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Mardi
5 novembre 2024

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 5 November 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 5 novembre 2024

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HONOURING VETERANS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À HONORER
LES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Mr. McGregor, on behalf of Mr. Michael D. Ford, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 218, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to honouring military veterans / Projet de loi 218, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les hommages rendus aux anciens combattants militaires.

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

Hon. Graham McGregor: Good morning. I just want to note off the top that I'll be sharing my time with a few of my colleagues: the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills, the Solicitor General and our Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

It's an honour to be here today as we start second reading of the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024. This bill proposes amendments to the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020, the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021, and the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006.

If passed, and once fully implemented, this legislation and associated regulations would help honour and recognize Ontarians who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces, enhance financial support for eligible veterans and promote career pathways for veterans and military families.

Speaker, Ontario is home to almost 150,000 veterans and that number is steadily growing as members are released from military service each year. Over the years, our government has introduced a number of initiatives to support veterans, including financial assistance, health care services and programs to help with the transition to civilian life. These efforts are part of a broader commitment to honour and support those who have served.

Ontario and Ontarians have a long history of supporting the security and defence of our country. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Veterans' Memorial and Afghanistan Memorial, which sits just outside on the grounds of Queen's

Park, commemorates the participation of this province's citizens in military campaigns from the 1860s to recent peacekeeping missions, as well as those who continue to serve today.

Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces have contributed to our country in countless ways, such as the Royal Canadian Air Force, whose members defend and protect Canadian and North American airspace and who contribute to international peace and security in over 100 different roles and responsibilities, or through to the Canadian army, whose highly capable personnel work in over 30 roles serving in communities across Canada, including in remote locations of the country, or the Royal Canadian Navy, whose members tirelessly work to protect Canada's coastlines and Arctic sovereignty.

Through their selfless acts of bravery, whether by land, sea or sky, veterans have protected and continue to safeguard our values, defend our rights and freedoms, and shape our nation's history. Through their actions and dedication, they have shown a strength of character and commitment to this country that has defined the Canadian Armed Forces for generations.

In World War I and World War II, the majority of those who fought and died for freedom were in their early twenties. Many were teenagers: 17-, 18- and 19-year-old boys. It's impossible to imagine what those soldiers went through. They were too young, and yet carried the commitment and sacrificed themselves for the greater good.

When we announced the tabling of our bill yesterday, I had the honour to speak with veterans whom we'd invited to the Legislature. The stories that I heard made me put my life into perspective. I implore everyone to go to their local Legion, volunteer and start listening. The wisdom of the veterans could help people understand what's important. The veteran community and their experiences are invaluable to our society. Everyone in this chamber likely has a story or an experience recounting how veterans have brought honour to our country through their service, not only putting their country before themselves but promoting Canadian values with integrity, both here in Canada and abroad.

Both Canadian armed services currently serving as well as veterans who have now transitioned back to civilian life deserve our respect and heartfelt gratitude, not just during Remembrance Week and then Remembrance Day on November 11, but every day of the year. That's why we are proposing legislative amendments and initiatives to reaffirm our government's deepest gratitude for their sacrifices and our commitment to build a stronger and more prosperous Ontario.

One way that our government is showing our commitment to our province's veteran community is through proposed changes to the Remembrance Week Act, 2016. This includes renaming the act to the Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week Act, 2024, to honour and recognize all veterans, including those who served in addition to those who lost their lives for this great country.

We are also proposing a new section in this act that would, if passed, provide that the minister responsible for the act may honour veterans with various recognition efforts, including by bestowing awards.

Over this past summer, we engaged in discussions with key veterans groups in Ottawa to listen to their stories and hear their thoughts and suggestions for ways our government can better honour and support veterans. From these discussions with representatives from the Royal Canadian Legion and other organizations supporting veterans, we heard that any recognition of veterans on behalf of the public is welcome, but especially for veterans whose volunteerism brings meaningful supports and contributions to their communities.

If I may, we rightfully acknowledge and honour our veterans for their service abroad or service while they're in active service, but, in our government's view, we don't always do the best job of honouring the veterans when they come home and contribute to their communities in civilian life. That's what the next initiative that we're going to talk about is hoping to address. To that end, I'm pleased to share that our government is developing a new award focused on veterans that would be delivered in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command to show our profound gratitude and specifically recognize veterans who have made significant contributions in their communities here in Ontario. This would be the first provincial award in Ontario specifically recognizing veterans.

Our government recognizes the extraordinary courage and significant sacrifices made by veterans across the province. We will always express our unwavering appreciation by highlighting and celebrating veteran service and formally recognizing their contributions to our local communities across Ontario.

I know my good friend and colleague the Solicitor General will be speaking more about this shortly; however, I want to put a pronounced emphasis on another aspect of this proposed legislation: the condemnation of stolen valour. With intended changes to the preamble of the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, to condemn any act that disrespects veterans, including acts of stolen valour, our government is reaffirming that veterans deserve to be treated with dignity and our upmost respect. We will always be clear and unequivocal: Our government will always condemn any act that disrespects veterans or detracts from the honour of those who have actively served their country. Anyone lying about their military service, rank or medals received must be condemned in the strongest possible terms today and every day.

We are also proposing to rename Remembrance Week in Ontario to Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week to

better recognize living veterans for their service and contributions in addition to those who gave their lives in service to our country.

Our province's veteran community is growing every year, with service members of varying ages. Whether it is by serving abroad in active combat, such as those who fought in Afghanistan, or those who have been deployed across the world as a part of peacekeeping missions, we have heard many stories of valour and how former service members brought credit and pride to our country.

0910

It is important that we recognize also, Madam Speaker, that the veteran population is changing. For instance, the more than 40,000 service members who served in Afghanistan will soon become the larger cohort of veterans.

By renaming Remembrance Week to Veterans' Week and Remembrance Day, we'll be able to better commemorate those who have given their lives in service to this country, as well as those who are living, to ensure that all their service and sacrifices will never be forgotten. This proposal positions Ontario as a provincial leader across Canada in legislating Veterans' Week.

Speaker, while our government is committed to the recognition of veterans for their service and broader contributions to our local communities, we are also steadfast in our commitment to providing them with tangible supports. With that in mind, I'd like to talk a little bit about the Soldiers' Aid Commission. While my colleague the member from Thornhill will speak in greater detail about how our government reformed the Soldiers' Aid Commission in 2020, and will continue to support this respected commission to reach more veterans, I'll focus on the high-level themes.

This commission provides financial support to eligible veterans in need to help with many of life's typical expenses: health- and mental health-related supports, housing-related expenditures, basic clothing and personal items, and employment-related supports. The reality is, the transition to civilian life can be difficult for a lot of our veterans, so the need for this type of support is real and growing.

When we took office, the typical profile of a veteran had already changed. It's with sadness that, with each passing year, the number of living veterans who served in the Second World War and the Korean War decreases. Until recently, younger veterans who served more recently were ineligible for support through the Soldiers' Aid Commission. We must not forget those who served in recent UN peacekeeping missions, for example, in Rwanda, Somalia or elsewhere, and we must also never forget the over 40,000 members of the Canadian Armed Forces who fought most recently in an active combat zone in Afghanistan.

Speaker, we have a commitment to support those who fight for our freedoms, including the right to free and fair elections, and even for the right for us as parliamentarians to speak in this House. I know some members of this House are probably a little upset that I get to speak, but more's the pity.

There was a choice that we faced between winding down a commission that had been truly groundbreaking over the course of more than 100 years or modernizing it to support a whole new generation of veterans and their families. We chose the latter. We chose to keep faith with those who served and protected us. We know that our veterans rightfully earn an overwhelming level of public support. We know that Ontarians want veterans to be supported as they establish their post-service lives. We know that, and so we took the opportunity four years ago to do what is right and do what is best for our veterans and their families by modernizing the Soldiers' Aid Commission.

Veterans face unique challenges, some of which require assistance to overcome, and this is exactly where the Soldiers' Aid Commission can play a role. Veterans gave so much for our country and our province; that is why we're committed to making sure that the Soldiers' Aid Commission remains an integral part of Ontario's strong veteran community.

This morning, the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services announced our government's plan to enhance financial assistance available through the Soldiers' Aid Commission for eligible veterans in need. The intended changes increase the maximum amount of financial assistance that eligible veterans and their eligible family members may receive through the Soldiers' Aid Commission from \$2,000 to \$3,000 in a 12-month period. And applicants may apply multiple times over the 12-month period until they have received the maximum amount of \$3,000 for eligible expenses. If both spouses in a household are veterans, each spouse can apply for up to \$3,000 in a 12-month period.

Speaker, this increase in financial support will give veterans more help to pay for essential services and supports, which includes health-related services such as hearing aids or eyeglasses, prescription and dental needs, specialized equipment like wheelchairs, and home repairs and moving costs.

We want to make it easier for veterans to apply for financial assistance from the commission. They've done so much for us, Speaker. Moving barriers out of the way for them to get the aid that they rightfully deserve is the least that our government can do.

We also want to make it easier for them to apply. From the commission right now, veterans need to apply for other funding from other veteran-specific programs before applying to the commission. Under our planned changes, veterans will only need to seek federal veteran supports before applying to the commission, which we hope will improve access and get the money where it rightfully belongs, assisting our veterans in their transitions to civilian lives.

Our support doesn't stop there. The proposed Honouring Veterans Act, 2024, builds on work already under way to promote enhanced health care service delivery and increase access to virtual health care services through Health811. Moreover, with help from our labour minister and our colleagues from the Ministry of Labour, Immigra-

tion, Training and Skills Development, our bill, if passed, would also support career pathways for veterans and military families. My good friend the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills will speak more about that.

Ontario loves, respects and honours our veterans. While we can never thank them enough for their service to our great nation, we can commit to always doing more to support and recognize them. Our government is doing exactly that through the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024.

As we approach Remembrance Day on November 11, let us recommit as a Legislature, not just today but year-round, to recognizing veterans for their service and contributions to our communities, supporting them through financial supports such as the Soldiers' Aid Commission and promoting a seamless transition into civilian employment in skilled trades for them post-service.

Madam Speaker, I would humbly say that I think this is a great bill, I think it deserves cross-party support and I certainly hope our colleagues in other parties will support this bill and pass this as soon as we can so we can get the support that we need for our veterans.

When you hear some of the stories of our brave men and women who served our country, I'd humbly submit that I don't think we can ever thank them enough, but we can sure as heck try. With this bill that we're putting forward, our government is doing our part to honour our veterans, support them and let them know that they've had our backs and we'll have their backs as well.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thanks to the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for his speech.

It is my honour and privilege to be speaking to the Honouring Veterans Act. Words cannot truly describe the level of commitment and sacrifice one must have to serve their country in the Armed Forces. That's exactly why we, the civilians, must take such an effort to make sure that they receive the honour and support they deserve. It is our duty to show that their commitment is not forgotten and to recognize the veterans who continue serving their communities as volunteers.

As the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism already mentioned, we are also proposing changes to help veterans to find expedited career pathways into the skilled trades for themselves and their families. Our veterans are not only heroes who have protected our country and fought for our freedoms, they are also professionals with valuable skills that Ontario needs to build for the future. They deserve to have our support when they return to civilian life and employment once their service is complete.

From our consultations with service members, their spouses and veterans, we heard that a considerable challenge when returning to civilian life is finding a career that complements the skills and experiences learned during service. The Honouring Veterans Act proposes to formally recognize certain military trades with their civilian trades equivalent and help them start their civilian careers in the skilled trades faster, without burdensome red tape and delays.

Veterans are professionals who possess valuable skills that Ontario needs to help build for the future. With around 8,000 Canadian Armed Forces members released from service every year, our government is creating a win-win-win situation for veterans, employers and our economy.

In the technology sector by itself, the majority of the technology we use today was military 10 years ago. So those veterans have skills in areas which are leading-edge to use in civilian life today, but we need to make sure that they have that tool.

0920

It's not only giving them the ability to get integrated in civilian life when they come out of service, it actually helps them to blend. So it's not only blending their time in the service, it is actually blending their exit strategy from the service and where they are going to end up after the years of service they will be serving their country for. We are doing this by proposing amendments to the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. It would help support skilled trades career pathways for veterans and Armed Forces members.

In response to our government's consultations with the military and veterans' community, we are also proposing changes to the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006, with Skilled Trades Ontario to accelerate credential recognition for veterans and military spouses who are licensed trade professionals from out of the province but within Canada. This will enable our government to modernize credential recognition for veterans and military spouses of service members.

Our government is also building on prior learning assessment and recognition processes at Ontario's publicly assisted colleges and universities to recognize the valuable learning experiences of veterans of Canada's Armed Forces. If passed, these changes will empower veterans and their families with the skills and a pathway for meaningful employment after service.

Madam Speaker, I think this is a great piece of legislation. It will help veterans who joined the service to know that they have a clear path to go back to civilian life after, to be able to meet the needs of their families, to be able to be integrated in the community, to be able to be productive—and we need their skills.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really appreciate being able to speak about the bill. I think it's great for the country and great for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'm delighted to rise and to speak on the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024, and to thank my colleague the member from Brampton North, the acting minister and my friend, for bringing this forward. It is not lost on us, on the week that we speak about this bill, just prior to Remembrance Day.

I also wanted to acknowledge my colleague and friend from Kiiwetinoong who yesterday reminded us why we should think of the late Senator Murray Sinclair today and every day. Senator Sinclair was not afraid to let us learn about the path to reconciliation.

I think it is so important that we remembered him yesterday, and every day, but also to acknowledge the contributions that First Nations, Inuit and Métis veterans, who served Canada—that we remember them on November 8. I think of November 8 as an important day in our calendar just like November 11. For the 12,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis who served Canada, we should remember their contribution so that we have a country that we can live safely in and have a country for other generations to follow.

So I ask everyone here today to join me in remembering and honouring the profound debt we owe to Canadian veterans. I will be at my Royal Canadian Legion, just around the corner from my constituency office, on Monday, as I have done in years past, to look at the cenotaph that they have there and to not only recall the stories that we read—and understanding that history was never accomplished by people who did nothing. These were real people with real families, with real lives, and they put everything on the line for ourselves and our generations to come.

I always listen attentively just before—next week, we will be on our break in the constituency, but I know the member from St. Catharines also speaks every year in the House as we remember those who served on Remembrance Day. I think of other members that have risen as well to tell the stories of their families and people that served. In my own family there's one story—I'll have to do more research on it—about a great uncle who served in the then-British colonial army, as it was told to me, who served in the First World War. It's hard to believe when you look at the numbers of veterans—unfortunately, we don't have any alive from the First World War, and the numbers who served in the Second World War are dwindling very quickly, but the young country of Canada contributed so much. That's why we have to be there for the veterans in our day, in this generation, so that we never leave them behind.

In times of both war and peace, veterans stood as a defender of our freedom and values, safeguarding the rights and security that every Canadian cherishes.

Some veterans, when they came back from service, came forward to serve in other ways. They became firefighters, police officers, first responders, dentists and doctors. They had lives too where they were able to share their stories of not only their service in conflict and wars, but took it even further to make a difference in the lives of our communities.

I had the honour very early this year—I think it was the first event of 2024—when I went to Toronto Police Service and I met our Toronto Police Service officers in uniform who had given their service to the Canadian Armed Forces. Let me tell you something, it is unbelievable to hear these stories. A person's commitment to serve, as the Premier has said many times, as others have talked about, this concept that I hold dear of service over self, gives new meaning when you meet somebody that served, that is a veteran, but also has come back to serve again.

And I think of those incredible police officers, firefighters and first responders.

There are things we can do. There are small things we can all do, especially this month, and one of them is attending or volunteering at a remembrance or veterans' appreciation event. For those who have Legions in their riding, it's so simple: On November 11, go to the Legion; go for the service; see for yourself. Lose yourself in a moment of time that, for my generation, may seem a little bit distant from the First World War, the Second World War or the Korean conflict.

When I think of those veterans today, I think of those that served in Afghanistan and other conflicts in the world where Canada has continued to contribute, because we are a country that believes in peace, we are a country that is optimistic and we are a country with incredible values that welcomes everyone from the world to bring the best of who they are into our province. This is why I've always said that one of our greatest strengths is the diversity we all bring.

Participating in a Remembrance Day event is very important. If we live near a museum—I know in Ottawa, there are phenomenal museums that also tell the story of Canadians that have contributed—go to the museum and tell the stories, because I think it's important. We must learn about the contributions that veterans made across Canada. Each region of Ontario has stories of veterans who served bravely, shaping the fabric of our communities through their dedication and sacrifice.

0930

It's understanding these contributions that connects us to the history and to the legacy, and to ask them to tell their stories if they are so able, because they're hard. We can't only look at history books and read old newspaper clippings to understand the contributions that people have made. That's why, if you see a veteran, approach them and talk to them and learn from their own expert eyewitness to history. This knowledge deepens our respect and reminds us of our responsibility to support and remember veterans as an essential part of Ontario's heritage and identity.

I think it is important also that we look to veterans as guest speakers to honour them when we can. For those in the Legislature that were fortunate enough to receive over our lifetime a government medal, let me tell you, it's a high honour. I received one in the early 1990s; I was rather young, and I was overwhelmed to receive a medal for a contribution that I had made. I know many of us from time to time at different occasions—the member sitting near me from Richmond Hill; I've seen her wear her medals as well.

The medals are an important recognition of a contribution made. But when you see a medal on a veteran, it's just taking it to a different level—something so small but so important for them, that they were recognized for something that they did. I think that's important. So inviting them to be a guest speaker at an event is important.

Carrying out acts of appreciation to honour veterans—sometimes it's a small honour. I have some veterans in my constituency of York Centre, and I enjoy sitting with them

at the Legion when I can and understanding their contribution, not only what it was at the time that they served in active service, but the work and the resources that they bring to another generation. When we see the young cadets who come forward, such as on Remembrance Day, we see the umbilical tie, one generation to another, and that's important.

We have to support campaigns that honour veterans. These campaigns promote awareness of the challenges that veterans face. This is very important. We can donate to campaigns to contribute to initiatives that improve the lives of veterans and their families. Supporting the campaigns helps foster a culture of respect and gratitude.

That's why the bill that my colleague tabled today, the Honouring Veterans Act, includes proposals from the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and others who have contributed to why this bill is so important. I really want to say thank you to all the ministries.

The act, along with supporting initiatives by several ministries, will expand provincial recognition for veterans, increase financial and community supports for veterans and support career pathways for veterans and military families. It's important because Ontario is home to approximately 149,000 veterans, and this number is growing, with 8,000 to 9,000 Canadian Armed Forces members being released from military service each year. And we know that while most veterans do well post-service, many also face socio-economic challenges that impact they're well-being and quality of life. As well, military spouses also face challenges and barriers. That's why we have to be there for them. They were there for us.

My colleague and mentor and great friend the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility reminds us of our duty to take care of another generation. They were there for us; we have to be there for them. But I say to my colleague, there's a younger generation of veterans coming forward as well who have served in recent conflicts. Who will be there for them in the years ahead? It may be our children—it will be our children—who have to take care of them, just like we have to take care of those veterans that served in the Second World War and the Korean conflict and in other conflicts. We have a duty to uphold this responsibility.

