I would like to talk a little bit more about other important changes our ministry is proposing to specifically support women in the trades, particularly in the construction industry. We have seen an increase of women working on construction projects and we have heard their requests to make their workplaces more inclusive. In fact, in 2022, a survey of Ontario tradeswomen in construction cited better washroom facilities as one of the things needed to make this type of work more appealing and welcoming to women. To help ensure this, we amended the construction projects regulations to require that, as of January 1, 2025, menstrual products must be provided on large construction sites. The construction projects affected would be those with 20 or more regularly employed workers and that are expected to last three months or longer.

While only about 13% of workers in Ontario's construction industry are women—and only 4% of skilled trades-related workers in construction are women—we want to increase this number. When women only represent one tenth of our construction industry, we are tying our hands behind our back at a time when we need all hands

on deck. We are working to support women and promote their role in the skilled trades and to ensure they know that they also belong.

To bring better, cleaner, washrooms to all workers as part of our latest Working for Workers package, we're proposing a new requirement under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for washrooms provided to workers. While in construction it's already a requirement for washrooms to be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, we are now proposing rolling out a similar requirement across all types of workplaces across the province.

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To ensure that this is a regular practice, constructors and employers will be required to maintain records of cleaning for each washroom based on requirements to be prescribed by regulation in the future. This requirement would allow workers to check when washrooms were last cleaned and help to keep the people in charge accountable. Washrooms in the workplace or job site need to be kept in a clean and sanitary condition, not just for workers' health, but also for their dignity. No worker should be confronted with or have to endure a filthy, unsanitary room while they work. This is especially important for women; we've heard about women having to leave the job site to access a washroom, or, unexpectedly, something happens where their flow is early and they are stuck on a job site without proper menstrual products. It is something most of us take for granted, but it should not be that way, and every Ontarian deserves a clean workplace.

The hard-working people of the province who show up day in and day out to do their jobs need and deserve for all constructors and employers to do their part. To further protect workers, we will as well consult and expand the types of equipment that are to be provided on construction sites. Equipment such as defibrillators is something that can make the difference between life and death in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest. This is in addition to steps such as a comprehensive ministry review of traumatic fatalities in the construction sector, led by Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer, Dr. Joel Moody, as well as incorporating asbestos-related data in the ministry's forthcoming occupational exposure registry to improve our efforts to prevent future asbestos-related illnesses.

We have moved on to another piece, as well, around sick notes. To better protect employees, increase fairness and, importantly, reduce unnecessary burden on health care providers, we are proposing a change to the Employment Standards Act to prohibit employers from requiring sick notes for the three unpaid sick days employees are entitled to under the act. We want to put patients before paperwork, while at the same time reducing the paperwork burden for health care professionals. We propose to do this by prohibiting employers from requiring a sick note from a medical professional for an employee's job-protected sick leave under the employment act. To maintain accountability in the office without creating unnecessary paperwork for health care providers, employers can still request another form of evidence that is reasonable in circumstance, such as an attestation.

Future ministry guidance would be developed to inform on this.

We would also like to help people avoid unnecessary trips to the doctor's office when they are sick. This means fairness for employees who can better recuperate at home. It also means better safety for health care workers and the public, who would see less exposure to people with communicable diseases looking to complete paperwork, and more protection for patients in waiting rooms. It would mean many hours saved for primary care providers, and really align with our goal to reduce the burden on health care. According to the Ontario Medical Association, family doctors spend 19 hours per week on administrative tasks, including four hours writing notes or completing forms for patients. Let's get those paperwork hours back for them to spend caring for patients rather than performing administrative tasks.

I want to emphasize that employers would still have tools available to maintain staff accountability, such as requiring an attestation or asking for a pharmacy receipt, depending on the circumstances. This is all about reducing unnecessary burden on our health care system by giving employees the opportunity to recoup at home. This complements the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's effort to collaborate with health care sector organizations as they explore additional measures to reduce administrative burden for sick and injured workers and health care professionals. We are prioritizing patients over paperwork, ensuring our workers have the support they really need.

I would also like to talk about workplace fairness. We want to send a message that employers who break the rules and exploit or endanger workers will face consequences. That is why we're proposing changes to the Employment Standards Act that would, if passed, double the maximum fine for individuals convicted of violating the act, from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This would make Ontario's maximum fine for individuals the highest in the country and send a message to unscrupulous employers.

We have also increased the penalty that an employment standards officer can issue for certain repeat offenders by five times. It is a change from \$1,000 to \$5,000. And it would be available for officers to issue on third or subsequent contraventions of the same provision.

We are making it clear to bad actors and repeat offenders that their actions are unacceptable. From less than the cost of some cellphones to a much more significant penalty, especially when it is multiplied by each employee affected, these changes are designed to make bad actors think twice before they violate the act and to give the courts and our officers more leverage to appropriately penalize those who do, levelling the playing field for Ontario's majority of responsible employers.

Speaker, I'd like to also echo an important proposal within Working for Workers 5 that Minister Piccini spoke to, and that is requiring employers to disclose in publicly advertised job postings whether a position is vacant and to respond to applicants they have interviewed for those jobs with specified information within a specified period of

time. It is not fair, after all the work, preparation and stress a job interview entails, to have applicants kept in the dark and waiting, many times with no reply, after they have been interviewed for a position, especially in cases where some employers do not have a currently available position but are simply building a pool of potential applicants for the future. Our proposed changes would help end that practice and bring fairness and dignity to job applicants.

I would also like to take the opportunity to remind everyone that effective October 1, 2024, Ontario has increased the minimum wage from \$16.55 to \$17.20 per hour. This 3.9% annualized wage increase is based on the Ontario consumer price index and brings Ontario's minimum wage to the second highest of the provinces of Canada.

We have also talked a lot about the increase of penalties. Our government and our ministry will continue to work with municipalities and courts to make sure that these bad actors are penalized, fees are recovered and employees are looked after.

All of these changes have one goal in mind: putting workers first. An economy that isn't for workers doesn't work at all, so, through our Working for Workers packages, we have been making and plan to continue making common-sense changes that put Ontario's workers in the driver's seat.

The themes the minister and I have been speaking about today are not new. In fact, this government has been supporting heroes and workers in all of its Working for Workers legislative packages.

In 2022, we stood up for members of the Canadian Armed Forces. We expanded military reservist leave to cover time spent in Canadian Forces military skills training and reduce the amount of time military personnel need to hold a job before they can take the leave, with their jobs protected, from six to three months. In 2023, we improved military reservist leave once more, expanding the reasons for the leave and further reducing the time reservists need to be employed before taking such leaves.

We have worked closely with our firefighters. The firefighter presumptive coverage improvements outlined today also build on improvements in 2023, when we expanded presumptive occupational cancer coverage for firefighters and fire investigators to include primary-site thyroid and pancreatic cancers, as well as further improvements this year, when the act was amended to reduce the time firefighters and fire investigators need to have been employed prior to diagnosis to receive presumptive coverage for primary-site esophageal cancer, from 25 years to 15 years.

We have been protecting the safety and dignity of workers from the beginning of the Working for Workers series.

We remember that legislation passed by this House in 2021 gave delivery workers the basic human dignity of access to a restroom at businesses they are serving. In 2023, we improved washrooms for construction workers by updating requirements for clean, well-lit and properly enclosed washrooms on all construction sites. And we

improved job sites for women by requiring women-specific washrooms on larger sites, as well as requiring that properly fitting personal protective equipment and clothing be available for workers of all body types, making construction work safer, dignified and more inclusive.

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To demonstrate our seriousness and commitment on workplace safety to bad actors, in 2022, we increased the maximum fine for corporations convicted of Occupational Health and Safety Act violations to \$2 million, emphasizing our goal of putting worker safety above all else.

We have also been proactive around the opioid epidemic's effect on workplace safety, enacting legislation in 2022 that certain workplaces have life-saving naloxone kits on-site and workers trained on how to use them. Ontario's workplace naloxone program was the first of its kind in North America. Everyone's life has meaning, and naloxone gives people the second chance they deserve. This initiative has saved lives and makes Ontario a safer place to work.

Fairness for employees and job seekers has been an ongoing theme of this government's improvements since 2021. To protect vulnerable workers, we first introduced mandatory licensing of recruiters and temp agencies.

And we followed up last year with changes that, once proclaimed, will require employers to disclose the expected compensation, or range of compensation, in publicly advertised job postings, to ensure job seekers have clear information about the pay they can expect before they decide to apply. We have heard the stories, and we might even have experienced it ourselves—where you have applied for a job, you have jumped through all the hoops, you have interviewed, you've prepped yourself, you've got in and you found out that the pay was less than attractive. I'm sure quite a few of us have had that experience. So being able to see that posted, we can be like, "Is it worth my time? Should I even try?" So I'm so thrilled about the fact that we have this. We want to ensure job seekers have clear information about the pay they can expect before they decide to apply.

We also ensured fairness for hospitality and service sector staff by clarifying and introducing some important employment standards—clarifying that employers cannot deduct wages when customers dine and dash, gas and dash, or otherwise leave without paying. It is so unfair for people who are working in these jobs to be responsible for people's unethical behaviour.

Clarifying that employees must be paid for trial shifts—and requiring employers to disclose if they have a policy of sharing in employee tips and post it in the workplace. We have heard so many times—and oftentimes new immigrants, who are invited to come and work and try out the job, and they're there for a couple of days or sometimes even longer doing these jobs that, at the end of it, they don't get paid for because it was a trial shift. We want to stop that practice of taking advantage of others.

We are also requiring employers who pay tips using direct deposit to allow their employees to select which account they want them to be deposited into.

Speaker, we are moving on to other parts of employment as well.

In order to ensure fairness for Ontario workers, it's important to keep our laws current with regard to new technology and applicable to real life. And that is another thing we have accomplished through the Working for Workers series. Technology in the workplace has transformed how we operate, communicate and innovate.

In 2021, we addressed this by introducing a requirement for larger employers to have a written policy on disconnecting from work—that doesn't work for us, but it's good that we are putting it in for others—to help safeguard people's personal and family time in an era when work can easily follow you home. In 2022, we followed up to help protect employees, with a requirement for large employers to disclose how they are monitoring their employees electronically.

We have also made changes to the Employment Standards Act to ensure that employees who work solely on a remote basis are counted for mass termination provisions and can receive the same protections as their in-office counterparts.

Speaker, our government has, as well, been working to get people into jobs through the Working for Workers packages. We have been ensuring that red tape and unfair practices don't stand in the way of newcomers, who aspire to contribute to our communities. In our last package, we made changes that, once proclaimed, will prohibit all provincially regulated employers from including a requirement for Canadian experience in a publicly advertised job posting or on application forms. This was a natural follow-up to our 2021 prohibition on Canadian experience as a requirement for registration in more than 30 regulated professions and compulsory trades.

This is such a big game-changer for newcomers. A lot of newcomers were caught in the cycle of: "We can't hire you because you need to have Canadian job experience," but nobody wants to hire you to give you the experience. But the minute that one employer took a chance on you, then you became attractive to so many others. We want to make sure that we are levelling the playing field for our newcomers.

We are working to help put newcomers on a path to success by enabling them to resume their careers in Ontario jobs that match their skills, including skills that we need and where job vacancies exist in sectors like health care and the skilled trades. This is why we've also been addressing the barriers internationally trained individuals can face when having their qualifications assessed. We have made changes that, once proclaimed and implemented, will improve transparency and accountability for the assessment of qualifications by regulated professions and third parties.

Speaker, as we have heard, this new Working for Workers legislation package extends the groundbreaking supports and improvements already helping millions of workers across the province, by protecting the health and dignity of workers and front-line heroes, ensuring fairness for employees and job seekers, supporting women at work,

removing barriers for employment and making it easier for more Ontarians to start a career in the trades.

We have also worked so very hard with our school boards and with different organizations to help change the stigma around trades. It used to be if you weren't considered academically smart, then the trades were for you, with a nudge, nudge, wink, wink. But now we want to really change that stigma. We wanted to see that our young people recognized that a job in the trades is a career for life. You have a skill that you can take with you wherever you go, and it is a very good and high-paying job.

We've also had the opportunity with our Level Up! career fairs to really talk to parents, because as new immigrants, a lot of parents will be like, "I didn't come here for you to be a plumber. I didn't sacrifice and pull up my life and move to a different country for you to be a carpenter." They want a doctor; they want an engineer. And so having these discussions with parents around the ability of somebody, for their child, to be a tradesperson that gives them a very well-paying job, that they'll probably get into the minister's six figures without even having a loan to have to pay off at some time. You're owning a house faster; you're owning a vehicle faster. I remember speaking to a young lady that had gone on to be an electrician and her mom was not very thrilled that she was doing that. She started changing her mind when she bought a car, and then she bought her mom a car—so, you know, her mom started changing her thoughts about the value of her being in a trade.

So we're working very hard with our school boards and with different organizations to be able to get youth to really look at a job in the trades. I know I spoke to one school board that had 800 students that were actually interested in getting into a trade, and that is an amazing change to what we are doing.

With our ministry, now we're really focusing on speaking to those employers about welcoming these new young ones into the trades and into the workplace. I don't want to work with my 16-year-old, and so some of these companies don't necessarily want to work with 16-year-olds in the workplace as well. But having those conversations about changing what the workplace looks like, changing what mentorship looks like, changing what opportunities are available for young people—because, as we've talked about, we know there's a silver tsunami, and we need to actually start building a succession plan. Somebody said to me what I thought was really good—I actually can't remember where I heard it, but in talking about the trades, they said, "The lawyers work in the buildings that you build; the doctors work in the buildings that you build." Everything happens based on the trades and construction industry, so we want to get our young people to really think about fast-tracking into the trades and being able to have potential careers for life.

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We're accessing every tool in our tool box to work harder for workers each and every year, and to not only protect workers but to also keep and attract more workers to our province in order to ensure that Ontario's economy

remains strong. As I've said, the themes aren't new. We're building upon the past bills we have introduced under the leadership of Premier Ford, and we will always remain committed and keep working to protect and support this province's working people.

I call on all members of this House to join me in supporting Bill 190, Working for Workers Five Act, 2024.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Questions?

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to my colleagues for their debate.

One of the things I learned working in health and safety is that sometimes you can make bad decisions with good intent. I'm afraid, in this bill, we may have done this. I think there was good intent on this.

The previous Working for Workers bill allowed regular firefighters access to WSIB presumptive coverage, and we've transferred this now to wildland firefighters. We heard from Noah Freedman during deputations that we're missing the point on this. The reality is that these wildland firefighters, that yearly rate—they won't hit the threshold. They'll have to actually work twice as many years because their seasons are half-years, because things don't catch on fire in the snow.

Not only that, but there's actually more risk of carcinogenic effect to them. There isn't a path to fresh air. They regularly touch soot with their bare hands. They don't have access to showers and the ability to change their PPE.

I put forward two amendments to address this. They were both voted down at committee. I'm asking: Would the Ministry of Labour please make the changes that are needed so we can help out these heroes who protect our forests?

**Hon. David Piccini:** As we've always done with this bill and others, we're always open to constructive recommendations. I know MNRF employees, their seasons do count as a year, so are scoped in. Anyone outside of that that may feel they're missing in this, we're absolutely happy to look and address that, as we'll continue to do, working with firefighters. I just got off the phone last night with Greg Horton, head of OPFFA. We have a great relationship—constantly working to ensure that we're responsive to their needs and look forward to continuing to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I want to acknowledge and thank the minister and the PA for an incredible job. As you know, I have worked on Working for Workers 1 to 3. We always talk about these bills as common-sense bills. The people of Ontario, when they suggested something to do, we listened to them, and we acted on it.

Minister, something which we're all concerned about is the grey tsunami that's hitting the skilled trades. There is a generation of workers in construction that are on the verge of retiring, but we don't have the workers to replace them. This could have really negative impacts on ensuring that we have the workers to build the roads, highways,

hospitals, infrastructure that we need. To you, what are we doing through this bill and how are we supporting Ontario?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Thank you very much for that question. I think it is important and very relevant that we tackle those incredible men and women and the silver tsunami he referenced, that generation that's retiring—that we increase pathways. So whether it's FAST, the focused apprenticeship, getting those hours in grade 11 and 12 towards your level 1 and, ultimately, your certificate of qualification; whether it's mandating a tech class, bringing back common-sense changes to our schools, ensuring tech classes, bringing back shop class; removing barriers for internationally trained men and women in the skilled trades; expanding funding through the Skills Development Fund for pre-apprenticeship programming to help people try a trade—I think to our Try a Trade program in my own community. These are all part of a holistic effort to expand access into the trades so that we get more young men and women into this career.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**MPP Jamie West:** My question is for the Minister of Labour. There are 11 items in this bill related to washrooms. Basically, you have to have washrooms, you have to keep them clean and you have to keep records that they were cleaned, as well. But all of this legislation actually existed at least as far back as 1990, this re-tabling of existing legislation. As well, it basically says you need porta-potties.

We've all talked about the silver tsunami, the need for more and more tradespeople. I am curious: When I hear the Minister of Labour talk about bringing Bay Street to main street—on Bay Street, I don't see very many porta-potties. We're basically telling people that we're going to attract people to this field; we need tradespeople. We're telling them we're going to attract women and people of colour and men and young children, teens to this career because we're offering them porta-potties that will be clean and that will be reported of cleaning.

My question, Speaker, to the minister is, are we really going to attract people by advertising porta-potties? And has he ever offered a job saying, "Come and apply at the Ministry of Labour; we've got porta-potties"?

**Hon. David Piccini:** That's an unfortunate characterization. What we're going to do to attract young men and women into the trades is bring back tech class, something this Premier is doing; bringing back hours in grade 11 and 12 to get into a trade, something this Premier is doing.

What we're going to do is we're going to break down barriers for women with properly fitting PPE, ensure proper cleaning schedules for bathrooms, work with the sector to bring in the trailers. I would encourage him to leave this place and come with me down to the 183 high-rise I was on, on day one on this job. All of them are leaving that party in droves to endorse this Premier because he's getting more young men and women into the trades and because he's laser-focused on removing the barriers.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Further questions?

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** Thank you, Minister, for your remarks and for the work that you continue to do in your ministry for the workers in the province of Ontario.

My question is actually for the member from Ajax, and I wanted to ask you specifically about issues that women face in the workplace. Given the challenges that women face, such as barriers to entry in certain industries, under-representation in leadership roles and harassment in the workplace, can you explain what specific actions your ministry has taken in Working for Workers 5 to promote gender equality in the workplace?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you for that question. We've had so much amazing conversation with women in trades. I've had Rok, especially, a beautiful Black woman—she is a carpenter. She so loves her job in the trade that she's done for many years, but we've had really good conversations about that.

Some of the things that are sort of snuffed at, such as the washrooms, about the menstrual products, about the opportunity to really highlight women in trade, the specific investments through SDF that are encouraging organizations that are mentoring young women into the trades, the make-a-dream organization that is fully focused on getting women and young ladies really thinking about the trades—they had an event where they had 2,000 young women that came to be on site, that were learning around trades, were doing interactive things, that were really taking away the stigma around trades and being able to do those hands-on things.

So our government has been very specific in talking about that in schools and really focused on the things that we can do to get women to recognize that they can achieve anything that they want to achieve.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** Next question?

**MPP Jamie West:** This bill has the removal-ish of sick notes, and I say "removal-ish" because you don't have to provide sick notes, but your employer can ask you to provide proof. It also only applies to the three days of personal emergency leave.

We used to have 10 days of personal emergency leave, but the Conservative government in their first, I guess, Working for Workers bill reduced it to three. Dr. Nowak, the president of the Ontario Medical Association, has told this committee, when we were reviewing this bill, that the Ontario Medical Association sees about 11 days, on average, of people being sick. I know the Conservative government is dramatically opposed to providing sick pay or providing any sort of pay to help workers get through sick days—especially low and precarious workers—but would the minister agree that we should be raising our personal emergency leave days back up to 10, considering the Ontario Medical Association says that 11 days on average is what they're seeing?

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**Hon. David Piccini:** Look, I appreciate the question. I think what we recognize is that taking a common-sense

approach to remove paperwork for doctors, so that they can spend more time caring for patients, is the right move—but also recognizing that you have to have integrity in the system and some checks and balances, so that employers have an ability to ensure that there is accountability in that system.

I think being willing to have that discussion is a good thing, which we have and which our government has. Sitting down with doctors to tackle a barrier so that they can provide more direct care to patients is important. Removing barriers in credentialing pathways so that we can get more people in health care is important.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French):** The time for questions and responses is finished.

Further debate?

**MPP Jamie West:** I'm looking at the time; we probably won't get the whole hour in the next five minutes, but I will start off.

*Interjection.*

**MPP Jamie West:** I can talk fast, but not that fast.

This bill, Bill 190, is a compendium of six schedules. When we were doing second reading of the bill, I sort of went through every schedule, so for this one, I'm going to sort of hit the high notes on it.

Just as a review for everybody: Schedule 1 basically talks about the high school apprenticeship program.

Schedule 2: I kind of call it the headline portion. It's going to disclose that the job posting is for an existing vacancy; it's going to respond to everyone who applied for the job applications and retain copies for all three years. It's not that these are bad things, necessarily, but I don't know if they're the first thing that workers would say they need in the times of unaffordability that we're facing right now. They won't hurt, obviously, but they're not front and centre, I don't think.

Schedule 3 is about requirements for reasonable alternatives to documenting proof of qualifications. This, we heard at committee, was incredibly important. I think that we have to give credit where credit is due: It's a good step forward. Nothing is spelled out in this, unfortunately, and I don't know, really, if we could spell something out at this point, but I'm glad that the government is looking at this. I think we as New Democrats believe it's important as well.

We really heard from people talking about how difficult it was to come over here, to Canada, as newcomers. If you're fleeing a war-torn country and the university you went to has been bombed and the records are destroyed, not only is it difficult to get the records; they may not even exist, especially if they're paper records. That really is a hurdle, and so we do need to provide a way for people to get into their profession that they had in their home country here, for two reasons: (1) We need those people to work in those fields; and (2) it's very demoralizing to pack up your family, to travel to a new country—maybe the language, the culture and the food are different—and become part of the fabric of the country that makes our country great, but then you are working in areas that are below your skill level.

It becomes frustrating. I'm meeting people who are dentists, who are taking dental hygienist jobs in order to compensate. We've all heard about the people who are doctors, and holding doctorates, who are driving Ubers or taxis. It's not good for them and it's not good for us. I can only imagine the mental health effects that it's having on workers in this position, who know that they can work at a higher capacity and aren't able to find those jobs because of qualifications. I am glad that we're looking to a way to have a reasonable alternative to proof of qualifications. There are great suggestions from the people who came to speak with us at committee about ways that we can do this. I'm looking forward to that, moving forward.

Schedule 4 kind of has three random items on it. One of them is just updating the health and safety regulations, industrial regulations. I referred to an office, but not necessarily an office, located in a private residence. I think that provides clarity for workers that that's happening. And number 2 is updating definitions of workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment, including—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Sudbury for cutting him off, literally mid-sentence, but it is 10:15 and I am compelled to now ask for members' statements.

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### ELEVATE PLUS

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I rise today to tell you about a graduation that occurred a little bit over a week ago in my home riding of Bay of Quinte from a great program called Elevate Plus. This program, funded through the Skills Development Fund and facilitated by Loyalist College and Quinte economic development, helps job seekers who have faced obstacles in their lives, whether it be mental illness, drug addiction or contact with the justice system, to build their skills, increase their confidence and prepare themselves for a career in our booming manufacturing sector. Over four weeks in class and four weeks on the job, these students develop into employees who are ready to work for any of our great manufacturers in the Bay of Quinte region.

I will say it was incredibly moving to hear their stories about the changes that they've made in their lives and their desire and commitment to be better people, better family members and better members of our community.

We are so thankful for this program, which graduated eight people in its 39th cohort to come through Elevate Plus. Over the years, that means hundreds of people have changed their lives, have gotten back to work and have made a difference across our community.

Thank you to Elevate Plus, all of the teachers and staff who make it possible, Loyalist College and Quinte economic development, as well as the Skills Development Fund, for this great program.

### CHILD CARE WORKER AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR APPRECIATION DAY

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Today is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, an annual opportunity to celebrate the commitment, skills and hard work of the people who care for Ontario's kids.

As the MPP for London West, I'm especially grateful to the dedicated, caring professionals who work in child care centres and licensed home child care across our city. Their commitment allows London parents to go to work, put food on the table and keep our economy going, knowing their children will be safe, nurtured and engaged.

The theme for this year's day is "Worth More!," which highlights the urgency of ensuring child care workers and ECEs receive the respect and resources they deserve, so they can provide the care our children need and deliver the services that families rely on.