Expanding the provincial recognition for veterans and facilitating a process to support programs are essential steps in reinforcing our dedication to honouring those who sacrificed so much for all of us. Without adequate support, these individuals often face unnecessary challenges, from financial stress to mental and health struggles. It is important that we are there for them.

We need to talk again about Remembrance Week. I started at the top of my remarks to make sure that we know the date, November 8. We spoke about that. That is very important, Indigenous Remembrance Day. We must remember that day.

November 11 is also an important day. That is the day when we come together. We come together and we go to our Royal Canadian Legions or we go to communities around Ontario that have a cenotaph. Just stop at the cenotaph. Stop for a minute and reflect on how lucky we are to live in this incredible province, thanks to the service of others.

It's important, as part of this legislation, that we amend the name of the statute to Remembrance Day and Veterans Week Act, 2024, that we amend the preamble to honour those who served, in addition to those who gave their lives, and add a statement condemning acts of stolen valour.

I want to talk about stolen valour. Yesterday, my colleague, the minister, brought in veterans. I had a chance to understand more about why stolen valour is such a threat. I never really thought about it until I read the bill and I made some calls myself, because I don't know what type of individual would think it's okay to be an impostor, to wear medals that don't belong to them, to feel that they have a rite of passage to be somebody that they're not. There is no society where this would be acceptable.

I really take privilege in even understanding what type of deranged individual could do something like this, because it's totally unacceptable. It's unacceptable anywhere that anybody should steal away valour or be an impostor to somebody else. I think of firefighters, police officers, first responders. I think of so many people, whose work to keep the province safe, is rooted in the identity of who they are. Anything that was awarded to them is theirs. We can't have somebody using a privilege that doesn't belong to them, as a means of saying, "I will be that person." This goes beyond the pale of anything that anybody could justify.

I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, because I've had the privilege of attending at so many march-past ceremonies in Aylmer, Ontario, at the Ontario Police College:—some of them served in the military. For the 10 march-past ceremonies I've been privileged to see, almost 5,000 people joined the ranks of police officers. Every time I look at the medals on the jackets of these officers, who are in some cases quite young, I ask the question: Where did you get the medals? Who awarded you this? And they say, "I served in the Canadian Armed Forces. I was awarded a medal for something meritorious that I did to stand up."

I talk of the importance of the uniform. The uniform of a police officer or a firefighter commands respect. It means when you go to a community wearing your uniform, it has an enormous responsibility for the person wearing it, that they take with a sacred oath, a sacred trust. For the people who see men and women in uniform, we respect that uniform for the importance it commands. Stolen valour, somebody who feels it's okay to put on somebody else's uniform, that didn't earn the right to do that, is causing not only confusion in the eyes of others—because when we see somebody in uniform, we assume that that person had the authority and the charge and the carriage to wear that uniform.

0940

I find this beyond horrific that we are even talking about what the minister mentioned in his remarks—stolen valour—of how somebody could do it and get away with it. This really bothers me, and that's why I'm delighted that in the bill we're talking about stolen valour as a way to raise awareness, as a way to remind people that you can't do it. It's not right.

So on this Remembrance Day, pay even more attention to the fact that the people that wear the uniforms—and the veterans that come out, I might add, on Remembrance Week, to wear their uniforms again. We're wearing poppies on our jackets and on our clothing ahead of Remembrance Day to remind—and we say the words, "Lest we forget." It's up to us in this generation and this present time never to forget. That's why we have to be grateful.

Madame la Présidente, je voudrais remercier chaque personne qui assure la sécurité de l'Ontario. Pour le premier ministre de l'Ontario et pour moi, c'est personnel.

It is personal. It is personal that we thank people that come forward to serve—and do you know what? It should be personal. It should be personal to every person living in Ontario, coming to Ontario, seeing the richness as to why we are so optimistic. It's because we believe in our province, we believe in our future and together, we can do so much. It goes back to remembering our past.

History is hard. History was never made by people that did nothing. So today, and every day, especially on November 8, especially on November 11, let us remember, lest we forget.

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

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I rise today to speak on an incredibly important topic—one that is important for all Ontarians and one that touches me personally. I am truly honoured to be here today in our Legislature, in the House of the people, bought and paid for dearly, to acknowledge and celebrate the people that have given us a gift.

Usually, when I speak with seniors, servicemen and -women or veterans, I bring what I call the gift of laughter. I have some fun with the crowd. I let people know that laughter makes us younger, more handsome and more beautiful, and there is a lot of truth to that.

But today, I would like to talk about another gift, and that is the gift of freedom. You see, I was born in Incheon, South Korea. Incheon is where the United Nations forces that included the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces landed to liberate Korea. As a young boy, I saw bodies lying on the road, B-29 bombers flying overhead, tanks in the streets and soldiers walking by our house. This experience stays with you forever.

What also has always stayed with me is that it was Canada—her brave sons and daughters—who answered the call. They came to the shores of a faraway country to save the Korean people, defend democracy and protect freedom, so that I can stand here today with you. I will be forever thankful for the ultimate sacrifice that 516 Canadians made to save Korea.

I have been blessed to have been able to come to this great country to serve the people as a city councillor, as MPP and as Minister for Seniors and Accessibility—the very first Korean-born minister in Ontario. But none of that would be possible today if it wasn't for the sacrifice and commitment of Canada. You see, as we introduce a new piece of legislation today to honour our servicemen and -women, we must always remember that, if not for the brave men and women over the past 157 years of Confederation, none of us could be here today.

I could not have experienced my gift of freedom as a boy in Korea without the brave Canadians who answered the call during the Korean War. We could not experience our gift of freedom if Canada and her Allies did not liberate Europe or in any other war before or since. This is how incredible and important a thing that our servicemen and -women have done. None of us could live in the best province—Ontario—in the best country in the world—Canada—unless we have this gift of freedom—a freedom that this little boy from more than 70 years ago could not have imagined.

I also could not have imagined that I would ever be standing here honouring the people who have and continue to answer the call, who put our lives ahead of theirs and made sure that we could all be here today. As we honour and remember with this new piece of legislation today, I want to thank them for my gift of freedom. Their sacrifice and the ongoing sacrifice of all those who serve today helps to protect this Legislature, a symbol of the people who are represented by those elected. They safeguard our beautiful province and country. This is why I am so honoured to stand and speak to many of the incredible pieces of this bill.

As Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, I have seen first-hand the effects of social isolation on our seniors. I often say that social isolation is public enemy number one for our seniors. When our seniors are isolated, their physical and mental health declines. When they are isolated, they are vulnerable to those who seek to exploit their isolation, often causing them to become victims of scams and abuse.

Our province is stronger when everyone is connected—when we are able to weave their unique selves in the fabric of our communities. This is why the community supports in this bill are so important. It is not only seniors who can feel isolated—our veterans can feel isolated. By enhancing community supports for our veterans, including by ensuring they have access to quality services, by exploring partnerships to support their housing needs and by introducing a transit relief program, we can combat social isolation for our veterans.

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When our veterans stay connected, we are all made better by the connection. Their strength continues to be our strength. Through this bill, our strength can also be shared with them.

When we look across the worlds of business and the not-for-profit sector, we see many veterans who, after their

military careers, have found inspiring ways to give back through taking on critical roles in these organizations.

We know that many of the lessons learned while in the military have a direct application in so many areas across our province. Lessons in leadership, hard work and interpersonal communication can be directly applied across a host of different sectors. While these skills are directly transferable, sometimes our veterans need extra help to make the transition into new careers. This is why the elements of this bill that assist in that transition are so important.

Streamlining the pathways for veterans and military families to have their credentials recognized is a marvelous, common-sense approach which fully aligns with our government's ongoing work to cut red tape and deliver services for the people of Ontario. We need to ensure that there are no barriers to those making that transition. I want to thank my colleagues for all the work they have put into developing a bill which helps veterans and their families transition into second careers.

These supports can help ensure that our veterans always feel connected, that their community cares about them and their families, always. Removing GO Transit and UP Express transit fares is another important way that we can help our veterans feel the support of our whole community.

It is an honour, today, to speak to a bill that includes provisions for a new award for our veterans and that is delivered in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command. My ministry, earlier this year, updated our regulations regarding who can partner with the government in the operation of seniors active living centres. We enabled more organizations, including Legions, to join our existing municipal partners in delivering key activities that keep seniors active and connected in our communities.

I want to thank our Premier and the Minister of Finance for their leadership through the fall economic statement to provide funding which will enable the government to create 100 new SALCs across Ontario. This historic investment will enable more opportunities for all our seniors, including our veterans, to stay connected in our communities. It also enable our Legions to continue their role as hubs in our community by hosting senior programming. It further encourages all our SALCs to work with the Legions and organizations that support our veterans, helping to create new partnerships and connections, which further strengthens our province.

Today, we have 316 SALCs, each an important hub which connects seniors in our communities with not only programs and activities that keep them active, fit and engaged, but also which act as conduits to other service providers that deliver the support they need to live independently.

Let's reflect on this for a moment. It has taken us decades, across governments of all stripes, to get to 316 centres. Now, we are adding almost 33% more. This is what leadership looks like, Madam Speaker. It is an example of building the kinds of partnerships needed to set up our province to continue to grow and thrive. These

kinds of partnerships provide accessibility and flexibility to support our seniors in the ways that best serve them. It helps to ensure that all seniors, including our honoured veterans, can receive the in-community supports they need: supports that keep them connected, active and healthy; supports that help them to feel the dignity and respect which they deserve; supports that are now made stronger by the ongoing, expanded partnership with organizations like the Royal Canadian Legion.

I want to thank all of my colleagues for their ongoing work to honour our veterans and their families. I look forward to hopefully sharing more news in the near future about extra ways that we are supporting organizations that help veterans who are seniors. I have shared how the sacrifice of so many has personally impacted me. Without these Canadians who bravely came to the aid of South Korea, I would likely not be here today. Every day I am reminded of how lucky I am that when the people of Korea asked for help, Canada answered the call.

My experience is only one of countless others. Each of us has been positively touched by the selfless acts of valour of our veterans. We are honoured by the action of these brave men and women who put themselves in harm's way to defend democracy and the ideals of human rights. We are honoured by the families of our veterans who have also endured hardships on behalf of the ethic that all people, everywhere in the world, should be able to enjoy the freedoms which Canadians have here. We continue to be honoured by those who wear the uniform today and by their families. While aggressors around the world still seek to impose their will on others, our military stands tall in the defence of democracy and human rights.

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To each of them—all of those who have served, those who serve today and to their families—I say from the bottom of my heart: Thank you, and may God bless you.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Do we have questions for the speakers?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Schedule 4 of this bill introduces an amendment to the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, 2020, adding in a paragraph about a new objective for the commission, which would be to assist the minister in promoting the financial program. We all in this House know how important it is to get the word out for individuals that desperately need this aid. Absolutely, we as policy-makers for this province should be promoting offering this benefit to veterans and families—it is a definite must. However, this bill does not clearly define how exactly the commission will assist.

My question is this: Can this government clarify to the individuals watching today—the new and old veterans that are listening today—if they will be taking funds from the commission's annual budget that is allocated for veterans and using these funds for advertising purposes?

Hon. Graham McGregor: I thank my colleague for the question; it's an important one.

We know when we design programs like these, the intention of government is to make sure that these programs make it into the community, actually make it to the

people that need them. One of the changes we made in this bill, which I hope the members will support, is increasing the amount from \$2,000 to \$3,000. We think, at a time of high inflation, with the cost-of-living crisis being the way it is, getting that extra bit of money into our veterans' pockets is simply the right thing to do. We've also put forward measures to make sure that it's easier to access before—well, as it stands now, I guess, and hopefully the bill passes, they have to exhaust all options. Now we're proposing to change it so they only have to seek federal veterans' aid funding to make it easier. Certainly, we can do a better job promoting the program.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the minister: At its core, this particular legislation before us this morning and later this week is reflective of a consultation that included the Ontario Command of the Royal Canadian Legion, True Patriot Love, Wounded Warriors Canada—just a few of the examples of the organizations that informed the intent and purpose of this legislation. I'd like the minister to talk a little bit about that consultation and how it shaped this legislation this morning.

Hon. Graham McGregor: I thank my colleague from Whitby not only for that question but for his unwavering support for veterans living in the Durham region throughout his entire political career and public life.

Applause.

Hon. Graham McGregor: Yes, give it up for the member for Whitby, guys. Come on.

I'd also like to acknowledge two other colleagues that were pivotal in putting this bill together. Of course, I am the Acting Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism, but our existing minister, who's on a leave of absence—we hope to have him back very soon—engaged in extensive consultations, as well as the member for Thornhill in her role as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. She's actually doing that announcement with the minister, or just did that announcement this morning, about our changes to the Soldiers' Aid Commission.

Politics is a team sport. We've been acting as a team here in the PC government. We hope members of the opposition also join our team and pass this bill as quickly as possible.

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

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Wow. Team sport. You didn't answer my first question, but that's okay. Working as a team sport would have been including the opposition so we could work together on this.

This bill outlines many suggestions for honouring our veterans, which is wonderful, whether through visiting a war memorial or taking part in Remembrance Day services on November 11. We just heard from the minister recommending everyone visit their Legions on Remembrance Day and make efforts to partake in local ceremonies at your cenotaph. However, there's quite a barrier that prevents most people from being able to do that.

My question is to the minister or the associate minister. Does this government have plans to make Remembrance Day a paid statutory holiday, so veterans, veterans' children and all Ontarians, their families, students and children can attend local ceremonies and pay their proper respects and honour their services, honour their parents' services, honour their family members' services and honour their neighbours' services?

Hon. Graham McGregor: Look, when we engage with Legions and with other veterans' organizations, that's not what came up. What did come up was seeking more recognition from the Ontario government for the service of their members, not only when they're in active service, but also for their service when they came home to Ontario and continued to serve their community. That's why the award that we're putting forward, in partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion, the Ontario Command division, is specifically going to be looking at honouring veterans, working with local Legions to honour veterans for community service that they gave for Ontario when they came home.

We, rightfully, always need to honour and acknowledge our veterans for their service while they're in active service, but I would humbly submit that the government and us as a society, we don't always do the best job of making sure we remember them when they're here. This award will help us do that, and we certainly hope the opposition puts partisan politics aside and supports the bill. Let's do the right thing and stand up for our veterans.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, through you to the minister, on the award, which is being developed in collaboration with the Ontario Command, can you speak a little bit, please, to the criteria that's going to be used to evaluate the contributions of veterans for this new award, please?

Hon. Graham McGregor: Thank you to the member for Whitby for that question. Gosh, I wish I had more detail, but part of what we're doing with this bill is giving ourselves the legislative authority to put the award together. We want to make sure that we're working with our local Legions—with the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command, but also with the local Legions—to see exactly how we can put this award together for the maximum effect.

It's an important honour that we need to bestow on a group of people that we owe a lot to, quite frankly. We know we can never thank veterans enough for their service, for what they did for our country. We can sure as heck try. When we're putting forward this award, we'll be engaging in consultation over the coming year to make sure that we get it right. It's something that we have to get right. It's something that they deserve. It's something that myself, and I know the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism as well, takes very seriously. We're going to get it done.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Thanks to the minister and the members opposite who have spoken about this bill today, about the new bill, about the new incentives. I've looked through the public announcement as what has come through so far. I'm looking forward to looking at the bill deeper, because there are many things in our communities that veterans need. So I see that extra money going to them will be beneficial, for sure.

But one of the basics that veterans need so greatly—particularly, I'll speak for my own community—is housing. We have over 97—and that's my last count a couple of years back—identified veterans who are homeless and living rough on our streets in the city of Hamilton. This \$3,000 a year is just absolutely not going to cut it for those veterans. So can we have the government's commitment to ensure that no veteran has to live on the street and that they do have the proper supports and housing that are absolutely necessary to putting them back in the community?

Hon. Graham McGregor: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. It's a good chance for me to talk about a little bit of the great work that our government House leader did during his time as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I know some of the members—he did some things that were maybe not popular with the members opposite. But I think a really good thing we can all acknowledge that he did, that they should even acknowledge that he did, is making sure that we got shovels in the ground for Homes for Heroes in Kingston, to make sure that we're supporting transitional housing for veterans. I just want to shout-out the government House leader for that. I know he took the bull by the horns and made sure that that happened.

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Part of the bill is also acknowledging—and part of our suite of initiatives is having our current Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing look at more opportunities for municipalities to make sure we get the housing part right. I'll also say that part of the bill, the Soldiers' Aid Commission, is important. The work we're doing to get skills more readily recognized to provide more opportunities so veterans are able to transition to civilian life is more important. The stolen valour piece is—

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

We're going to move to further debate.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Good morning to all my colleagues today. Good morning, Mom—I know you're watching. Thank you for all your advice and history of my family in the military.

It is always a distinct honour to stand here in the House as the opposition critic of Legions, veterans and military affairs, a title I want to remind everyone that was created by this opposition because there was a gap. There was a large gap in representation here at a provincial level, and it was noted. Most people know that the federal government and Veterans Affairs Canada is the level that handles concerns and issues affecting veterans across Canada. That's very true, but at a provincial level, we still have

responsibilities to our veterans, young and old, past and present.

I am pleased to talk about this new bill, the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024, and to discuss what this bill entails, what it introduces and what it means for veterans in Ontario. Just yesterday, November 4, we recognized the beginning of Veterans' Week 2024, which goes until November 11 when we recognize the true sacrifices of our military service members across all of Canada.

The two-minute moment of silence we observe can never truly make up for the lives lost and it can never properly honour the sacrifices of young men and women. But it's a moment where we bow our heads in solidarity and we bow our heads in reflection—a moment when we collectively stand together from the west coast to the east coast across Canada, all with the same thought and goal in mind.

Before I touch on this new bill, I think it is very important to go back and recount the invaluable and countless contributions that veterans not only made during their physical years of service, but even after they returned home to their communities, to their families and to a new Canada—a country and a province that looked different from when they had left to fight in World War I and World War II.

In World War I and World War II, these veterans were individuals who walked our streets. They left as young boys, often lying about their age—far too young they were. Back to home soil, the motherland, they returned as men—men that had witnessed unspeakable things and now needed to address issues plaguing their community, such as a lack of affordable housing.

Ironically, our veterans are experiencing the exact same thing today, so maybe not much has changed across Canada or in our province. Just yesterday my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre talked about how veterans historically fought for the right to housing right here in Canada. That's such an important point to raise here.

While we wear our poppies proudly this month, we must make sure that the poppy is not made out to solely be a performative symbol that we are expected to wear during the month of November. So while I wear mine today, let me dig into the history of housing and how the advocacy and the resiliency of generations before us came to provide hundreds of thousands—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize to the member for interrupting, but it's 10:15 and we now need to move to members' statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF MS CHI-CHEEMAUN

Mr. Rick Byers: Colleagues, on September 29, my wife Margot and I had the great pleasure of joining a large group of passengers to celebrate the 50th anniversary of

the maiden voyage of the MS Chi-Cheemaun, the amazing vessel which runs between Tobermory at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula to South Baymouth on Manitoulin Island.

The Chi-Cheemaun was built in 1973 in the Collingwood shipyard. With a length of 365 feet and beam of 62 feet, it is a big and beautiful ship.

There was a naming contest for the new vessel, with 225 entries submitted. The \$100 first prize was won by Donald Keeshig; although it was his daughter Lenore who submitted the entry on his behalf. Chi-Cheemaun is an Ojibway word meaning "big canoe."

On September 29, 1974, Chi-Cheemaun made its first run from Tobermory to Manitoulin Island, carrying 140 passengers and 60 vehicles. The ship encountered 14-foot waves on the 28-mile journey, but the new vessel made the journey with ease.

Chi-Cheemaun is operated by the Owen Sound Transportation Co. Its schedule runs from May to October, and it makes three return trips each day.

The 50th anniversary voyage was wonderful, with calm waters and beautiful scenery. Author Richard Thomas, who has written a great history of the Chi-Cheemaun, was guest speaker, and we heard Lenore tell her story of the naming. There was also great music from Moondance. Thank you to all those involved in this great celebration. It was a wonderful tribute.

Colleagues, if you want a great sailing experience, come to Tobermory and ride the Chi-Cheemaun.

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

MPP Wayne Gates: In Niagara, residents are paying out-of-control rates for parking at our local hospitals. It's \$3 for just a half an hour of parking, and \$16 a day. It's no secret we have an affordability crisis in the province of Ontario. Costs for rent, groceries, gas and much more have skyrocketed over the last few years. We shouldn't be adding extra costs to people's lives and forcing families to choose between visiting a loved one at a hospital or making ends meet.

Patients should be focused on getting better. Families should be focused on caregiving and support, and front-line health care workers shouldn't have to pay to go to work and park. We shouldn't be charging nurses, doctors, patients and families fees to park at a hospital. I know right here at Queen's Park, MPPs do not pay for parking. Why should nurses, doctors, front-line workers have to pay to go to work to save lives?

Local hospital systems depend on parking fees for millions of dollars a year, and much of that revenue goes to private companies contracted out for parking services. This government shouldn't be forcing hospitals to rely on parking fees to pay their bills or to provide care for patients. This government should be funding our public health care system and ensuring patients have the resources they need to provide the best possible care. This government should stop underfunding, provide hospital systems with the funding they need and ensure no one—

patients, families, workers alike—has to pay to park at a hospital.

WHITBY HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Lorne Coe: I had the opportunity last week to open a 154,000-square-foot health and wellness centre in west Whitby. The centre is the most extensive medical group practice in Canada. This innovative facility will provide hard-working families in Whitby with access to urgent care, cardiology, diagnostic imaging, physiotherapy, a pharmacy and psychological support.

The clinic's central location near the toll-free Highways 412 and 418, situated on land purchased from the Ministry of Transportation—thanks to the Honourable Caroline Mulroney, who was the Minister of Transportation at the time—was strategically chosen to facilitate the provision of medical care by 85 physicians, including specialists and family doctors, to patients across the region of Durham.

Speaker, what's clear is that our government will leave no stone unturned to improve the quality and access to health care in Whitby and other towns and cities within the region of Durham.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: A constituent of mine has been in crisis for five long years. She is a mom who had to quit her job and is completely burnt out trying to care for her 24/7, complex high-needs eight-year-old daughter. Last week, after exhausting every avenue possible, she gave up guardianship of her daughter to the children's aid. Her family can no longer afford to properly care for her needs.
1020

First, the children's aid put her daughter in a hotel room in Sudbury. Now she has been moved a five-hour drive away from her family to a foster facility in Mississauga. All of this should and could have been prevented.

In March, I held a press conference in the living room of Tina Senior. Tina had to quit her job as a registered nurse at Health Sciences North to care for her complex medical-needs son, Alex. Before the Ford government came into power, children with high levels of need received help from community-based children's agencies. Kids received the care and support they needed to achieve their full potential. Now, under this government, parents have to quit their jobs and go deep into debt to access private, for-profit services.

This is not right. This is not my Ontario. These kids, these families need and deserve care in northern Ontario, in Sudbury, where I am. It is very sad to see the damage done by this government to our public, not-for-profit care system and the horrible consequences on special-needs children and their families.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms. Jess Dixon: Both of my grandfathers saw active service. David Dixon served in the Royal Navy and David

Dyke saved in the Royal Canadian Artillery and came under heavy fire at Monte Cassino. When I was younger, I felt like I always heard this poem read at Remembrance Day ceremonies, but it's been quite a long time since I've heard it, so I beg, Speaker, that you indulge me with a couple of extra seconds. The poem *Dulce et Decorum Est*:

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas-shells dropping softly behind.

Gas! GAS! Quick, boys!—An ecstasy of fumbling
Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time,
But someone still was yelling out and stumbling
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime.—
Dim through the misty panes and thick green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams, you too could pace
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,
His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: *Dulce et decorum est*
Pro patria mori.

That is Wilfred Owen. He died, aged 25, in the trenches, one week before the war ended. His parents received the telegram notifying them of his death as the bells were ringing out on Armistice Day.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: This government has broken our health care system, and it is regular people who are paying the price. This past weekend, I heard three stories from constituents that highlight the state that our hospitals are in. One of the people I spoke to spent eight hours at the Queensway Carleton emergency department, worried that she was having a heart attack. This woman had had a heart attack before, so in addition to the chest pain, she was dealing with trauma for eight hours. She was freezing, so she asked for a blanket and was told the nurses were so busy that no one had time to grab a blanket for her.

Just imagine what that must have felt like, Speaker: freezing, scared and in pain, and no one has time to help.

Another constituent, a 14-year-old girl, sat in the ER with her mom for seven and a half hours with a concussion and they felt lucky because they were told when they arrived that the wait would be 14 hours.

I also spoke with health care workers at the Queensway Carleton, who told me that their working conditions are absolutely impossible. Patient care aides are only being given three days of training, so there's high turnover because workers are overwhelmed. Workers are being assigned to areas where they don't have any training or experience, knowing they can't spend the time with patients that the patients deserve. And they can't take vacation time because of the worker shortage, so they never get a break.

Despite all these challenges, there was not a single new investment in hospitals in the government's fall economic statement. That is an utter dereliction of duty. My constituents deserve better, and the people of Ontario deserve better.

CLARISSA TOWNSEND

Mr. Ric Bresee: Today, I rise to recognize an extraordinary individual from our community, nurse practitioner Clarissa Townsend, who recently received the prestigious 2024 nurse practitioners of Ontario Boehringer Ingelheim Award for her outstanding contributions to patient care.

Clarissa is from North Hastings and has dedicated her life to helping others, exemplifying the true spirit of nursing. She has an impressive educational background and has been a beacon of knowledge and care in our health care system. For over 18 years as a nurse practitioner in Bancroft and now at the Kawartha Cardiology Clinic, Clarissa has developed and implemented innovative programs to optimize the treatment of patients with heart failure, hypertension and diabetes. Her commitment to improving patient outcomes through education and self-directed care has made a significant impact on the lives of so very many.

Clarissa's recognition is not just a personal achievement, it reflects the incredible work of nurse practitioners across Ontario who are leaders in health care. Her humility and her dedication to her profession shine through in her statement: "I'm just a person who wants to do good and I ... want to see people cared for."

I commend Clarissa Townsend for her hard work and determination to be a role model for her daughter and for all young women who aspire to make a difference in their communities.

LE MOUVEMENT D'IMPLICATION FRANCOPHONE D'ORLÉANS

M. Stephen Blais: J'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui pour parler d'une organisation francophone extraordinaire dans ma circonscription. Le Mouvement

d'implication francophone d'Orléans, ou le MIFO, soutient les francophones de l'est de l'Ontario depuis 40 ans.

MIFO est le plus grand employeur francophone dans l'est de l'Ontario et c'est le plus grand centre culturel de la francophonie canadienne à l'extérieur du Québec. MIFO offre des services éducatifs, la garde d'enfants, les arts et la culture, pour les personnes âgées et les personnes avec des besoins spéciaux.

Maintenant, MIFO prévoit de construire une installation sportive ultramoderne pour servir la communauté, un projet qui ajoutera 350 emplois et 13 millions de dollars au PIB chaque année.

MIFO is an organization that promotes francophone culture throughout eastern Ontario, offering educational, cultural, artistic, sports and recreational activities to the largest concentration of francophone minorities in the country outside of Quebec.

It's hoping to bring a state-of-the-art recreation and sporting facility to serve the francophone community of eastern Ontario. MIFO has recently applied for funding under the community sport and recreation fund. If props were permitted, I'd be throwing a ball across the aisle to the Minister of Sport because, Minister, this will be the easiest touchdown you'll ever score.

BRAMPTON ATHLETES

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: Today I'm honoured to recognize three remarkable Bramptonians, a part of the Toronto Pearson Airport Running Club, who have achieved extraordinary milestones, showcasing that age and challenges are no barrier to endurance and excellence.

At the ages of 65 and 64, respectively, Mr. Kuldip Grewal and Mr. Harjit Singh have demonstrated unparalleled dedication. Mr. Grewal completed the half Ironman in Welland, Niagara Falls, finishing an impressive journey of two kilometres of swimming in 58 minutes, 90 kilometres of biking in three hours and 47 minutes, and a 21.1-kilometre run in two hours and 53 minutes, for a total time of seven hours and 59 minutes.

1030

Mr. Harjit Singh took on the full Ironman challenge in Sacramento, California, completing a gruelling four-kilometre swim in one hour and 12 minutes, 180 kilometres of biking in eight hours and 39 minutes, and a 42.2-kilometre marathon run in six hours and 11 minutes, for a total time of 16 hours and 43 minutes.

I would also like to highlight Mr. Jasvinder Dhaliwal, who completed the Niagara Falls Marathon on October 27, 2024, with a finish time of four hours, nine minutes and 49 seconds. His dedication and impressive pacing truly reflect his commitment to endurance and athleticism.

These accomplishments by Mr. Grewal, Mr. Harjit Singh and Mr. Dhaliwal are testaments to the power of determination, strength and perseverance. Brampton is incredibly proud of these achievements, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all three on their remarkable journeys.

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION
BRANCH 25

Mr. Ross Romano: This past Friday, November 1, 2024, I had the privilege of being a part of a new phase in the history of Sault Ste. Marie's Royal Canadian Legion Branch 25. They needed a new building, and they have found an innovative way to achieve their goal.

Through a unique partnership with a local developer, they were able to demolish their previous facility and build a brand new, nine-storey building, including 108 affordable housing units, a gathering hall, meeting rooms, museum amenities rooms and fully developed grounds. It's impressive. The state-of-the-art facility is Branch 25's new home, the place where they will continue to honour and serve our veterans and our community for years to come, while securing a stable source of revenue to offset their operating costs.

We remember the incredible sacrifice our veterans made so we may enjoy our freedom. Our local Royal Canadian Legion Branch 25 works tirelessly supporting our local veterans and ensuring that we never forget.

I want to thank our local Branch 25 on their new home, and I want to thank them again for the incredible work they do supporting our community.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a very special guest, who is the consul general of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Toronto, Mr. Enio Cordeiro. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guest to the Legislature today.

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to welcome the members of the Ontario Dairy Council here today. Farmers make the milk, but the dairy processors are the people who make the great products out of that milk, and we wish them well here today at Queen's Park.

Hon. Rob Flack: To echo the honourable colleague opposite, I want to recognize the Ontario Dairy Council here today: Mr. Gilles Froment, Ed Perugini, Sarab Hans, Kristine Hayes, Brian Kerr, Éric Lafontaine, Maria Prado, Stephen Quickert, Hans Sommer, Marie Ly, Julie Paquin, Richard Sanchez, Kiran Mann, Christina Lewis and Valerie Smith. Welcome to Queen's Park and we'll see you at lunch. Well done.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome all of the members from the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario who are at Queen's Park today: the executive director, Dr. Michelle Acorn; Amanda Rainville, from my riding, who lives in Capreol; as well as Jessica Romeo; Jodi Colwill; Valerie Winberg; and many more. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park. We appreciate your hard work.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: On behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, I would like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario here to Queen's Park ahead of Nurse Practitioner Week. Let's

take an opportunity to celebrate their dedication and hard work. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to join members who have welcomed nurse practitioners to their House. Thank you for what you do. In particular—I see you up there, Colene—PeerWorks, who are here about peer support for folks struggling with addictions and mental health. Colene touched my heart this morning. Thank you for the work that you do, giving people hope and opportunity. I appreciate it.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I too would like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. Thank you for all you do to keep Ontarians healthy. God knows we need you right now. But in particular, clever Kevin Zizzo, cool Krystal Fox and joyful Gillian Elms. Thank you. Enjoy your day.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Especially as we have Crime Prevention Week this week, I want to welcome: Roger Wilkie, deputy chief of Halton Regional Police Service and president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and his executive officer Tammy here; Lisa Darling, the executive director of the Ontario Association of Police Service Boards; and acting superintendent Anthony Paoletta from the Toronto Police Service. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would also like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, in particular Barbara Bailey, Michelle Acorn and Marie Greer-King, who will be meeting with me later today. I'm looking forward to that very much. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Trevor Jones: It's my pleasure to welcome [*inaudible*] Paightyn Armstrong who studies political science at McMaster University, and her friend Tori Harling, who studies political science at U of T. Have a great day, ladies.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to welcome the Economic Developers Council of Ontario, who are hosting a reception in the dining room at 5 o'clock. In particular, I'm looking forward to meeting with Cephass Panschow, Darcy Brooke-Bisschop, Chad Richards, Michael Marini, Paul Pirri, Tyson McMann, Kate Burns Gallagher and John Regan. Welcome to Queen's Park, and I recommend all members join their reception.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I would like to also thank the NPAO for a productive discussion this morning about the four Ds—they will inform me about that later—as well as the Ontario Dairy Council and a school from my riding, Crestwood school, who will be arriving in the gallery shortly. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to welcome Brian Kerr from—yes, Kawartha Dairy ice cream is in the building. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): If there are no objections, I'd like to continue with introduction of visitors.

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: I too would like to welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, in particular Dr. Michelle Acorn, CEO of NPAO, and the nurse practitioners I met this morning: Noorin Jamal, Stephanie Lawrence and Elizabeth Smith. Thank you for all you do.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I'm pleased to welcome from my riding of Simcoe North the Georgian Bay District Secondary School grade 10 civics students and grade 11 law class. Also, a big welcome and thank you to all the teachers accompanying the students here today: Tarra Popple, Paula Quinn, Tim Jenkinson, Jessica Carney, Peter McLean, Hailey McClean, Kristy Seca and Rachel McDonald. Thank you all for being here, and enjoy your visit at Queen's Park.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker.

Remarks in Anishiniimowin.

Good morning. I would like to welcome Mitch Simmons and Laura Blair, who are here with the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education, also known as KOBE. KOBE coordinates the educational programming for the First Nations served by the Keewaytinook Okimakanak chiefs' council. Keewaytinook Okimakanak means "northern chiefs" in Anishiniimowin. Meegwetch for coming to Queen's Park, and thank you for your work.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I too would like to welcome the members of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, and in particular, Jodi Colwill, Valerie Winberg and Jessica Romeo, whom I'm meeting with later today. Thank you for everything you do.

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Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I just want to give a big welcome to Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor, who are the parents of Samika Kapoor, one of our pages who have been working this session.

MPP Jill Andrew: Good morning, Speaker. I too would like to welcome Dr. Michelle Acorn, CEO of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario, and all the nurse practitioners here today.

And I want to take an opportunity, because I didn't get a chance yesterday, to welcome and thank the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, who we met with yesterday: Kiki Cekota, Adele Yamba and Kristel Flores. Thank you to all our front-line health care workers for the invaluable work you do every single day.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome the team from PeerWorks who were here this morning for their advocacy day, including president Andrea Schaefer and operations director Allyson Theodorou. Thank you for everything that you do to support the work of our peer workers in the province of Ontario. Thank you for being in your House this morning.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It's my honour to also stand in this House to welcome PeerWorks, Ontario's only province-wide voice for lived experience and peer support. They represent 50 different community-based organizations, who are all doing the very best they can to advance the work around consumer survivor initiatives.

This morning I had the distinct pleasure of welcoming to my office Susan Dobson, who is the executive director of Krasman Centre—their organization serves York region, Toronto and Simcoe county—and Elizabeth Tremblay, Peer House Toronto coordinator, doing exceptional work in our great city; and of course Melody Li, the executive

director and founder of Homeless Connect, a dear friend and an advocate for those who are under-housed.

I also want to extend my welcome to the nurse practitioners of Ontario, led by Nathan Bains, who has so graciously coordinated a meeting with my office this afternoon, as well as the Economic Developers Council of Ontario and Stephanie Crilly. Thank you for all your administrative support there.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Speaker, it's always a pleasure to welcome a family member. I'd like to welcome Kiran Mann, CEO of OIC Foods, from my Mississauga-Malton family. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I too want to extend a welcome today to nurse practitioners Marcella, Debbie and Erin, who came to meet with me this morning. Thank you very much for coming and welcome to your House.

As well, Ontario Dairy Council members Stephen, Kristine, Ed and Maria, whom I met with this morning: Stephen is the owner of Reid's Dairy in Belleville, one of our great dairy processors, an absolute staple when you come to town. Ed is the CFO of Lactalis, which operates Black Diamond in our area. Thank you so much for coming—a pleasure to meet with you this morning.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I would like to recognize today our page captain Kellen who comes from Essex county, and also recognize his mother Tammy and sister Kalila who are visiting us today from Essex county. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to also welcome the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. I'm looking forward to meeting with Beth Cowper-Fung, Chantal Sorhaindo and Kelly Kokos. I also want to send a warm thank you to nurse practitioners Kevin and Erin and CEO Dr. Michelle Acorn for a wonderful discussion this morning.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'd like to welcome Christie White to Queen's Park. Christie joined my staff as an executive assistant in the Premier's office.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Je voulais souhaiter la bienvenue à M. Éric Lafontaine, qui est le directeur général de la fromagerie St-Albert dans ma circonscription, une fromagerie qui est connue à travers la province. Donc, il est ici aujourd'hui avec ses collègues, les producteurs laitiers de la province. J'ai bien hâte de jaser avec eux, puis de les rencontrer ce midi. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

QUESTION PERIOD

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. Housing starts are down. Targets are, apparently, out of reach for this government and the crisis is getting worse than ever.

We did what the government won't do. We put a real housing plan on the table, a plan that would double the supply of permanently affordable homes by working with non-market providers. Instead of supporting our motion

and rolling up their sleeves and taking an all-hands-on-deck approach, this government said no.

So, Speaker, why is it that when it comes to lobbyists and insiders and Conservative donors, the answer is always yes, but when it comes to the basic needs of Ontarians, this Premier always says no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: What we voted against yesterday was a tired old plan that failed and continues to fail the people of the province of Ontario. This is something that the NDP tried when they were in government between 1990 and 1995, which was a spectacular failure, Mr. Speaker.