Speaker, London West families have been struggling under this government with the rising cost of living, and the promise of \$10-a-day child care provided a glimmer of hope. But the Conservatives' failure to develop a work-force strategy to retain and recruit ECEs and child care workers means \$10-a-day is not even close to a reality for the almost 5,000 kids waiting for a space in London.

Will the Premier show his appreciation today for the child care workers and ECEs who fuel Ontario's economy by giving them the decent work, good pay and fulfilling careers they deserve?

### RIGHT TO HEAL REDPATH PROGRAMS

**Mr. Dave Smith:** This past Sunday, October 20, I was at a fundraising event at 100 Acre Brewing. There was a bandshell set up, and a number of local artists all joined together to raise money for one of our local charities. We had local artists Mike Kidd, Sarah Jayne Riley, Brad Renaud and Joslynn Burford there to entertain us and keep us engaged as we raised money for an organization called Right to Heal.

Right to Heal delivers an Indigenous land-based cognitive behavioural therapy approach to addictions treatment. It's all based around the research of Peggy Shaughnessy. Peggy is just completing her PhD in addictions research right now at Trent University, and the RedPath Program that she delivers through Right to Heal is making a difference in my community in the fight against the opioid crisis. The approach is a non-medical approach, where someone learns why they're addicted so that they can get to the underlying issue, learn how they can take personal responsibility for their own well-being and find strategies that work for them to avoid the destructive behaviour that put them in the position they're in. We're seeing tremendous success with this program. With addictions, there is no silver bullet—not a single approach will work for everyone. But this approach is seeing tremendous results for many who have gone through her program. Peggy's program has changed the

trajectory of the lives of so many people in our community.

Thank you, Peggy, for developing the program, thank you for introducing it to me and thank you for your patience as I work to find funding so that you can save the lives of so many people in our community.

### TENANT PROTECTION

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** This summer, while the Premier was busy telling people struggling with homelessness to get off their posteriors and get a job, my constituents in Aspen Towers were desperately trying to hold onto their housing. Their brand new landlord has been trying to evict hundreds of tenants, issuing eviction notices just three days after he took ownership of the building, telling people they had only five days over a long weekend to make a decision.

#### 1020

This government has abandoned my constituents and renters like them. They have refused to implement real rent control, which would take away the incentive from bad landlords to evict tenants just so they can jack up the rent. They have refused to levy stiffer penalties on landlords who ignore the rules, provide false information or unfairly evict tenants. They've refused to proactively enforce the rules, leaving it up to tenants to do it themselves, and then refused to fix the Landlord and Tenant Board so that these tenants can have swift justice.

The Aspen Towers tenants in Ottawa West–Nepean include families with children, people working two jobs just to pay for rent and seniors who were finally able to retire after a lifetime of work. None of them will be able to afford rent if they are turfed onto the Ottawa housing market. They will have to work three jobs. They will have to go back to work in their seventies. Some of them are warning that they will have to live in their cars.

Instead of blaming people who are struggling because of his government's failures, the Premier should get off his posterior and make sure that everyone in this province can afford a place to call home.

### EVENTS IN SCARBOROUGH– AGINCOURT

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** The summer break was very productive. I managed to attend over 220 meetings, announcements, community events, new business openings in addition to attending standing committee meetings. It was informative to meet and listen to the daily challenges and concerns of Scarborough–Agincourt residents, businesses and organizations.

I visited Sir Ernest MacMillan public school to distribute backpacks filled with school supplies to students in need. I made time to chat with the students and help them overcome some of the issues they face.

I also had the privilege of meeting Dr. Norman Bethune CI's BearBella all-girls robotics team to help with their fundraising as they prepare to represent Canada in the FIRST Global Challenge in Athens, Greece.



Among the highlights of the summer recess were the Blackstone Foundation's grand reopening of the Chester Le community library, which was established by a \$199,700 grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation.

I also managed to organize two barbecues for our residents.

Another crucial event that I attended with the Minister of Health was the announcement of the allocation of \$1,478,000 to the TAIBU Community Health Centre and \$1,325,000 to Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities to ensure our residents get access to primary care services.

The grand opening of Scarborough Health Network's mental health centre in Scarborough with Premier Ford and Minister Jones was a historic first.

These are some of the events which kept me busy during our summer break.

#### BRITISH HOME CHILD DAY

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I rise to share a story of significance, a chapter of Canadian history that is often overlooked: the British home child that began 155 years ago. This child migration scheme was a government program that sent 125,000 poor and desolate children from ages six months to 18 years from the UK and Ireland to Canada as indentured labourers to work on farms and as domestic servants from 1869 to 1939. This program was borne out of a desire to alleviate poverty in Britain and to provide a solution for the children deemed unwanted and neglected.

Many home children faced harsh conditions, including abuse, forced labour and neglect. They worked on farms and in factories, and they helped build communities across this country.

Their resilience played a crucial role in shaping the agricultural, industrial and urban landscapes of Toronto, Canada, Ontario and beyond. They are remarkable heroes, and that's why, on September 28 of each year, we celebrate and commemorate the British Home Child Day.

Today, many Canadians can trace their ancestry back to these children, who helped lay the foundation of our rich and diverse and growing nation. It's estimated that 12% of the Canadian population, four million people, are British home children descendants, including Ontario Premiers and MPPs.

As we reflect on their experiences, we must consider how far we have come and how much further we need to go in safeguarding the welfare of children today. In modern Ontario, our province is failing as one child dies every three days in government care.

Today in the Legislature, we will be joined by descendants and families of the British Home Child program who have travelled from across Ontario to attend a reception which I'm co-hosting with the British Consulate General in Toronto. I invite all members to join us after question period to celebrate with them.

#### OPERATION WHITE HEART INSTALLATION

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Over the summer, I did over 240 events. One of my favourite ones was on October 17—actually, that's not over the summer, but anyways, that's another one.

In the great riding of Ajax, in Rotary Park, we unveiled an installation in partnership with Operation White Heart, through the advocacy of Michelle Cook, a constituent who lost her son Josh to suicide.

Operation White Heart began in New Brunswick and is an awareness project focused on promoting conversation around mental health and suicide while utilizing basic landscaping supplies such as mulch and white stone to create a white heart. This was started by Robert Lothian. This heart, crafted with care and intention, stands as a symbol of compassion, understanding and hope. It serves as an important reminder of a connection needed to open conversations about mental health and the unwavering support we must offer to each other. As we honour the memories of those who have left us too soon, let us also commit to re-creating a world where every person feels seen, heard and valued.

I want to give my thanks to Councillor Marilyn Crawford and the councillors from Ajax who worked to make this the first Operation White Heart sculpture in the province of Ontario.

I encourage members of the House to learn about this initiative and maybe get one in their riding. As Robert said at the unveiling, it will not solve the issue, but just maybe somebody will see one and think twice about taking their lives.

#### RIDING OF SCARBOROUGH— GUILDWOOD

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Today I stand before you to share the stories of the people I represent in Scarborough—Guildwood. Over the past 19 weeks, I had the privilege of meeting with my constituents, listening to their challenges and understanding the issues that affect their daily lives.

Vacation was not a priority for me. I was in the field every day, making a difference and giving them hope for a better tomorrow. Many families are facing food insecurity and are struggling to put food on the table. Food bank visits are on the rise, with one in seven people at the food banks in Scarborough. Job opportunities remain limited, and many of my constituents are finding it increasingly difficult to secure stable, well-paying jobs. Access to health care remains a significant concern, as over 19,000 of my constituents are without a family doctor.

Aside from that, I am very proud to say that I have participated in over 200 events throughout Scarborough and Scarborough—Guildwood, connecting with residents, community leaders and organizations dedicated to making a difference. Each event has reinforced my commitment to advocating for the Scarborough community.

We need a government that will provide solutions. They deserve a government that will stand up for the people of Ontario.

#### COMMUNITY LEADER AWARDS AND THANKSGIVING DINNER

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Two weeks ago, we celebrated Thanksgiving, and my team and I had our annual Community Leaders Awards and Thanksgiving Dinner at the Oasis Convention Centre in Lakeview. We had a great turnout of over 300 people to celebrate the harvest and to recognize some very special community leaders from across Mississauga–Lakeshore.

That includes Barry Gilbert, an Indigenous elder and the founder of the Eagle Spirits of the Great Waters, who has done so much to promote Indigenous art, culture and a spirit of healing along our waterfront on Orange Shirt Day and throughout the year.

We honoured my friend Vishal Khanna, the founder of the Sai Dham Food Bank, the only food bank in Ontario that operates 365 days each year and helps seniors and others with special needs.

1030

As we celebrate Small Business Week, we recognize a small business owner like Joe Leroux, the founder of Amadio's Pizza, who has supported our local festivals, youth hockey teams, food banks and charities since 1990.

I want to thank David Zura from CityNews Toronto for joining us as well to help us tell some of these uplifting stories.

I'm thankful for Barry, Vishal and Joe for all of their Ontario spirit across our province, and I just want to thank them for being part of Mississauga–Lakeshore on this special evening.

#### GREATER NAPANEE

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I'm honoured today to rise representing the wonderful people of Hastings–Lennox and Addington. Speaker, as you know, I represent a very large riding consisting of many different and diverse communities. While I'd love to talk about them all today, I'm going to focus on one area, the town of Greater Napanee.

Greater Napanee has several new and expanding industries announced with the support and leadership of this government. We've seen a major expansion of the Goodyear tire plant, with hundreds of new high-paying jobs; a new battery storage facility that will help to enhance and stabilize the power grid for everyone; and the implementation of a new health home program that will lead to every single resident there having access to primary care.

The high note, however, was Greater Napanee receiving almost \$35 million to build a new waste water facility through this government's Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund that will allow for the development of over 3,000 new homes in Greater Napanee. The mayor of Greater Napanee, Terry Richardson, put it best when he

said, "This is game-changing," and I left out the expletive on that.

This is the type of work that this government, under the leadership of the Premier, has been doing all across this province during the summer session. While the opposition may talk about how long the break was, for this government, there is no break in our work to keep building Ontario. Whether here at Queen's Park or working in the ridings all across the province, we are and will continue to get it done for the people of Ontario.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to recognize the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming on a point of order.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** On a point of order, I just want to correct my record from my answer yesterday to the member from Bay of Quinte. I said the fine Minister of Sport had won a Grey Cup championship—I was wrong; he has won four championships.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Good that we got that straightened out.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** I'd like to introduce my friends who are sitting in the public gallery: Mr. Yang Jianying, who is a well-known urban strategist for Dun Huang International Tourism Solutions; his wife, Liu Qifang; and his son, Yang Chaopeng. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** With today being the British home child reception, I'd just like to welcome a few guests who have travelled here today: Kathleen Kirkman, Lisa Gleva, Lori Oschefski, Lyma McIntosh, Malcolm Farrow and Marilee Gosselin, as well as Carol Godard and Eleanor McGrath from my riding.

**Hon. Stephen Crawford:** I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Oakville, Shawn Fang, and with him are a number of youth volunteers from the Oak Medical Education Foundation, along with his daughter and his parents, Guang Fang and Jinqing Xu, who are here celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'd like to introduce Marissa Jeffkins, Martha McGrath, Michael Barry, Nancy MacDonald, Nancy Smyth, Patricia Bielert and Paul Stewart, who will be attending the British home child reception at lunch today.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. I have a few people to introduce today. First of all, my powerful page is page captain today: Lincoln Knibbs from beautiful Beaches–East York. And his proud parents are in the chamber: "Jazzy" Julia Peters and "Gregarious" Garnet Knibbs. Welcome to the House.

I also have to introduce Rita, Katherine, Karen, Craig and Rob Franklin, who are direct descendants of the British home child program and Dr. Barnardo's children,

Edward Charles Franklin who came here at nine years of age in 1909, and his sister, Florence Salt, who came here in 1907 at 14 years of age. Welcome to your House. We'll see you at the reception today.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I wish to give a warm, warm welcome to the grade 10 students from St. Joseph's high school in my great riding of Windsor–Tecumseh, with teachers Mr. Bill Croft, Mr. Charlie Sylvestre, Ms. Dana Stevens. Welcome to Queen's Park. Looking forward to meeting you after all the commotion that we're going to go through in the next hour and change.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** Good morning, Speaker. I would like to welcome some incredible folks from Toronto who are here for the British home child reception today: Ada Sloan, Adrienne Patterson, Aldo Palma, Ali Thompson, Allyson Reid, Bill Hopton, Bob Franklin. Welcome to your House.

**Ms. Chandra Pasma:** I would like to join my colleagues in welcoming the British home child descendants and advocates, including Danielle Walker, Deborah Gallant, Kaitlin Gallant, Denis Gosselin, Denis Piquette, Derakhshan Qurban-Ali, Edward Hewitt and Edward Rice. Welcome. We look forward to seeing you at the reception afterwards.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** As well as my colleagues, I'd like to welcome some individuals here today from the British home children's centre. They would be Hugo Straney, John Jeffkins, John Vanthof, Joyce Kalsen, Judi Helle, Karen Franklin, Kate Barlett and Katherine Franklin. Welcome to your House. I'm looking forward to seeing you later on at your reception.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** They're not here yet; they're going through security, but I want to give a big shout-out to the students from Uxbridge Secondary School, one that I go to very often. Of course, today, they are from the great riding of Uxbridge-Pickering. I want to say to them, welcome to the House, and go, Tigers!

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch, Speaker.

*Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

I'd like to welcome some guests to Queen's Park. Yesterday, my team met with Raven Lacerte, the founder of the Moose Hide Campaign. The Moose Hide Campaign is a First Nations-led grassroots movement to end violence towards women and children. Also on her team are Grace Park-Wawia and Joshua Matthewman. Meegwetch for coming to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'd like to welcome members of the Canadian Credit Union Association, who gave us a wonderful breakfast this morning. I've already met with them. One of my grandfathers was the founder of a credit union near Stratford, and so I'm very proud to have met with him today.

I also want to make note of a school visit yesterday. Maurice Cody public school was here. They weren't in the gallery at the time, but over 75 grade 5 kids from Maurice Cody visited yesterday. Welcome to the House.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to add my voice in welcome to many people who are travelling from across Ontario for the British home child reception happening

right after question period. I'd like to welcome Rick Hayward; Rita Franklin; Rob Franklin; Sandie De Freitas; Scott Ladoucier; Sheila Eaton; Suzanne Park; Warren Vandal; William C. Smith; Walter McIntosh; Nancy Smyth, the Canadian ambassador to Ireland; Fouzia Younis, the British consul general in Toronto; Janice McGann, the Irish consul general; Eleanor McGrath; Finbarr McCarthy; Lori Oschefski, president of the Home Children Canada charity; as well as Sir George Beardshaw, who is a 101-year-old World War II veteran and the last home child of Canada.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask if the House agrees to continue with the introduction of visitors. Agreed? Okay.

**M. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Aujourd'hui, j'ai le plaisir d'accueillir ici à Queen's Park les élèves de 10<sup>e</sup> année de l'École secondaire catholique Embrun, qui est une école de ma circonscription.

Je voulais juste dire que la visite est possible grâce à une belle initiative du programme des voyageurs pour la démocratie, qui est un programme du ministère de l'Éducation. Donc, plus que jamais, on a des écoles de notre région qui viennent ici. On sait qu'on demeure très loin, donc c'est vraiment le fun de voir ça, pour ces enfants-là de pouvoir apprendre ce que notre gouvernement fait et la démocratie.

Bienvenue. Ils seront ici dans quelques instants. Je viens de prendre une photo avec eux—un gros groupe; 78 élèves.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I would like to welcome some more guests who are at Queen's Park today for the British home child reception: Elizabeth Ladoucier, Emma Carter, Eric Morse, George Beardshaw and Georgina Warner. Welcome.

**Hon. David Piccini:** I would like to welcome to Queen's Park today very dear friends and the person who's been with me since day one in this Legislature and runs everything, including me, sometimes, in the constituency office: Bonnie and James. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I'd like to welcome to the House people who are going to be joining the British home child reception at noon: Carol Goddard, Catherine Strongman, Catherine Mulrone, Cathy O'Connell, Con O'Connell, Craig Franklin and Cynthia Teeter. Welcome to your House.

#### DEATH OF MEMBER'S HUSBAND

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader has informed me he has a point of order he'd like to raise.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker: On behalf of Premier Ford and the government, I just want to express, through you, to the member for Scarborough Southwest, our deepest sympathies on the loss of her husband. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you and your family, and it's great to see you back. My condolences.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** This question is for the Premier. Six months ago, the Ontario Science Centre was a world-class institution. It was bustling with school field trips, with science experiments and creative installations, but today, under this government, it's been boarded up. It's been relocated in scraps to a strip mall in Etobicoke. Just a year ago, Ontario Place was an accessible public park. It was being enjoyed by millions of visitors, but today, it's a pile of rubble locked away behind fences.

I've been all over this province, and no one is telling us this is what they need. So my question to the Premier is, when will he stop the schemes and the scandals and get to work building the homes, hiring the doctors and fixing our schools?

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

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** To the Leader of the Opposition, it's nice to see you disrespect the Integrity Commissioner once again in this House.

But, Mr. Speaker, the science centre board has made a decision in order to open exhibits across the province, and two of the locations are Harbourfront Centre and Sherway Gardens. Now, we are making a big effort—the province of Ontario, in collaboration with the science centre—to bring science centre learning to the people of Ontario. This was a decision by the science centre, and we encourage families to go visit the exhibits as they do, and prepare for their Christmas shopping and the holiday season.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, if the minister can't answer on her own file because she's under investigation, maybe she could find another minister to help her answer these questions.

It's been six long years of this government and Ontarians are without a doubt worse off. They are stuck trying to find a doctor. They are stuck looking for an affordable place to live. They are stuck with the bill for this Premier's costly schemes and scandals.

The Ontario Place scheme alone could cost taxpayers billions, all so that the insiders at Therme can make huge profits off of prime waterfront land.

So my question to the Premier, again, is: How can this Premier or anyone else on that side possibly justify this?

*Interjections.*

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

To respond, the Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Mr. Speaker, in case I don't have my facts correct—it was the NDP and the leader of the official opposition that filed a complaint with the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner is doing his job. I assume that all of us who sit in the House respect the Integrity Commissioner, the institution, his office and staff. So I have to ask the question: Why do you insist on

disrespecting the Integrity Commissioner and the important work that he has to do?

While you do that, the members on this side of the House will focus on building Ontario. In fact, let's just list a few accomplishments: Grandview Children's Centre, Mount Sinai, Michael Garron Hospital, West Park Healthcare Centre and the Ontario Court of Justice—all projects that reached substantial completion under this government's leadership.

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

The final supplementary.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'll say it again, Speaker: Boy, do I wish we didn't have to spend all our time submitting complaints to the Integrity Commissioner about this government. But, sadly, that is the state of the province of Ontario right now.

Yesterday, the Premier stood here and said Ontario Place was a field of weeds. The last time he said that, do you know what he was talking about, Speaker? He was talking about the greenbelt. How'd that work out for you? The Premier said that, we'll recall, to justify selling off the greenbelt for \$8 billion in windfall profits to their insider friends, until we forced him to back down.

When is this government going to learn? What is it going to take for them to reverse their latest scheme to sell off Ontario Place, or is it going to take another RCMP investigation?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Infrastructure.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Please, let the leader of the official opposition continue to disrespect the Integrity Commissioner in this House. I am sure he is watching.

But, Mr. Speaker, let me talk about the things that keep the Ministry of Infrastructure busy—that keep all of us busy, in fact. Let me talk about the projects that we are building in the province of Ontario: the IDoor4Care children's hospital in Ottawa; the Eglinton Crosstown West extension tunnelling work is completed; the Scarborough subway extension; Cambridge Memorial Hospital; the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health redevelopment project; GO expansion; Highway 3; Hamilton Health Sciences West Lincoln; Niagara Health's new South Niagara Hospital project; the Ontario Line; QEW/Credit River.

Mr. Speaker, we're busy building this province; the NDP is just filing complaints.

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, I'm going to go back to the Premier. Let's talk about another unpopular scheme of this government: the Premier's fantasy tunnel under the 401. Recent polling is now showing that about two thirds of the government's own voters say they strongly oppose this tunnel plan. It's even less popular, not surprisingly, with the rest of Ontarians. People in rural Ontario don't want to

hear their government is spending \$100 billion in taxpayer dollars on another wacky scheme from this Premier, right? They deserve, instead, a government that's going to make sure they have access to their local emergency room, say, when they need it.

**1050**

So my question to the Premier is, why do this government's priorities never seem to match the reality of this province?

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

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Mr. Speaker, we know gridlock is at an all-time high, and that's because the previous Liberal government—obviously, the NDP—have refused to build in this province. For 15 years, they had a chance to do something. They did absolutely nothing.

We look at all solutions to these problems, whether it's public transportation or whether it's a tunnel. We know the 401 is one of the most congested areas in our province. We need to improve productivity. We need to get people moving and, Mr. Speaker, we will look at every option possible.

We're building the Ontario Line, moving 400,000 people every single day. That party opposed it. We're building Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass, and we will continue to do a feasibility study on the tunnel because we know we need to look at the next 10, 20, 50 years of this province, not go back to the previous Liberal government that did absolutely nothing to build, and I can say the NDP would be no different.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Well, Speaker, I don't think Ontarians are going to buy that from a Minister of Transportation who can't even give us an opening date for the Eglinton LRT. My gosh—a basic, basic responsibility of this minister.

My question, back to the Premier: This is a government that is six years in, and congestion is, yes, worse than it has ever been. The Premier could get people moving today by allowing trucks to drive toll-free on the 407 and free up the 401. When we put that to the government as a proposal, what did they do, Speaker? They said no. They said no to the people of this province. So why is the Premier making commuters wait for some fantasy tunnel that will never get built instead of just taking back the 407?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Mr. Speaker, that question from the NDP sums up everything you need to know about them and the previous Liberal government. They don't think anything can be built. They think everything is a fantasy.

In fact, that's what they said when we proposed the Ontario Line. They said, "That could never get built. You could never get shovels in the ground." Guess what? The

shovels are in the ground, and it will move 400,000 people every single day.

That is what they said to the people of Scarborough. For 10, 15 years, they denied them the subway. They denied them transit. What did this Premier do? We got shovels in the ground on the Scarborough subway extension.

To them, it's always a fantasy. To our government, it's about building. It's about building for the future. It's about building, putting shovels in the ground on the 413, the Bradford Bypass. This is about the future generations of this province. This isn't about the next four years; it's about thinking ahead. The next 10, 20, 50 years—what will this province need? If it was up to the NDP and Liberals, nothing would ever get built in this province.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I do seem to remember these are the same folks who poured cement down a subway line, but anyways.

Listen, while Ontarians are stuck waiting to find a home, a doctor, support for their kids in schools, this government is stuck in scandals and schemes that are moving us absolutely nowhere: a \$1-billion spa deal, an \$8-billion greenbelt giveaway, a \$100-billion fantasy tunnel.

Instead of homes, Ontarians get headaches. Instead of doctors, they get delays. And instead of schools, they get spas. So my question to the Premier is, when will this government stop catering to insiders, put people first and finally deliver the basics for Ontario?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** Mr. Speaker, we are delivering every single day for the people of this province. Whether it's a \$70-billion plan to build public transit to move people faster, to make people more productive, to get people within walking distance of public transit, guess what? The NDP oppose that every step of the way.

We have a piece of legislation that is on the floor that we asked the NDP and Liberals to support, that would help us accelerate the construction of highway builds across this province, including the Bradford Bypass, including Highway 413 and the Garden City Skyway bridge, Mr. Speaker. But guess what? I know what the members opposite will do. They're going to vote against it again, because they don't believe in building this province. They don't believe in getting people to work and back to their families instead of spending time in gridlock.

This government has a plan to build, and we will continue to make sure we get shovels in the ground, regardless of what the opposition do to try and stop us.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoché:** My question is to the Minister of Education. This summer, the Conservative government cancelled already approved plans to build 48 new school-

based child care centres that would have created spaces for over 3,000 kids in the GTA. These were ready-to-go projects that were held up because of a lack of provincial funding, despite promises to fund them. Parents are desperate to get their kids into \$10-a-day child care programs. When the space isn't there, what are they supposed to do, especially moms? Not go to work? Not pay the bills? All families deserve accessible and affordable child care.

Why are Conservatives withholding funds for much-needed affordable child care spaces?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I think the member knows that these seats have actually been reallocated because the board was sitting on this surplus money. We're working collaboratively with the federal government to get a better deal for Ontario families, because we know that child care has increased to some of the highest costs in Canada under the former Ontario Liberal government.