To make matters even worse, it is very similar to a plan that the federal Liberals have in place. It is about ideology and talking about housing, but not actually getting shovels in the ground. If the NDP and the Liberals spent some time actually contemplating the issue, as opposed to writing about it and talking about it, they would know that we have introduced a new provincial planning statement, which is housing-positive, which unleashes housing along our transit routes, in co-operation with the Minister of Infrastructure, who is bringing forward transit-oriented communities.

But what it really reflects on, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that interest rates increased so quickly, so fast, because of the high-inflation policies of the federal Liberal and NDP government. That is what has caused a pause in what was a record-setting pace of building homes across the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Talk about ideology, right?

Here's what happens in Ontario today: The Premier cuts deals, insiders cash in and regular Ontarians pay the price—every single time.

There's always time and money for schemes like a \$100-billion tunnel to nowhere and luxury spas in downtown Toronto, but investing in housing that people can actually afford—they can't even imagine it. Is it any surprise that Ontarians can't find affordable housing today? It's not being built. Sitting back and waiting for the homes to magically appear is not working.

So is this Premier just waiting for a miracle? Why won't you consider public investment to make up the difference? Where do they think that homes are going to come from?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Listen, I watched the Leader of the Opposition's press conference with respect to her policy. She was asked three times what the policy would cost, and three times she avoided the answer because she didn't know.

It reminds me of their election platform. Remember their last election platform? They had this massive hole in spending. I think it was—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: It was \$7 billion.

Hon. Paul Calandra: It was \$7 billion, Mr. Speaker. That's Liberal and NDP math, right? What they are contemplating is, by our calculations, an over \$150-billion program that will create literally no homes.

Instead, what we're doing is we're building infrastructure so that we can unleash not hundreds of homes, not thousands of homes, but millions of homes for the people of the province of Ontario.

We invest over \$1.2 billion a year across the province of Ontario in subsidized housing. We've removed development charges on affordable housing. I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition that she and her party voted against that. That policy unleashed hundreds of thousands of—

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

The final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I don't know what this minister and this government expect. Do they think people are going to live in the tunnel? I mean, come on. Where are the homes? Where are they? You're not building them. People can't afford them anymore.

Two and a half years ago, the government's own Housing Affordability Task Force laid it all out. They said to build 1.5 million homes. We need fourplexes, we need density near transit, we need non-market housing. But since then, what have we got? Scandals, excuses, wasted time, wasted money.

Even with all of their attempts to pad the numbers for housing counts, this government is nowhere near close enough, and all you have to do is read their fall economic statement. People in Ontario cannot afford to wait any longer. They cannot afford this Conservative government any longer.

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If the Premier can't get the job done, isn't it time he got out of the way and let those of us who actually have a housing plan get it built?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, look, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to go to the people of the province of Ontario and ask them for a mandate, I welcome it, because I will put the record of this government on the table any day.

We were building homes at a record pace across the province of Ontario; they stood in the way each and every time. While we were bringing automotive investments to the tune of \$45 billion, they were voting against it. We were building transit and transportation. They couldn't get it done; we are building it across the province of Ontario. We're unleashing opportunity in northern Ontario. We're connecting the minerals of the north and the wealth of the north to the prosperity and manufacturing might of the south. We're building our hospitals, we're educating our students better, we're balancing the budget, we're getting the job done.

You want an election? Bring it on. I know the people—
Interjections.

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

I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government side will come to order. The Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development will come order. The Associate Minister of Small Business will come to order. The government House leader will come to order.

Start the clock. The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let's talk about this government's record, shall we? This question again is going to go to the Premier. One year ago when this government got caught trying to sell off the greenbelt to insiders, they promised to review the Lobbyists Registration Act. That was after the Integrity Commissioner revealed an unregistered lobbyist was handing out Raptors tickets and rounds of golf, and after staffers were found using personal emails to communicate with insiders and lobbyists. Yet, here we are, no review, no accountability and former staffers like Ryan Amato are flat out refusing to comply with FOI requests.

My question again to the Premier: Is flouting integrity rules just business as usual for this government?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: Mr. Speaker, I'm actually happy for the opportunity to report that we are making progress on the review of the lobbying act. I met with the Integrity Commissioner this summer. We've received some of his ideas, we're waiting on some more, and I hope to close the loop on some of that before he retires.

I have to tell you, he has done an absolutely excellent job and I welcome the opportunity to say thank you to the Integrity Commissioner, Commissioner Wake, for the tremendous work that he has done. He has held up his office to a high standard.

I'll say more about the review in the second question.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, we also appreciate the Integrity Commissioner; we have kept him quite busy this year with complaints about this government.

The government claims zero tolerance for wrongdoing, yet they haven't lifted a finger to prevent it from happening again. By law, the Lobbyists Registration Act was actually up for review in 2021—that's three years ago—but this government blew right past that deadline. Meanwhile, lobbyists and insiders are calling the shots, right? They're snapping up MZOs, they're gouging hospitals for private staffing companies and they're bulldozing Ontario Place for a luxury spa.

My question to the Premier is, when are you going to follow through on tightening the lobbying rules, or are the perks and the massages just too good to pass up?

Hon. Doug Downey: Again, I want to speak more about the review of the lobbying act. While the Leader of the Opposition is tilting at windmills and keeping him busy with frivolous inquiries, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this: When the review is brought forward, it will last well beyond any of us in this place. It will be a solid piece of reform that will endure and set a standard that is even tighter than what we have. It is a great opportunity to move forward.

I know that she's bridging over to all sorts of other things that upset her about the progress we're making in this great province, expanding jobs and investments, and Ontario Place and all of the great things that we're doing for the people of Ontario. I don't know if there's a third question in there or if she's just going to talk more about the things that upset her, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, great things, Speaker—a million people went to a food bank last year. They're doing great things.

The government was cautioned repeatedly that bad actors are taking advantage of the system because this government has allowed it to happen. The Conservatives have talked a very big game, saying it would root out the bad actors, the bad actor lobbyists. They said they would introduce new penalties for breaching the act. The Premier even suggested jail time, remember that?

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes. But they were never serious about strengthening that lobbying act and the integrity laws.

I'm going to make this very simple for the Premier, because he only has two options: Will he protect the public by fixing the Lobbyists Registration Act, or will he continue to protect his lobbyist friends?

Interjections.

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

The member for Brantford–Brant and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Speaker, as has been mentioned by the Attorney General, we are following the recommendation from the Auditor General, and we are getting that done. While our government expects all lobbyists to follow the current rules, it is clear that a few bad actors have taken advantage of the system.

Speaker, our government will not tolerate this type of behaviour. While public advocacy plays an important role in our democratic system, it must be done in an ethical and transparent manner. Anyone doing advocacy work with the government must be held to the highest standards. We will not tolerate anyone putting themselves above the trust, transparency and accountability of the people of Ontario. There is no place in Ontario for this government—for bad actors and these practices must be and will be put to an end.

But, Speaker, rather than be distracted by this, we will continue to build Ontario. We will get it done.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: Over 2.5 million people in Ontario don't have access to primary care right now. The current shortage of family doctors means the number of unattached patients is going to double in the next few years. That's 4.4 million people, or one in four Ontarians, by 2026. Let that sink in.

Nurse practitioners who have joined us in the House today are ready to fill the gap. They are trained to perform absolutely crucial work to address this health care crisis. But your government hasn't addressed their wages in years, and now that funding gap between nurse practitioners who work in hospitals and nurse practitioners who work in the community and in home care has become an ocean. Why won't this government pay nurse practitioners what they're owed, regardless of where they work?

Interjections.

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

The member for Essex and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Let me take an opportunity to praise the nurse practitioners who are here today and across the province of Ontario for their very valuable contribution to the delivery of primary care.

I take particular note that when Liberals and NDPers talk about primary care, they never include in their statistics the contribution that is made by nurse practitioners. But we include them in our statistics. When we deliver primary care in the province of Ontario, we know that approximately 90% of everybody in the province of Ontario has primary care, part of which is delivered by nurse practitioners. We've funded the largest expansion of nurse practitioner care in the history of the province of Ontario, and we continue to make progress and do more.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nurse practitioners want to work. They want to help solve the crisis in our health care system, and many of them cannot find a job.

1100

How could it be that with 2.5 million Ontarians without access to primary care, we have underemployed nurse practitioners right here, right now, in Ontario—even in my riding in rural northern Ontario?

Let this sink in: We have nurse practitioners willing and able to care for unattached frail elderly people, kids with complex medical needs—and keep them out of the emergency room, yet this minister refuses to fund them.

If the millions of dollars over three years promised was the solution, those nurse practitioners would not have come from all over Ontario to be here today. What is the minister waiting for?

Interjections.

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

The member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, this government has undertaken the largest expansion of nurse practitioner service in the history of the province of Ontario, and as part of that expansion—let me talk about the Lakehead Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic, which has an additional 1,600 patient spaces. That's another 1,600 individuals who will get service in and around the area of that nurse practitioner-led clinic. That's thanks to the grand expansion of those services undertaken by this government.

On this side, we believe in patient-focused, team-based care. We're going to continue pursuing that. That's why we have appointed Jane Philpott, a recognized expert in primary care, to help us reach even better goals. Even though we're reaching approximately 90% of all the residents in the province of Ontario, we want to do better, and we're going to do better. That's why we've appointed Jane Philpott to assist us in that goal.

LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Across the province, we are seeing companies invest, expand and create great-paying jobs. That's what happens when you cut red tape and ensure the conditions are there for businesses to thrive. It is a direct contrast from the previous Liberal government, who actively implemented policies that they knew would crush businesses and drive workers out of this province.

This is a new era for Ontario. Companies from across the world know that there is no better place to do business and invest than right here in Ontario.

Can the minister please provide this House with an update on new investments and expansions that are happening right now here in Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, the economic developers who are here today know that every single night Premier Ford gets his text about yet another company investing in Ontario.

Last week alone, Ontario landed more than \$1 billion in private company investments, adding more than 2,300 jobs. Included in that number was Moderna's expansion in Cambridge. Their multi-million dollar investment allowed them to partner with Novocol Pharma, to add a new fill-finish line for mRNA vaccines. That will create more good-paying jobs in Cambridge and in the surrounding area.

Thanks to the great work from our economic development folks who are here today, we're seeing more investments flow into the province at an unprecedented rate. That's why 860,000 jobs were created in Ontario since we were elected.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: We're seeing companies make job-creating investments in every sector of our economy. Communities that the previous Liberal government turned their backs on are seeing their local economies flourish. That's what happens when you lower the cost of doing

business and you get rid of the red tape that the Liberals put up to stifle business investment and job creation.

Our life sciences sector is growing rapidly, and Moderna's investment is yet another vote of confidence in Ontario. We have everything that the life science companies are looking for right here when they evaluate where they should expand. Most importantly, we are home to the best talent in the world, with over 70,000 STEM students graduating from our top post-secondary institutions each and every year.

Can the minister please highlight any additional life science investments that have landed in this province recently?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Yesterday, we joined Kenvue in Guelph to announce the completion of their multi-million dollar facility expansion. Kenvue is the world's largest pure play health consumer product company. They make iconic products like Tylenol, Band-Aid, Listerine, Polysporin—all the things that you find in your drawer at home.

They expanded their Guelph facility, bringing the size of their plant to more than 255,000 square feet. That investment will allow them to ramp up their manufacturing capacity. That investment will also add more good-paying jobs to the hundreds of employees that Kenvue already has in Guelph.

Speaker, we've landed more than \$5 billion in new life science investments, and there's much, much more to come.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Over the past six years, homelessness has surged, and the shelters are full. There are now over 1,400 encampments in Ontario. The Conservatives could take responsibility and invest in affordable housing, but instead they're blaming everyone else for the problem.

My question is simple: When an encampment is cleared, where exactly do you expect people to go?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the member will appreciate that, in her own riding, we have increased funding for the Homelessness Prevention Program by—I think it's 28% in the member's own riding. We have a historic investment right now of over \$1.2 billion to help us deal with the challenges that have been brought on by a really rapid expanding population in the province of Ontario.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I think the member is correct in one sense: We are investing record amounts in the Homelessness Prevention Program across the province of Ontario—as I said, \$1.2 billion. It is our expectation that our municipal partners work with us, that our federal partners work with us, so that we can deal with this challenge head-on because, ultimately, it is the right thing

to do to ensure that everybody has a roof over their head and that they have access to the services that they need.

If our partners aren't going to get the job done, we will step in and make sure that we do get the job done.

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

Ms. Jessica Bell: Back to the Premier: This government has had six years to address the homelessness crisis, and it has never been worse. To end homelessness, people need a permanent, affordable home, but the Conservatives have essentially turned their back on affordable housing and the construction of affordable housing at a time when the government's own documents show there are 234,000 people facing homelessness.

When are the Conservatives going to take responsibility and address the homelessness crisis?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'm not sure what the member is talking about. The reality is that we've increased funding to \$1.2 billion, a record amount of funding in the province of Ontario, to deal with the Homelessness Prevention Program.

I know that the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions is also working on the very real piece that we see often in some of these encampments, the mental health issues and addiction issues. So we're dealing with that at the same time.

We're also putting in resources. Look, we were the ones that led the call for the federal government to eliminate the HST on purpose-built rentals. What happened when we saw that happen? We reduced the tax and we saw record amounts of housing being built in the province of Ontario.

When we brought forward a plan to eliminate development charges on affordable housing, that member and that party voted against that initiative.

What we're going to do is this: We're going to continue to fund housing across the province of Ontario, but it is our expectation that the funds that we are spending are going to see the results that Ontarians want. If they don't, we'll step in and get the job done.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Aris Babikian: My question is for the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation. Under the Premier's leadership, Ontario is a top choice for families and workers to live. People are coming here to build their careers and to start new lives, and that's something everyone should be proud of.

1110

As more people settle in Ontario, we must ensure that our transportation infrastructure keeps up with that growth. Sadly, the previous Liberal government left our province in a gridlock crisis. Because they failed to act, commuting has become more difficult for everyone. That is why our

government must commit to building and expanding our roads, highways and transit systems.

Can the associate minister please outline the steps our government is taking to reduce gridlock and keep Ontario moving forward?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I remind the House that questions should be addressed to ministers, even though parliamentary assistants are permitted to answer.

The member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to my colleague for the question. Our population is growing; we know that, and we need more infrastructure to support the families moving to our great province. Under this Premier's leadership, our government is focused on getting people out of gridlock. We have a plan to build new highways and public transit all across Ontario.

We are building historic projects that will support our growing population and make it easier for people to get where they need to go. As part of our plan, we're building critical projects like Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass. We are building the Ontario Line, a brand new subway in the largest city in the country. And for commuters who take the GO train, we're building new tracks and new stations to prepare for two-way, all-day GO service.

Our government is building for the future. We're focused on tackling gridlock and keeping this province moving.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: Bonnie Crombie and the Liberals do not have a transit plan. They keep saying no to investments that will keep our province moving. The NDP are no better. They don't believe in building new highways. They vote against funding more transit. They said no to the Ontario Line subway, and they voted against funding two-way, all-day GO train service.

We are the only ones, under the leadership of Premier Ford, with a plan to improve Ontario's transportation network. Can the parliamentary assistant please outline the progress our government is making to tackle gridlock?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind the members to address their questions to ministers.

The member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington and parliamentary assistant to reply.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

You're absolutely right. It's true: The Liberals and the NDP simply don't have a serious plan to tackle gridlock. What are their solutions? They want to remove car lanes to add more bike lanes on our busiest roads. They want to tear down highways like the Gardiner Expressway. The NDP want to use your money to give private trucking companies free tolls on the 407.

We believe in building new infrastructure, such as the toll-free Highway 413 and the electric two-way, all-day GO service. Unlike the Liberals and the NDP, we actually have a serious plan to address gridlock. Our government will get Ontarians moving and keep Ontarians moving.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Recently, I met Carolynne, a 79-year-old woman living in my community. She was diagnosed with a stage 4 single prolapsed bladder three years ago and is still waiting for critical surgery. While waiting to see specialists and for surgery, her condition has worsened to a double prolapse, greatly impacting her quality of life. She's forced to spend up to \$180 on incontinence products out of her limited budget.

Carolynne's story is heartbreaking, but not shocking to anyone anymore under this government, who's only in it for themselves.

Minister, what will this government do to help Carolynne get the surgery she needs and end her suffering?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Essex and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, the province of Ontario has a health care budget. In 2018, that health care budget stood at \$60 billion. Today, the same health care budget stands at \$85 billion, for a \$25-billion increase, which is a 41% increase over the same period of time. At the same time, the province of Ontario has the number one best surgical times in the entire country, better than any other province—better than British Columbia, better than Saskatchewan, better than New Brunswick.

But we can always do better, and we will always seek to do better. We are expanding the community health clinics and the community health surgical centres to give more surgeries and faster surgeries in the province of Ontario. Of course, we know the NDP don't support that plan, but we're going to go ahead with it.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Carolynne cannot wait on empty promises. She lives in constant discomfort and pain, and is suffering mentally from an indignity that comes with a sensitive condition. She has been told it could take still up to another two years before she gets surgery. She was brave enough to come forward and share her story. Can the minister promise Carolynne she can get her surgery before her 80th birthday?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Any person in that situation—including that dear constituent—who needs to get that health care should get that health care.

I want to point out that we're providing better health care in the province of Ontario through increasing surgical activities and surgical opportunities through the surgical clinics that are being set up by an expansion that was undertaken by this government. We know that the opposition didn't support that expansion, but we need that expansion to help constituents such as that dear lady who needs her surgery.

In Ontario, surgical times are faster than anywhere else in the entire country. We're doing better than every other province, but we always seek to do better and better so that we can help every constituent, including that dear lady, get

their surgery. That's why we've undertaken an expansion of the surgical clinics, which will offer a better experience and faster experience in the province of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. While this Premier is busy distracting the public with booze, bike lanes and subterranean passages, 2.5 million Ontarians are being hung out to dry without family doctors. In his own riding of Etobicoke North, 32,000 people have no family doctor—no one to go to who knows their medical history and no one to go to when they are at their most vulnerable state—thanks to this government.

Jennifer, one of my residents, is losing her family doctor after three decades. As a senior, she is worried about being without a family physician who knows her diagnoses. Unfortunately for Jennifer and the other 2.5 million Ontarians without family doctors, this government is failing to retain and recruit health care professionals.

My question to the Premier: What are you saying to your 32,000 residents when they come to you asking for help to get a family doctor?

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

The member for Essex and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I feel for Jennifer, because Jennifer needs primary care, just like everybody else in the province of Ontario. I feel for Jennifer especially since the Liberal Party reduced the number of doctors being trained in Ontario when they formed the Liberal government.

But we're not going to do what the Liberals did. We're not going to reduce the number of doctors being trained in the province of Ontario. In fact, we're training more doctors, not only in southern Ontario but also in northern Ontario as well. We're training more doctors than the Liberals ever trained. We're going to make up for their mistakes, we're going to make up for their failures, and we're going to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East will come to order. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock.
1120

Perhaps I need to speak more loudly. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will come to order. The Minister of Natural Resources will come to order. The member for Don Valley East will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay. If you repeatedly ignore the requests of the Speaker to come to order, you will be warned, and the next stage, of course, is an early exit for the day, in case we've forgotten.

Start the clock. The supplementary question?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I hope the 13,000 lovely people in Essex who are without family doctors get help from this member.

In my riding of beautiful Beaches–East York, there are 23,000 people without a family doctor. I'm embarrassed that this government has done nothing to fix it in the past six years. My staff work hard to help the residents find physicians in our riding who are accepting patients. They call local clinics. They try to connect our constituents with the doctors. It's not easy.

Meanwhile, this government created a digital map to help Ontarians find beer and wine in the area—talk about skewed priorities. The 32,000 people in the Premier's riding of Etobicoke North need basic health care, not a six-pack. The 23,000 people in my riding of Beaches–East York need a trusted family physician, not a box of wine.

So my question to the mayor—sorry, I mean Premier—
Interjections.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Sorry. My mistake—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Please let the member pose her question.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'm sorry.

My question to the Premier is, when will the 2.5 million Ontarians without a family doctor finally get one?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal member who just spoke has illustrated my point perfectly. I stated previously that when the Liberals calculate their statistics, they always talk about family doctors and they never include nurse practitioners.

Nurse practitioners deliver primary care. Nurse practitioners deliver patient-focused care. Nurse practitioners believe in the team-based strategy. But that member, three times, referred to primary care and doctors and never once mentioned nurse practitioners.

We believe in nurse practitioners. This party believes in nurse practitioners. Liberals do not believe in nurse practitioners. Maybe they should start believing in nurse practitioners.

TAXATION

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness. The people of Ontario know that our farmers are the backbone of this community. They work hard day in and day out to put food on our table. But right now, they're facing one of the toughest challenges yet. The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is pushing them to the financial brink and making it harder for them just to compete. It's driving up feed, fuel and fertilizer costs for their farm operations.

Farmers across our province, especially in my riding, need to know that our government stands with them against this unfair and regressive tax. Can the minister share what concerns he has heard from farmers about the harmful impact of the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax on their operations?

Hon. Rob Flack: Thank you to the member opposite from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. He's doing a great job.

He is a great neighbour, representing farmers very, very well. Thank you, sir.

Earlier this year, 25 leading agri-food agribusinesses and farmers sent a letter to the federal government asking them to scrap the tax. Sadly, it went unresponded to and ignored. I want the House to hear some examples.

The Grain Farmers of Ontario have described this tax as “unbearable,” estimating it will cost their members \$2.7 billion by 2030.

John de Bruyn, past chair of Ontario Pork, has said that it makes their sector less competitive in the global markets that they compete in.

The Ontario Fruit and Vegetables Growers’ Association says that it cost their members \$16 million last year alone.

Sadly, the carbon tax coalition opposite continues to support it. It’s punitive, it hurts our farmers, it hurts our food processors, it raises the price of groceries. Scrap the tax.

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

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: Ontario farmers are facing tough economic times. Soaring costs are hitting them hard, from fuel to farm equipment and all the essentials needed to keep their operations running. The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is making everything worse, adding costs every step of the way. Farmers have told us that this tax is making it harder and more expensive for them to do what they do best: feed Ontario.

With everything going up, they’re being forced to pass those costs on down to the consumers. The price of the tax isn’t just felt on the farm, it is felt on every family’s dinner table as well. But we know our government is stepping up to help.

Can the minister please explain how our government continues to stand up with our farmers and is providing them with help that they need?

Hon. Rob Flack: Simply put, we’re creating the environment for our farmers and food processors to succeed. What have we done to create this environment, you ask? We’ve lowered taxes and WSIB premiums. We raised the Risk Management Program from \$100 million to \$150 million. We secured \$569 million through SCAP. We raised the feeder cattle loan program from \$260 million to \$500 million. We continue to pave the way to help our farmers and food processors succeed.

What do the members opposite do? They support a carbon tax. It’s punitive. If they really want to help the program, if they want to help our farmers and food processors, get on board and get away from this tax. From the farm gate to the consumers’ plate, axe this tax and axe it now.

NORTHERN POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker.

Remarks in Anishiniimowin.

This government isn’t in it for the municipalities in northern Ontario. In northwestern Ontario, Red Lake,

Dryden, Kenora, Ear Falls, Machin, Ignace and Pickle Lake all saw substantial rises in OPP costs. Pickle Lake’s 315% increase amounts to \$668 per property this year.

Northern municipalities are sounding the alarm bells at the skyrocketing price of policing. Will this government provide them the cost relief they are asking for?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I appreciate the question. The provincial government, our government led by Premier Ford, takes public safety very seriously all across Ontario. We are lucky to have the Ontario Provincial Police that, for so long, has taken care of public safety for approximately 75% of the land area of Ontario. They received two million calls last year and responded to over 1.2 million calls.

We’re never going to not listen to our municipalities. We are always going to listen to them wherever they are in Ontario. I have been in discussions throughout AMO and presently with municipalities to make sure that their concerns are heard.

Again, at the end of the day, public safety is a priority for this government, and we will continue to listen to municipalities wherever they are in Ontario.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Northern municipalities are already facing housing crises, mental health crises, health care crises, and budgets are tight. They are warning that the result of increased policing costs will be cuts to other services and increases in taxes.

Will this government listen to towns and help with the costs of policing so municipalities can keep their services and avoid extra tax increases?

1130

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I think the Premier has been very clear. We’re going to continue to dialogue and to engage and to listen to the concerns of the municipalities.

At the end of the day, people who serve in the OPP also deserve to be paid a fair wage. Police officers across Ontario deserve to be paid fair wages—and we have here the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

We dialogue with organizations all the time. We will listen to our municipalities. We will continue to engage with them. We will be there for them. We will leave no one behind. And we will always prioritize, with a laser-focused approach, public safety throughout our province.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Over the summer, residents of Manitoulin Island were left stranded for long periods because of mechanical failures on the Little Current Swing Bridge. This happened several times over the summer, with no notice and with little to no explanation from the ministry about what caused these delays. And there have been ongoing closures for maintenance and repairs.

In this year's budget, the Minister of Finance specifically highlighted replacing the swing bridge as part of their plan. However, over a year later, we still have no idea how much the government is going to spend, the timeline for the project, or even when we'll get shovels in the ground. The swing bridge is the only year-round access point to Manitoulin Island.

Minister, will you tell the people of Manitoulin when the new swing bridge will begin construction and when it will be completed?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The swing bridge is obviously a very important project for us, and that's why it was featured in the budget, as part of our \$28-billion plan to build roads, bridges and highways over the next 10 years. That is why we are committed to improving the transportation infrastructure across this province. It's this government that has put forward the dollars to invest, knowing how important it is for that community. We'll work through the process to make sure we get construction under way as soon as we can. We'll design that bridge and ensure that the people across this province can use it and the residents, as well, can benefit from it.

This government is committed to building in the north, building this entire province, and investing in the necessary infrastructure to support Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, to the minister: There are still no answers coming from this government. People in rural and northern communities shouldn't be left in limbo when it comes to critical infrastructure. Replacing the Little Current Swing Bridge will be a massive undertaking. The lack of information and transparency from the government has people in Manitoulin worried about whether this project is being taken seriously by this government.

When the bridge is closed unexpectedly for any amount of time, it affects people's ability to get to medical appointments, to work, to events, and it negatively impacts Manitoulin's ability to bring visitors and business to their community.

Hawaters are tired of hearing reannouncement after reannouncement from this government. They want to see concrete dollars allocated to the replacement project and action and a firm timeline for completion.

Minister, all we want is a date. When will the new Little Current Swing Bridge be built?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, we are very serious about building this bridge. That's why we featured it in our budget, and that is why that member has an opportunity to support that budget. I know, last year, that member voted against that very document that featured the swing bridge. In fact, he has another opportunity, through the fall economic statement, to support the continued construction and building of bridges across this province, including the swing bridge.

I would hope that member stands up for his residents in the north, stands up for his community, and especially that specific project, the swing bridge, that he has mentioned himself, and votes to support the fall economic statement,

which is in this Legislature for debate and will be voted on. I'm hoping to count on that member's support to ensure that we continue the process of getting that bridge under construction and built for the people in the community and for those in the north who use it.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Billy Pang: My question is to the Solicitor General. Community safety is a major concern for people across Ontario, especially in my riding of Markham—Unionville. Every day, families worry about the safety of their neighbourhoods. They want to know that our government is doing everything it can to prevent crime before it happens. We know that safe communities aren't just about policing, they are about everyone working together: community groups, local leaders and law enforcement.

Crime Prevention Week highlights just how important it is for us to be aware and engaged. When everyone plays a role, communities become more resilient and safer. Can the Solicitor General please share what steps our government is taking to promote crime prevention and enhance community safety across Ontario?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank my friend. He's a great supporter of the York Regional Police service that keeps his community safe each and every day.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Crime Prevention Week is very important because we talk about awareness, we talk about engagement and prevention of crime across our province. We are delighted to have the president of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Roger Wilkie, deputy chief of Halton here today.

Our government is acting. That's why we put almost 2,100—it will be 2,100—new boots on the ground in the next 12 months. It's unprecedented. When I went back to speak to some of the older police officers, they said that when they went to the Ontario Police College, class sizes were 40 and 50. Now they're 500, thanks to Premier Ford and the investments we've made. And we're not stopping. Whether it's fighting auto theft, whether it's fighting to get the violent and repeat offenders off our streets, this government will prioritize our public safety.

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

Mr. Billy Pang: Every community in Ontario, whether big or small, deserves to feel safe. People want to feel secure in their homes, on the streets and in their neighbourhoods. Crime prevention isn't just about stopping crime. It's about giving people the tools they need to protect themselves and their families. Our communities are stronger when people have the resources to stay safe.

But we know that crime prevention doesn't look the same everywhere. That's why it's so vital that every Ontarian, regardless of where they live, has the same opportunities to benefit from these safety initiatives.

Speaker, can the Solicitor General please explain how our government is helping to ensure these crime preven-

tion resources reach all Ontarians, including those in our most diverse and remote communities?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Again, thanks to my great friend from Markham–Unionville.

Mr. Speaker, our government has not stopped. We have a CCTV grant. We have an auto theft prevention grant. We have the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension Grant. We don't stop.

But one has to ask the question: When the associate minister and I made the announcement last week on calling on the federal government to enact meaningful bail reform, where was Bonnie Crombie? She was hiding, just like she did with the carbon tax—not coming forward and saying that when she sat on the Peel Regional Police service board, she knew to the dollar the amount of carbon tax being wasted. Because the Peel police service couldn't have more boots on the ground, they're paying the carbon tax. She is silent on public safety and Ontarians know it.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My question is to the Premier. Survivors of intimate partner violence have been telling this government that the court backlogs and delays created by their underfunding are denying survivors and victims of crime access to justice.

The Premier's fall economic statement projects a half-a-billion-dollar cut in next year's spending on the justice system, falling from \$6.2 billion to \$5.7 billion. In Ontario, we have seen legitimate cases being thrown out. This is due to unconstitutional court delays.

We've seen rapists and human traffickers walk free because this government chooses to look the other way. Why is this government cutting justice spending by 9% when survivors are still not getting their day in court?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Attorney General.

1140

Hon. Doug Downey: Mr. Speaker, that member could not be more wrong. The investments we're making in modernizing the justice system and arming the justice system to do its job: We added more judges this year than any time in the history of the province in a group. We are adding the resources in the capital of buildings. We're adding the resources in the support structure, hiring crown prosecutors, victims' services, court clerks. We've made full-time opportunities for court clerks who were previously in more tenuous employment. We're adding technology, Mr. Speaker.

But here's the only theme to all of that: We are doing that in spite of the opposition and them voting against us at every single stage.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Half a billion dollars in cuts and all we get are canned talking points.

This government has insulted survivors and families who are mourning lost daughters who were killed through intimate partner violence. The House has heard loud and clear from courageous survivors like Cait Alexander, who was nearly beaten to death by her former boyfriend.

This House has also heard from Emily Ager, who was raped and who actually testified in her case, but the clock ran out and her case was thrown after she began her testimony. Both of those people have now walked—the abuser, as well as the rapist, are now free on our streets because of this government. This government refuses every opportunity to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. They're letting rapists and abusers walk free.

Speaker, why does this government have such disdain for survivors and victims of sexual assault? Who are they actually protecting?

Interjections.

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

To respond, the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: We just heard our minister, our Attorney General, just speak about the investments that we're making to ensure that our victims have their day in court, but one of the other things that our government has actually done, where the members opposite have been silent, is calling on the federal government for mandatory remands for perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Those are the steps that are actually going to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and make sure that women are free to feel safe on our streets.

We're also making sure that we're investing in the services that women can access if they are assaulted, because we believe that every single woman is the heart of their family, their community and nobody, no woman should ever feel like they are a threat of their own life and their own safety. So investing in our shelters, investing in supports that help women across communities—

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

ONTARIO FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Ms. Jess Dixon: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming. Film and television production has been a big success story across our province, especially in my own area. I'm from Cambridge. The Handmaid's Tale is largely filmed there, as was the Queen's Gambit, Reacher on Amazon and notably, once upon a time, Murdoch Mysteries was filmed at my own house where it involved, I think, somebody falling out of the tower and dying—anyway, a lot of filming going on in beautiful Cambridge. Obviously there's a lot of other jurisdictions that are competing to try to bring film and TV to those respective areas as well, so we obviously have to continue supporting this industry.

Can you talk more, Minister, about what our government is doing to promote and cultivate the expansion of onscreen-based industries in Ontario?

Hon. Stan Cho: I certainly can, Speaker. In fact, the member mentions a few amazing shows, but that's not the end of the list. The Umbrella Academy, Shoresy, Letterkenny, Suits, Ginny and Georgia are also all filmed right here in Ontario. It's because of our government's investment into this industry, which has generated approximately \$1.8 billion in spending and created almost 26,000 jobs.

That's why in our budget 2024, we invested more than \$1 billion to support Ontario's screen-based industry tax credits, which include the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit, Ontario Production Services Tax Credit, Ontario Computer Animation and Special Effects Tax Credit and Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit.

This commitment is helping the industry. I know the previous Liberal government left the industry up Schitt's Creek with no paddle, but this government is saying, "Lights, camera, action" on film in Ontario.

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

Ms. Jess Dixon: While the minister references a number of other wonderful productions that have happened in Ontario, as the one asking the question, I'm going to bring it right back to Cambridge again. As I said, the Handmaid's Tale, Gilead, is largely filmed in Cambridge. One particularly notable scene during the riots and the protesting involved one of my favourite local coffee shops, the Grand Café, actually having all of its windows blown out, which is quite something to see in your safe local jurisdiction.

Obviously, I don't think that you could replicate Gilead in any other place outside of Cambridge, but other jurisdictions are trying to enhance their own landmark attractions to a considerable extent. Could the minister elaborate on specific initiatives that our government is undertaking to showcase this industry across the province?

Hon. Stan Cho: Why, yes, I can—another great question from the member.

In fact, we are investing into the industry in a variety of ways, not the least of which is \$19.5 million to support festivals and events across Ontario. Now, I'm not sure why the Liberals are heckling. Maybe it's because they voted against all of these measures, and it's hard to hear all the economic activity that's spun off of this industry. But we won't leave the film industry in the dark. We're going to continue to invest in them, whether it's the Windsor International Film Festival, the Toronto International Film Festival, or most recently, the Forest City Film Festival. This government is saying, "Lights, camera, action" in Ontario. We're here to stay. Let's see it thrive and grow.

MUNICIPAL BY-ELECTION IN TORONTO

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning. There are four members who have informed me they have a point of order they wish to raise. We'll start with the member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: On a point of order, I would like to just say that, as of last night, there is a newly elected city councillor in ward 15, my riding of Don Valley West. I would like to congratulate Rachel Chernos Lin and her team on a very successful campaign and wish her all the best at city hall. Thank you.

Mr. John Fraser: I know it's been busy and loud in here today, and that everybody's heading to caucus, but I wanted to let everybody know that after question period, Dr. Shamji and I will be at our desks, and if you want to know how many people in your riding don't have a family doctor, we'll stay here as long as it takes.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a valid point of order.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I just wanted to remind all members in the House that there is a flu clinic taking place at the legislative library today until 3 o'clock. This is an excellent opportunity to get a flu shot if you don't have a family doctor.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness.

Hon. Rob Flack: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome my wife, Denise, who is up in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

The House recessed from 1149 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Deepak Anand: It's always a pleasure to welcome family members to Queen's Park. Sarab Hans is the president of Hans Dairy, from the family of Mississauga-Malton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

THE ABIEZER PENTECOSTAL CHURCH (TORONTO) ACT, 2024

Mr. Rakocevic moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr54, An Act to revive The Abiezer Pentecostal Church (Toronto).

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

First reading agreed to.

SKYBOLT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY
LIMITED ACT, 2024

Ms. Pierre moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr60, An Act to revive Skybolt Construction Company Limited.

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

First reading agreed to.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Nancy Corcoran for these petitions. They're called "Justice after Birth Injury."

I don't know if you know, Speaker, but the Canadian Medical Protective Association is a taxpayer-funded organization whose mandate is to defend malpractice by physicians, including cases of devastating birth injury and permanent impacts on the babies being born, as well as their families. The approach of the CMPA is to defend at all costs, which means that it will go through courts for years and years for a birth injury, where malpractice happened. Physicians are human beings, and sometimes things don't go well. It will go through court, often, for 10 to 12 years. Very few lawyers want to take on those cases because of the amount of defence that the physicians have through the CMPA.

There are other jurisdictions, such as Japan, that have systems similar to us—but they take it that the injured baby and their family will receive payment without incriminating anybody. They would like the provincial government to look at this model so that babies who are injured at birth, who will have disabilities for the rest of their lives, don't have to go through courts and wait for decades.

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Samika to bring it to the Clerk.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind members to keep the summary of their petition brief. Also, they can indicate the number of signatures if they wish to do so.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition is about taking action on auto theft in Ontario, something that many across the province, in the midst of this auto theft crisis that we're experiencing, are calling for—over \$1 billion of lost money each year; 80% of the vehicles stolen here are going abroad.

The recommendations are bringing a state-of-the-art VIN registry that we need here in this province; real action at the borders, as these vehicles are taken onto crates and shipped out of the country; real action on enforcement—the list goes on.

So this petition, signed by many, is asking this government to make stopping auto theft in this province a priority.

I'm very proud to be signing this petition and giving it to page Marie-David.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled "Petition to Raise Social Assistance Rates." There have been countless signatures on this petition. We've all been tabling them.

Basically, what they talk about is how our social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line. Basically, you cannot make ends meet with this amount of money. If you're on OW, Ontario Works, it's \$733 for an individual; if you're on ODSP, the Ontario Disability Support Program, for an individual it's \$1,368—far too low for people to be able to make ends meet and move forward when it comes to the rising cost of food and rent, utilities and other things like that.