To be clear, from day one, we were skeptical about the deal, which is why we were the only province in Canada to secure a midway review to ensure the sustainability and longevity of this program. Having met with Minister Sudds in Ottawa, I thought that we both agreed that we wanted affordable and flexible child care for Ontario families. However, Minister Sudds's response to my letter has made it clear to me that the federal Liberals care more about pushing their ideology than making child care affordable for families in this province.

I am calling on the NDP and the Liberals across the aisle to join us to support this program to ensure that we can have affordable and flexible child care for families in this province.

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Speaker, the minister knows very well that funds are being withheld for child care spaces, and the Conservatives are well behind and will fail to meet their own targets. Today is Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, and one of the things that is missing in the new funding formula and what child care workers have been asking for, for years, is a wage grid. Other provinces have successfully implemented a wage grid. Do Ontario's child care workers and early childhood educators not deserve the same?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I want to thank the early childhood educators for the loving environment they do for our young folks and for those early learners, but, Mr. Speaker, that is why retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care, early-years workforce is critical to the sustainability and implementation of the CWELCC system and will achieve the system growth and ensure increased access to high-quality licensed child care in Ontario.

I have had the opportunity to visit child care centres across this province this summer and have met with early childhood educators and have heard the concerns about retention and recruitment. That's why we have made these changes, and we will ensure that we are providing—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** That's what we are doing. We are providing the supports for those families.

For 2024, the wage floor increased from the planned \$20 per hour to \$23.86 per hour for eligible RECEs, program staff; from the planned \$22 per hour to \$24.86 per hour for the registered ECEs' supervisors and RECE home child care visitors.

## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Traffic congestion cost over \$11 billion in productivity losses every year. With a growing population and increasing traffic congestion, it is clear we need to enhance our transportation infrastructure and we need to do it now. We all know the frustration of sitting in traffic, watching our time slip away due to ongoing road congestion delays when it comes to completing vital highway projects—time we can spend with family, friends and loved ones.

**1100**

Thanks to the minister, our government has introduced the Building Highways Faster Act to streamline the approval process and reduce delays. With major projects still facing years of planning and approval, it is important for the people of Ontario to see the real progress. These are important goals. We need to understand how this will actually play out on the ground.

To the Minister of Transportation: Can you elaborate how this proposed legislation will cut down the time it takes to build highways?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation and member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** My thanks to my friend the member from Mississauga–Malton for the question. The Building Highways Faster Act is a key initiative that reinforces our government's commitment to get Ontario moving. As our population has grown, so have the pressures on our highways, but this legislation will allow us to cut through the delays by streamlining the approval processes and eliminating the red tape so that we can deliver key projects even more efficiently.

It's about getting it done: building the highways we need, reducing the congestion, improving road safety and driving economic growth by ensuring that the movement of people and goods across this province continues to flow.

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

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you for that wonderful answer. The need for faster and more efficient highway construction has never been more pressing for the residents of Mississauga–Malton and our province.

Our roads face increasing demands due to population growth and economic prosperity. Urgent action is needed, and needed now, as Ontario continues to be the economic powerhouse of Canada. By streamlining approval process and reducing hurdles, the government claims to be prioritizing the timely delivery of critical infrastructure projects.

With that in mind, Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please provide specific examples of how the Building Highways Faster Act will expedite the construction of highways and benefit Ontarians going forward?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Once again, thank you to my friend from Mississauga–Malton. Speaker, the Building Highways Faster Act will have a direct and positive impact on the daily lives of Ontarians. By reducing the time it takes to plan and build our highways, we're making sure that commuters will spend less time stuck in traffic and more time at home with families and loved ones. Improved highway infrastructure means faster, safer travel for everyone, whether it's getting to work, to school or just to enjoy the beautiful places all across Ontario that we have to offer.

Speaker, by enhancing the efficiency of our transportation system, we're also supporting local businesses, allowing goods and services to move more quickly and reliably. This government is about delivering results for Ontarians: faster commutes, safer roads and a more connected province.

#### HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

**MPP Jill Andrew:** To the Premier: Across Ontario, people are paying enormous parking fees at hospitals. In the GTA alone, a monthly parking pass is about \$400. That's a lot of money, especially for our overworked and underpaid health care workers.

Earlier this week, I tabled a motion calling on this government to eliminate hospital parking fees for health care workers, hospital staff, patients and their families, and adequately fund our public hospitals. Patients should be able to bank on this government to properly fund our public hospitals and not revenue from a parking spot for the hospital care and services they need.

My question is to the Premier. Will this government provide necessary funding to eliminate hospital parking fees today so health care workers, patients and families can have one less financial burden at the hospital tomorrow?

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The hospital parking directive is a directive that exists in the province of Ontario, and the purpose of the Ontario hospital parking directive is to keep the financial costs down on parking fees for patients and visitors at hospitals. The directive was created to reduce the barriers to accessing health care.

Mr. Speaker, under the Ontario hospital parking directive, there is a cap placed on any increases for parking fees in parking spaces associated with hospitals.

In addition to that, there are also special rates created for a 10-day pass or a 30-day pass. This is all in keeping with our policy to help keep the financial burden of parking down for patients and for people visiting patients at hospitals in Ontario.

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

**MPP Jill Andrew:** I wonder if the Premier or any MPPs pay for parking here at Queen's Park.

Anyhow, back to the Premier: CTV News recently reported on a Toronto woman who paid nearly \$2,000 in parking fees to visit her mother. Speaker, when you're sick or when you've got a loved one who is sick in the hospital, parking costs should never be a barrier. When you're getting chemo, managing chronic health conditions or just trying to keep up with all of your medical appointments—some of us know that really well—parking costs should never, ever, be a barrier.

As the Premier pins the price tag of his foreign luxury spa on Ontarians, many Ontarians cannot afford to visit their loved ones in hospital, literally. So I'll ask the Premier again: Premier, will you choose people over your profit schemes, properly fund our public hospitals and eliminate hospital parking fees today as a concrete solution to actually help Ontarians get by?

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The province of Ontario has an Ontario hospital parking directive, and under this directive, the goal is to help alleviate part of the financial burden on patients and their families who are visiting them at the hospital. This is a policy of the province of Ontario.

Under this directive, Mr. Speaker, not only is there a hard cap on any parking increases, but in addition to that, there are special rates established for a 10-day parking pass and a 30-day parking pass. This is in keeping with the policy established in the province of Ontario. There are also special discounts that are offered under the hospital parking directive.

Mr. Speaker, the hospital parking directive exists to help people in the province of Ontario and alleviate the financial burden of parking, because we want everybody in the province of Ontario to get the health care they need at the hospitals that are available in the province.

#### SKILLED TRADES

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Ontario is at a critical juncture and who is going to build our infrastructure in my great riding of Newmarket–Aurora? We have a major pipeline that's going to be built down Leslie and it's going to add to our waste water capacity. I have a brand new apartment building going up on Yonge Street that's going to provide almost 400 new homes.

Speaker, it is critical that we have enough skilled workers to meet the growing housing and infrastructure demands as we build Ontario. Without enough people in the skilled trades, we know that vital projects like hospitals, schools, homes and pipelines won't be built, and we're going to experience delays. That's why our government must do everything we can do to provide Ontarians

with the opportunities to launch into these well-paying and lifelong careers.

Speaker, can the minister please outline what steps our government has taken to ensure we have the workforce necessary to build a strong future for Ontario?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Thank you to that great member for that question—and an exciting waste water project to expand housing in her community.

We've got students here today and this government is taking some meaningful steps to support them on their career paths. We're expanding tech classes in high school. In our latest Working for Workers bills that we spoke to this morning, we're expanding the focus of apprenticeship in the skilled trades so that in grade 11 and 12 you can get hours that count towards your level 1 C of Q.

This Minister of Education is smashing down barriers and bringing back common-sense changes like financial literacy to actually ensure that these youth aren't living off of government handouts and government programs and actually have the skills to stand on their own two feet and to succeed in today's ever-changing economy.

1110

We need more youth in the trades. In my supplementary, I'm going to expand on even more steps we're taking to get our next generation into the skilled trades to build the homes, hospitals, highways and schools this government is building.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Ontario's economy depends on a strong, skilled workforce, and it is no secret that we are facing a shortage of skilled tradespeople. In fact, estimates suggest that, by 2025, one in five jobs in Ontario will be in the skilled trades.

At the same time, we know our experienced tradespeople—those who have built and shaped Ontario's infrastructure—are nearing retirement. These are the workers who mentor the next generation and keep our economy moving. If we don't act now, we risk not only losing their talent but also the opportunity to transfer the critical knowledge to younger workers.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is ensuring that we can attract new tradespeople while retaining our experienced workers to ensure that Ontario remains a leader in the skilled trades?

**Hon. David Piccini:** It's a fundamental outlet that we just want to build Ontario, but we recognize two challenges: getting a generation to actually build it, but also the retiring golden generation.

Do you know how we're not going to do it? By taxing the trades, as the previous Liberal government did so well: by taxing them with increasing fees, increasing exam fees. We're lowering all of that, Speaker, or outright removing fees.

In fact, we're doing common-sense changes to get more women into the trades, like properly fitting PPE, ensuring we have programs that protect women, ensuring we're making investments in programs like the Skills Develop-

ment Fund that have led to a 30% increase in women registration into the trades.

We're building a province. The previous Liberal government, we know it because they said it: They wanted a service economy. They turned their backs on manufacturing workers. They drove jobs out at Kraft, at plants in my riding. We're building a province, and we're making sure we have the workforce designed to build the things that our great country needs so that we're not dependent—

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

The next question.

## HOME CARE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Premier. Recently, we learned about medical supply shortages affecting home care patients in the province of Ontario. The shortage is so severe that appointments are being cancelled and some patients are being sent to urgent care centres—that's if they're open—and could end up in emergency departments. It's so bad that cancer patients have to buy their own medical supplies from Amazon.

The province restructured home care last year, and then chose—chose—to take a five-month summer break while this crisis developed. Speaker, what is this government going to do to ensure this issue is fixed for home care patients immediately?

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely unacceptable that patients do not get their medical supplies on time or as ordered. Patients must receive their medical supplies on time and as ordered. We expect everybody who needs home delivery of these supplies in the province of Ontario to receive their supplies, and we also expect that the families counting on those supplies will receive those supplies.

That is why the minister has already communicated with the chair and CAO of Ontario Health atHome and has already directed and authorized that the CAO take all means necessary, whatever means necessary, to ensure that the supplies are delivered on time and as ordered.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Just to let you know, sir, it was your government that signed the contract. You're responsible for what's going on in the province of Ontario right now.

My question is back to the Premier. I heard directly from front-line staff about how this supply shortage has affected them. There have been serious delays in delivery. We have independent medical supply businesses today that have been doing this work for years without problems or complaints. Nurses are frustrated and are being forced to figure out how to divide what supplies they have left. Patients are left without the services they need.

Speaker, to this government: Why was this supply contract taken from independent businesses who were doing their jobs with no complaints, who have been doing



it for years, and given to Bayshore, one of your big donors?

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

The member for Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make this absolutely clear: Our government expects that every person in Ontario who requires delivery of medical supplies at home shall get those medical supplies at home and on time. That is why the minister has already communicated with the CAO, to make sure that those supplies get delivered on time.

This is a logistics issue. There is no lack of supply. This is a logistics issue, and the minister has already directed that these supplies be delivered on time, in accordance with the orders that were made. Any person in the province of Ontario who is out of pocket as a result of having to seek an alternative source may apply for reimbursement, and, in fact, those actions have already been taken. The phone number to call is 1-866-377-7567.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** There are many people who struggle with math, and this Conservative government, the Premier and his Minister of Health are no exceptions, but the math is easy and it's frightening: Both the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Ontario Medical Association agree that 2.5 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor. These organizations both say this number is set to increase to 4.4 million people by 2026; 11,000 people have died waiting for surgeries and diagnostics, and the number of hallway patients in Ontario has doubled. The math is heart-wrenching.

While the health minister is proud of \$20 million apparently invested in team-based care, the Premier wants to spend \$1 billion to sell beer in corner stores, more than \$400 million on a foreign-owned spa's parking and more than \$50 billion on a tunnel. When will the Premier wake up and realize that health care needs to be his priority?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the parliamentary assistant and member for Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Mr. Speaker, the province of Ontario supplies more primary health care to more people than any other province in Canada, and in addition to that, the primary care services in the province of Ontario are provided to at least approximately 90% of all of the residents in the province of Ontario.

Let me give you an example of how we're expanding primary care right in the city of Ottawa. We can talk about the Ottawa nurse practitioner-led clinic, where an additional 6,400 spots have been created to provide primary care to people. That's an additional 6,400 patients who will get primary care right in the city of Ottawa as a result of the actions taken by this government.

We've increased the health care budget from \$60 billion to \$85 billion, so that people in Ottawa can get primary—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

The supplementary question?

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** Well, here are some ideas of what the priorities of this government should be: the families that cannot find a family doctor; I spent this summer knocking on doors in my riding, and it was the number one concern at the door. What about residents of cities like Ottawa and Belleville who have to wait up to 18 hours in a hospital emergency room? What about residents of small towns in Ontario whose emergency departments had to close because of staff shortages? What about the 17,000 residents of the health minister's own riding of Dufferin-Caledon without a doctor, or the 32,000 residents of Etobicoke North who don't have a doctor? Yes, he should prioritize the 2.5 million people across this province who don't have a family doctor—and I could go on.

But talk is cheap, Mr. Speaker. When will this government act on what is important to Ontarians and finally make the long-overdue investments that health care needs now?

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**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Ontario leads the country with almost 90% of all residents connected to primary care. That's better than Quebec; that's better than British Columbia; that's better than Alberta; that's better than every other Canadian province. And while the Liberals actually trained fewer doctors when they were in government, we're now training more doctors as a result of the programs introduced by this government.

Mr. Speaker, right in my own riding, the riding of Essex, we've added an additional 1,200 spaces to the Kingsville primary care centre. That's the Essex county nurse practitioner-led clinic where more and more nurses are being added to the province of Ontario. In fact, since making government in 2018, this government has helped to train approximately 80,000 new nurses—

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

The next question.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** My question is to the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform. The people of Ontario and families in Mississauga-Lakeshore are growing concerned about the rise in car thefts. Every day, we hear stories of families and individuals having their vehicles stolen right from their driveways, including my own many years ago.

Car thefts are disruptive and costly, leading to high insurance premiums and a loss of trust in the safety of our neighbourhoods. The people of Ontario are looking to our government for solutions. They want to know what steps are being taken to stop these crimes and protect their property.

Speaker, what is our government doing to address the rising issue of car thefts in Ontario and ensure Ontarians feel safe in their own homes and their communities?

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** Thank you to the member for that question. I know the member is plugged in like you wouldn't believe in Mississauga–Lakeshore. He gets calls every single day with residents saying cars are being stolen.

What is this government doing about it? Well, we're doing a lot, Mr. Speaker. The people of Ontario deserve to know that when they are the victims of an auto theft crime, the aggressor will be caught and held accountable for their crimes, which is the reason why we've been laser-focused on this issue and why we've invested more than \$130 million to purchase five new police helicopters in the GTA and Ottawa.

Believe it or not, a municipality the size of Peel, which I represent along with the member, didn't have their own helicopter. Getting a bird in the air in seconds and minutes, rather than in minutes and hours, is vital for cracking down on these violent offenders, getting them quickly. It actually helps prevent high-speed pursuits, which actually keeps our officers safe as well. These helicopters will be equipped with advanced technology to enhance highway safety and help in reducing violent crimes.

This party is taking it seriously. That member is as well. Let's keep it going.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** Car theft is not just a statistic; it is a personal and often traumatic experience for the victims. For many Ontarians, losing their vehicle means losing their primary means of transportation, impacting their jobs, families and day-to-day lives. The financial burden from insurance claims and replacing a stolen vehicle can be overwhelming.

Given the sophisticated nature of these car theft operations, including the use of advanced technology to bypass security systems, urgent action is needed now. Ontarians need to know that something is being done to stop this. They want to know that our government is taking their concerns seriously.

Speaker, can the minister elaborate on how the recent investment in police helicopters will enhance and enforce what we are doing to protect the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I'd like to thank the member for that question once again.

Through you, Speaker: Because of the joint air support unit, police services will have access to a rapid-response crime-fighting tool that will help police. I want to make it clear that these helicopters are not only about tackling organized car thieves; we're using eyes in the sky to also work against human traffickers and gun smugglers.

I was disappointed to hear some of the opposition scoffing about the investment in the helicopters when we announced it. They don't think this is a priority for them. You know, the fact is, when police officers are in that gallery, every single member of this House will stand up and applaud them for the heroes that they are. The difference is, when they leave, the PC Party stays standing up for our front-line officers.

The people of Ontario work hard day in and day out. They've told us public safety is a priority for them. It is a priority for us in the PC Party. We will not relent in this work.

## INDIGENOUS RELATIONS

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

Hunting is fundamental to the traditional ways of life. In Neskantaga First Nation, treaty rights are being violated by helicopters flying and landing on their homelands. This is happening without their consent. These choppers are scaring the moose away and disrupting the annual fall hunt. Will this government respect treaty rights and stop all activities related to the two Ring of Fire road projects until the end of the fall moose hunt?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply for the government, the Minister of Mines.

**Hon. George Pirie:** Thank you very much for the question. Obviously, all of the activities around the Ring of Fire roads are being handled through the Indigenous communities, through Marten Falls and Webequie. This government is committed to consultation—we have made that very clear—and to the point that the Indigenous communities are conducting the consultation with all the communities on those roads.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Speaker, business should not happen at the cost of the ways of life of the people of Neskantaga. Will this government respect Chief Moonias's request and undertake a full review of all the activities infringing upon the treaty rights that have taken place without the consent of the Neskantaga First Nation?

**Hon. George Pirie:** Thanks so much for that question. As you know, and as we've said very many times, this government is fully committed to the duty to consult. We take this very seriously.

In relation to all the activities in the Ring of Fire, we know that the environmental assessment process is being conducted through the Indigenous communities. They are handling it. They are the individuals that are conducting all the consultation with the 22 nations associated with the development in the Ring of Fire. This is a priority for the government. We take it very seriously.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Constituents often raise serious concerns about loved ones who struggle with severe mental illness and addictions. When an individual lacks the insight or judgment to accept appropriate treatment, I believe it is up to society to advocate for them, to help them to recover and restore them to a life of stability and purpose.

Speaker, families and loved ones are advocating for severely addicted and mentally ill persons to be compelled

into involuntary care. My question to the minister is, will the Ontario government consider this type of life-saving measure?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you for the question. Everyone's life has meaning, and that's why our government has been focused on creating a system of care to meet people and prioritize connecting them to supports and services when they want those services. Those investments have been continuous from the very beginning, when I first became minister, including annual funding for mental health and addiction supports by over \$800 million through the Roadmap to Wellness and, in the 2024 budget, adding an additional \$396 million. We also announced an unprecedented investment of over \$370 million to build 19 new best-in-class treatment facilities through the HART hub programs in communities across the province.

Mr. Speaker, through these different funds and these different initiatives, we've now added over 400 detox, treatment and withdrawal management beds across Ontario. The very first ones have already seen more than 10,000 new unique visits. So we are—

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

1130

And the supplementary question?

**Mr. Vincent Ke:** Thank you, Minister, for your answer. Unlike other jurisdictions such as BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, deterioration as an alternative to harm is only partially a priority in Ontario when deciding if a patient needs involuntary treatment.

When it comes to the need for treatment, bodily harm and deterioration are also considered differently. For example, I witnessed that one young man was not deemed as needing treatment, who then later went on to cause his father to suffer a rib fracture.

Again, my question to the minister is, what actions should the government take to reduce these types of tragedies?

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Once again, to make it very clear, we're focused on building a system of care, building capacity to help individuals where and when they need that help so that they can access supports as quickly as possible. We want to connect more people to treatment. That is a priority that we are focused on to ensure that we do have all the components necessary within community to support individuals, whether it's withdrawal management, whether it's treatment beds, and then connecting them to supportive beds and giving them the opportunity to reintegrate into society.

This is why the HART Hubs will add to the beds with the Addictions Recovery Fund to continue building that capacity. As I said, one of the things that we see as a fallout of that is that there's less pressure on the emergency rooms and more treatment capacity for the individuals in the community.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue building capacity in the province and looking after the people, meeting them where and when—

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

The next question.

## TAXATION

**Mr. John Jordan:** My question is to the Minister of Rural Affairs. With inflation already hurting families in my riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is making life even more unaffordable. Rising costs on everyday essentials like groceries, gas and home heating are pushing hard-working Ontarians to the financial brink. In rural areas, where people rely on driving long distances for work and services, the added burden of higher fuel prices is already causing more economic hardship. How can carbon tax Crombie and her Liberals justify increasing taxes on food, fuel and other necessities of life when so many are already struggling to just get by?

Speaker, can the minister please share what our government is doing to help fight this unjust carbon tax?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** To the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, I thank him for this question, because we need to continue to talk about how the Liberal ideology is continuing to increase the cost of living for not only individuals in the GTHA but across the province, as well as the cost of doing business. But it's our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford and the astute mind of the Minister of Finance, that is bringing solutions to the table.

For instance, we're helping leave more money in seniors' pockets by indexing the guaranteed annual income benefit, for the first time in Ontario's history, to the rate of inflation.

We've also extended the tuition freeze to help families and students achieve goals when it comes to pursuing their goals in terms of next jobs that we have in Ontario.

The other thing I want to share is that we're embracing nuclear. We need to, because we need affordable, reliable, green electricity. We've reduced gas by 5.7 cents, and we're making sure that we in Ontario—

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

Supplementary question?

**Mr. John Jordan:** Thank you, Minister, for that response. It is encouraging to hear about the strong leadership of the Premier and the minister on this issue. Unfortunately, the reality of the financial situation of so many families in my riding because of the carbon tax is truly a challenge.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has confirmed once again that the carbon tax costs most households more than any would ever get back in rebates, further deepening the affordability crisis. Carbon tax Crombie and her Liberals are expensive and out of touch when it comes to the understanding of the negative impact of the carbon tax on rural families.

Speaker, can the minister please share what investments government has made to support residents in rural Ontario as we fight the Liberal carbon tax?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I do want to revisit the fact that it's our government that's expanding nuclear across this province so that we can have affordable electricity—and this matters why? I'm looking at young people in the

gallery today and to those of you watching: You need to know that the Liberal ideology is going to more than double the cost of carbon tax across the nation. What does that mean for us? I live on a farm in rural Ontario. We have to heat our house and run our business on propane because we don't have access to natural gas. My friend here, the Minister of Mines, who lives in Timmins, only has access to propane as well. Ladies and gentlemen, when this carbon tax more than doubles by the year 2030, six short years from now, the cost of propane, for example, is going to go from 12.4 cents to 26.3 cents.

They are doing nothing, Bonnie Crombie and Justin Trudeau, based on Liberal ideology. It's driving costs through the roof. It is our government in Ontario that are standing up and will fight every day—

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

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** My question is to the Premier. ODSP rates are legislated poverty in Ontario. I speak to constituents, some living in government-held ridings. Every single month, they are barely surviving on the \$1,300 per month they receive. Rent for a studio apartment in Toronto alone is already over \$1,400. That leaves people with a negative cash balance at the end of the month. No wonder homelessness has doubled. We are also seeing that there is almost 27,000 people living in Ontario on ODSP and OW, who are homeless.

When will the Premier end legislated poverty in Ontario? When will he double the ODSP rates?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I do thank the member for the question, but we have to remember where things were at when the Liberals and NDP were here. You had an opportunity to increase the rates, but you really didn't. And in 2022, we made a significant change by increasing the rates at the rate of inflation. Do the members opposite know where we are at right now? We've increased the rate 17%—17%—and we've also given people on ODSP an increased ability to earn income; we increased that rate by 400%.

We're going to keep doing this. Also, through my colleague here, the Skills Development Fund is giving many people opportunity to get training to get the jobs of the future. We're not going to stop working and helping those most vulnerable in Ontario. This is what we're going to do: We're going to keep working with them.

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

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I want to remind the minister that they have a responsibility now. Six years in power, stop pointing the finger over there and start looking into the mirror.

We have to believe that marriage equality exists in Ontario, but in fact, it does not. For Ontarians on ODSP who choose to live with their partner, their financial

support is drastically cut. It is almost eliminated altogether, because ODSP considers their partner's meagre income as their own income from the minute they move in together. Imagine, delaying or forgoing living with the person that you love, your life partner, your co-parent, your caregiver.

Speaker, this is such an important issue. We have so many people coming to the House who want to hear this answer. We need to ask this government: Will you fix the incredibly discriminatory practice, or does he think that people on ODSP don't deserve to live with their partners, the people that they love?