There was an open letter that was sent to the Premier and to cabinet ministers that was signed by over 230 organizations. They recommended that the social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works and ODSP.

Considering that we have people who are living below the poverty line and considering that during COVID, when the CERB program from the government of Canada came through, they had a basic income of \$2,000 a month, these citizens who signed the petition for the Legislative Assembly have asked to double social assistance rates for both OW and ODSP.

I support this petition. I think it's important that people have enough money in their pockets to pay their bills so they can move forward in life. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Jakob for the table.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Dave Smith: I have a petition from some people in my riding. It talks about how the population of Ontario has grown significantly over the past number of years, and that this means that there's an increase of traffic on our roads, and we need to make sure that we're doing the appropriate things to improve transportation efficiency in the province of Ontario. We have to reduce commute times because of that. It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that when the population goes from 10 million to 15 million, there will be more people who need to travel all across the province.

I fully endorse this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Ali to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mr. Brian Smit from Oxford for these petitions. He has gathered names from Oxford, London and Stittsville. It's against privatization of our health care system.

The petition talks about that the cost of delivering surgery in private, for-profit clinics exceeds the cost of providing the same services in our hospitals—often by as much as 100% more expensive.

The backlog of surgeries in British Columbia did not go down when they went down this path of privatizing all patient surgical suites.

Ontario has the capacity within the existing system to do a whole lot more surgeries, if we had the money available to do them.

So they ask the Legislative Assembly to stop all funding to private clinics and independent health facilities, and that the money be redirected to our publicly delivered health care system for medically necessary surgeries.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Lily to bring it to the Clerk.

1510

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Dave Smith: I have another petition from people in my riding about affordable housing. We know that we cannot be leaving anyone behind. We have to have the entire suite of housing available. Many different options need to be made available for people—not just purchasing, but rentals. Having purpose-built rentals is something that we need to make sure that we're promoting and doing in an appropriate way.

This petition is asking the provincial government to accelerate construction of new homes and make sure that we do ensure that we have purpose-built rentals available for everyone as well.

I fully endorse this petition. I will sign it and give it to page June to take to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: This petition was presented by Dr. Sally Palmer, who has been an absolute champion in fighting for those receiving social assistance and calling for an increase in rates. As we know, those living below the poverty line in the midst of an affordability crisis are the ones who are most affected. This is calling for an increase in both OW and ODSP by significant amounts and not what we have been seeing in recent years.

I certainly support this petition. I will be signing my name to it and giving it to page James.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here, and it deals with the issue of housing.

I'll summarize the petition as follows: It wants to bridge the gap between the demand for homes and the supply of homes. The petition goes on to say that the lack of new housing is leading to higher property prices. It also leads to higher rental costs. And it's making it difficult for young families. It deals with the question of how young people and young families will be able to find housing in

their price range. Also, it proposes that low-income residents might find more stable housing if we were able to increase the supply of housing.

Finally, the petition calls upon the Legislature to support and implement measures that will increase construction of new homes across the province of Ontario, and by doing so, would lower the cost of purchasing a home.

I support this petition. I will affix my signature to it. I'm giving it to page June, who, I am sure, will diligently bring this petition to the robed individuals at the centre of this chamber, who are diligently working away at the grand table and will process that petition through the ministry, as required.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

MPP Jamie West: This petition is kind of near and dear—it's not in Sudbury, but near Sudbury, and we have similar issues.

Back in 1998, a 14-kilometre section of Highway 67 was downloaded to the town of Iroquois Falls. Over time, the population has declined, and the cost of maintaining this road has become too onerous with the financial resources that they have. So now you have a situation where you have a highway that's deteriorating, that's full of potholes and patches and soft shoulders that are falling apart, overgrowth—even the patch upon patch upon patch is making it difficult to drive. The community now is looking at that perhaps this highway should be a gravel road, because at least they could maintain a gravel road. It's overall deteriorating, and they don't have the money to support it, even though this highway was downloaded to them from the provincial government. It's a vital link to Highway 101 west for the residents, businesses and emergency services.

Their request, basically, under the “therefore” part, is that they would like Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation to take back the responsibility for the highway, reverse the downloading of this, so that the people who live in this area have access to their highway and it's maintained in good condition.

I think it's an excellent petition. I can understand their concern. I don't want them to be overlooked. I support this petition. I'll affix my signature and give it to Jakob for the table.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Dan Lebrun for these petitions called “Supportive Housing.”

Whereas there are 2.6 million Ontarians living with a disability that require different levels of support, Ontarians with disabilities face a higher risk of institutionalization—going into a long-term-care home—due to lack of supportive housing. They want to live in their own home, but they need support.

The housing starts are not acceptable, and they are not inclusive. Most of the new homes that are being built are

not inclusive, are not accessible and certainly do not have the supportive services that go with them.

They signed the petition because they would like the government of Ontario to invest in supportive housing so that the 2.6 million Ontarians living with a disability would have an accessible place to live and would have supports to allow them to live respectfully in their own home.

I fully support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask Marie-David to bring it to the Clerk.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

MPP Jamie West: This petition is entitled “Let’s Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant.” It’s a petition I’ve spoken about in the past. The short version of this really is that the Northern Health Travel Grant hasn’t been updated in a very, very long time, and the costs that were in place back when it was brought out have slowly, over time, due to the cost of living increasing, fallen behind, so people in the north who are travelling to southern Ontario for medical reasons are paying out of pocket for what’s happening.

One of the issues that comes to my office a lot, related to that, specifically, is that you are not paid for the first 100 kilometres when you travel. As well, the cost that it has for hotels, for example, doesn’t cover the cost of a hotel [*inaudible*] if it’s a family member going down, you’re out of pocket and worried about your health.

I feel like their ask is very reasonable. They want to bring together health care providers in the north and recipients of the Northern Health Travel Grant to form a committee to make recommendations.

My understanding is, the Minister of Health has committed to an update that will be coming this fall. Fall doesn’t end until December 21, so, hopefully, it’s coming out before then.

I know it’s very important to the people of Sudbury. I will affix my signature in support and give it to Graham for the table.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Stephanie Poirier from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. They’re called “Invest in Ontario’s Arts and Culture Sector.”

Did you know, Speaker, that the arts and culture sector contributes \$28 billion to Ontario’s GDP and creates over 300,000 jobs?

The Ontario Arts Council has not seen an increase in their budget for a very, very long time, which makes it really hard for them.

Many of the people who work in the culture and arts sector have income precarity. They make very low income—many of them below \$25,000 a year.

They would like the government to consider increasing the Ontario Arts Council budget to \$65 million, to adequately invest into arts and culture, including for equity-deserving groups—small, medium grassroots collectives,

and the BIPOC community as well as the LGBTQ community.

I think it’s a good idea. I will affix my name to it and ask page Lincoln to bring it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 212, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various Acts with respect to highways, broadband-related expropriation and other transportation-related matters, Bill 214, An Act to amend various energy statutes respecting long term energy planning, changes to the Distribution System Code and the Transmission System Code and electric vehicle charging, and Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes;

That when Bill 212 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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That, upon receiving second reading, Bill 212 shall be referred to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, November 18, 2024, at 9 a.m. until 10 a.m. to receive a 20-minute opening statement on Bill 212 by the Minister of Transportation or designate, followed by 40 minutes of questions and answers, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of five minutes for the independent member of the committee; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 18, 2024, from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 212; and

That the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 212:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Friday, November 8, 2024; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee and their designate following the deadline for requests to appear; and

—That, if not all interested presenters can be scheduled, each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters, by 12 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2024; and

—That witnesses shall be scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes to make an opening statement followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent member of the committee; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 7 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 2024; and

—That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2024; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 21, 2024, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m., from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m., and from 7 p.m. until midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 212; and

That on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 7 p.m., those amendments to Bill 212 which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto; and at this time, the Chair shall allow one waiting period, if requested by a member of the committee, pursuant to standing order 131(a); and

That the committee shall report Bill 212 to the House no later than Monday, November 25, 2024, and if the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy on Bill 212, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith; and

That upon adoption of the report, Bill 212 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 212 is called, 55 minutes shall be allotted to debate with 25 minutes for members of His Majesty's government, 25 minutes for members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, and five minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That, at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 212 without further debate or amendment; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from the morning orders of the day, no deferral of the third reading vote on Bill 212 shall be permitted; and

That, if a recorded division is requested on the third reading vote on Bill 212 the division bells shall be limited to five minutes; and

That when Bill 214 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, upon receiving second reading, Bill 214 shall be referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior; and

That the Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet on Monday, November 18, 2024, at 9 a.m. until 10 a.m. to receive a 20-minute opening statement on Bill 214 by the Minister of Energy and Electrification or designate, followed by 40 minutes of questions and answers, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of five minutes for the independent member of the committee; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 18, 2024, from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 214; and

That the Clerk of the Standing Committee on the Interior, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 214:

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 12, 2024; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to each member of the subcommittee and their designate following the deadline for requests to appear; and

—That, if not all interested presenters can be scheduled, each member of the subcommittee or their designate provide the Clerk of the Committee with a prioritized list of presenters to be scheduled, chosen from the list of all interested presenters, by 2 p.m. on Wednesday, November 13, 2024; and

—That witnesses shall be scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes to make an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided into two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent member of the committee; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Monday, November 18, 2024; and

—That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 4 p.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 2024; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 21, 2024, from 9 a.m. until 10:15 a.m., from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m., and from 7 p.m. until midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 214; and

That on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 7 p.m., those amendments to Bill 214 which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto; and at this time, the Chair shall allow one waiting period, if requested by a member of the committee, pursuant to standing order 131(a); and

That the committee shall report Bill 214 to the House no later than Monday, November 25, 2024, and if the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Interior on Bill 214, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith; and

That upon adoption of the report, Bill 214 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 214 is called, 55 minutes shall be allotted to debate with 25 minutes for members of His Majesty's government, 25 minutes for members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, and five minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 214 without further debate or amendment; and

That when Bill 216 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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That upon receiving second reading the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of the bill is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from the morning orders of the day, no deferral of the second or third reading votes on the bill shall be permitted; and

That if a recorded division is requested on the third reading vote on the bill the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 26.

Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a very long motion and a very important motion for the government.

As I've said in the House before, we've got a very short sitting—tomorrow, there will be essentially four and a half sitting weeks left until the House rises.

These bills are very, very important for His Majesty's government.

Bill 212, which the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation, tabled in this House on October 21, is an act that covers some very, very important transportation measures for our government. Schedule 1, the Building Broadband Faster Act—I think everyone in this House agrees that broadband is a critical piece of infrastructure that all of our communities need. The Building Highways Faster Act, 2024—again, self-explanatory: I believe there are highways in every corner of this province that I think all members of this House would agree should be built faster and more efficiently. The Highway 413 Act was one of our signature commitments to the people of Ontario during the last election. And

finally, the Highway Traffic Act and the Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, which—I'm going to paraphrase: The minister has got a lot of questions about bike lanes in this Legislature.

The one thing that I will say about the Premier and the minister—they've been very clear on what they've meant when it comes to getting traffic moving. Part of our commitment to the people of Ontario is that we're going to get things moving. They've been crystal clear in all of their endeavours about what that means. I don't think anybody can say the Premier wasn't clear when he made his Empire speech about how he wanted to handle certain bike lanes in the city of Toronto, to deal with gridlock.

Bill 214, again, is another signature bill for the Minister of Energy and Electrification, the Honourable Stephen Lecce—an act to amend various energy statutes respecting long-term energy planning. I think long-term energy planning is something that our government—through his speech on October 23, when he tabled this legislation in the leadoff speech—is committed to and we need desperately. I've been in this House since 2010, and there have been a number of situations regarding residential construction where the last mile has stopped residential development because of the way energy policy was dealt with. I've also got a number of opportunities in my riding when it comes to industrial growth. But again, the last mile, which this bill will deal with, is certainly something that we need.

The last portion of this legislation was Bill 216, which is the 2024 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review. Next to our government's budget, the fall economic statement is the second-most important economic piece for us. Again, the government has been very clear. We've looked Ontarians in the eye and said that we want to continue to take a fiscally responsible approach to invest in the economy and to build the critical infrastructure for our growing communities. Bill 212 speaks to that; so does Bill 216. We need to reduce gridlock; again, Bill 216 and Bill 212 speak to that. We need to make life more affordable. This is a pivotal bill in our government's mandate, and we need to ensure that there's certainty around some of the measures in Bill 216.

For those who want to talk about the fact that we only have four and a half weeks, I have to say that both Minister Sarkaria in transportation and Minister Lecce in energy and electrification certainly took the summer, in their portfolios, to talk to Ontarians, to consult with Ontarians and to help formulate the policies that are here. I know in my own riding, when it comes to Minister Bethlenfalvy and the fall economic statement—he spent a lot of time in my riding, talking to Ontarians about what they wanted to see in terms of continuing to build our province and moving our province forward.

I want to say to those three ministers—their summer was well spent, consulting, talking, but most importantly, listening. I think that's one of the things that I wanted to put on the floor with this motion, as we move forward and we provide certainty for these three bills.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and reply to the government's motion of time allocation—of these three bills.

The one thing I will agree with the government House leader on is that they're important bills. That's why we disagree that they should be time-allocated. That is the most important thing.

What is time allocation? Basically, the way a bill normally travels through the House—it's introduced at first reading. We, as a rule, always approve first reading, because we believe that bills should be able to be introduced in the House so they can be debated. It's our job to be the owl to look at, make sure that the—I got that right, eh? We're the owl?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, yes.

Mr. John Vanthof: To be the owl, to make sure that we look at what the government has planned and point out mistakes, or point out different—anyway, that's—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We are the eagle.

Mr. John Vanthof: We're the eagle? Okay. That's the first time I've tried that quote; it will be the last time, too.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. I've got an hour. You can talk all you want. But we take our role very seriously.

So the way it goes: The bill is introduced at first reading. We approve. It's introduced for second reading. It's debated, eight, 10 hours, until everyone who wants to add their voices from either side has the opportunity to do so. You go to your ridings, the people you represent, and you talk to them about the bill, and then you bring their views to the House. That's becoming increasingly difficult, because this government introduces a bill, one day, and then debates it the next day. They can consult with the people who they prefer to consult with, but the overall general population of the province often doesn't get the chance to consult. That is a problem.

Anyway, the bill goes through its normal eight, 10 hours—

M^{me} France Gélinas: They usually limit it at 6.5.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. Always, the Speaker gets up at six and a half hours and says, "Shall the bill continue to be debated?" If there are still different points of view, it's allowed, but under this government, with the new House leader, who I get along with, personally—now they halt, they adjourn debate at six and a half, and then they introduce a time allocation motion to limit debate.

There are three bills they're limiting here—they're limiting debate on all three and eliminating committee on one. They're basically eliminating the views of many people in Ontario—especially on bills that are so serious.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Explain what a committee does, how people can—

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, member from Nickel Belt.

When a bill is taken to committee, that's when—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: She can heckle me from any seat she wants.

That's when people who have a vested interest and who are experts in their field can come and give the government and the opposition their views, their advice.

To curtail that, as is done in the final fall economic statement, which the government claims to be the second-most important bill in this House other than the budget—to totally eliminate the views of anyone to come to committee? I think that is very dangerous in itself.

1540

You can take my word for it—or you might not take my word for it, and that's fine. But what I try to do is I try to find the voices who have been working at this longer than I have, or people who I expect would understand how the system works. I did a bit of research, and what I've come up with—let's call them the top hits of time allocation. I know that wouldn't be a bestseller. But let's talk about the top hits of time allocation—the top views.

I have a unique perspective because, right now, I know I'm the only person here who has a family member who is in the opposite side, on the government side.

Hon. Doug Downey: No, Ernie does too.

Mr. John Vanthof: And he regrets it more than I do. Very good catch, Attorney General. I never thought about it that way.

See? That's why you should have debate. This is a good debate, right? It reminded me of something that I missed.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. The debate is powerful.

I'd like to read a couple of quotes into the record—or reread them—from the member from Oxford county, a.k.a., to me, Uncle Ernie. He was speaking about the Liberal government in 2017, but some of this will sound strangely like it's happening right now.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Really?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's striking, actually. It's incredible.

Dateline May 31, 2017: "Maybe the time allocation motion is to stop us from talking about those bad decisions...."

"The government needs to stop managing from photo op to photo op. They need to actually do the research and base policies on data and evidence, and they need to stop ramming through legislation without listening to the people they are impacting; otherwise the people of Ontario will continue paying the price."

I agree with the member for Oxford—and it's not always that I agree with the member of Oxford. Actually, the member for Oxford is one of the main reasons I'm NDP. But with this one, I fully agree.

It's not the only one. Dateline May 18, 2017: "I've said this before: A bill being rushed through committee is not a sign of efficiency. It is a sign of a government that is disorganized and can't manage their schedule...."

"It seems like every day this government rushes through another bill without proper consultation or debate...."

"It is our job to debate legislation."

Again, very wise words from the member from Oxford county.

It's interesting that the government House leader, in his remarks, recognized that we have a very short sitting period, but that's because the government chose to shorten the sitting period of the Legislature by about a month. They created the shorter sitting period. They are creating their own problem, or their own solution for not wanting to debate bad legislation.

Again, from the member from Oxford county: May 2, 2017—and this is very important. You should all take the wise words from the member of Oxford county to heart: “Mr. Speaker, how do they go home to their constituents and say they're doing their job if the government cuts off debate before they even have a chance to speak on this important issue?...”

“In fact, as I pointed out multiple times in this House, the government is not leading by example....”

“Mr. Speaker, instead of worrying about politics, I ask the government to worry about getting this legislation right.”

Again, wise words from the member for Oxford county—words that the government that he is currently a member of doesn't seem to be following. It will be interesting to see how the member from Oxford county votes on this time allocation motion.

The member for Oxford county is not the only person who has weighed in on this.

Someone else in this House, who I am not related to at all—but I think we all respect this member. It's the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, someone we all know as Yak, John Yakabuski.

We will go back to October 21, 2015: “If we have it wrong and we haven't given it enough time, then we have done a disservice to the people of Ontario, a disservice to this Legislature. So what would be the crime for us to say: ‘Whoa, hold on. Let's take another look at this. Let's get the views of some more members of this Legislature’?....”

“We are cutting the head off debate, we are cutting the head off the opposition, and we are rendering this a single-party state, and that is wrong. People expect more.”

Again, wise words from someone who is now a member of the government side, who perhaps is supportive of this bill—we won't know until a vote.

Again, dateline May 2, 2017: “I wish we weren't speaking to another time allocation motion in this House, but that seems to be—maybe not the orders of the day all the time, but certainly the order of the day when it comes to this government.” I would add—it's not in this quote—that he was speaking about the Liberal government of the day.

This government is acting exactly like the Liberal government—

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: I just got here.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, you were just here for a little while. I'm not pointing right at you.

This government is acting exactly like the government it replaced—the government that we were all glad was replaced.

“They are the government of the guillotine when it comes to debate in this chamber.” That could be said of this government, as well. “If they don't want to talk about something because they don't want to hear all of the facts and all of the opinions and all of the experts that are out there, they simply stifle debate, shutting out the public, but also shutting out the members of this House....”

“But there has always been a difficult balance, and I recognize that. I understand how difficult it is to govern. I have never been on that side; I'm looking forward to it someday.”

Now they have the chance, he has the chance, and his government is doing exactly the same thing as the previous government.

Again, I quote the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: “I have been consistent on this point since I got here in this House. It is a misuse of this chamber, it is an abuse of the members, when you continuously bring forth time allocation motions, particularly on a bill of this nature that needs reasoned debate”—I would suggest that the fall economic statement would need reasoned debate—“that needs the opportunity for deputants to come forward with ways that can improve upon the legislation.”

Again, I fully agree. The fact that the government is not having any committee for the fall economic statement says they only want to hear from one side—from who, you could say, are their insiders. That's one way. They're saying they have consulted over the summer. They've consulted with who they've picked to consult with—as opposed to open consultation, where the public can come to consult.

Again, from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, May 16, 2017: “I did have a chuckle myself only because I am so flabbergasted by the behaviour of a government here in the province of Ontario. They want to get legislation through so they use the—they don't use the negotiate method; they don't use the committee method; they don't use the compromise method. They use the guillotine method.” And the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke always had an action move when he said that. I won't hit the desk, because I don't want to bug the translation people, but anyway, that's—he did many times. “That's how they get legislation through here in the province of Ontario—the guillotine method....”

“This is the thing that just galls me to no end. It galls me to no end that this is how we do things in this Legislature. Do you know, Speaker, what ... the problem is? I look across here at the Liberal bench and currently in front of me—I know I can't make references to members not being in the House, so I'm not going to do that directly. But there's not a single”—and this is an improvement, I will say. As the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was saying this, he said, “But there's not a single member sitting on the Liberal side right now, as God is my witness, who has ever spent five minutes in opposition—not five minutes in opposition. They have no idea what it is like to live on this side of the House when you're trying to make positive changes to legislation.”

1550

There are many on that side of the House who are in exactly the same position: They have never sat in opposition and have never actually realized what a good opposition is, and how allowing the opposition to criticize and to propose to improve the legislation for the people of Ontario—because the legislation isn't for the government; good legislation should be for the people of Ontario.

It is interesting to note that some of the members who have sat on the opposition benches are some of the people who are now currently advocating, promoting, the same things that they were so against from the previous government.

That brings me to the current House leader, who now has proposed this time allocation motion. I have so many quotes from the current House leader that I don't know where to begin. I could do the next 44 minutes just on quotes from the current House leader on why time allocation is a terrible idea.

May 16, 2017, Mr. Steve Clark—"The Minister of Children and Youth Services can sigh all he wants, but facts do matter. Facts do matter, and deciding to choke off debate on a bill, a bill that many stakeholders are imparting information on—many stakeholders are indicating that there are some measures that they like, but there are also some measures that stakeholders have indicated to our critic that they don't like." That's reasonable. "But the government doesn't want to hear those negative voices. They want to bring this bill through committee without debate. They want to bring it back to the House with as little debate as possible and then move forward. I wouldn't be surprised—we've dealt with two time allocation motions today; I believe that we'll probably be dealing with more before this government rises."

How many time allocation motions have we dealt with—and the government will know—since we've come back?

What the government is also doing—and they have perfected this, because now they do three bills in one motion. The Liberals didn't really have this fully understood. They actually did each bill through a separate time allocation motion, so then they at least had to listen to us and to the Conservatives at the time—the Tory opposition. They had to listen to the Tory opposition and to us—to try to change their minds to slow this down. The current Tory government has figured out, "We don't want to listen to this. We don't want to listen to these people actually make sense for an hour on each bill, so we're going to package three bills together and only have to listen to it once." If it wasn't so damaging for the people of Ontario, I would give you a bow. This doesn't help the people of Ontario in the least—not at all. Actually, in the long term, it won't help your government either because—and this isn't a quote from anybody.

Perhaps you know the numbers better than I, but this government, I believe, holds the record in Ontario for having to rescind legislation, having to pretend that it never happened.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You mean like the greenbelt?

Mr. John Vanthof: Like the greenbelt legislation and others—Bill 124.

So why is this government not learning and saying, "Maybe we should actually listen to voices who disagree, so we can make sure our legislation stands the test of time"?

You won a majority. You have the right to put forward your agenda. We get that. But you also have to use that power wisely so that your right stands the test of time.

I would say that having to rescind bills almost right after you put them through; having to fight in the Supreme Court and lose and having to rescind bills; and having bills investigated by the RCMP—I would suggest that that is part of the problem. Now you're not learning from that problem; you're actually speeding it up. You're doubling down, and that is truly scary.

Anyway, back to the quotes—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Favourite part.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

Again, from Mr. Steve Clark—I'm reading off Hansard, so I can use the member's name, I believe: "It has real difficulty managing its ... agenda. I used my comments a few days ago about this government's lack of planning and organization when it came to ... House leaders' meetings that we sat in—myself and the member for Simcoe–Grey and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—where the government actually indicated that they wanted two bills that they hadn't even introduced yet, that they hadn't even talked to the critics about. They hadn't even disclosed the details of those bills, yet they wanted to make sure that they got them through the House with as little debate as possible. They don't want to hear those dissenting voices."

Do you know what, Speaker? The government House leader will remember this. I was much younger back then, just starting out in my political career, but we used to have House leaders' meetings where we actually discussed what bills were coming up in the next few weeks, so that we could all go back to our constituents and talk about the pros and cons of those bills. And we kind of knew what was coming up for debate so that we could provide the best-informed debate possible. The first thing that this government did was cancel that.

This week is a good example. Basically, the government House leader got up and said, "As for the agenda for next week"—or last week. He got up on Thursday, I believe, after petitions or after motions, and basically what his report said was, "We're going to debate stuff." That's basically what he said. It had no detail at all. I can see why the government likes to do that. But is it better for the people? No. Does it make better legislation? No, it doesn't. There's a reason why this place was designed to work like it's supposed to work.

I respect everyone in here, and every time I'm in here and I listen to someone speak, I learn something. Every time a government decides to curtail debate, and, even more important, decides to curtail committee, we lose the opportunity to learn something.

I don't profess to know everything. I say this to everyone I meet: My job is to know a little about a lot of things and to know the people who know a lot about what they're experts in, and, when I find out what is being proposed and what's being debated, to contact those people and see what can be done better, what's good.

There are lots of things that we totally disagree with the government on philosophically, but almost every government bill—like the ones you rescinded, there was nothing that we—and I quote him often, but in the words of one of my great friends, Kevin Modeste, even a broken clock is right twice a day. So there are good things in every bill, but every time—the Liberals did it, and now you're doing it—you curtail debate, you're missing the opportunity for someone to say, "Wait a second. Have you thought about this? Have you thought about this?" You're totally missing that.

Now, we will continue with the quotes from—oh, there's so many of them, I don't want to—okay. So again, April 21, 2015, dateline, Steve Clark, Ontario Legislature: "Again, I want to put on the record my concern that with every single bill this government tables, they either ask for closure after 10 hours or they're starting to time-allocate all these bills. It's a concern of mine. Here, the greatest issue that I have is that in this case, with Bill 80, we've only had four of our members—far, far too few members. In my entire five years as an MPP, to see a bill be time-allocated after four official opposition speakers—it's unbelievable. So I want to put that on the record...."

"So I leave that with you, Speaker. We're going to vote against this time allocation motion. We're going to stand up for democracy."

1600

At the time, the government House leader was concerned that the government of the day was moving closure after 10 hours—10 hours of debate. Oh, those were the days when we had 10 hours of debate. Since he's been government House leader, each debate has been stopped at six and a half hours. He should be outraged, but he's not. He's not at all, and I'm shocked at that. I'm shocked at that, that there's not even a hint of remorse. But there will be a day when there will be some remorse, when some of this legislation—when they've missed things that they thought they had all the answers to and it turned out they didn't, like with the greenbelt. You all thought you had all the answers. That didn't work out so well. Bill 124: You thought you had all the answers. It could be so easy. That didn't turn out so well.

MPP Jamie West: Bill 28.

Mr. John Vanthof: Bill 28, same thing. So you think you have all the answers, and obviously it didn't work out that well.

I think I'm going to go to—

Mme France Gélinas: Child care.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm going to go to the bills in a second, but I would like to close the quotes—I'm not going to quote too many more—with the top 10 quotes from Steve Clark. But actually, there's only eight. I'm going to have to read these from back to front, because

we're going to see how the government House leader—how his thought process progressed, or regressed.

Dateline, October 27, 2014. Bated breath? "Trust is easily lost. You need to make sure that when you carry on a government, you have that balance and you deal with people openly, honestly and with respect...."

Pretty good, eh? I commend the government House leader on that. I fully agree with that.

Let's go to October 28, 2014, just one day later: "My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke quoted one of the sayings that is here in this chamber"—and I don't know anything about Latin—"Audi alteram partem, which means, 'Hear the other side.' All we're asking is that you hear the other side."

Again, very thoughtful. I have to commend the member.

November 24, 2014: "Debate is the hallmark of our democratic society. It's the reason we get up in the morning and come to this place at Queen's Park." What has happened to the government House leader?

April 16, 2015: "It is anti-democratic to speed legislation through this House without adequate debate from all parties...."

"So again, I appeal to the member for St. Catharines and all the MPPs on the government benches to consider carefully the path you're treading. When you are elected into government, you not only are given power, but you're also given the trust of the people. Don't silence the voices, even though they're opposition voices, by shutting down debate and forcing time allocation."

I couldn't have said that better myself.

Mme France Gélinas: Pretty well said.

Mr. John Vanthof: Very, very eloquently said.

April 21, 2015—this is a very short one. This one is going to be echoed by me at the end of this speech: "We're going to vote against this time allocation motion. We're going to stand up for democracy." What happened to democracy?

October 22, 2015: "Time after time after time this government has rammed through pieces of legislation because they don't want the opposition's voices to be heard and they don't want the voices of Ontarians to be heard."

It's funny how a move across the aisle changes the perspective, but it doesn't change the problems. This doesn't change the problems.

May 16, 2017—dateline again. The current government House leader mentions Mr. Bradley several times. Mr. Bradley was the Liberal government House leader at the time, dean of the Legislature at the time, a very long-serving member: "Mr. Bradley goes on to say in his speech on December 11, 2001"—so I'm quoting Mr. Clark quoting Mr. Bradley: "'The best way to deal with legislation is to have the government sitting most of the year so that it can receive careful analysis and debate in this House and in committees and, in fact, in committees that travel across the province to get meaningful input. We do not have that.'"

"Again, I agree with Jim Bradley from November 24, 1993"—and actually, I agree with Jim Bradley from Nov-

ember 24, 1993, and so did the government House leader when he actually said this.

He continues—the current government House leader: “So we’ve taken the entire legislative day to just talk about this government’s desire to get their bills passed and get out of here for the couple of months we have as a break. I just think that’s not the speech that I heard from the throne when we were elected.”

Again, that actually could be said of the current government—absolutely.

I’m almost done. May 16—no, no. Wait a second. I already read this one. Okay, so this is going to be my last quote from the government House leader when he wasn’t government House leader. This one—okay, you’re going to have to pay attention to this one.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, you’re going to have to pay attention to this one.

Dateline, November 28, 2017: “I’ll give them, actually, the People’s Guarantee, because we will listen to them, and we will ensure that those Ontarians are being listened to.

“We are looking at a government that is for the insiders and not the people. You know what, Speaker? That’s going to change.”

Really? There’s a French saying: “Le plus ça change, le plus” it remains the same. Come on.

He continues, “They’re going to stifle public opinion. They’re going to shut down all opposing voices. They’re going to rack up a lot of Facebook ads and a lot of television ads to try to promote themselves. People have seen through that. They’ve seen enough of this movie. They want it to end.”

That’s eloquent—eloquent. What I can’t understand is why the current government House leader is doing exactly the same thing he accused the Liberal government of. Will the real Steve Clark please stand up?

In his presentation, he mentioned the three bills that the government is time-allocating, and I’m going to spend a few minutes on those bills, because since it’s time-allocated, I likely won’t get another chance to speak to it.

If you remember, on Bill 212, I was just starting my speech when the Speaker, following the rules of the House, stood up at six and a half hours and said, “Shall debate continue or shall we adjourn?” and the government House leader asked for the debate to adjourn, stifling my ability to represent my constituents.

1610

Mr. Tyler Allsopp: And you said nothing.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, no, I did say something. I followed the rules of the House, so this is my opportunity. This bill spends a lot of time talking about gridlock, and I was going to talk about gridlock as well. I can remember this exactly. I was just about to talk about how I travel from my riding—my house is about six hours north of here, and I travel down here once a week, travel back and forth when the Leg is running.

A lot of people don’t—I get that gridlock in the GTA is incredibly frustrating. I get that. I drive through it, and I

only have to do it once a week—or twice a week, back and forth. I have trouble with low numbers. You know, I forgot I was—anyway.

What people don’t understand is that, in northern Ontario, the TransCanada Highway goes through my riding. All the goods that travel back and forth through Canada, especially in wintertime, go through my riding. They go through Highway 11. It happens time after time after time that there’s an accident on Highway 11, and that’s northern gridlock. Everything stops. And if it’s a serious accident—and we’re not going to go blow by blow because I do not want to retraumatize the families who go through this. But if it’s a serious accident, if it’s a fatality, the highway is closed for hours and hours and hours, and people are stuck on that highway because there is no detour. There is no detour on Highway 11.

Sometimes the highway is closed when a commercial truck does something that obviously shows that they shouldn’t be driving that commercial truck. We have seen—and my colleagues from the north can back me up, and I’m sure the people from the government side would back me up as well if they were allowed to debate.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: So I have been behind a truck that decided to do—Highway 11, a two-lane highway with not much shoulders and, all of a sudden, the 40-foot or the 50-foot trailer decides to do a three-point turn on Highway 11. And do you know what happens? The front wheels are in one ditch and the trailer wheels are in another ditch, and it’s done. The highway is closed. It happens time after time after time.

I’m not even talking about the really dangerous accidents. Anyone who’s driven on those highways, on 11 or 17, we have all, all of us, had the white-knuckle moment where you pull on the side and go, “But for the grace of God, there go I.” We have all had that.

Can you imagine how we feel in northern Ontario—anybody in Ontario—when we see on Marketplace how drivers are licensed in Ontario? Do you realize that the Auditor General already identified a similar issue in 2018? In 2018, the Auditor General identified a similar issue and nothing—nothing.

Now, I give credit where credit is due. The Ministry of Transportation has been doing blitzes, and the one blitz early this year—and I know this one because this one sticks in my head—76 commercial vehicles were pulled over, and that’s a good thing. And 32 weren’t allowed back on the road because they weren’t safe—almost half. So on any given day, half the cross-country trucks in my riding are unsafe.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: In mine too.

Mr. John Vanthof: The member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay—and the one thing you have to realize for northern Ontario is that’s also our main street. We can’t take the other street because we know, yes, the trucks are on this street so we’ll take the other one. We don’t have that. That’s our main street.

Want to go to the grocery store? Highway 11. Want to go to the doctor, if you have one—that's a whole other discussion. Take Highway 11.

Hon. Graham McGregor: What if I want to ride my bike?

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. Don't start pushing me on bikes. I'm Dutch. Dutch people like bikes. But anyway, it's a serious, serious issue.

We want to talk about gridlock. If I make it to North Bay, you get four lanes. Life changes with a divided four-lane highway. Life changes. You get down to Barrie, it gets really busy. I've said this before: When you're a northerner, anywhere below Barrie is the GTA. We can't tell the difference if it's Brampton, Markham or Scarborough. I know now, but not then.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: You all laugh at that, but many people think that north of Barrie or north of Muskoka, it's all tundra, and I'll assure you that's not the case. That's not the case.

But you know what, the thing that I find most odd: I drive to Toronto and the 400, the 401 are packed. I get that people are frustrated. But I'm from northern Ontario and I can't understand—the 407 is built and it's empty.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's empty. It's empty. When I drive by it, it's pretty empty. I've taken it a couple of times. I realize why people avoid the 407: The bills are big. The funny part is this current government or their Conservative predecessors, they actually—they didn't sell the 407. That's not accurate. They leased it out—right?—for, I believe, 95 years, 99 years. They probably used the same contract that they are using on Ontario Place—probably using the same contract.

In the debate, one of the Conservative members—we were talking about the 407. In the debate, they said, “Well, the 407 is not going to reach full capacity for seven years. So talking about trying to get some kind of legislation, or actually buy part of the 407 back or do something is so short-sighted.”

Well, you know what? I don't think that leaving the people of Ontario who need to get to work and are on the 401—to leave them there for seven years because you don't want to admit that it was a mistake to lease out, to basically give away the 407, I don't think that's responsible, at all.

When we talk about gridlock, there are all kinds of gridlock. But if there's one thing I can leave this government—if the Minister of Transportation really wants to look at it, we need to clean up commercial drivers. There are a lot of great commercial drivers—I would say the majority. But the bad ones? We have all, in northern Ontario—I've had a truck come at me and pass, and I've had to pull off to avoid the head-on. This isn't a once-off. This happens all the time.

That's something we need to be able to stop. That's something that we need to—I think it's beneficial. I think we're having a beneficial debate here. It's too bad that you always want to cut them off. I'm making a point here.

Now, the next bill—what was the next bill?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Bill 214.

Mr. John Vanthof: Bill 214. It's a bill that concerns mostly energy, almost all. Oh, no, I have to go back to the other one: broadband. That's Bill 212. That's another very important thing across the province. The government came out with a \$4-billion plan to fix this and we were supposed to have full broadband by the end of 2025 I don't think you're going to make it.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: I don't think you're going to make it, and the reason that you're not going to make it is the way—you divided the province up into 40 regions and then held a Dutch auction.

1620

I know what a Dutch auction is because I'm Dutch; I don't know if the rest of you know what a Dutch auction is. It's a reverse auction.

Companies could bid on if they were going to supply broadband in that region, but you had to be—my region was huge, where I am, so all the little players, the smaller broadband players that were actually providing the service, couldn't bid.

In our region, a big telecom, Bell, won the bid, but they didn't provide the service before and are likely not going to provide the service now. I get it; Bell is a private company. I ran a private company for a long time—not the size of Bell; I was a farmer. I grew things that I could sell to make money. If there was something that I grew continually and it didn't make money, I quit growing it. Bell is not in the business of serving hard-to-serve places, because there's no money in it. So the government is now going to provide them a subsidy, and what they're doing is, they're rebuilding infrastructure that was already there, and the people who didn't have Internet before still don't have it.

The government House leader spent some time talking about the last mile. He's right on one—it's always the last mile that's so hard to serve. In northern Ontario—I'm not even northern Ontario; my colleague from Kiiwetinoong is far farther north than me. I'm not northern Ontario; I'm central Ontario—but we know very well, because we are always, always the last mile.