*Interjections.*

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

The associate minister.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** The member opposite has to also understand that this is a process that we are fixing and we're working with all of those who are saying to us, "We need the supports." And it's happening at the rate of inflation. That's why we're at 17%. The member opposite laughed at us when we said we are increasing it by 5% and at the rate of inflation. So now we're at a 17% increase.

**1140**

Also, we are doing things across the government to make life more affordable, right? The LIFT care tax—we've been adding. Also, One Fare—\$1,600, so that people can get around.

We're also pushing back against the carbon tax, because every time we make these increases to help people, we have a carbon tax that's sucking the money right back out of their pockets.

When will the members opposite support our attempt to make life more affordable in Ontario and support our initiatives to help every single person in Ontario have an opportunity at—

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

The next question.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** My question is for the Minister of Education. In growing communities, the need for new and updated schools is critical. Under the former Liberal government, propped up by the NDP, families waited far too long for a single school to be built. Because of their inaction, parents and educators across our province and in communities like mine are worried about the pace of school construction.

When we look at areas of rapid growth such as Oakville North-Burlington, we see a clear need to ensure that our education capital projects are moving forward swiftly and efficiently.

Every student deserves a learning environment that will help them succeed.

Can the minister please explain what steps our government is taking to accelerate the pace of school construction

across the province and in my own community of Oakville North–Burlington?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** I thank the hard-working member from Oakville North–Burlington for the question.

Under our \$1.3-billion plan, schools are being built faster and more efficiently so that students can attend state-of-the-art schools close to home and in their local communities.

Since September 2023, 29 new school construction projects have opened. One of these was the new St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School in the member's riding. I had the pleasure of touring this new school with the member. We met with Ms. Palazzese and her students in grade 8, to participate in a STEM class that focused on how energy is transferred. We then went on to tour Mrs. Browne's grade 1 class, to participate in a literacy activity to identify initial sounds and rhythm matching.

Speaker, it is tours like these that make me so proud of the work that our teachers are doing, supported by this government. The students and teachers at St. Cecilia were truly enjoying their new school, and it was heartwarming to be able to see them in action.

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

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for her recent visit to St. Cecilia Catholic Elementary School and for the response and the important work being done to support schools across our province.

In my own riding of Oakville North–Burlington, our population continues to grow rapidly. Families are moving in, and with that growth, the demand for student spaces and child care is increasing. While we've seen progress, I hear from parents who are concerned about whether schools are opening fast enough to meet this demand.

And it's not just about building more schools, but about building them on time. We know that delays can have a significant impact on students, forcing them into overcrowded classrooms or longer commutes to schools in other areas.

Can the minister outline how our government is investing in new schools across Ontario?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you again to the member.

Since 2018, our government has approved or supported the development of over 300 school-related projects, including child care, of which more than 100 are actively under construction.

In the member's own riding of Oakville North–Burlington, our government has supported an investment of over \$208 million for five new schools and one school addition, to create 4,541 student spaces and 352 child care spaces.

That includes two new elementary schools and one secondary school addition completed and opened from our investment of \$51.9 million, creating 1,627 student spaces and 88 child care spaces.

And three new schools are planned or under construction, from our investment of \$157 million, that will create 2,914 student spaces and 264 child care spaces.

Speaker, our government is making historic investments to ensure students, not only in the member's riding but across Ontario, are receiving the best education possible.

## HOUSE SITTINGS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(h), 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 House shall commence at 9 a.m. on Monday, October 28, 2024, for the proceedings of orders of the day.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Under standing order 59, I would like to inform the House of the schedule for next week.

As you just stated, Speaker, on Monday, October 28, the House will resume at 9 a.m. and we'll continue second reading debate on Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act. In the afternoon, we'll be debating opposition day motion number 1.

On Tuesday, October 29, in the morning we will have second reading of Bill 214, Affordable Energy Act. In the afternoon routine proceedings, the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity will deliver a ministerial statement on Women's History Month. Afterwards, we'll continue with second reading of Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act.

On Wednesday, October 30: in the morning, second reading of Bill 212, Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act; in the afternoon routine proceedings, the Minister of Finance will introduce the fall economic statement and will deliver a ministerial statement following. In the afternoon is second reading of Bill 214, Affordable Energy Act, and also private member's business: The member for Oxford will have private member's motion number 117.

On Thursday, October 31, in the morning and afternoon, we will debate the fall economic statement.

## SIR GEORGE BEARDSHAW

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I understand the member for Toronto Centre has a point of order as well.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I do, Speaker, and thank very much for the indulgence. Earlier this morning, I wanted us to acknowledge a very special young man who is in the building, and I wanted to let you know that he has actually arrived.

The special young man is 101 years old. His name is Sir George Beardshaw, and he is Canada's last surviving British home child. He has travelled today from London, Ontario. He was a member of the Queen's Own Rifles infantry. In the last 23 days of World War II, he and his

fellow soldiers survived on a ration of two potatoes per day.

For those who are not able to join us for the reception, please welcome Sir George Beardshaw.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1149 to 1300.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated October 24, 2024, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## PETITIONS

### PHARMACARE

**Ms. Bhutila Karpoche:** Speaker, in Ontario, 1.5 million people don't have access to prescription medicine coverage, and that is leading to people having to choose between paying for their medicines or paying for groceries and other daily expenses. We know that medicine is an important part of our health care services, yet we have a public health care system that does not cover medicine.

Through the hard work of the federal New Democrats, we finally have a federal pharmacare bill that is a first step towards a national universal program that would give access to contraception and life-saving diabetes medications. But the success of that program is contingent on the province's support, so I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario immediately urging the government and the Legislature to commit to signing the national pharmacare program, so that all Ontarians can benefit from the coverage of these essential medicines.

### CAREGIVERS

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Speaker, 24/7 family caregivers perform an essential service. They work so hard for free, doing things that, if we tried to reproduce it at a social level, would be very, very expensive. And we don't even have the resources that we need, for example, in long-term care.

So this petition, signed by people in my riding and originating from my riding, calls on the Ontario government to support 24/7 family caregivers, including through financial compensation, so that those caring for loved ones in our society and those receiving care from loved ones

have some relief from financial distress and the resulting mental stress.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.*

Good afternoon. I have a petition here to raise the social assistance rates. As we know, the Ontario social assistance rates are below the Market Basket Measure poverty line. We know that. Also, there's been an open letter to the Premier and also two cabinet ministers signed by over 230 organizations to double the rate of Ontario Works. It's important that we start looking into this to make sure that these rates have—to be able to live and spend these monies that are given out to these citizens who are living under the poverty line.

So again, I support this petition. I'm going to sign this petition and give it to June. Meegwetch.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a petition that was given to me by Sally Palmer, who has been actively collecting petitions under the matter of raising social assistance rates. The petition calls on social assistance rates, Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program payments to be doubled.

This makes a lot of sense, because there are many people who are on social assistance who just can't make it work. They're living in poverty. It's better to help them rebuild their lives than it is to continue to have them live in poverty.

I'll be signing this petition and giving it to page Jasper.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank Dr. Sally Palmer from McMaster University for her tireless efforts to collect signatures on petitions calling on the Legislative Assembly to raise social assistance rates. The petition notes that social assistance rates in this province are well below what Ontarians need in order to lift themselves out of poverty: \$1,300 a month for people on ODSP is completely insufficient to cover the cost of rent and food and basic essentials. The petition also notes that the federal government recognized that \$2,000 a month was the basic amount that was necessary to enable people to live during the pandemic when they created the CERB program, which offered \$2,000 a month.

Therefore, the petition calls on the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for Ontario Works and ODSP. I fully support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Samika.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**MPP Jamie West:** I also want to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for her tireless work on this, providing petitions from across the province on raising social assistance rates.

Basically, what's spelled out here is that if you're on OW, Ontario Works, you make about \$733; if you're on ODSP, you make \$1,200 and change. That includes the 5% increase the Conservative government often brags about.

What we need to recognize is that the poverty line is here. Imagine you're underwater; even with the 5% increase, you don't get up to where you need to be above it. So the petition is calling for basically doubling the ODSP and OW rates so that people are not starving in their homes or being kicked out of their homes because they can't afford rent, heat or hydro.

I fully support this petition. We need to take care of people, so that they can back on their feet. I'll affix my signature and provide to page June.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

#### ADDICTION SERVICES

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I have two petitions I'd like to read. The first is to raise social assistance rates. We know these rates have been—really, going back almost 40 years—pushing people into deep poverty. Nothing has happened to substantially raise these rates and the only reason people are surviving is because of volunteers staffing food banks and gathering food. So I firmly support this petition to, at the very least, double ODSP and OW rates, and I will sign it and give it to Ziggy.

And then, the second petition I would like to present is for funding of supervised consumption service sites and consumption and treatment services. We know that in my riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North, 400 lives have been saved by consumption treatment services, and without those services, people will be dying and, frankly, children will be finding those dead people on the streets. It's extremely important that those sites continue to exist, and so I support this petition and will also give it to Ziggy.

#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Today in the Legislature, we had Raise the Rates host a rally outside. One of their main asks is to increase or double social assistance rates, because we know right now there are about 900,000 Ontarians who are forced to rely on social assistance, but the rates for social assistance have not increased significantly for a very long period of time. Those on Ontario Works are expected to live on only \$733 a month. Can you imagine that, Speaker? You can't rent a room with that, especially in an expensive city like Toronto.

Those on ODSP, the Ontario Disability Support Program, receive just over \$1,200. These rates are essentially legislated poverty for people, so it is very important that we provide rates for social assistance recipients that allow them to thrive. Of course, doubling them is the first step. We obviously need to do more. But I have so many signatures on the petition, from my constituents in Parkdale–High Park, calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately double social assistance rates so that people can live healthy and dignified lives.

1310

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a very timely petition as we await the rollout of the flu shot and the COVID shot here in Ontario, to support the Stay Home If You Are Sick Act and to provide paid sick days for workers in this province.

The petition points out that over half of workers in Ontario do not have access to paid sick days from their employer. Therefore, if they are sick, if a child is sick, they have to make a very difficult choice between staying home from work, giving up the pay for that day, potentially even losing their employment, or going into work sick and risking spreading infection to their co-workers and their customers.

The petition also notes that low-pay, precarious, racialized workers, the most vulnerable workers, are often the ones who are most likely not to have paid sick days from their employer. These workers are particularly stressed by the difficult choice before them, giving up their pay or going into work sick, because it could mean not being able to make the rent, not being able to buy their groceries.

The petition calls on the Legislative Assembly to immediately provide 10 days of personal emergency leave, paid sick days and 14 days of paid leave when there is an infectious disease emergency, such as we experienced globally with COVID-19.

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Nikki.

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I have a petition here entitled "Ontario's Children Deserve a School Food Program." We know that food insecurity is at an all-time high in Ontario. In the previous year, over one million Ontarians visited the food bank. We know that children cannot learn when they are hungry. Parents should not be forced to make a choice between paying for rent and packing food for lunch for their kids.

There are community food programs, but they are struggling to meet demands. We need a proper program, and Canada is the only G7 nation that does not have a national food program or national standard, even.

Finally, there is now a national school food program in the works, so this petition is urging the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to sign on to the national food program so that children do not go hungry; so that they have access to nutritious meals and they can learn well.

#### ADDICTION SERVICES

**MPP Jamie West:** This petition is entitled "Petition for Funding of Supervised Consumption Service Sites and Consumption and Treatment Service Sites." Basically, what they are talking about here is the epidemic of overdose poisoning deaths that we're seeing in each of our cities.

Almost 10 Ontario residents die every day in our province from overdose. Supervised consumption sites offer a gateway to supportive services that includes addiction treatment, so you are able to create a safe space, so they are able to connect with people and find treatment in the future.

They are calling for funding to reopen the supervised consumption sites in Windsor and in my city of Sudbury. They're also calling for funding to keep open the supervised consumption site in Timmins, which I'm assuming they are wanting to be reopened now, and also to fund supervised consumption sites for every community in the province that is in need.

I support this petition. I've spoken with family members. I've spoken with people who have gone through recovery because of supervised consumption sites. I follow the science. I think this is an important cause. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Alessandro for the table.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**MPP Jamie West:** This petition is very similar to the one I read earlier. It is about raising social assistance rates, and it really is about taking care of people in our community.

This afternoon, we're going to be debating a labour bill, and we need to recognize that people on ODSP very often are people who were injured at work, who were not recognized by WSIB. These people sometimes, because of the low rates of ODSP—when we're talking about \$1,368 for somebody with a disability, they're often in a position where they lose their housing, and they are the people in the tents that you walk by. These are workers in our province on ODSP.

Other people are unable to make it work on OW—\$733. My colleague mentioned that you can't find a room for rent in Toronto for that amount. There's a sign in Sudbury that offers a room for rent for \$800, so they've got to come up with about \$70 just to make rent. How are they going to get heat? How will they pay for a phone? How will they get food?

This is basically legislated poverty. We cannot expect people to get back on their feet and back in the workforce if, every month, they have to scramble to make up the money that is needed to make ends meet. We need to be helping people in society get a hand up, not a handout.

I support this petition in terms of doubling the social assistance rates for both of these, so that people are not living far, far below the poverty line.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WORKING FOR WORKERS FIVE ACT, 2024

#### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À OEUVRER POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS, CINQ

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 24, 2024, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 190, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / *Projet de loi 190, Loi modifiant diverses lois relatives à l'emploi et au travail et à d'autres questions.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** I recognize the member from Sudbury—popular today.

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you, Speaker.

I had about four minutes before we rose for question period to talk about this bill. I was just going through the six schedules in general. I went through every one of them on second reading of the bill, but I'll just be picking out certain ones.

Just as an update, I was at schedule 4. There are three not-quite-related items in there, but important items. One is to update the health and safety definitions to clarify that industrial regulations refer to an office, but not an office in a private residence. That helps. For people who are in health and safety, there are different regulations for different industries, and there isn't one that says specifically "office." So it helps ministries and employers and employees know the regulations that apply to them.

It also updates the definition for workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment to include certain virtual activities. The world, as we all know, has more virtual activities going on, and so I think this is an important step forward.

It also amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include telework performed in a private residence, and it makes some changes there.

There are also seven items about posting in an electronic format, which eliminates the need for physical copies. I'm not going to go too far into this unless there's time later, because I talked about it a lot at second reading. There is a concern in here when it comes to electronic format. I'm not against it, but there are people who are not computer-literate. There are people who don't have access to computers. There are workplaces where there isn't access to computers and to online services.

I come out of mining, and mining is one of those industries where newer mines are being updated with this service, but many mines don't have any connectivity underground at all. And even those that do, when you're out in the drift, you don't have access to these services. This creates a situation where, for example, you don't know who your health and safety reps are from the management side or the employee side in the workplace, so you don't even know who to ask questions about when you think a situation may be unsafe to get feedback. That really creates a situation where we could have more people injured or killed in the workplace.

We have been flatlined as a province at about 250 workers killed every year. As a country, we've been flatlined at about a thousand workers killed every year. And we're not really trending anywhere; we float up and down. But having less safety systems, less safety awareness, less access to it is not going to help us be safer, in my opinion.

There were some recommendations, and if I have time, I'll get to the amendments. There were some amendments



that were brought forward by the building trades council. That was a very thoughtful thing on it. It made a lot of sense to me that you would have it online, and then you would have to, as the employer, confirm that the people had access to it and confirm that they were aware of it. I think that would be a step forward.

One of them, for example, is about how every year the employer has to provide the WSIB data for their area—testing results and that sort of thing. If you are in a workplace that has high WSIB cases—we talk a lot about mining. We were at Meet the Miners last night; me and my colleagues from all parties were there. In mining, for example, there are a lot of carcinogens that are there, and they do monitoring to verify what's there. This could be the difference between people deciding to wear respirators to protect themselves or not. This could be the difference between pushing for better ventilation or not. These are things that workers really need access to.

**1320**

I'd be interested if there will be a challenge in the courts on this, because workers fought very hard to have the right to refuse unsafe work, but also they fought very hard to have the right to know. So when you're putting things in places where they don't have access to it, there could be a challenge to—do they actually have the right to know the information that's available to them? Is it available to them specifically or is it—I was just thinking about the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. In the beginning, they hide all the documents downstairs and remove the stairs so that no one can go down there, but, technically, you can go to city hall and find them if you're able to traverse the way there. These are things that I find concerning.

As well, putting the workplace violence and workplace harassment policies only on electronic format: My colleagues may remember, this is one of the first things that the Conservative government did—not in electronic format, but they basically said you don't have to post these in the workplace anymore. This is a serious thing. We are, all of us, I think, pretty aligned on intimate partner violence—lots of communication with the public over the summer, a lot of work done on this—very passionate. New Democrats want this declared an epidemic. We would have declared it immediately last year; the Conservative government wants to study it some more. We know that this is a situation that is happening, that there is workplace violence and workplace harassment—sexual harassment—that is happening. Having those policies hidden on a hard drive—any of us, if you look at our backlog of emails, as we're skimming through and trying to sort through, you know how easy it is to have things just buried online and unable to find.

That becomes a situation where we could do a much better job in making people aware of what the policies are. Those policies, as well, could contain links to the procedures on what to do. So when you feel like you're being harassed, when you feel like someone has acted violently towards you, when you think there's sexual harassment or sexual violence happening and you want to bring that forward, it would explain the process for that.

Who do you go see? Who specifically do you talk to? Because if you're in a situation that you may not want to have broadcast all over the place, you don't want to go asking random people in your workplace, "Who should I speak to? Who has the sensitivity training? Who has the training to investigate this effectively and ethically?" Anything we can do to lessen that happening, I think, is really, really important.

Now there is a thread, I think, in all the Working for Workers bills—this is the fifth one—to talk about washrooms. This one has 11 items about washrooms—11 different things about washrooms. They basically all come down to three things: They say you have to have a washroom, you've got to keep it clean, you've got to keep records of it. In those 11 items, it says that in various different ways. I'm going to get into washrooms in a second and talk about this more thoroughly but I think that, at the bare minimum, at any workplace, we would all consider that it probably has a washroom for the employees. That is not a major leap forward for workers in the workplace. That is not something anyone has ever come to my office—and I would challenge anyone to say, "People actually came to my office—I had a workplace and they told me the washroom was the tree in the backyard."

Washrooms are part of the building code, and the reality of this—as much as it makes the papers and people talk about it—is that all of this legislation already existed at least as early as 1990. I was skimming through the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, the last draft of which was in 1990. There may have been alterations before that; I just wasn't going to go back in the Wayback Machine and try to figure out with Google. The problem is that it is nearly 25 years later. As a flag waving for people, the Conservative government is saying, "Don't worry, workers, we've got your back. We're working for you. You are going to have a bathroom, it's going to be cleaned and there's going to be a piece of paper that says how often they wash it."

Honestly, if you think you are breaking ground, you've never been to the movies because this already exists in the movie theatre bathrooms. This already exists in any public washroom at a mall. This isn't anything new for people, but it is a great thing to tell people who are not from construction and a construction background. It's a great distraction for them, because there's a sort of idealistic version of what happens in construction: "Oh, my gosh, they didn't really have washrooms," or "Oh, my gosh, their washrooms were never cleaned. Oh, they never had a checklist."

The other thing about that—this legislation is coming out, like, 25 years after it was last written in the Ministry of Labour regulations and the Occupational Health and Safety Act—is that in that 24-and-something months since the act and regulations were published with this part of the information in it, it means that if the government is retableting legislation that already exists, they have not been able to enforce washrooms being present, they have not been able to enforce washrooms being cleaned, they

haven't been able to enforce washrooms having a checklist on them. That's probably why, in the public, people are thinking, "Man, those porta-potties are disgusting." Because we've all been to the roadside ones, which are owned by the province. In northern Ontario, we don't get the ONroutes; we get a porta-potty on the side of the road, and I've got to tell you, those things are disgusting.

Honestly, it's the Conservative government's responsibility to maintain them clean, and they don't do a very good job. I think a lot of people in northern Ontario walk past the porta-potty to the tree if they're able to, because they'd much rather go by the tree than inside there.

*Interjection.*

**MPP Jamie West:** You have none at all?

**Mr. Guy Bourgoquin:** We have trees.

**MPP Jamie West:** Perfect. I'm living a luxury with my porta-potties. I'm so glad.

Schedule 6—I'm going to get into this. The Minister of Labour and I, just earlier, were talking about—I think we had missed an intent here. Speaker, you were in committee with me. I worked in health and safety for almost 20 years. I'm very passionate about it. I have several examples of, as a committee, us coming out with great ideas and the outcomes not being so good, mainly because we didn't speak to the workers who were involved. I'm very thankful for Noah Freedman from OPSEU coming to us and explaining how the WSIA—or WSIB; WSIA is the act—but the Worker Safety Insurance Board, the coverage for them won't transfer over.

I really believe the intent for us was to make the same coverage for the urban, rural—the typical firefighter with a fire truck. We want to transfer that onto the wildland firefighters, and so we did a copy/paste—I'm paraphrasing here; it's not exactly what happened. But we put the whole thing over there. We're not recognizing how different their work is and the exposure they have compared to urban and rural firefighters. We also don't recognize how long their careers are, the difference in their careers and the impact that they have. I will get into that later on, as well.

I want start with schedule 2. I'm going to go through this really quickly. I feel like I'm already speaking really quickly. This is the part I kind of call the "headline bill," because it sounds really good as a headline. The Conservative government, they have a massive majority. Congratulations to them, but they could really be doing a ton of things to help workers. People are struggling every day in this community, and instead of tackling those root causes, we're kind of colouring on the edges. Are we going to vote against this? No. But is anyone going to be giving us a high five and a standing ovation? Not really.

I will give you an example: In schedule 2, the three items in it basically are, if you have a job posting—a public one only; for a private job posting, this doesn't apply. But on a public job posting, you have to tell people if it's for an existing vacancy or not. I didn't hear anyone cheering from outside.

The second thing is that anyone that was interviewed, you've got to reply to them—still crickets.

The third thing is that you've got to keep copies for three years of any prescribed information you have. Not even my colleagues are clapping for this. They wrote the legislation.

The reason I say it's a headline portion of a bill is it sounds good, and if you are not paying attention—and a lot of people cannot pay attention because they are so busy working two or three jobs, bringing their kids to soccer or hockey—you hear this and you go, "Working for Workers? I guess so. I'm not applying for a job, but it sounds good."

But when you sit down and analyze it, that doesn't do anything. It just doesn't. I guess it's helpful. I'm not going to vote against it, but again, no standing ovation for that. I cannot see anyone on a job hunt putting it on a wish list of the things they would want.

I could see people saying, "I would like more information about pay transparency. I would like to see the wage gap being closed. I would like to see what sort of benefits are available, what other people in that field are making, specifically. What will I be making and where is that part for it?" I think that's something people would like to see: the security. I think most of all, people would like to get out of these gig jobs, these short-term contracts, into full-time employment, where they have pension and benefits and they can actually plan a life and save for a house and make ends meet.

**1330**

Section 3 of this bill is what I call "prohibition-ish" on sick notes. The government describes it as a prohibition on sick notes, but I think it's "prohibition-ish." The employers can no longer ask you for sick notes—but there's an asterisk at the end. They can't ask you for sick notes, but the fine print at the bottom is, "only for the three personal emergency leave days that you are entitled to as an employee."

Most employees don't even know they have personal emergency leave days—they have no idea at all, and that may be because things are hidden online instead of being posted in the workplace. You are entitled to three of them. If you're sick, if a family member is sick, for an emergency, if a caregiver coming to watch over your children for daycare is sick, you can use a personal emergency leave day—there are only three; there used to be 10.

The Conservative government, I guess, didn't title the first bill they tabled on labour "Working for Workers," but in that bill—let's call it "0.1" or "0.5 Working for Workers bill"—they removed the 10 personal emergency leave days that we had prior to the Conservative government being elected. They said, "Let's work for workers and get rid of the personal emergency leave days—scrap it down to three." We're actually the third-lowest in Canada when it comes to personal emergency leave days.

The other asterisk, the other fine print at the bottom of this is that you can only use it for those three PL days—any time you're sick after that, the employer can still ask you for sick notes, but even during those three PL days, the employer can ask for reasonable evidence. I know it's shortly after lunch, so I don't want to gross people out. But

I don't know what reasonable evidence of sickness would be. Some of the suggestions—the Ontario Medical Association came and talked to us—were maybe a prescription or something like that.

The reality on sick notes: This is a cake-and-eat-it-too moment. They want to be able to tell the public, in a stump speech, “We've removed sick notes,” and have everyone say, “Oh, my God. Finally, someone got it. The Liberals didn't get it. They didn't pay attention at all. They couldn't care less. Finally—it took six years of government. They finally got around to removing the sick notes that are just a waste of time and a burden for doctors—and it's moving illness all around.” But they don't notice the little asterisk, the fine print—that we didn't really, right? We're going to tell the employer, “You don't have to, but you can ask them for proof.” For most people, their proof is going to be a sick note. What's the other reasonable proof? Do you need a photo? It's ridiculous. So it's one of those things where you can say it but you're not really saying it.

I talked about the Ontario Medical Association. We were very fortunate to have Dr. Nowak come to speak to us at committee when we were reviewing this bill. The Ontario Medical Association has never been in favour of sick notes. There is a mentality out there that believes that people who are abusing it are deterred from using sick notes—that way, they can't artificially phone in sick. I'm telling you, you're wrong. I represented workers for almost 20 years. There weren't a lot of them, but the people who abused it—barely an inconvenience. Do you know what you need when you need a sick note? You go to the doctor, and the doctor says, “The patient told me he was sick. He looks okay today.” That's all they do. They don't diagnose what happened. They don't take tests. They don't do anything like that. The person was out-of-pocket 15 bucks, back when I was at the smelter; it's probably 20 bucks or more now. The doctor spends more time doing paperwork; they're tied up with it.

What it does do is, it punishes people who are actually sick. It causes a lot of mental stress on them. Those are the people who don't abuse the rules. Those people, when they come in when they're sick, spread illness. They spread it right across the city, because they get out of their house and take public transit. They ride a bus, and they spread their illness to everyone on the bus or—buses are in Sudbury; you guys have the subway as well. So you infect as many people as you can along the way with your common cold, with pneumonia, with whatever you have that's communicable. God forbid you have COVID, because you're going to spread that all over the place. Then you go to the doctor's office, where there are vulnerable people—there are elderly there; there are new parents with their young babies—and you're there, hacking and coughing and spreading your virus to all of them. Plus, whatever they've got that's communicable gets to be shared with you, while your immune system is weakened; not only that, you take up a spot in the doctor's office.

So somebody who doesn't have a cold, someone who isn't just—“I have a really sore throat and my nose is

running, and I know that in 24 hours, I'm going to feel better if I can just stay in bed and recuperate with some chicken soup.” You're taking a spot from somebody who needs to schedule a prostate exam, somebody who is wondering if they have cancer—not a diagnosis, but they have a mole that looks suspicious, or they have a lump in their breast. People have serious medical needs. Because of the Conservative government, their spots are being taken up by people who are like, “Yes, I'm sick.”

The final part of this, as well, is that we're desperately in need of family doctors. Desperately, we need family doctors. I need a family doctor. I found out mine retired. It was an interesting meeting last year at the OMA, when I said my doctor may be retiring soon and they said, “Oh, no, he's been retired for a couple of months now.” So I am without a doctor as well, like a lot of people in my community are and a lot of people in each one of our communities are.

One of the things that causes that: In family medicine, it is an average of about 19 hours of paperwork—19 hours of paperwork. As New Democrats, we proposed a bill to have administrative assistants do the paperwork for them, effectively doubling the amount of time the doctor had to see patients. And quite frankly, talking to Dr. Nowak and other doctors from the Ontario Medical Association, they want to see patients. They don't want to do paperwork. It's not why they got into medicine. They got in to practice medicine, not fill out forms for insurance and not write sick notes saying, “This guy used to be sick, but not no more.” They don't want to do that.

So if we could reduce the amount of paperwork they have, they would be eternally grateful, and as somebody without a doctor, I would be eternally grateful, because maybe someone could take me on their roster. That would mean the same thing for elderly people and people with young children and newborn babies, that we would have a place for them to go as well.

Now, I already talked about Bill 47—the first Working for Workers bill, I guess; they didn't title it that. But they cut all kinds of worker protections in that one, including freezing minimum wage for two years or three years—I can't remember right now. But basically, Bill 47 was the first time they really punched the workers in the stomach.

I think that Bill 28 is another example, when they went after education workers—the lowest-paid workers, basically, in the school. These are your custodians, your EAs. Basically, these workers, as we met with them, were telling me that they were living with their parents or had to move back in with their parents. These were tradespeople who had to move back in with their parents because they weren't making enough in their school. EAs and cleaners were telling me about using food banks, having to take their kids to food banks because they couldn't afford to have child care while they were going to food banks.

Imagine that, as a parent: You work for the province of Ontario, and the Conservative government passes Bill 28 to step on your neck. At the same time, you don't even make enough money to feed your kids, and you don't

make enough money that you can hide the fact from your kids that you can't feed them, and you have to bring them to the food bank with you. That's revolting. It really is, and I want to pause on that for a second and let it sink in.

Now, the amount of food bank use in this province for the last eight years has increased. In particular, as a labour critic, where I look every single time is to see if there's been any change in terms of full-time workers using food banks, and sadly, it has not. Every year, the number of full-time workers, the amount of people who are working for a living and a primary source of income, using food banks goes up in the last eight years.

And I'm 100% with the Conservative government: The Liberals dropped the ball on this, right? I'll give them the first three. I'll give even the first four. I'll blame the Liberal government for that, because the first two were under the Liberal government. Let's say for the next two, with the Conservative government, they had to figure out what the priorities of what they were doing. They had to meddle in the municipal election. There's a bunch of other stuff. They had to make licence plates. There's a bunch of stuff, really important to the people of Ontario, that had to come first before they took care of working people at food banks. But the last four years are squarely on your shoulders, just right here on your shoulders, because—I don't know, you're kind of at the wheel, right? You're steering the ship. More and more people in food banks; tent cities and encampments all over the place on a regular basis—not super exciting, right?

We could tackle these things. We could take care of these things. But the government doesn't want to do that. What they want to do is table bills that say, "Hey, you can have a washroom when you go to work," or that say, "Hey, if you're interviewed, we're going to let you know if it's for an existing position or not, so you've got that going for you."

**1340**

So the other thing Dr. Nowak of the Ontario Medical Association had said to us during his deputation with the committee—and the Conservatives heard that as well and my Liberal friends heard it as well. He said that the three PL days are very limited. Those are the days that were cut back by the Conservative government—again, Speaker, I'm just reminding everybody—cut back from 10. We're advocating for paid sick days, but I think that a Conservative government that doesn't agree that workers should make any more money than they deserve—or not even deserve; they're opposed to any paid sick days at all, including during COVID-19. But I think restoring 10 personal emergency days would be a first step forward. Instead, they'd rather be the third-worst province behind, I think, Nunavut and Nova Scotia—I can't remember; one of the Maritime provinces.

But the Ontario Medical Association's data shows that people get sick, on average, about 11 days out of the year. So the 10 PL days wouldn't even make it to the 11 average that they're seeing, but it would actually reduce the amount of illness that is spread around here. It's spread around from people.

It's a frustrating experience for me because I had a job that was different than being an elected official; fortunately, it was a unionized job where we did have some paid sick days. But I have to say that, as a member, all of us members, we don't specifically have paid sick days, but our salary isn't affected if we don't come because we're sick. It's not. We have that luxury. Also, our salary isn't as low as possible like a lot of these minimum-wage workers who are at a Tim Hortons or a 7-Eleven or somewhere else where they cannot afford to take a day off work when they're sick. So there's something that we really need to focus on.

I'm about half an hour through. I want to talk about the washroom section of this bill because this gets touted a lot. In the previous bill—I think all the bills really had a little section on washrooms.

I have to tell you, I worked in construction. I did it for 10 years. I worked in mining and followed a lot of construction projects in the mining sector as well. I've always been interested in construction. My father-in-law has a little construction company as well, and most of my friends are blue-collar. We all have our favourite work boots and that kind of thing that people who don't work in those fields typically don't have or even know what we're talking about. In fact, the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay and I once, while the bells were ringing for a vote, were talking about splitting firewood and our favourite types of wood and the difference between—like, maple, for example, splits really well, while poplar is a little different; you've got yank it apart and stuff. The member for Oshawa just said, "This is the most northern Ontario conversation I've ever heard." But I digress.

There are all kinds of things about washrooms in here—also, authorizing the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations to modify and supplement the employer's duties to maintain clean and sanitary washroom facilities. A whole 11 of them—11 things about washrooms. Who knew?

I can tell you, if you talk to workers, in passing it sounds really good. But if you talk to workers about this, there is not a worker out there who is saying, "My number one thing is bathrooms, man. I don't care about the wages. I don't care if I have a desk. Just tell me about your porta-potty that you've got."

So, basically, three things—11 items on it, and they say the same three things: You've got to have a bathroom, you've got to keep it clean, you've got to keep records. Kind of a high bar to reach; that's most workplaces. I would argue every workplace would have it. Five bills—we're going to clean those washrooms; we're going to have a washroom—and it sounds really good. It sounds really good for people who work in construction and don't understand that we already had washrooms. There was already a requirement to keep them clean. There's already a requirement to keep records of them. So nothing has changed. Like I said earlier, nothing has changed for about 24-and-a-bit years—or maybe even earlier than that; 1990 was the earliest record I could see of this actually being legislation that already existed.

I have a theory of the reason the Conservative government keeps tabling legislation that already exists. One is they go to a press conference and everyone goes, “Oh, my God, they thought of this?” They didn’t. Someone did a long, long time ago. But the second thing is, I think it’s a make-work project so the Minister of Red Tape Reduction doesn’t go out of business. They just keep making more duplicate legislation and then he can go afterwards, “Oh, my God, there’s too much legislation.” So that’s my thought on it.

But there is a higher bar than porta-potties, and there are a lot of places that want to do this already. There are washroom trailers. The trailer shows up. It’s towed in and it’s towed out. It has heat. It has flushable toilets. It has running hot and cold water. It has an area large enough to put your coveralls and your tools. Some of them have showers. If you’re in an area like mining facilities, for example, where the regulations require you to have a shower and remove all your gear and leave it—like, you can’t bring your contaminants home with you because, in Nova Scotia, children were getting occupational diseases and cancers that were brought home from the workplace—this is all available. It’s not a niche thing. There are companies that do this. It’s their bread and butter. That is the bar we have to get to.

The building trades, during committee, they asked for amendments to include this. I don’t know why the Conservative government voted them down. One of the members, he had argued that it’s probably too costly to have these. Expensive, right? Can you imagine how expensive it would be to have a flush toilet? Oh, the luxury. If only we all had that in our houses. Basically, they said porta-potties are good enough for those workers. These workers who we want to attract to the skilled trades: outhouse—good enough for you, guys; good enough for you, ladies.

Carmine from building trades said the members who voted against this and spoke against this, maybe they should come to a busy construction project and use the porta-potty for a week or two, and you see how exciting it is. You see if you want your kids to come there—or your spouse, or your friends. The next time you go to a high school, talk to them about the wonderful experience you had at the porta-potties that week and how kids should be excited to get into these skilled trades.

The minister, on multiple occasions, has said we are bringing the same expectations from Bay Street to Main Street—same expectations from Bay Street to Main Street. I went for a walk on Bay Street yesterday—not one porta-potty.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** No.

**MPP Jamie West:** Not one of them. I think they don’t have porta-potties on Bay Street. I have a feeling—I live a long way from Bay Street, and we don’t have porta-potties in our apartment either.

**Interjection:** I hope not.

**MPP Jamie West:** The member opposite said, “I hope not.” This is the point I’m trying to make to you. No one is excited to have a porta-potty. I want to be frank with

everyone in this room: A porta-potty is an outhouse. That’s all it is. “Porta-potty” sounds better, but it is an outhouse. It’s a plastic one, but it’s a plastic shell with a plastic toilet seat over a plastic bucket.

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** If you’re lucky, they put an insulated thing around it.

**MPP Jamie West:** If you’re lucky. In the winter, sometimes they wrap it in a jacket, but it is not warm. It’s a tiny closet. I want you to picture this, because there has been a lot of conversation about how we need to have more women in the trades. You need to recognize this: You’re in a little plastic closet, about as big—I can’t use props, but about as big as the desk—not even to this wall here, so twice as big as my desk. It’s small. We’ve all seen them, right? Little tiny outhouse.

When you’re there and you have to sit down, as you do, sometimes, you’ve got to wrap your coveralls over your legs, you’ve got to hope your sleeves don’t fall onto the ground—hopefully there isn’t waste on the ground, but, in the winter, there’s always snow and water on the ground, so hope your sleeves don’t land into that. You’ve got to balance your tools on your lap, because you can’t leave your tools outside because they go missing. That’s the dignity and experience. You’re sitting above a bucket of waste with your coveralls over your waist, with your tools on top of you, and the Conservative government is going, “Man, how can we attract more women to the trades? I guess porta-potties would be the way to do it.” I’m telling you, it’s not. I worked there in the trades in construction on construction sites almost 30 years ago. I was not attracted to the porta-potties either. They were outdated back then.

The final thing on this, with more awareness about germs and awareness, you do not have a place to wash your hands. If you do, if you’re lucky, it’s outside. It’s a little pump. You pump the bottom, and water spits out about as quickly as you can spit water out of your own mouth, and you try to lather that and get it off. But at most places, it’s Purell, and it’s a pretty well-used pump that you don’t want to touch with any part of your body. But that’s what you get to clean yourself with afterwards: a little bit of Purell.

I’d also argue that on Bay Street, they probably don’t have one-ply toilet paper that you can almost see through. Who knows? I don’t have a lot of friends on Bay Street. I have a lot of friends who work in construction, though, and they are not excited by this.

Look, here’s the thing, and I don’t want to lay into this too much, but we’ve got to figure this out. Does anyone honestly think that you’re going to attract workers to any industry by advertising, “We have outhouses”? Do you think that if, in your ad, you said, “We have clean outhouses,” it would move the needle? “Not just outhouses, these are going to be clean. We have a checklist to ensure they’re clean. This is ridiculous. It’s a ridiculous thing to tell people. We are in a crisis where we need people to come into these fields and we are not offering anything to them. In fact, if anything, I think we may be disgusting people away from them.

1350

Anyone who was an employer who interviewed people or a supervisor who interviewed people, at any point, did you talk about how clean your outhouse was? Or, when you're doing an interview, did you ever get to the portion where they said, "Do you have any questions for us?" and you said, "Yes. Tell me more about your bathrooms. Do you have outhouses? How often are they cleaned? Do you have a checklist?" Because that didn't happen. It didn't happen. Not once in the history of mankind did people say, "My goodness, I hope they have an outhouse for me in my workplace." The reason I know this is true is because when I come here, I come from the north side where the park is, for Queen's Park, and there's an outhouse there. I would argue and—as my colleague from Waterloo would say, I would win—not one of us ever used that outhouse. It's really close too, and if you think outhouses are cool and attracting to your job, get your assistant to go use the outhouse. You use the outhouse. Be a leader. Talk about how cool it is. In the interview, the next time you have an OLIP interview or an EA interview or an LA interview, tell them you've got an outhouse for them and it's going to be clean—and documentation.

I'm leaning into this because I want you to know that an outhouse is not a competitive advantage. I think it was in the early 1900s, up to maybe 1950, but it is no longer a competitive advantage—it just isn't. It's like telling somebody that you have a Morse code machine. It's all right, I guess, but no one is going to be excited about that. I am telling you that everybody, in every other industry, has flush toilets and I can guarantee you that Bay Street has flush toilets. But on Bay Street, where people don't work in the trades, don't fully understand the trades—when my dad retired, he actually had a semi-retirement career where he would run construction projects for people who had white-collar careers because they don't understand that trade, the same way that my dad wouldn't understand accounting or being a lawyer or something. But because of his background as a blue-collar worker, he knew how long jobs should last, what they should cost, who you should be speaking to. He did almost a consulting thing for it.

But people from those areas on Bay Street, they don't understand what it's like to be in construction, so it sounds like the Conservative government is going something. I can imagine the Bay Street parties with the champagne, where they say, "Oh, my goodness. They're going to have bathrooms—outhouses—and they're going to be clean, with a record of clean they are. Oh, my goodness, what a great job." It's 25-year-old legislation.

Look, there are times in debate where, as different parties, we just poke each other in the eye, and maybe it's not for the relevance, maybe we're just cherry-picking things. But I want to talk about people who came to speak to us at committee. Line came from OpenCircle—she said 11% of women are in these fields right now. That number increased 1% in the last 10 years. Raly came from Toronto and Area Road Builders Association. They said one quarter of the construction labour force right here in the

GTA can retire—right now can retire. The sector needs to hire and train 60,000 members. Finn, Adam and Rokhaya came from the carpenters' regional council. They said that 20% of their members are ready to retire and they're going to need 30,000 workers moving forward. Steven from the Ontario Road Builders' Association said Ontario's \$198-billion transportation plan—the plan you guys are advertising all over the place, \$198 billion. I'm hoping Highway 69 gets on that list, by the way; if we can't four lane it, the last 68 km, maybe we can do like two tunnels underneath. I'll go back to the Ontario Road Builders' Association: Steve says Ontario's \$198 billion transportation plan needs skilled workers. He didn't say how many, but tons. That's a lot of money and that's a lot of work that's going to come out there—hopefully going to come out there. Andrew from ResCon, he said that 100,000 construction workers will be needed in the next decade.

We know this, and I know the minister knows this as well, and all of us know this. We are the silver tsunami. There are all these different phrases for it. Look, Mike Harris decided at some point to start ripping out shops from schools. The Liberals didn't put them back. There was that whole dearth. I was part of that generation where I was going to go into the trades. My buddy loved auto shop, I wanted to take auto shop to understand what he was talking about, and they were like, "You've got good grades. You don't need this," and they steered me away from it. I went to college, went to university and became an apprentice electrician. My journeyman, a couple of years younger than me, is picking me up in a truck; I'm paying off my student loan, right? Thank goodness for that guidance counsellor. Thank goodness for Mike Harris ripping out shops. Thank goodness for the Liberals steering people away from getting into it.

But we are all aligned that we need tradespeople. We've got to patch this ship, but we're not going to do that with porta-potties, we're not going to do it with outhouses. We're just not. We're not. Look, I can hear it already, "Well, what would you do, smart guy?" I can tell you. I can tell you what a New Democratic government is going to do because, in BC, they've already done this. It's a leadership role. You guys can cut and paste; you can copy it. It's free. We have lots of great ideas that we give you.

"Flush Toilets Coming to BC Construction Sites": This is a news release that came out on September 5—right around the time we were reviewing the bill, actually, with stakeholders—from the Minister of Labour, a New Democratic Minister of Labour, a New Democratic government. "Construction workers can soon say goodbye to unsanitary portable toilets on most construction sites and can say hello to cleaner flush toilets." So they're changing the occupational health and safety act—not to have checklists, not to have outhouses that are cleaned, but they're actually going to have "construction sites with 25 workers or more to provide flush toilets, hand-washing facilities and clean washrooms." It's a step above the minimum that's here already. It's going to come into effect October 1.

The minister says, "We all know how unpleasant porta-potties can be, but this is actually a health-and-safety issue

for construction workers.” That’s Harry Bains, the Minister of Labour. “We have heard clearly from the building sector that it is an important issue for workers, and it contributes to the sector’s ability to attract and retain workers, including women”—including women.

And it goes on. I won’t read everything, but I want to come down to it, because Tiffany Madden, a female worker for IBEW 213: “I love my job, but one of the worst parts of going to work is facing the nasty conditions inside of construction-site porta-potties. These new rules mean myself and my colleagues will be treated with the basic dignity of having flushing toilets with running water, something that workers in most other industries take for granted. This is a game-changer for the construction industry and”—listen carefully—“could even attract more women to the trades.” That’s what we’re trying to do. All of us from all parties are trying to do this.

This is another quote, from Brynn Bourke, executive director, BC Building Trades: “This regulation addresses one of the most egregious and long-standing indignities that construction workers have had to face in their daily lives. The requirement for flush toilets on large construction sites means workers building BC’s next generation of major infrastructure will have much-improved washroom facilities, along with running water for handwashing. A sincere thank you goes out to the provincial government”—a New Democratic government, goodness—“for bringing this regulation into effect and to the thousands of workers who fought for these changes.”

It’s because they’re listening to the workers. I’ll get into it as well. You know what was interesting on this, just listening to workers? The Workers’ Action Centre came to talk to us in committee and they represent a lot of non-unionized workers. If you’re not unionized, you would have to figure out all the labour law on your own, so workers’ action centres across the province will help people do that—ridiculously low-funded, not a lot of support for them, especially from a government that talks about working for workers. I asked them, “In all these Working for Workers bills, these labour bills, how many times were you consulted?” Zero. Isn’t that weird? You would think, they represent all these workers—but, like, not once consulted? Bizarre.

The other thing is, Laura Walton, I called her and I said, “Hey, how many times have you been consulted, the OFL?” She’s new as the president. So I asked the other executives as well. Do you know how many times they’ve been consulted on these workers bills? Zero. Crazy, right? You would think they would call all the time, but they don’t. They don’t. If you’re working for workers, you’ve got to talk to workers.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** And they represent how many members?

**MPP Jamie West:** Millions. I don’t know, about maybe 10 million. I think it’s 10 million.

But we’re talking about the majority of non-unionized workers in these two different areas—can’t get a hold of them, and they would love to talk to the Conservative government and give them advice with their bills, pass

legislation like they’re doing in BC under the New Democratic government.

Don Wightman, board member of the BC Construction Association and president of PML—just in case you think it was just workers saying it was a good idea: “This is a positive change for our industry. We fully support this initiative so that our workforce has access to safe and clean washrooms on our project sites. This is an important step in providing a positive and healthy workplace for all of our workers.”

Clive Yule, president of Total Energy Systems: “Without highly skilled and hard-working employees, construction companies cannot be successful.” This is a win-win, employer and employees. “These new regulations will give workers much better sanitary conditions that will help keep them healthy and productive while building BC’s critical infrastructure.” That’s pretty cool, right? It’s not even that far ahead. It’s just basically what we’ve got at home, you could have in your workplace, and it’s not expensive.

**1400**

There was an argument during committee that having someone come and have to pump up the septic system, it would be challenging, especially in Far North, remote work areas. What do they think they do with porta-potties in Far North, remote communities? That bucket fills up, man. They have to be cleaned and emptied as well. I’m not trying to gross anyone out, but we could do so much better.

The expression “the least you can do” is not supposed to be “literally find the least thing that you could do,” right? We say it all the time. As critics, as shadow ministers, our role is to look for ways your bills can be improved, and the way it can be improved is stop telling people to be excited about outhouses.

I’m glad I have enough time for this because I want to get in here: Section 4 is about an increase in fines. They’re going to double the amount of fines, and I wanted to put forward an amendment on this that, instead of doubling them from \$50,000 to \$100,000, we should increase them from \$50,000 to \$500 million. The reason I wanted to do that is because the maximum fine is never used. Maybe once in the history—I went back as far as I could. The closest I got was \$32,000, so about \$20,000 less than the max. So if you’re doubling it but you’re not using the maximum fine, put it high, man. If you’re going to write legislation for headlines—imagine the headline: “\$500 million maximum fine.” You’re never going to put it more. Like, maybe it’ll be \$22,000, but people who are busy, people on Bay Street, they’ll go, “Oh my God, they’re really taking this seriously.” And then you give them that little wink like, “Yeah, we’re not,” you know?

So striking out \$50,000, substitute \$100,000: “We’re being tough on the bad bosses.” I heard it all. The previous Minister of Labour, he loved to say that. “Those bad actors,” right? All the time. The thing is that these fines are almost never levied. Any of them are almost never levied. You have to be so egregious to get any of these fines that the highest fine I could find, looking back—I went back almost 10 years—was \$31,000 and change—

like, two thirds of the way to the max. So, playing along at home, you're going to increase it from \$50,000 to \$100,000, even though it's almost \$20,000 less than the max already—\$30,000 is the highest that I had there.

But when we looked at wage theft, Ontario workers proved that \$36 million was stolen from them. And the outcome of it is that these bad bosses, these bad actors the Minister of Labour and the previous Minister of Labour like to talk about, got to keep \$23 million of that in their pockets and their bank accounts, where they made interest off it.

And that's only what's recorded, what's brought forward, because there's a lot of people learning that wage theft isn't legal. They don't know how to challenge it. They're afraid to challenge it because they'll be fired. Because I swear to you, if you have a boss who is willing to steal money out of your pocket, food out of your children's mouths, they have no qualms about firing you for making waves. So you had to prove that it was stolen, so only that small percentage that were able to do that—\$36 million came, but they got to keep \$23 million out of it.

The previous Working for Workers bill—speaking of doubling the legislation—had a thing about wage theft not being allowed. Yes, it already wasn't allowed. It was already illegal before that. So it's another headline bill.

So when you bring it up and you maximize it, it doesn't mean anything. Make it \$500 million. If you are not going to give the maximum fine anyway, make it something ridiculous. If you're going for the headline, just make it the craziest headline you can. Just pretend, right?

Now, here's the other thing. So on the one hand, this is like the sick notes, right? You don't need sick notes, but you kind of do—same sort of thing.

So in 2018—remember, I was talking about their first Working for Workers bill? They don't want to call it that because it's basically “punch workers in the face” bill, but they decreased the administrative penalties for violations of the Employment Standards Act. There used to be a \$350 penalty. They dropped that to \$250. The \$700 penalty dropped down to \$500. The \$1,500 penalty dropped down to \$1,000. Because, you know, if you rip off workers and you have to pay for it, it hurts business. That's the philosophy.

On the bright side though, for those workers who are getting money stolen from them—porta-potty. That's going to be great for them. So workers get porta-potties. The worst offenders of bad bosses under the Conservative government, depending on the egregious fine that they have, how bad they are, they're actually saving \$100, \$200 or \$500. The worse they do, the more they save—what an incentive, by the Conservative government.

This sounds like I'm pulling things out of the air on this, but I want to talk to you about a grocery store in Waterloo called Dutchie's Fresh Market. Speaker, you would remember this. It stood out to me. Waterloo Region Community Legal Services and Joanna Mullen shared this story—Erica also shared a story similar to this. Dutchie's Fresh Market employs young workers and newcomers.

Primarily, over the last couple of years, they employed people fleeing Ukraine, the war. This is their first workplace experience in Canada, and they're with a boss who's ripping them off. What he would do is either not pay them at all—he never paid overtime but made them work overtime, in many cases—or he would write a cheque and the cheque would bounce, so not only did you not get paid, but you got an NSF charge, so you got to pay the bank for you to go to work. Dutchie's, by the way, has flush toilets, so it's probably why they get away with this. They have 15 counts of charges of failure to pay—15—eight counts of director's orders to pay.

If you go to Waterloo right now, you can go shopping at Dutchie's because it's still open. That's how serious the Conservative government is taking this. The place is still open, man; not only that, but workers continue to come forward about wage theft, after the director's orders and charges and court cases—they could care less, because the Conservative government is careless in enforcing the act and following through on this. They're getting close to having stolen \$500,000 from workers, and the place is still running like a clock. They're still ripping off newcomers. They're still ripping off students who are coming in. It's a business plan, and it's working for them because the Conservative government has dropped the ball.

One of the reasons I think this is happening is because in that first Working for Workers bill that they don't want to call the Working for Workers—the “punching workers” bill, the first one. Not in the bill—prior to the bill, actually; the Premier did it on his own. We used to have employment standards inspectors. There were 2,345 inspectors; the Premier cut that down to 788. When you have 788 and you used to have over 2,000, it's hard to enforce these orders, and I would argue the reason you did that is because the Conservative government doesn't want them enforced. The Conservative government doesn't really care about workers, especially low-wage workers; especially newcomers who are coming here and getting ripped off as their first experience—I don't want to put words in their mouth, but all the evidence points to this, and that's a shameful thing to be.

The amount of money that people are taking—I think it's important. There's no penalty afterwards, so if you get caught—the \$22 million that's still owing to Ontario's workers. In estimates, I asked the Minister of Labour, “Why aren't we chasing after this?” They didn't really have an answer; they'll get back to me on it. It doesn't seem to be a priority.

I'm telling you, as New Democrats, the number one priority is making sure that workers who go to work get the money they deserve; the second priority is making sure that workers who go to work aren't going to food banks.

I'll tell you this: That \$22 million is interest-free. They keep it in their bank account and collect interest on it. They can invest it; they can do whatever they want. But when they pay those workers back, there's no interest; there's no penalty. So if you're an unscrupulous boss, why wouldn't you steal the money? Just steal the money—the worst thing is you have to pay them; I already have to legally pay



them in the first place. This is the business plan. No one on the Conservative bench will make eye contact with me anymore because they know this. This is the truth of what's going on there.

I want to remind everybody that the only way we know about the wage theft is because people jump through the barriers—it's complaint-based; you have to make a complaint, because there are not enough employment standards officers able to come out and figure this out. So you have to feel secure enough that you won't get fired, you have to overcome any kind of language barriers, you have to know this law exists, you have to know how to file it, you have to be willing to overcome the risk of losing your job—and feeding your kids. You jump through all of those barriers, plus more—there's still \$22 million.

I have this great quote from Joanna Mullen: “Wage theft is the difference between paying rent or not.” It is the difference between your children having food and medication. This isn't some tiny little thing. This is a major thing. You're affecting people daily, and their kids. So she has asked for more enforcement and pointed out that prosecution was used minimally, that nearly 90% of the complaints—90%—don't even get a violation.

We need to take a proactive approach. ESA has got to get in there. If we can inspect all the restaurants in Toronto—you see the sticker outside the restaurant—we can inspect more workplaces for wage theft. It shouldn't be complaint-based.

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And workers need protections when they're standing up for their rights, because if you look at health and safety, the health and safety inspectors did 59,000 enforcement orders. The ESA just barely cleared 1,000. And I'll tell you my hunch, because I have about three minutes: The reason the Conservative government doesn't want to talk about wage theft is because the Conservative government is the biggest wage-theft employer in the province, second only to the Liberal government. Because the Liberal government, with Bill 115, capped at 1% the wages of education workers. And the Conservative government were like, “Hey, hold my beer. I'm doing all public sector workers—all of them. I'm stealing money out of their pockets left, right and centre. I am capping them at 1% even though it's unconstitutional.”

They knew it was unconstitutional because when they were in opposition, they told the Liberals it was unconstitutional. But then, when they came into power, they were like, Liberal, Tory, same old story. Same deal, right? So they passed Bill 124.

*Interjections.*

**MPP Jamie West:** I hear my colleagues opposite heckling me because I guess they think it was cool to beat up on nurses and teachers and education workers and EAs—

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** During COVID, by the way.

**MPP Jamie West:**—during COVID. And the outcome now is, it's just over \$4 million in lawyers' fees that is not coming out of their pockets; it's coming out of taxpayers' dollars—on top. The same thing happened with the Liberal

government under Bill 115. Taxpayers had to clean up their mess, coming out of taxpayer dollars.

But that, I think, is why they don't really care about wage theft, because they kind of like it. They're doing it too. When the former Minister of Labour was talking about those bad bosses and he was pointing, there's that old expression about the other fingers pointing back at you. He's got three of them pointing right at him.

And Bill 28, the one that stepped on the education workers—unbelievable the way they attacked those education workers and had to repeal it because of the backlash from the public. But Bill 28—I will never remember this because I was debating on it. I was very frustrated about them attacking these vulnerable workers, and the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour, when it was passed, got up and high-fived each other. They were so ecstatic: “Man, we really beat the crap out of those workers.” Sorry. I apologize; I can't say that—a little bit of industrial language came out.

I want to get into wildland firefighters, and I wish I had more time. I could talk about this all day, literally. Now look, wildland firefighters: I mentioned earlier that we had missed the boat on this. It sounded good in the first place. Noah Freedman sent a lot of information the Minister of Labour has asked me to share it with him. I'm committed to sharing it with him. I'm committed to sharing our amendments that were voted down that would address this. I don't know why it was voted down.

The wildland firefighters are exposed to a lot more carcinogens than a regular firefighter. I'm not saying regular firefighters aren't, but they typically will come with breathing apparatuses. Wildland firefighters have a scarf they can put over their face. Also, when you're in a wildland fire, you can't escape. If this building, God forbid, was on fire—but you know it was because half the building is marble, half is wood—if you get far enough away, the smoke goes away. But if you're in a forest fire, it's always surrounding you. These wildland firefighters, they don't get to change their clothing. Sometimes they're in the same PPE for 11 days in a row. There aren't places to have showers because they're in remote areas. Also, one of the things they do to ensure the fire is out is they stick their hands in the soil in the suit. The soil and suit are all covered with contaminants that get on their hands, and on their face, and on their clothing. When they're sleeping, they're breathing it all.

Their season ends up being half the year because it's hard to start a fire in the winter. The threshold we had on them is, you have to work this many years as a firefighter. But if you're looking at hours, you're never going to get there.

The other part of it is, it's physically intensive, difficult work with really low pay and not a lot of respect from the Conservative government or—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** I also want to ask the member, recognizing that you did use unparliamentary language, to officially withdraw that, please.

**MPP Jamie West:** I would officially withdraw that. I apologize.

I have to say, people in my riding would be surprised I made it this long.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

Questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** There's a wonderful organization in my area. It's called WEST, Women's Enterprise Skills Training. They offer training opportunities to prepare women for employment and especially pre-apprenticeship in the skilled trades, trades like CNC machinist and mechanical millwright. This is made possible through a \$1.24-million grant funding from the Ford government and this fantastic Minister of Labour. I met some of these fantastic women at the LIUNA union and training hall. LIUNA is a great union; it's training women for lucrative careers in the skilled trades.

My question to the member across is this: When is the NDP finally going to realize that women can do skilled trades just like men?

**MPP Jamie West:** It seems like an odd question to ask somebody who actually worked in the skilled trades, who actually worked with women who are in the skilled trades. I'm very proud to be a blue-collar worker. I keep my hard hat and my work boots in my office as a reminder of where I came from. Saying to the New Democrats, who are workers and come from workers' backgrounds, who are tradespeople, who have worked in blue-collar industry—saying, “When are you going to figure out that women can also do this work?” is a little bit out to lunch. It really is.

I didn't meet women at skilled trades to be able to point at them and say, “Hey, I met someone once on a tour.” I actually worked with women who were in skilled trades. I knew them long before I came here. I represented them as a worker safety rep in mining plants. So the conversations we have about having PPE that fits properly, I was resolving that in my plant long before it was even an idea on the Conservative bench.

It's a rich question to ask and, frankly, it's insulting.

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

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch to the member from Sudbury. I know Working for Workers is not doing enough for firefighters. I know how you spoke about, towards the end, about Noah Freedman, who is with OPSEU—that wildland firefighter from Sioux Lookout. He says that these changes are not going to work for the wildland firefighters because parity is not the same as equity. In one fire season—you spoke about this too—the wildland firefighter might be exposed to smoke and soot for around 2,400 hours over a hundred days on the fire line.

The question is, why do fire rangers need to work twice as much as other firefighters to receive even the minimum amount of cancer coverage?

**MPP Jamie West:** The member brings up a really important thing. I am hopeful that we're going to be able to address this in the future. The minister and I had a quick conversation about it—we missed it. I'm going to say we missed it because when I debated the bill the first time, I

applauded having this tied into the bill, taking the feedback from the previous labour bill to address this. I think it's good intent with bad outcome. It sounded good to us because we don't work in that field and we don't fully understand it, but when you talk to the workers from OPSEU, the wildland firefighters, they are going to have to work twice as long and, quite frankly, won't be able to have the presumptive cancer coverage that, I believe, we were intending them to have—at least I was. I know New Democrats were; I want to believe the minister was as well.

And so, we're hopeful it's going to be addressed in the future. Otherwise, I think we're going to see a lot of them coming down here to Queen's Park to protest like they have in the past.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member from Sudbury for his speech here today. He worked in the mining industry. I worked in the automotive industry and, to be honest, my son is going to become a mining engineer; he's working for Kinross right now.

What I've noticed over the years is that the NDP have lost their support of labour, and their eight unions are supporting our party now. What do you think has caused that to happen?

**MPP Jamie West:** There are a lot of unions beyond eight. The reality that you have to look at, though, is that if you're the government in power and your workforce and the labour union is dependent on infrastructure grants from the government, and money is flowing to you, you are never going to say anything bad about them.

These eight unions were really proud of being part of previous governments as well, and they will be very proud to be part of any government in the future. That's the reality of it. They are not going to bite the hand that feeds them.

I'm not saying there aren't union members who don't vote for different parties. We know that. In every workplace, there are members from all workplaces who vote for different parties. But the reality, in terms of the leadership, is that leadership is never going to bite the hand that feeds them when you're counting on contracts that add up to hundreds or perhaps even millions of dollars worth of work. Your job as a union leader—and I was a union leader for 20 years—is to ensure your workers have the best contracts possible, and that's what's really going on, and it's basically going to be a fair-weather friend when the winds change.

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**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Guy Bourgouin:** Thank you to my colleague because you did a great job on this speech. But my question is this: As you know, I used to be a millwright by trade. I come from a trades family. When I was listening to the debate, and I hear grade 11 and grade 12 students can speed up to become a tradesperson, and I've seen even kids coming—young adults, because they're from colleges, they come back—when you're in 11th or 12th year,

you don't have the maturity to see, sometimes, danger. We're talking 15 years old and 16 years old and 17 years old. That is very scary for me because I've trained a lot of young millwrights. I used to be a lead hand.

But what I've seen is, there are good employers out there, who will surround them, but there are bad apples out there, as you know. My scare is that these kids are going to go into these workplaces and maybe put their lives in danger because they're going to say, "Well, know what? There's a job there. You have to go do it." The kid's on the job. He wants to learn the trade, rightly so.

I'd like to have your perspective, because we come from safety backgrounds also, but I'd like to have your perspective because this is very dangerous if we have employers doing this with young adults—well, young kids.

**MPP Jamie West:** It's a great question from the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay. We actually met a long time before we were elected, when we were both sitting on the advisory committee for CROSH, the Centre for Research in Occupational Safety and Health. People who are interested in health and safety will know that young people are injured at a much higher rate than seasoned workers, and that people who are younger—this is why insurance rates for younger people are higher—have a sense of invulnerability. Also, you tend to be, as a younger person, afraid of talking to your boss. There's that imbalance of power. You're used to always listening to your parents, understanding what they want to do is safe. There are good workplaces out there. I think it's a good idea to have people exposed to trades.

Interestingly, in committee, I asked different trades unions about bringing them back to high schools. They said, "No, we've got to bring them back to grades 7 and 8." Now, the Conservative government, I think it would be great thing if they did two things: One, return the shops that they removed when Mike Harris was in power and, also, buy back the 407 that they sold off when Mike Harris was in power.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I thoroughly agree with the member from Sudbury when he says that as a union leader your job is to ensure the best contract possible. I agree with that, and yet there are union leaders in the province of Ontario who are not representing their members and who are actually ignoring their members. I'm thinking specifically of one union leader named Fred Hahn, who is ignoring the calls from his union to step down for his anti-Semitic behaviour and comments.

When is the NDP going to stop supporting Fred Hahn and ask him to step down?

**MPP Jamie West:** I appreciate the question. I understand why he would want to deflect from the bill, because the bill is pretty weak. The bill is missing the point when it comes to actually protecting workers. They don't want to talk about the fact that in Ontario, for the eighth year in a row, working people are using food banks at a higher rate. They don't want to talk about the fact that you're not

going to attract workers to the construction field by offering them an outhouse, even if it's a really clean outhouse. They don't want to talk about the fact that the wildland firefighters aren't going to have the presumptive coverage that's in there. They want to talk about a specific union, a specific individual that has nothing to do with our party, that specific individual and what they're doing. It isn't part of our party.

Our job is to make sure that the people of Ontario can put food on their table. Our job is to listen to them when they're being rent-evicted because of the policies that the Conservative government has. Our job as New Democrats is to hold you account and to point out to the table of Ontario what they're doing in BC that allows people to have flush toilets in the workplace while this Conservative bench stands up, high-fives each other and gives itself a standing ovation for porta potties.

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

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I apologize for deviating from the standard procedure today, but I would like to deliver my inaugural address to the House. My name is Tyler Allsopp, and I am honoured to be here today, delivering my inaugural speech to the House, as the newly elected MPP for the Bay of Quinte.

First and foremost, thank you to everyone back home in the Bay of Quinte for supporting me and entrusting me with this responsibility. Over the years, you've heard me be a strong voice in our community as an advocate, as a business owner and as a city councillor. Now, as an MPP, I will use this opportunity to lift your voices and represent all of you right here in Queen's Park.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank all my colleagues for the incredible reception that I received on Monday as I took my seat in the Legislature for the first time. Thank you all very much. What an experience. It is, admittedly, a little bittersweet, though, to know that no matter what I may achieve here, that I will not be getting that type of reception again.

I would also like to give a special shout-out to my wife, Jennifer. As many of you know, Monday was a big day for me, but my wife, Jennifer, had to wrangle three kids onto a train and get them all the way to Toronto, so it was a much bigger day for her. Darling, I love you so much. Thank you for all that you do for our family.

Speaker, colleagues, this being my first address to you, there are a few things that I want to cover in my speech today. Having just come through a by-election, as you might imagine, I have a number of thank yous that need to be attended to.

As all of you who are sitting here in these chairs know first-hand, to run a successful campaign at any level requires a dedicated and passionate team, and at the provincial level, it takes a village. I am so grateful for the village that formed around me to help me win this by-election.

That includes all of my door-knockers, who walked with me 10 to 12 hours a day, in the scorching heat, throughout August and September. They worked incred-

ibly hard with me to make sure that we visited as many people as possible at their doors, to hear their issues and to share our message. We went through many socks, shoes, bottles of Gatorade and tubes of sunscreen together, and we shared some great laughs about my comb-over tan line. Thank you all very much. That's some real politician stuff.

I would also like to thank our sign team who, likewise, worked many long days in the heat to make sure that we had the visibility that we needed during the campaign, and for making quick work of taking them down afterwards to return the beauty of the Bay of Quinte back to our residents, sign-free. This dedicated crew has served for many elections in my riding, and the average age is pushing 75 years old on our sign crew. My 63-year-old father was the young guy on the crew for that campaign. Thank you all for your hard work.

*Interruption.*

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I wasn't even done.

Thank you to our campaign office staff, including our manager, CFO, chief of staff and communications director, as well as all of the office volunteers who helped answer calls, process donations, organize the canvassing teams, print maps and all the other important tasks that you undertook to ensure our success in this campaign. This includes that morning, when I came in early, and asked the manager who had been working late on walking maps what time he went home the night before. He looked at me with bloodshot eyes and said, "Tyler, I never left." Thank you all so much for your hard work.

I would like to thank all the donors who took money out of their pockets to support our campaign. We greatly appreciate your support, and we could not have run a campaign of the size and scope that we did without your generous contributions. Thank you all very much and I'll be calling you all again soon.

I would like to thank the PC Party team for their tremendous efforts and the time that they dedicated to get it done in the Bay of Quinte. Your guidance, organization and assistance is so appreciated. I can't thank you enough for all the hard work you did on behalf of our campaign.

I would like to extend a thank you to all of my colleagues in the PC Party, as well as the members of the NDP, Liberals and Greens who came to our riding this summer to assist with this by-election. Residents this summer had an unprecedented access to so many MPPs from across the province and from every party. They greatly appreciated your presence in our riding. Thank you all for coming to the Bay of Quinte.

Finally, I'd also like to thank the residents of the Bay of Quinte for being so hospitable and so gracious to everyone who came to our doors over this campaign. Every single member of our team took the time to tell me how polite and friendly my community was to them, and that means the world to me. I could not be prouder to represent the people of the Bay of Quinte. Thank you very much.

As many of you will know, the Bay of Quinte riding is comprised of Quinte West, Belleville south of the 401, and all of Prince Edward county, and is certainly one of the most beautiful ridings in all of Ontario. Located less than

two hours from Toronto, three hours from Montreal and close to the US border, the Bay of Quinte has become a hub for agriculture, manufacturing and tourism.

Whether you come to live, work or play in our riding, we have so much to offer. In Quinte West, we have the natural beauty of the Trent-Severn Waterway, the stunning hills of Batawa and a vibrant downtown and business community, not to mention thousands of acres of farmland and CFB Trenton, along with the National Air Force Museum of Canada.

**1430**

In Belleville, there's our vibrant and historic downtown along our picturesque waterfront of the Moira River and the Bay of Quinte, which is the setting of my previous job as a city councillor at Belleville city hall, which is over 150 years old and is truly the centrepiece of our beautiful and historic downtown. Belleville also boasts a diverse economy, with many great retail stores, restaurants and a thriving industrial park, home to some of the world's largest brands, including Procter and Gamble, Amazon, and Kellogg's. It is truly the economic powerhouse of our region.

To the south of Belleville lies one of Ontario's true gems in Prince Edward county, known for its endless shorelines on the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario, as well as its rolling farmland and many vineyards and wineries. It has become one of the top tourist attractions in all of Ontario, and it just takes one walk along the dunes at Sandbanks or down the main streets of Picton, Wellington or Bloomfield to see the vibrant natural, cultural and artistic hub that keeps people returning to Prince Edward county year over year. It is this natural beauty, bustling economy, thriving arts and cultural scene, and great public infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, that drew my family to the Bay of Quinte almost 30 years ago.

You see, I was born just down the road, at Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga, on October 13, 1992. My father, at the time, was—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** I apologize for 1992, everybody. I look much older, if it's any consolation.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** All right. I've only got 12 more minutes. Let's stay on track here.

My father was a shoe salesman at the Eaton Centre, and my mother was home with my older brother, Joshua, where she worked from home as a seamstress and a dressmaker.

My family moved to Southwood Crescent in Belleville, Ontario, in the fall of 1995, just before my older brother, Joshua, started kindergarten. They made that move in the hope that growing up in a quieter, closer-knit community would allow us to develop stronger friendships and provide our family with safety and security, and better opportunities for future growth.

My mother continued her dressmaking and seamstress business and is a fantastic mom, business owner, artist and craftsperson. Today, she only does bridal gowns, but in those early days, she would stitch hemming pants, stitch-

ing life jackets—whatever she could to help us pay the bills. When I walk around my hometown of Belleville, Ontario, if there's a woman coming towards me, odds are she's going to ask me, "Are you Janine Allsopp's son?" And I always say yes right away, because I know what's about to come: "Your mother is the nicest person, and she went over and above to make my special day that much more special."

If any of you have ever grown up in a home business, you know that teaches you to respect boundaries. It was okay for my brother and I to wrestle; we just couldn't do it on the kitchen floor when there were six bridesmaids in there for a fitting.

My father recently retired after 20 years at Quinte Health. He's a hard-working, humble family man who taught me what it means to draw a public salary. I remember my dad used to take all of the on-call shifts he could on the weekend. And even though if he had to go in for 10 minutes, he could bill for four hours, he would look at the job and go, "Jeez, that's going to be a quick one." He would head off to work, and we'd see him three and a half or four hours later. I'd say, "Dad, I thought you said it was going to be a quick one today." He'd say, "Well, it was. But they're paying me for four hours anyway, so I got ahead on some of my tasks for the week. I went around to see if anyone else needed anything and just made sure that the people got good value out of me today." That was a really important message for me to receive as a young person.

Having just retired, and being a humble guy, I think he expected maybe an empty conference room and a sheet cake. But when he opened that door, it was packed to the gills with all the people that he had gone above and beyond for over his career. My mom and dad ate out for about a year free because of all the gift cards that those people gave them.

Thank you both very much, and I love you both very much.

My first memory of Belleville was running across my neighbour's lawn to Stanley Park, which is at the corner of our street. Though we were new to the community, our neighbours approached us to contribute to the remodelling of the play structures in that park. We were brand new, and my parents were strapped for cash after the move, but they obliged. And when the playground was completed, our names were etched on the stone monument with the names of all of our neighbours. Though we had just got there, we already felt that we were part of this community.

There were some hiccups along the way, however. I was the new kid in a new community, with a last name which was seemingly impossible to pronounce. They called me "Tyler All Stop," "Tyler Al Sapp," "Tyler All Slopp," and in one particularly egregious incident that happened over the PA system at Harry J. Clarke Public School, they put the S before the Ls, and though it would be unparliamentary for me to pronounce that pronunciation, needless to say, it stuck around for some time.

I just saw the honourable Associate Minister Thanigasalam looking at me going, "Was Allsopp really that hard?" Fair point. Fair point.

It was at this park, Stanley Park, just on the corner of my street, that I developed my first love, which was BMX biking. Though I did not know it at this time, this newly developed passion would have a tremendous effect on my life.

Starting at 10 years old, my friends and I would ride our bikes all over town, looking for things to jump off, over and through, as well as ledges to grind and rails to ride down. Whether it was at Nicholson high school, behind the old Intelligencer building or at the newly built Belleville Public Library, I was what security guards rightly referred to as a "menace to society."

All over town at our favourite riding spots, we were routinely asked to leave and told to go somewhere else. It became apparent to me quickly that, in my hometown, for BMX riders and skateboarders, there was simply nowhere to go. Though other neighbouring municipalities—smaller ones like Trenton and Madoc—already had concrete parks, my hometown of Belleville did not.

This incongruity led me to my first political action 20 years ago, to join a committee called Can't Wait to Skate that was advocating for the construction of a new skate park. As the sole BMX rider in that committee, I got used to political heckling at a young age. Over the course of four years and dozens of committee meetings, by the time I was 16, our skate park was built.

During the time, due to my passion for cycling, I started working at the local bike shop, Doug's Bicycle. Once the park had opened, many of my friends wanted to participate in contests, but there was no one to organize them. So at 16, I started to host contests, not only at our local park but at other parks across the region.

In my position at the bike store, I would call up suppliers and ask them to donate prizes. Since no one else was willing to fill the public speaking role, I also served as the announcer at those contests, which were my first public speaking events. Over the years, in Belleville, Trenton, Picton, Madoc, Deseronto and Campbellford, my friends and I hosted, announced and rode in more than 40 events.

A few years later, after leaving college, I returned to Belleville. Armed with these great experiences and a passion for business, I ended up purchasing with a partner that local bike shop I grew up working at.

As some of you may know, running a small business, particularly a seasonal one, is not for the faint of heart. It takes a tremendous amount of effort, dedication and sleepless nights. But it was an absolute joy, and just like my mother, I was doing what I loved for a living.

Having found my voice, and with experience as a home and business owner, I took it upon myself to try to secure representation for young people in our area. I first ran for municipal council in 2014 at 21 years old because I felt that young people were not being represented, not because the older members of our city council weren't trying to hear us, but because we were not speaking in forums where we could be heard and in ways that they could understand.

I think back to my experience on that Can't Wait to Skate committee, trying to explain to older city staff, who

were certainly there to support us and engaged in trying to help, the differences between quarter pipes, bowls, spines and rollers. They desperately wanted to understand and help us, but we had to do our part to make ourselves heard and understood.

I learned a lot during that first council run, and a lot of people in my community got to learn about me. Though people generally liked what they heard, in a field of 22 candidates where the top six were selected to serve on council, I placed 10th. Though it was not the result I was hoping for, it was again reaffirmed that there was a desire for youth voices, for new perspectives and for young leaders in our community. I just had more work to do.

Over the coming years, I continued to grow my business and get involved, and in fact was awarded the 2017 Quinte Business Achievement Award for young entrepreneur of the year. When the next municipal election rolled around in 2018, though I was still 25 years old, I felt ready to take another run. Though I acquitted myself well and doubled my vote tally, heartbreakingly, I placed seventh in that vote and was the runner-up in that election.

After the unfortunate passing of a long-time member of council, Pat Culhane, who was a phenomenal person, and what some would describe as an unorthodox appointment process, I was finally able to accept my seat on council in February 2021.

After a year and a half of council experience, I ran for re-election in 2022. This time, I led the polls and was the youngest councillor elected in ward 1, and became the chair of the police services board, working out of the new police station just around the corner from where I now live with my wife, Jennifer, and my three daughters, Olivia, Everly and Riley.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** Thank you.

1440

The reason I told you all of that is to tell you this. If you are a young person in the Bay of Quinte or in Toronto or in any other part of this province who may feel unheard and who may wonder if they will ever get the things in their community that they need, my message to you is simple: Get involved. Because no one thought that the former menace to society, the new kid in town with the funny name, born in Mississauga to a working-class family—a shoe salesman and seamstress—and who found his voice announcing BMX contests at the local skate park would one day be standing here as a legislator at Queen’s Park as a 32-year-old MPP, lifting the voices of over 100,000 residents from the Bay of Quinte.

This is the power of getting involved, this is the power of perseverance, and this is the power of standing up and getting your voice heard. No matter who you are or where you are from, in Ontario, there is no limit to what you can become if you have the audacity to believe in yourself, the tenacity to keep showing up and the conviction to not take no for an answer.

Thank you very much.

*Applause.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you to the member from Bay of Quinte. I’ll give you a

second to really savour this moment. The inaugural speech only happens once, and the excitement that you speak of is only for today.

We’ll move on to questions and I’ll recognize—no questions? We’ll go for further debate.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions? Questions? Okay. I think you were very thorough, member.

Further debate?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I’m here with comments on the Working for Workers in five acts—somehow, I keep misreading that. It reminds me a lot of theatre pieces. For example: “Much ado about something, but not too much ado about improving life for workers.”

I want to begin by reading something that has come from wildland firefighters to my office:

“Ever since the wildland firefighters said enough is enough in 2023, and began speaking publicly about the ways they are mistreated by this government, the government has been covering up their concerns with praise.”

Recently, “Minister Smith of the Ministry of Natural Resources said, ‘You’ve been heroes in many different jurisdictions. You’ve made Ontario proud, Ontarians proud this season, and every season, and I want you to know that we’ll make sure you have what you need to answer the call for your province.’

“The government claims to help wildland firefighters, but their response to problems are smoke and mirrors. This government refuses to recognize wildland firefighters as firefighters and reclassify them” from resource technicians to firefighters. They’ve been begging for that for years.

I must ask my colleague from Mushkegowuk—James Bay, did we not have an agreement with the Minister of Labour that wildland firefighters would be reclassified? It has not happened. I’m very sorry that that commitment was not kept. It’s quite shocking, actually.

“All they have been asking for is to be treated with the same dignity and respect as firefighters in our cities.”

The wildland firefighters had three requests for this government regarding Bill 190. They asked for the peak fire season, from May to August, to count as a year of service instead of only counting as one third of a year of service. Now, there seemed to be some confusion that the bill already recognized service for wildland firefighters as being from May to August, but it doesn’t actually say it in the bill, so they are very, very concerned that, in fact, they may have to wait 20 years before any pre-emptive cancer coverage actually comes into effect. That’s very, very concerning.

“The NDP put forward this common-sense amendment that the wildland firefighters asked for ... and this government shot it down. Why? Instead, they defended themselves again, saying they’ve done more for wildland firefighters than any other government.

“How can this bill be ‘working for workers’ when the common-sense solutions workers put forward to solve problems get voted down?”

That's a very good question, and unfortunately, I can't answer.

I went through a great deal of the Hansard of the committee hearings and I was very disappointed to see that so many—in fact, all the practical amendments were voted down. So I'd like to move on from there to look at WSIB.

Now, Steve Mantis, who's an extremely articulate spokesperson for injured workers, gave a bit of a history of the WSIB. Well, of course, it was originally called the Workmen's Compensation Board, and it was intended to be a non-adversarial system that would be an inquiry system where the bureaucracy would look into what happened and make a decision based on that.

The system would have a collective liability so individual employers would not be dinged for accidents that might occur on their site, but that liability would be spread across others in the same industrial sector. There would be an impartial body to administer the act that would be arm's-length from the government. It's interesting that we have seen, over the last 30 years, 40 years, those principles eroded so that the system has become very adversarial.

I'm sure any of the MPPs have heard from people coming into our offices how people are mistreated. Recent research from the Institute for Work and Health, a world-recognized body in workplace health and safety and worker's compensation, found almost 50% of workers with a permanent impairment ended up with mental illness because of how they were treated by the decision-makers at the WSIB. Here is a public system that is supposed to be supporting workers and, in fact, in many cases, is making them ill.

But I want to add here that if you actually talk to the workers at the WSIB, they are suffering from moral injury because no worker goes to work saying, "Oh, I can hardly wait to turn down somebody with a permanent injury, send them on the street and hope that they're penniless and in misery." No worker goes to work saying, "That's what I want to do," but that's a requirement if you work at the WSIB. The reason we know that is because so many people are turned down at the initial application stage for support from the WSIB that when they go to the appeals tribunal, the WSIAT, almost 85% of those decisions are overturned either in part or in full. That tells you that the people at the front end—I am willing to bet that there are quotas, that they are told, "Do not approve these people because maybe they'll go away, and at best, they're going to appeal, and at least we've got six months where we don't have to give them any money. We don't have to pay any money, so we can save that money on their backs." That is the crime of WSIB today.

They moved into a system of cutbacks for workers. The system apparently is now overfunded; there's some \$35 billion-plus in investments. So they have been asking for improvements for workers. Back in the Harris years, the benefit level was cut from 90% to 85% of earnings. They would like to see that come back to 90%.

The payment into the pension fund was reduced from 10% to 5%. Do you know what that means? They no longer are eligible for the Canada Pension Plan. They're

not eligible for the Canada Pension Plan once they stop working, so all they have is whatever has been put aside for them through the WSIB, and the WSIB cut that from 10% to 5%, which means that when they come to retirement age—poverty. This is legislated poverty. It's no accident. Everybody knows about it. It's not like I'm saying something that is suddenly new.

The other thing that they were asking for was an acknowledgement that people are now working past the age of 65, and yet when you hit the age of 65, you are no longer covered for any accidents that might take place at work. So if you have a traumatic accident and you're 66—so sad, too bad, you're not covered. So they've been asking for a change. Now, not a single one of these things was changed, altered or acknowledged during the responses from the government.

Another major thing that was brought forward was wage theft. Now, wage theft is a very, very serious issue, and it's particularly serious for certain groups of vulnerable workers. Ms. Joanna Mullen brought this forward, and what she talked about was that fines—that there have been thousands of claims and actually many, many claims that are acknowledged, but hardly any money that gets paid out. The member from Sudbury was referring to this earlier in his remarks—that it actually pays to steal money from your workers because, chances are, even if you are mandated to pay it back, you've been able to get interest on it. But the reality is, it's only such a small percentage of the money that is known to have been stolen that employers are actually required to pay back.

#### 1450

I want to connect this to the situation for commercial truck drivers. We know—and you can look at their website, Justice for Truck Drivers—that wage theft is a huge issue for them, as is the lack of training. Some people will have seen the CBC Marketplace story called "Truckload of Trouble," and one of the things that was of significance in that story is the lack of training. Particularly, new Canadians are coming over, hoping to build a life, hoping to have a good job, and they pay money for training, but they don't receive the training—"Here you go. Here's your licence. Here are the keys. Off you go. It's automatic transmission. Anybody can do it. Don't worry about it." Then, they're pushed to beat the clock; they're not allowed to stop on the highways.

You look at Highway 11, and there are soft shoulders. Guess what happens when you get onto a soft shoulder. Your truck rolls. Well, I was sent a photograph just about an hour ago of a truck on Highway 11/17 with a huge front-end loader that has slid off the side of the truck. How does something like that even happen? Because (1) the driver doesn't know how to safely fasten it to the truck, and (2) because nobody is staffing the inspection stations that are 100% the responsibility of the provincial government.

So vehicles that should not be on the road, that are not safe to be on the road are not pulled off the road. Then you have these same workers who are victims of wage theft, and you have this terrible, terrible situation with people on

the road, without the training they need, not getting the money that's owed to them, pushed to drive in unsafe conditions, and people are dying. Those drivers are dying; other drivers are dying when they come into accidents with them. And do you know who gets blamed? The drivers—the new Canadians. It is not their fault.

It is 100% the responsibility of this government to ensure that people who come here get the training they are expected to get, that they are paying to get, and not be pushed through by unscrupulous businesses or things going on at DriveTests—and that's a whole long story there.

I'd like to just come to—because these things are all very closely connected—what we know about what's going on with inspection stations.

Oh, and I do have to correct the record on one issue. The Minister of Transportation said yesterday that we didn't vote in favour of four-laning Highway 11/17. I have no idea where that came from, but people should know that the project of four-laning Highway 11/17 goes back to the NDP government—every government that has been through, since that time, has supported the four-laning of Highway 11/17. We're happy to see it happening. The NDP has never voted against it.

So what's going on with inspection stations? Well, what we know about the \$30-million inspection station in Thunder Bay is that it's almost never staffed, and do you know why? Because there are fewer than half of the transportation enforcement officers that were identified—this is based on 2011 traffic data. Some 264 enforcement officers were required full-time to strictly perform roadside and bus terminal inspections and motor vehicle inspection station audits. However, there are only 148 officers right now. That's based on 2011 statistics. We have 148 officers. I've been told that there are 28 that cover northern Ontario, but what I've actually learned from enforcement officers who have written to me is that, in fact, there are no northern enforcement officers; they are being sent up from southern Ontario, so the ministry pays for their airfare, their hotels, their overtime. They come up for a week, are open for a certain number of hours, do their job—in fact, they do their job very well, because just last week at the station in Shuniah, of the 300 trucks that were inspected, 105 were pulled off the road.

**Mr. Guy Bourgoin:** That is scary.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** It is scary.

We know that when the enforcement officers are there, that people get pulled off and, frankly, that saves those drivers and it saves everybody else. We also know that many of the new Canadian drivers are told, “You don't think this truck is safe? Too bad. You're taking it. If you talk back to me, that's okay, I'll just get somebody else. We'll get somebody else new to drive.” And they're not trained to do the mechanical work on the truck. They are so vulnerable.

We know that the training needs to take place, and what we also know is that as of 2023—so, this fall, the training falls under the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. As of 2023, there were eight inspectors for over 500 trade

schools. That's crazy. That's impossible—impossible—to be inspecting and doing what needs to be done.

Now, again, I've learned from the enforcement officers that, in fact, that could be one of their responsibilities to go and inspect those truck training schools. There aren't enough of them to do it. Why are there not enough of them? Because wages and benefits are way too low for the responsibility of the job. That has been known for at least a dozen years, yet, what's happening? What is the government doing to address the problem?

We know that the inspections are not taking place at the schools, not in the volume and thoroughness that is necessary. We know there are bad actors out there. We also know that there are excellent training schools and excellent companies. But you know what happens to those excellent companies? They're undercut by the bad ones because they're not paying their workers, because they're stealing the money from their workers and they're blackmailing them. A lot of these workers are hoping to get permanent residency status. They are not in a position to be pushing back against an opportunity to work. They are also trying to support their families. It is up to our system to make sure that all of those checks and balances are in the system, that those places are inspected.

I have a request into the library to see whether that number has grown from eight; I surely hope so. You cannot possibly inspect over 500 trade schools of all disciplines with eight people. It's an impossibility. We know it's an impossibility because, guess what, people are getting put on the roads without training, and we know that.

We know that nobody is at the inspection stations, that they are not able to do the work that they're supposed to be doing. We also know that it's a dangerous job being a transportation enforcement officer. You're pulling people off the road when they want to get on with their business. It's not an easy job. People can be very aggressive and you're often out on the highway by yourself.

This is entirely the mandate of the province to be looking after these things, to be making sure our highways are safe, that the drivers on them have been trained, that drivers have received the training that they've paid for, and that nobody is cutting corners and nobody is allowed to cut corners. We need to be standing up for those drivers as workers and looking after their health and safety. If we do that, then we are also looking after our own health and safety—anybody else who is using the highways.

Once again, I will point out that, right now, as we speak, there's a front-end loader that slid off the back of a truck, which is blocking the main thoroughfare, the way that people get to hospitals, get to appointments. All the North Shore, all Highway 11, they all come into Thunder Bay.

**1500**

I want to say one more thing about this inspection station because we often hear, “No, we depend on the element of surprise when we have these inspection stations,” but the reality of the station in Shuniah, just outside Thunder Bay, is that it's only one way to come through. Everyone who comes from the highway going



west across the country must stop at that station if they're asked to stop. They have no choice. There's no alternate route. That station could be open 24/7 and no problem because the drivers have to go. It doesn't matter if they're on the phone to each other saying, "Oh, boy, you better watch out. Drive a different route so you don't have to go through the inspection station." They have to go through it. They have to pass that route. Frankly, it works even better when there are people from the OPP and MTO on the other side of the highway also pulling people off who are travelling east.

These are things that can be fixed. We don't see the government addressing them and it is the reason, frankly, that I get so much mail and so many phone calls about safety conditions on our highways. And 100% of the control over this situation lies with the provincial government; 100% of it lies with actually paying workers appropriate wages and benefits for the responsibility of the jobs that they are undertaking on our behalf.

I will stop there. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Mr. John Jordan:** Last week, I attended a women's economic security program announcement in Kingston, St. Lawrence College, and that was for the expansion of the women's welding program. So, a real effort by this government to move, or facilitate, I guess, is the right word, women moving into the trades in a very successful way. So we certainly want to thank the minister for women's social and economic opportunity and the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. I want to thank the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, and the Minister of Colleges and Universities for those.

My question to the member opposite is—we have training for these women and then we have to provide a work environment that's conducive so they feel comfortable going into those work positions. Would you agree that this bill is another great step forward towards that?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I would like to say that it's a step forward in that direction. I'm not sure that it is. I don't see anything substantive that makes workplaces safer for women, but also, as we heard from the member for Sudbury, when you don't have clean washrooms and there's no commitment to having anything better than porta-potties, it's not a great environment, frankly, for anybody to go into, but certainly young women are going to think twice.

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I'd like to thank the member from Thunder Bay—Superior North for her presentation and also for all of her work in advocating for proper training for truck drivers and also for helping expose the fraud that's happening in terms of training centres not providing the right training, taking people's money and, frankly, putting everybody who uses these roads and drives these trucks at risk.

My question is around food insecurity. We have seen food insecurity rise. More than one million Ontarians access food banks, and when you look at who is accessing food banks, the sharpest increase has been in workers, people who have full-time jobs and still cannot afford to eat.

Can the member please explain what the government could be doing better to support workers not having to choose between paying for housing and other living expenses and being able to afford to buy groceries? Thank you.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Thank you very much for the question. It's been extremely distressing to see the thousands and thousands of people, including working people, who are accessing food banks now. We went through Bill 124, where the government spent enormous amounts of money to fight workers in court on an unconstitutional bill. We saw Bill 28. We are seeing workers in so many areas who are desperately underpaid, who don't make enough to keep a roof over their heads.

This all comes down to, frankly, policies and the kind of atmosphere and treatment that the government subjects certain kinds of workers to. We talk about the trades, but we don't talk about the health care workers. We don't talk about the education workers, who are desperately underpaid, and then, as I've given the example of, the transportation enforcement officers. We have these gaps. The pay isn't there. It's no wonder that we're having trouble filling work, and it's certainly a crime that we have seen poverty at the level of the 1930s Depression on our streets with the number of tent cities and people having to use them.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** Thank you to the member opposite for the remarks. I was sad to hear about the training piece, because I'll tell you, through the SDF, which is the Skills Development Fund, it's \$1.1 billion that the minister and this government is putting towards families, allowing young people to get trained. We want people to get trained. You shouldn't have voted against it.

I'll tell you an example. I was at an event, the 10-year anniversary in my riding of an amazing place called Building Up. Their sole purpose is to train young people in precarious situations to have jobs. If you heard the stories that these young people told me about getting a job, getting that experience and going to work every day so they can put food on their table—why don't you vote for some of these important initiatives that this government has? What do you want to say to those women and men at Building Up who now have a job and are able to feed their families?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** We know the government loves to put poison pills into every single bill. If we're voting against it, it is because it is harming people at some other level. It's fantastic if those people are getting work, are able to put food on—for their families. Why is the government not hiring the inspectors needed to make sure that people who want to train to be professional truck

drivers are not getting ripped off and put on the highway without proper training? Why for one group are you ready to do it, but for another group you're ready to throw them literally under their tractor-trailers?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** Thank you to my colleague for your speech. I come from northern Ontario, and Highway 11, for me, is extremely important. We brought a lot of bills that they speak about voting against. I can tell you they voted against Chad's Law. They voted about cleaning Highways 11 and 17, which is a major artery. They voted against a class 1, which should be the same as class 400.

To get back to the trucking industry, when we see the marketplace and what's happening with the MELT situation, that the companies are bypassing and then taking advantage of truck drivers, it's not the truck drivers' fault, but it is our responsibility to make sure they get the appropriate training because when they hit the highways behind an 18-wheeler and then they have to come face to face, if you're in a car or in a truck, you will be the losing part of it, and it may cost your life. There was one that lost his life in Thunder Bay.

I want you to expand more on this because we live it on a day-to-day basis in northern Ontario.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** Thank you to the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay. There was a very horrific accident quite recently on Highway 11/17. It was closed for 12 hours. There was an enormous fire. Two vehicles burnt to a crisp. The driver of the smaller vehicle was killed on impact. This was a collision with a commercial truck, in fact, locally owned in Thunder Bay, and not a new driver, but possibly a driver under the influence. We don't know that for sure. It's all under investigation, a horrific accident.

What if those inspection stations were actually open on a regular basis? What if that truck had been stopped before? I'll tell you the one thing that that driver did: pass on the double yellow line in a construction zone.

1510

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** They voted against it.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** You voted against actually making Ontario in alignment with the rest of the country—

**Mr. Guy Bourgoïn:** North America.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:**—North America, to say that passing on a double line should be illegal. Right now, in Ontario, it's a suggestion. Had that been in place, perhaps that driver would not have made such a terrible, terrible decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** As most of you know, I worked in the auto industry in 1986 and I remember seeing the first woman electrician at the Ford plant, and my former boss, Nicole Stoetzel, is now the assistant plant manager at the Ford plant in Oakville. I've been talking to a lot of young women in my community that want to get into the trades and they're saying thank you to this minister that's been able to get them into the trades.

I want to know why the member here is so against getting women into the trades in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick response.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I'm sorry, Speaker, sometimes the questions are so preposterous. I think that, perhaps, we should have Pinocchio's nose growing every time that kind of question is posed.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** I will ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary statement.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I will withdraw. The point is, of course, we as a party, and I as an individual have never opposed women in trades. I'm of an age to have known women who were in the trades a long time ago and had a pretty rough time. I am happy to see that on all sides we are trying to create workplaces that will welcome women, welcome the kind of contribution that women can bring to a workplace, and we support that.

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's a pleasure to rise in the chamber once again. It's the first time I've done this since last June. That was a while ago, eh, guys? But it feels like we never left. I'm happy to speak to this bill because there are some measures in the bill that I really agree with. Some of the stuff is codifying stuff that is already there. That's kind of what we've seen in these Working for Workers acts. I'm not complaining about it, just pointing it out.

I think the focus on apprenticeships in high schools is really important. I agree with that. I thank the minister for doing that. It's the right thing to do.

The thing where I—and I don't want to go into what the member from Sudbury was going into, in terms of his debate. There are some things here that—you know, they're talking about stronger protections for workers. While I appreciate that, on five occasions, I've put forward a bill that talks about fairness for people working in residential care settings, whether that's a retirement home or a group home or a youth correctional facility. The fairness is—those folks aren't covered by WSIB. They don't have the same workplace protections as other people working in residential care that's provincially run, provincially owned.

So when they talk about protecting women, largely these PSWs, DSWs and other workers are mostly women, and they work jobs where there is significant risk. If they were covered by WSIB, they'd have good coverage—number one—but they'd also be covered for more than just the job that they were injured at, if they had more than one job. Many of them have more than one job. When we talk about protecting workers and promoting women, I think not voting against this bill—number one—which the government has done twice now, really, it makes it hard to believe that they're serious about protecting employees and promoting women. It's a very simple bill. It's a very straightforward bill and I encouraged multiple ministers who are open to it, but for some reason, the government doesn't do it.

I think it's hard for the government to toot its horn and say they're doing this on one hand when we have this very, very unfair situation for mostly women, personal support

workers, developmental service workers, youth correctional workers, dietitians and other people working in these circumstances.

I just want to point that out. I think you have to have some sort of measure or modicum that says, “We’re doing these good things,” but let’s not make them something larger than they actually are, which is another one of the challenges with the bill.

The second thing that I would like to say I’m happy to see, but I think it’s a bit of an overstatement, is prohibiting mandatory doctors’ notes. If we remember the history on doctors’ notes here, when the government came in, we went back to doctors’ notes. The pandemic hit, the government continued to require doctors’ notes, until it became absolutely obvious that it was the wrong thing to do. So, they prohibited doctors’ notes.

The pandemic ended. What happened? Anybody guess? They brought doctors’ notes back.

Finally, four or five years later, this is being done, and it’s a good thing. Here’s the problem: It’s kind of moot, in a sense. It’s moot because 2.5 million people don’t have a family doctor that could write a note, even if we required one. That’s the irony of the whole thing, right? You can’t find someone to sign a note for you. It’s a big problem.

I’m glad we’re doing this, but we’re not fixing the other problem: the millions of people in this province who don’t have a family doctor—2.5 million. There are five million Canadians that don’t have a family doctor. Half of them are in the province of Ontario, even though we’re only 36%, 37% of the population. We have a problem. This is a problem.

The doctors’ notes, it got fixed. Doctors, they’re a bigger problem. They demand more attention. The government’s refusing to focus on that, and the minister even says, “I think things are okay.” Well, they’re not okay.

If you don’t have a family doctor, it’s hard to stay healthy. If you have a chronic disease, like diabetes or a heart condition, you need a family doctor. If you’re at risk for cancer, heart disease or stroke, if you don’t have a family doctor, you don’t have a way to get into the care that you need or an easier way to get into the care that you need. You have to go through the emergency room.

I would just encourage all members—I know I keep talking about family doctors—to know how many people don’t have family doctors in your riding, because I know. I know I have 21,000, so that means one of every six people I meet in my riding doesn’t have a family doctor—one out of six. It’s the same or worse for many of us in this place. It’s a really serious situation.

I congratulate the minister again on prohibiting doctors’ notes. Let’s just get some doctors and nurse practitioners so that we can make sure that people have the basic things that, when we come here, we promise that we’ll do for them: We’ll take care of their health. That’s important.

I also want to commend the ministry for expanding the definition of workplace harassment to include virtual harassment. We all know that these things and our other devices—we spend a lot of time on them. We communicate to each other that way. There’s a lot of risk in

communications over a device like that. You can harass people; you can bother people. I know the government has done some legislation—the legislation passed here around about when you can email people—not that that stuff ever works, but it’s an effort, right? That’s a good thing.

The thing that’s actually, again, ironic with this is—and the House leader would know this, and the minister would know this, and, actually, the other side would know this—that we’ve been trying to make sure that in municipal workplaces, people are protected. We saw what has happened in Ottawa. We saw what has happened around the province. The government voted for my colleague from Orléans’ bill the first time around. The House leader supported it. We were going to write some legislation—didn’t happen. We brought forward the bill again; the government voted against it—not a priority. I don’t believe that members on the other side don’t think it’s a priority, and I don’t believe the House leader doesn’t think it’s a priority. I don’t believe that they don’t think it’s the right thing to do. But it’s not getting done, and there’s a reason for that. That reason might be in the front row.

1520

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Point of order. I recognize the government House leader.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thanks, Speaker. Through you, to the member: I say enough in this House without you putting words in my mouth, so just stick to your knitting, my friend.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** In any event, the government voted for the bill at the time.

You all stood up and voted for the bill, so if that’s not an indication of support, I don’t know what is. If your intent was to look good and not do anything—that might have been a possibility; I wouldn’t put that on you, just like I wouldn’t put words in your mouth.

Why don’t we pass that bill? Why haven’t we passed that bill? The reason might be in the front row, but that’s not a good-enough reason.

People are at risk in municipal workplaces because there’s stuff that happens there that would never, ever happen here or never happen at your local Sobeys or your Loblaws or any other workplace—and we’re not tolerating online harassment here, but we’re tolerating that. How does that figure? How can we do that?

So make sure that workers in residential care have access to WSIB, number one. Let’s get doctors, so, now, even though we don’t require sick notes—that people have access to the care that they need. And if we’re serious about harassment—it’s not just the member from Orléans; it’s the member from Niagara Centre. He’s got a bill as well. And we all agree on this. So why can’t we do it?

I thank the minister for bringing forward the bill. Like I said, there’s stuff that’s very supportable in this. Some of the stuff is just—it’s supportable, but it’s just codifying regulation. I just think we need to go further than we’re going in the bill, and I wanted to express that here today.

I think that's all I have to say. And you're all happy about that, right?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** This bill creates pathways for Ontarians to enter the skilled trades, including through programs like OYAP and FAST, and also provides support for second-chance workers, for second-career individuals, and it's backed by historic investments in workforce training.

While we're investing and building a skilled workforce, the federal Liberal counterparts have cut over \$230 million from labour market transfer agreements, and those are funds that support employment services and workforce development. So I'm asking if the member opposite would call on their federal colleagues to reverse these cuts and stand with workers by supporting this bill and the training programs that it supports.

**Mr. John Fraser:** If I was worried—my job is here—it's you folks on the other side. So what I really want to say is, don't spend the billion dollars on getting booze in the corner stores a year early because you want to have an election. Don't spend \$3 billion on handing out cheques. Don't spend it. Spend it on the things like you're talking about that are important, and I know you want those things that are important. Spend it on things like the 21,000 people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore that don't have a family doctor. That's what I'm trying to say here. I know you want those people to have a family doctor. I know you do. I don't doubt that you do. That's the point of my debate.

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

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to the member for Ottawa South on his debate. He was talking about a bill that had to do with harassment in city council and how it passed and is just in limbo right now and maybe won't come back, and how it would affect workers immediately today.

I'm curious as well, because I had a motion about just recognizing Injured Workers Day—that actually started here at Queen's Park. We've been recognizing it unofficially all around Ontario every year on June 1, but it's never officially recognized in the House. That also passed second reading. I wanted it to go all the way to third reading. It's pretty easy, not a tough debate.

Why do you suppose that certain bills get to second reading and never come back?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Just remember to make your comments through the Chair.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I don't want to speculate, but I think there are members on the other side who I sat with before 2018 who remember private members' bills and how we would work at the end of the session to pass bills like you're talking about, together. It was a bit of a negotiation, but there's no more negotiation. We don't negotiate anymore. It's just, "We're going to do it our way. It's going to be our stuff."

I don't know why that is. I don't know where that's driven from. I don't know why a simple bill to stop the

workplace harassment that can happen in municipal offices isn't getting done. There's no rational explanation that there's no effort.

Actually, the Integrity Commissioner—basically his first recommendation is to have a code of conduct. That's what the bill did. So what else do we need?

I wish I could give you a better answer than that, but that's the best I can come up with.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Thank you to the member from Ottawa South for his remarks today.

A couple of questions here—specifically, I am guessing that the member from Ottawa South does believe that enhanced PTSD coverage for all front-line workers is a good a thing. I also think he probably supports Ontario's paramedics, social workers and hospital staff, that they have more comprehensive medical health protections. So, if that's the case, the member from Ottawa South, will you vote with us on Working for Workers 5?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I think you can read into my debate which way I'm going to go.

What I do want to say though is, my point about the workers in residential care: PSWs, DSWs, those folks—it's just fair. These are people who aren't earning a lot of money. They're at risk. They're supporting families.

I was part of a government that started to bring in PTSD legislation. It was an initiative by the member from Parkdale–High Park at the time. It's something we all agreed on. Everybody voted for it—yes.

Let's all get together for these folks who are front-line workers, are taking big risks. It's not as newsworthy and evident, but they are at risk.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Fraser:** Oh, I've brought forward this bill before. It got to second reading once—just in case you want to know—and the two other times it got defeated were in this Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Again, comments through the Chair.

I recognize the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** I want to thank the member from Ottawa South for your comments. I was here both evenings for the bill about the PSWs and residential care workers, trying to get them WSIB, and also the same evening that a Liberal member was trying to get protection for municipal workers. Both times, protection for municipal workers, there were women survivors sitting in the members' gallery, and for the PSWs, they were sitting in the gallery as well. I can tell you it was one of the most hard, awful experiences of being in this Legislature to see both of those bills voted down and, in fact, to see laughter.

**1530**

Can you please perhaps explain why it is not available to us to respect those workers and pay them and support them properly?

**Mr. John Fraser:** I was just going to say I got nothing. Look, I don't think that anybody on that side that I can see

right now disagrees with that, that they don't think it's the right thing to do. I don't believe that. I believe every member on the other side believes that both of those things are the right thing to do. Now, sometimes it's because a minister or another member doesn't want them to do it. The ministry tells them that. Sometimes it's just simply because, "Well, that's not our idea."

Every private member's bill that has been passed in this House with my name on it has had two other peoples' names on it. That's the way it's supposed to work, right? I know—again, back to the former member for Parkdale–High Park, who had the same experience, got a lot of things done, being in the third party. That's the way it should work.

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

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** Thank you to my colleague from Ottawa South for his remarks. He's certainly very committed to workers' rights and to making sure that people are treated fairly in the workplace.

Today is Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day, and we certainly want to thank all of those workers who work hard to support our children. I wonder if he has any thoughts about the things that this government has done, like Bill 124, that hurt those workers, and if there's anything in this bill that could help them. What can we do to better support those workers today?

**Mr. John Fraser:** First off, I think we have to sort out the wage issue for those ECE workers. That's the biggest challenge right now that's facing them.

Beyond that, the kind of protections that I'm talking about in the workplace: WSIB, making sure they have coverage. Bill 124—poorly thought out, bad idea. If the government had come and asked me, I would have said, "It's a bad idea," because you're going to end up where we ended up, which was with an \$8-billion liability.

That's not the thing that really was lost. What really was lost and what was lasting—because the money came back, right? They won. Respect: We weren't treating, again, mostly women with respect. We were saying, "You can't bargain. These folks can bargain. Most women, you can't bargain." That's the thing that was lost. The government lost the respect of those workers when they did that, and they're going to have to work hard to get it back.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate? I recognize the member from Mississauga—

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Malton.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):**—Malton.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** It's always a pleasure and an honour to stand in the House and debate on important things that we're doing for the people of Ontario.

Today, I'll be talking about Ontario's Working for Workers Five Act, a bold step towards ensuring fairness, opportunity and equity in the workplace. This legislation is more than just a set of policies. It is a commitment to the people of Ontario, ensuring that workers are supported, respected and given the tools they need to succeed in today's economy.

As always, when I start my conversation or my remarks, I always start by saying thank you to supreme God for giving me the ability to stand in this place. I can't thank enough the residents of Mississauga–Malton for giving me an opportunity to serve. Thank you to my family and friends for always supporting me. And thank you to the staff, who are always ahead of us so we can make sure we can be the voice of our riding and our government.

As you know, Madam Speaker, my colleagues were talking about their busy and insightful summers, so I'm going to be adding a little bit about that as well. I had the privilege of visiting many local businesses and talking to various community stakeholders to understand the need of Ontarians.

For example, OIC Foods, a leading manufacturer of ethnic foods, to Nye Manufacturing, a family-owned metal fabrication business: The constant take-away from my conversations with them was that the workers are the backbone of our economy, and we must provide them with the support they need to continue to grow and thrive. The Working for Workers bill is a great example. The majority of the things which you see in this bill are actually the voice of the people, and we heard from them. We asked them about the problems, they helped us to find the solutions and we made sure those issues are being resolved by providing the solution through these bills.

I want to take a moment and thank the minister and the parliamentary assistant for doing an incredible job and being the voice of those workers.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** That applause was for the people who have given us those suggestions and we were able to put them in.

Working for Workers Five, as I said earlier, highlights the vital role every worker plays in our province. Whether it's the assembly line worker at Sonora Foods, a leading tortilla manufacturer, or a skilled worker at Downsview Kitchens, a crafter of custom kitchen furnishings and cabinets in Mississauga–Malton, our government is committed to prioritizing the safety of every worker.

Before proceeding further, I want to take you back and talk about Working for Workers Four, which received royal assent, giving us significant advancement in several areas. For example, when we talked about work-life balance: Employers with 25 or more employees must now implement policies on disconnecting from work and electronic monitoring.

Occupational health and safety, for example: Making sure maximum fines under OHSA have increased for officers and directors who fail to ensure a safe work environment.

Non-compete protections and access to washrooms: I do remember when I was at Canada's blood services, Shahid Mughal, from Canadian Muslim Friends, walked up to me and he talked about how there's no access to the washroom for the truck drivers. Conversations like this are the rationale and the reason we were able to build these kinds of Working for Workers bills, to give back to those who are giving to all of us in Ontario. Business owners are

now required to provide delivery personnel access to workplace washrooms. Thank you, Shahid, for your suggestion.

These changes reflect our commitment to supporting workers right across our province. For example, this act represents not just a continuation, but a significant escalation to our efforts to ensure Ontario remains the engine of Canada's economic growth and prosperity.

Ontario, as you know, has been facing the largest labour shortage in a generation. Today, as we talk about it, as much as 198,000 positions are going unfilled. That's almost 200,000 paycheques not being collected. Each of those jobs, left vacant, represent billions of dollars in lost productivity, lost opportunities for businesses and lost chances for Ontarians to build a brighter future for themselves and their families.

When a worker goes to work, it's not just bringing financial independence; it gives them the opportunity to do their best and give back to society. Even more important, every one of those unfilled jobs represents a paycheque that a worker is not able to cash out to pay their bills, put food on the table and support their families. It is a moral imperative, not just an economic one, to address these challenges.

Ontario's future prosperity depends on the skilled trades. One in three tradespeople are set to retire in the coming years. That's an alarming number when you consider what's at stake.

#### 1540

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, our government has an ambitious plan to build 1.5 million homes, 50 hospitals, highways, transit and infrastructure for growing communities. That means we need to have more than 100,000 new workers in construction alone by 2032, workers to build the roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, and homes so that we can keep up with the growth. Without these workers, we cannot grow, we cannot compete, and we cannot thrive. That is why the Working for Workers Five Act is a step towards forming the solution and filling that gap. It's the kind of forward-thinking action Ontario needs to remain competitive.

At the heart of this legislation is a vision for a future where every Ontarian can get better training to get a better job and with a bigger paycheque. These are not just words, these are action-oriented improvements with deliverables attached to it.

We're not just opening doors; we're creating new ones. One of the most exciting initiatives under this act is the launch of the Focused Apprenticeship Skills Training, which is called the FAST program, an extension of our highly successful Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, OYAP. Through FAST, we are creating an avenue for students in grades 11 and 12 to gain real-world apprenticeship experiences while completing their high school education. This this is an important change that we need.

Often, I speak to the parents, and whenever they talk about the opportunities, they think about doctors, lawyers and engineers for their kids, but there are many more opportunities out there, and not everybody wants to be a

doctor, lawyer or engineer. I personally believe, more than the students, we need to change the mindset of our parents. These jobs in skilled trades are well-paying, six-figure jobs and gives them an opportunity to be an entrepreneur as well.

Programs like FAST are going to help those make sure the students will work alongside skilled tradespersons to gain the kind of experience that simply cannot be taught in classrooms through a textbook. It's not just about classroom learning; this is about equipping young Ontarians with hands-on experience, practical, technical knowledge—the very tools they need to secure well-paying jobs and giving back to society. It is giving young people the chance to be inspired, to develop a passion for a career in the trades, a career where they can shape the world around them, where they can take control over their future, earn a six-figure paycheque without taking on tuition debt and feel self-confidence and hope for their future.

We all know that university is not the only path to success. All five fingers are not the same. In the same way, if anyone who is not interested in being a doctor, lawyer or engineer, there are many opportunities out there to support and help the community. This government understands that, and that's why we are making sure that success in the trades starts with real-world training, and we are making sure our youth are ready for it.

This is just the beginning. We know that Ontarians of all ages are seeking opportunities to pivot to new careers, and the skilled trades offer exactly that. Our government is committed to eliminating barriers to entry so that anyone and everyone who wants to contribute to Ontario's skilled workforce has the ability to do so. The act provides alternative pathways for those who may not meet certain academic requirements but have prior professional experience in related fields.

By prescribing alternative criteria in future regulations, we're ensuring that a lack of traditional academic credentials doesn't hold someone back from a fulfilling career in the trades. This is about recognizing and valuing experience over red tape. It's about giving people a second chance, a chance to start over, a chance to give back to the communities, and a chance to thrive. This is about future-proofing our work force. We're making sure Ontario has the skills and the talent today to meet the demands of tomorrow.

And when we talk about the demands of tomorrow, Madam Speaker, this is the government who has made sure that we have secured over \$44 billion in new investment. We are preparing ourselves for 1.5 million homes. We're investing \$1.5 billion to prepare people for rewarding careers; \$100 billion to build new roads, highways and transit systems; \$50 billion to construct and update 50 hospitals; \$4 billion to connect every community in Ontario with high-speed broadband. We're focused on keeping costs low for families who may need help by reducing the gas tax by 10 cents.

Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're making sure we are staying focused on the things that matter most to us: that is, rebuilding Ontario's economy, investing in

our workers, keeping our communities safe and lowering the cost of living. We're making sure that this is about future-proofing our Ontarians. We're making sure Ontario has the skills and the talent for today, to meet demand for tomorrow.

This government is taking steps to modernize how apprenticeships, journeypersons and employers connect. We're launching a new online job-matching portal, a one-stop hub for networking, job opportunities and career development in skilled trades. This is more than just a website; it's a gateway to opportunity. Whether someone is starting out or starting over, this will help them and be supportive as they progress in their careers.

Right now, Ontario does not have a dedicated provincial system to help apprentices find employers and sponsors who are looking for apprentices, and this new platform will streamline and simplify the process. This government knows that technology is changing every industry, and the skilled trades are no exception. By harnessing the connecting power of the 21st century, we're ensuring that finding a job in the trades is easier, faster and efficient. We're connecting the talent with opportunity in real time, and that is critical as we work to close the skills gap.

Now, let's be clear, Madam Speaker: Working for Workers Five is not just about short-term solutions, it is about providing long-term sustainable success for Ontario's economy. It's about building the foundation for a future where Ontario remains the best place to live, work and raise a family. By opening pathways into the skilled trades, we're securing our province's future one apprentice at a time.

Madam Speaker, this is a pro-job, pro-growth, pro-worker piece of legislation. It puts people first—real people with real families, real ambitions and real dreams. It provides opportunities for those starting out in life and starting over. It opens doors for our young and old alike, for newcomers and for Ontarians seeking new career paths. It gives our workforce the tools to succeed in a rapidly growing world.

Our government's message is simple: Whether you're starting out or starting over, we're here to help you succeed. We're providing the resources, the training and the support you need to build a better life.

With Working for Workers Five, we're building Ontario's future and we're building it together, and as we are doing this, we're making sure that we consult our stakeholders. The stakeholders include the Police Association of Ontario; the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario; the Ontario Chamber of Commerce; unions including LIUNA, Unite Here, OPCMIA, the Sheet Metal Workers, IUPAT, and the Heat and Frost Insulators; the Ontario Medical Association; the Ontario College of Family Physicians; the Premier's Council on Equality of Opportunity; the Ontario Forest Industry Association; Rescon; and many more. We are asking these people.

Madam Speaker, I want to share with you some of the quotes which we have received about this bill, for example: "Unlocking pathways to the skilled trades means

unlocking the future of our province. The targeted supports announced today will break down barriers and pave the way for more people to discover rewarding and in-demand careers in Ontario's more than 140 skilled trades. Skilled Trades Ontario looks forward to our continued partnership with the ministry to ensure Ontarians have the tools they need to build a thriving future." This is Melissa Young, CEO and registrar of Skilled Trades Ontario.

**1550**

Madam Speaker, these are not the only people. These are the people who actually believe that if we want to grow our province, if we want to make sure that when we welcome over 800,000 new Canadians to our province, we are prepared, we're there to support them, to give them the opportunity, to welcome them here, and grow their family—to the people who are already here, so that we're able to support them. These are not just our words—this is the bill to build on the strong foundation we have already laid with the previous four Working for Workers acts, but more than that, it provides the next generation with the pathways they need to succeed in the trades and contribute to the growth of this province.

At this time, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this essential legislation. Let's give Ontarians the tools they need to build their future, and let's build, together, a better, stronger Ontario right here.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):**  
Questions?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** When this bill was introduced, we had some stakeholders contact us about some of their concerns with the bill, and the main issue they had was what's not in the bill.

I want to read a quote from Ella Bedard, who is from the Workers Action Centre: "There's an epidemic of wage theft in this province, but increasing fines will not, by itself, address the crisis. As we have been saying for years: Workers need proactive inspections to ensure employers obey the law and we need effective collection of stolen wages when the Ministry of Labour has ordered an employer to pay back workers' wages."

My question to you is, what plan does this government have to ensure that there are proactive inspections at workplaces, particularly ones that have a track record of not treating their workers properly, and what is your plan to ensure that if an employer is found to be holding back wages—that you have measures in place to ensure that worker gets paid for the work they completed?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member opposite for that important question.

Workers are the backbone of our economy. Since 2016, the revenue for the province has grown from \$150 billion to \$215 billion, thanks to the hard-working workers of this province.

It is a sad truth—no worker had to go through this. And that is why our ministry has the inspectors continuously doing inspections to make sure all the bad actors are not taking advantage of our workers. I'll continue to ask these workers to reach out to the ministry at any time they have

any issue, so that we can take care of our workers and remove these bad actors.

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

**Ms. Christine Hogarth:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his work. He was the former parliamentary assistant and did many of these consultations towards many of these Working for Workers bills.

So I want to thank you—and, of course, your constituents, for making sure that you are here to add their say.

I was also there at the food terminal when we did the announcement on the bathroom, so I want to also thank your friend who made that suggestion.

That's what this government is about—it's about consulting with people and then getting those ideas and putting it in legislation, and we have many examples all across the province.

To the PA—I'd like to ask him a question about the current workforce. We're seeing a large skills mismatch. There are people looking for jobs, and they don't have the right skills for them, but then there are jobs that require a particular skill set, but we don't have the right candidates. So what actions are this government and this ministry taking to help fix this problem with skills mismatch?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for all your hard work during the summer and along the time—serving as an MPP.

Madam Speaker, simply put, if you really look at it, we have jobs going unfilled, and there are people looking for jobs. I always say, people need jobs, and jobs need people. So what is the missing link? The missing link is exactly what the member talked about: the skills mismatch. That's why our government understands this: practical solutions through practical consultation. We have the Skills Development Fund. Through this fund, we are investing up to \$1.4 billion across the province to provide over 600,000 workers with the skills and training so that they are ready to work.

It's not just the words; it's the actions resulting into the results. In the previous government, we saw 300,000 jobs going away, and today, we have over 800,000 workers working in the province of Ontario. There are over 92,000 manufacturing workers, over 66,000 construction workers, over 36,000 PSWs and health care workers working today because of the work of this government's policies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions? I recognize—the riding name is coming to me—London North Centre.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank my friend from Mississauga–Malton for his presentation. I did want to draw the member's attention, however, through you, Speaker, to the words from the Workers Action Centre. They pointed out that the higher fines that this government is legislating through Bill 190 will really not mean anything, and it will amount to what our labour critic has called a "paper tiger." The Workers Action Centre has pointed out that these higher fines won't mean anything for workers when these fines are very

rarely levied. They pointed out that what the workers actually need would be protection from wrongful dismissal, more proactive inspections, and meaningful collection on orders.

Will this government, in their next iteration of the never-ending Working for Workers bill series, actually talk to workers, actually talk to the OFL and actually put something in the bill that workers legitimately need?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. He talked about continuously working towards improving and supporting the workers, and I absolutely agree to that. Hopefully, we see Working for Workers Six, Seven, and Eight as we continue to support our workers as the continued progress happens in our province of Ontario.

Again, to the member opposite and to everyone in Ontario, this bill is your bill. If you have any suggestions, please reach out to all your MPPs. They're the champions and the voice of you, and they'll take those issues to the ministry. I guarantee you if there is a problem, together, we can solve it. I know this: Under the leadership of this Premier, this minister and PA, we'll continue to support working for our workers. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto:** I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for everything he does in his community and through Mississauga. Thank you.

As you noticed, we're losing one in every three skilled trade workers. With us being able to attract \$45 billion of automotive investment here in the province of Ontario plus that we're building 1.5 million homes across the province, what will this bill do to help get more people in the skilled trades that we need for our economy and to build those homes that we need in the province of Ontario?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Lakeshore, my colleague from Mississauga, for the incredible job that he's doing. As you know, Ontario is the economic engine of Canada over the last six years. You've seen that the good policies of this government have resulted in an increase in revenue and the number of people working.

As you know, over 800,000 people came to Ontario last year. While everyone was coming here, the people already here need homes. That's why we need 1.5 million homes, but at the same time, to build those homes, we need our workers.

As I said earlier, jobs need people and people need jobs, and the solution is very simple. Thanks to the Skills Development Fund, we are investing in the skill set and skill match of the people of Ontario. Today, there are over 600,000 people working with these skill sets, and we will continue to support our workers as we progress and build a better, stronger Ontario. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick question, quick response?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** The member for Mississauga–Malton will know, as do all members in this Legislature,



that there are 2.5 million Ontarians who do not have a family doctor, and a lot of that is due to the 19 hours a week that family doctors spend writing sick notes. This bill kind of eliminates sick notes. It says that workers no longer have to show a note from a qualified health practitioner; however, if the employer requires it, they still have to provide evidence of entitlement to sick leave. Why did the government not take the advice of the OMA and eliminate any requirement for evidence for a worker to stay home when they are sick?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick response.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I want to say thank you to our health care professionals for supporting our Ontarians, including the doctors from OMA. I had the opportunity to meet them during the consultation as well.

We understand the burden on the doctors and the paperwork they have to go through, rather than looking at the patient. That is why, in this bill, we were making sure that they don't have to—the patient, the workers looking to go on sick leave don't have to provide a doctor's note. We're making sure through step by step we are supporting our workers of the province of Ontario.

*Report continues in volume B.*







**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Allsopp, Tyler (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et des Jeux
Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	Oakville	Associate Minister of Mines / Ministre associé des Mines
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	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 (IND)	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	
<b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
<b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre associé de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
<b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
<b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b>	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Electrification / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Électrification
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre 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	
<b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Ministre associé de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
<b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	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 Deputy Government Whip / Whip adjointe du gouvernement
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
<b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
<b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
<b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	