Bill 214: This one is regarding energy. Do you know what? As we electrify the province and we have electric cars, we're going to need a lot more energy. That's not a surprise to any of us, and I think we all could agree on that. And regardless of where that energy comes from, we need to price it. We need to know how much it's going to cost—the total cost, the true cost—regardless of whether it's nuclear, wind, solar, natural gas or water power. There are a few big hydro dams—and the reason many of us call electricity “hydro” is because of water power. They all have costs, they all have impacts, and we need to be sure that what we're investing for the future, for many years—that we actually have the true costs. This bill doesn't actually do that.

The government has been very reluctant to talk about true costs, and I think that's a problem and that's why this bill should be further debated, and—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, this bill is going to go to committee. The committee debate is short, as well, but the debate for third reading is very short.

The bill that's the most truncated—if you want to measure bills by importance, by thickness, this is a quarter inch. That's a pretty big bill for these guys. The government House leader said that this was the second-most important bill next to the budget. You would think, since it's so important and the government is so proud of what they have in this bill, that they would want to debate as much as possible; that they would have want to have a committee to look at it, to have people to see, because the more information you have, the better decisions you can make.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It hasn't even been a week.

Mr. John Vanthof: It hasn't been a week.

There's one part in this bill and in the following bill talking about—and the Premier has made a big deal about this: that every person in the province is going to get \$200. I'm not trying to minimize 200 bucks. I don't care what your income is; 200 bucks is 200 bucks. And for some people, \$200 is a lot of money. I would highly recommend, if the government is going to send that cheque, that you cash that cheque. But I often—I don't know how to put this. I read a lot. I don't read a lot of Shakespeare. I think people know that. But this \$200 cheque reminded me of a strip in *The Wizard of Id*. Some of you might be too young for *The Wizard of Id*.

As you know if you follow my Hansard, I have compared this government—the “get 'er done” bill I suggested perhaps was written by Larry the Cable Guy. And then when they rescinded the bills, I suggested it was written by Homer Simpson—like, d'oh. And then I suggested that perhaps the government reminded me a bit of *The Dukes of Hazzard*.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, I was there.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. Well, the \$200 cheque reminds me of a strip in *The Wizard of Id*. Again, I'm not minimizing the 200 bucks. If you need—

Hon. Nina Tangri: But you are.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, I'm not. The 200 bucks is very important.

I'll just have to give a bit of background on *The Wizard of Id*. The kingdom of Id is ruled by a despotic king who pretends to have elections. He has a wizard. He has a few other main characters. The king is on his castle wall, and he's giving a speech to his people. He promises, “If you vote for me, I promise a chicken in every pot.” His people, the people who live in Id, start throwing rocks and pitchforks at the king. He turns to the wizard and asks, “What's wrong with these peasants?” And he says, “Sire, they no longer have pots.” If you don't catch the reference, perhaps—“We couldn't get you a doctor. We promised; we couldn't get you that. We can't even get you gauze for your home care. Here's 200 bucks. Hopefully, you'll forget.”

For those in northern Ontario, with the budget—and I remember this distinctly—the Northern Health Travel Grant was going to be changed. Do you know what? It hasn't changed. It might be coming. But for someone who has to come to Toronto for surgery—do you know what a hotel room in Toronto is now? And do you know how much they get? A hundred bucks—“Here's 200 bucks. Maybe you'll forget.” It's an awful lot like *The Wizard of Id*. You're trying to make people forget about your own shortcomings, and maybe they will.

Again, I encourage everyone to cash that cheque and use it on whatever you're missing that this government has absolutely failed to accomplish.

The Premier actually said that Ontario is now the powerhouse of the whole of North America; the whole world is looking at Ontario as a powerhouse. Okay, I will take his word on that. If it's a powerhouse and then—and I'm paraphrasing, but I think I'm close. We need to send everyone 200 bucks to stimulate the economy? No, those two don't fit. The truth is, the 200 bucks is to hopefully, hopefully make people forget the shortcomings of this government. That's what the 200 bucks is about.

1630

What people want government for is the basics. They want to make sure that they can have a safe school for their kids. They want to make sure that if they work hard, they can eventually afford a home. They want to make sure they can rent a home. They want to make sure that when they call an ambulance, an ambulance comes. They want to make sure—in my part of the world—when your hospitals are far apart, that when you get to an emergency room, it's—

Interjection: Open.

Mr. John Vanthof: —open. They want to make sure that they don't have to travel eight or 10 hours to have a baby.

Do you know what? Those basics are actually what create jobs. When companies come here and they see that everything is stable and it's—I live in a riding, Timiskaming—Cochrane. We have all kinds of jobs—high-paying jobs in the mines, in forestry, in farming; six-figure jobs. Why can't we get people to come and stay? Because of our lack of basic, basic services; of mental health services, of social services, the things that government should help provide—and they're not.

You're not providing basic services, and that is—maybe not your undoing, but it's the province's undoing.

You can give millions and billions to certain industries. Do you know what? We have agreed with some of those. We haven't voted against them all—but we have brought it up continually regarding health care, regarding mental health, regarding education, regarding housing.

I listened to the government say, “Oh, the NDP can't cost their plan on housing and blah blah blah”—I forget what number they showed up with. For some reason, the government has no problem putting—what is it?—a billion dollars in a parking garage for a spa. But any money to help build houses, non-market housing that the private sector is not going to build without help—that's too much

money. But a billion-dollar parking garage for a spa? “Sign me up.” What is that? That’s your undoing.

A very good question was asked today regarding encampments. There were no encampments when I got here. It’s not just an Ontario problem; I get that. But when the government is talking about using the “notwithstanding” clause to move the encampments—where are you going to move these people to? What kind of society doesn’t look at the root causes of the problem and at least try to fix the root causes? You’re not doing that. You’re failing on that.

The fact is that you don’t even want to debate bills, that you think you have all the answers. When you see that things are going wrong, you’re going down exactly the same road as the previous government went down. You think that you’re infallible, and so did they. They were just as smug as some of you are now—and not all of you. I have great relations with—but as a government, the fact that you time-allocate major budget bills, quite frankly, is arrogant and smug, and people at some point are going to realize that. I hope, as a province, that you change course. Deep down, we all want the best for Ontarians; I 100% believe that. That’s why I ran for this job. That’s why I’m here speaking. That’s why you all ran.

Speaker, we will be opposing time allocation on these three bills because we believe that democracy depends on debate. In many parts of this world, people would love to have the ability to debate bills. The fact that a majority government chooses to curtail debate is a threat to democracy. That’s why we will vote against this time allocation and any other ones that come forward.

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

Mr. Clark has moved government notice of motion number 26 relating to allocation of time on Bill 212, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various Acts with respect to highways, broadband-related expropriation and other transportation-related matters; Bill 214, An Act to amend various energy statutes respecting long term energy planning, changes to the Distribution System Code and the Transmission System Code and electric vehicle charging; and Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say aye.

All those opposed, please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I move to see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The government House leader has moved to see the clock at 6. Agreed? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TRUCKING SAFETY

SÉCURITÉ DU TRANSPORT ROUTIER

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Transportation should explore the establishment or adjustment of a waiting period for drivers holding a class G licence before they can apply for commercial vehicle licences, such as class A or class D, to ensure that commercial drivers are experienced and fully prepared for the responsibilities associated with operating larger vehicles, with an exemption for drivers where appropriate, such as agricultural operations.

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

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I am honoured to stand here today to discuss my private member’s motion, which is aimed at enhancing road safety across Ontario while ensuring that our commercial drivers meet the highest standards of competency and readiness. This motion calls upon the Minister of Transportation to explore the establishment of a mandatory waiting period for class G licence holders before they can apply for commercial vehicle licences. The purpose of this waiting period is to give drivers the valuable time and experience they need on Ontario’s roads before taking on the responsibility of operating larger, more complex vehicles.

1640

I’d like to begin by thanking the honourable Minister of Transportation for their unwavering commitment to putting the safety of Ontarians first. Under the minister’s leadership, Ontario’s roadways have benefited from policies that prioritize the well-being of everyone on the road, from pedestrians to professional drivers. It’s inspiring to work alongside a ministry so dedicated to continuous improvement in public safety.

An example of this commitment can be seen in my recent private member’s motion, which has now successfully introduced an online air-braking learning module. This new system replaces the air brake knowledge test at the time of renewal, streamlining the processes for drivers while maintaining rigorous safety standards and eliminating unnecessary red tape. By embracing modernization, we’re able to keep Ontario’s licensing system efficient and responsive to the needs of the trucking industry which serves as a lifeline for our economy.

Madam Speaker, road safety isn’t just a provincial issue. It’s deeply personal to the people I represent. In Brampton and across Ontario, road safety is a top concern for families, businesses and communities. Many of my constituents regularly share their worries about keeping our roads safe for their loved ones and colleagues. They see first-hand the challenges and potential dangers associated with large commercial vehicles on our highways and

have voiced their belief in the importance of thorough preparation for those in charge of operating these vehicles.

I stand here today on behalf of those constituents, committed to listening to their concerns and acting on their behalf to make our roads safer. They understand that preparation and experience are crucial, especially when it comes to operating large vehicles that require quick reflexes, sound judgment and a steady hand. This motion aims to ensure that drivers who transition to the commercial sector have these vital qualities.

This motion is rooted in a straightforward but powerful goal: to ensure that all commercial drivers are prepared and experienced enough to handle the responsibilities associated with operating large vehicles on Ontario's roads. By implementing a waiting period between obtaining a class G licence and applying for a commercial licence, we're addressing the critical need for increased experience, maturity and skill development before a driver can step into the commercial sector. The waiting period will provide class G drivers with essential experience on Ontario's roads, familiarizing them with our unique road conditions, diverse weather patterns and high-traffic areas.

Canada's unpredictable weather—harsh winters, foggy autumns and slippery spring roads—requires a level of driving proficiency that only time and practice can build. This period will allow drivers to build the confidence and skills necessary to safely operate large vehicles, benefiting both themselves and the broader community.

Commercial drivers play a vital role in Canada's economy and transportation network. These drivers are responsible for the movement of essential goods and services across the province and beyond. But without adequate experience, new drivers face a steep learning curve when transitioning to larger vehicles. This inexperience can lead to costly accidents, increased risk on the roads and tragic outcomes for those involved.

By requiring at least one year of driving experience with a class G licence, we're enhancing drivers' skills and reducing the risks associated with inexperienced commercial driving. This motion would create a safer environment not only for commercial drivers, but for everyone sharing the road with them.

Experience matters. It builds better decision-making, smoother handling of unexpected changes and a higher level of road awareness, all of which are crucial in the commercial driving industry. This motion aligns with Ontario's graduated licensing system, which has proven effective in preparing drivers through a step-by-step process. The proposed waiting period would build on this system by adding a layer of practical, real-world experience before drivers can apply for a class A or class D licence. This would allow drivers more time to adapt to the road's demands and safely transition to commercial driving.

When new drivers spend additional time practising on the roads, they become better equipped to handle high-stress situations, make sound decisions and safely navigate Ontario's complex highways. Our current system prepares drivers well, but there's room to strengthen it further. A

mandatory waiting period would close the gap and bring additional assurance to the safety of our roadways.

This motion also helps address a concerning trend we have witnessed in recent years: the practice of border-hopping. This occurs when non-residents come to Ontario to quickly obtain a commercial licence, only to exchange it in other jurisdictions. By instituting a waiting period, we would protect the integrity of our licensing system, ensuring that those applying for commercial licences are genuinely committed to meeting Ontario's standards. This measure reinforces Ontario's reputation as a province that values experience, preparation and safety above all else.

I understand that the trucking industry faces several challenges, including a shortage of drivers. This motion is not intended to restrict new drivers from entering the industry, but rather, to prepare them properly. By ensuring that commercial drivers have adequate experience, we're creating a safer environment for both the public and the drivers themselves.

A safer trucking industry is an asset to Ontario's economy. Fewer accidents mean lower insurance costs, less vehicle downtime and reduced operational disruptions. Additionally, the reduced accident rates resulting from better prepared drivers can lessen strain on our emergency services and health care systems. This motion is not only an investment in public safety, but also a wise economic strategy that helps secure the stability and reliability of Ontario's transportation sector.

This motion is fully aligned with our government's commitment to public safety and economic efficiency. Ontario's roads are experiencing increasing commercial traffic, especially as our economy grows and our communities expand. By implementing an experience requirement, we're supporting the government's focus on responsible standards for drivers, prioritizing safety and ensuring that our infrastructure serves Ontarians well.

This motion also aligns with the government's dedication to reducing red tape while upholding rigorous safety standards. This is evident in the recent success of the online air brake learning module, which I introduced to replace the traditional air brake knowledge test at renewal. Like this new module, the waiting period proposed in this motion represents another step forward in creating a modern, efficient and safe transportation system for the people of this province.

As we discuss this motion, it is important to consider sectors with their unique operational needs, like agriculture. Our farmers rely on timely access to commercial vehicles to manage their seasonal demands, and I want to assure them that this motion provides room for appropriate exemptions. Agriculture use may be excluded from the waiting period requirement to ensure Ontario's farmers can continue their essential work without unnecessary barriers. By tailoring our approach, we can balance safety with flexibility for industries that can contribute so much to our province's economy.

In closing, this motion represents a commitment to road safety, public accountability and an improved standard of readiness for commercial drivers. By establishing a one-

year waiting period for class A drivers before they can apply for a commercial licence, we're taking a significant step in ensuring that Ontario's roads remain safe for all who use them.

This motion is more than just a policy change. It's a commitment to giving our drivers the time and experience they need to become skilled and confident commercial drivers. This is about strengthening our road safety, reducing preventable accidents and creating a system where experience is valued and prioritized. It is about building a safer, stronger Ontario, where public safety and economic vitality go hand in hand.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to all my colleagues for considering this motion. Together, let's build a legacy of safety, reliability and trust on our roads, one driver at a time.

1650

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

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: This motion speaks about how the Ministry of Transportation should explore the establishment or adjustment of a waiting period for drivers holding a class G licence before they can apply for commercial vehicle licences.

I think it's a move in the right direction. It certainly doesn't go far enough. It doesn't go far enough—I'm saying this because we've all seen the report from Market-place showing the corrupt system. Because we privatized, all of a sudden, they found loopholes; in other words, they're paying money to bypass MELT. MELT is the training that's given to truckers to be able to get their licence for truck driving. They're teaching them just to pass the test, but they're not getting the whole training.

Just imagine: We're on Highway 11 and we have truckers that are not qualified driving on Highways 11, 17 and every highway in Ontario. That is a scary thought, and this is not just a couple of bad players. In French, we say, "C'est systémique dans le système." It is more than just a couple of bad players. We tend to hear them saying, "Oh, there's just a few bad players." It's not just a few bad players.

And what are we doing about it? Shouldn't we get to know who these schools are and pull their licences and bring these drivers that have been licensed and say, "We need to retest you because we have concerns"? They may not be trained enough to drive on our highways. It kills people.

I introduced Chad's Law especially because of situations like this. Two big trucks, 18-wheelers, were passing on a double solid line—by the way, in North America, just Ontario and a few states don't have that law. In the States and Canada, most states and provinces—all provinces have it. It's law. But in Ontario, we judged that it was not good enough for us, not safe enough for us. It doesn't make sense. Two solid lines should be law in Ontario. The OPP asked me to bring that bill. It makes sense.

But we have truck drivers that are—and there are good truck drivers. Don't get me wrong. We know a majority of them are good truck companies. They train them well. I

know I was speaking to the one that was on the report that has a simulator. It makes sense to have simulators. We train pilots. We train feller bunchers in the bush.

MPP Jamie West: Miners.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Miners—why can't we train truck drivers the same way? Have a certain amount of hours so we expose them to black ice, so we expose them to freezing rain, so we expose them to slush, so we expose them to snowstorms. That is what we're dealing with here.

Is this a step in the right direction? It is. I'm not going to argue that, because at least it gives the minister a time of adjustment, but that doesn't go far enough. Are you kidding me? Chad almost lost his life, and we have the video of that. Imagine how traumatic that is, seeing that. It is scary what's happening on our highways with people that are not qualified and are driving, and yet we're seeing a motion that could have gone a lot further to address what's happening on our roads. People are dying on our roads. People are dying.

Il y a du monde qui meurt sur nos routes. C'est inacceptable. C'est pour ça que je dis que c'est comme un petit pansement, un petit pansement pour le problème qu'on traite. On ne guérit pas un cancer avec un « Band-Aid ». C'est systémique dans notre système, comme c'est là. Puis on a un ministère qui dit : « Bien non, on a les routes les plus sécuritaires au monde—dans l'Amérique du Nord. » Je ne devrais pas dire au monde, mais dans l'Amérique du Nord.

Je peux vous dire, moi, qu'il y a bien du monde qui vont sur les routes 11 puis 17, mais je peux te dire qu'ils ne sont pas gros dans les culottes, rien que pour ne pas user d'un autre terme qu'on connaît tous, là. Mais c'est une réalité qu'on vit au jour le jour dans le nord de l'Ontario.

On n'a pas de bypass. Quand la route ferme—mon collègue en a parlé un petit peu, mais quand la route ferme, elle est fermée. Moi, j'ai été pris huit heures derrière un camion à cause que, justement, il y avait quelqu'un qui est décédé sur la route. Et on ne peut pas bypasser. Il n'y a pas de détour. On est pris là. Ça, ça veut dire que le Canada au complet est arrêté—au moins, qu'il bypasser par la 17, mais là, il est trop tard. Il est rendu sur la 11.

Puis quand ça vient, l'hiver, tout le monde passe sur la route 11. Pourquoi? Il y a moins de côtes. C'est moins difficile. Ça sauve de l'essence pour ces compagnies-là. Puis je pense que les assurances demandent aussi qu'ils passent par cette route-là.

J'ai oublié de dire que je vais aussi partager mon temps avec la députée de Superior North.

Mais ceci dit, je pense que—écoute, c'est une motion qu'on peut supporter, mais définitivement, ça ne va pas assez loin. Et le ministère le sait. Et le gouvernement le sait. Ce n'est pas un secret de Polichinelle, comme on dit en français. C'est tout le monde qui le sait, puis ils l'ont démontré.

Ça fait des années que nous, sur ce côté de la Chambre, on dit qu'il y a un problème dans l'industrie du camionnage. Puis le gouvernement—ça tombe dans l'oreille d'un sourd. Bien là, on a les preuves, puis ils ne font encore pas assez. Ils ne font rien. Ils disent : « Ce sont quelques

mauvais joueurs. » C'est systémique. On doit réparer ça. Mais la motion est supportable.

Merci, madame la Présidente.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: We will be supporting this bill and are glad the government is finally acting on a recommendation of the Ontario Trucking Association and other advocates for road safety, such as Truckers for Safer Highways. Unfortunately, it's difficult to have confidence that this will result in the significant changes that are needed.

First, the privatization of DriveTest: The recent Auditor General's report is clear that the ministry's failure to monitor and crack down on fraud taking place at DriveTest centres is undermining safety on our roads.

Nonetheless, in 2023, the ministry awarded a new contract to the same service provider, Serco, through a non-competitive process. Serco is a powerful international corporation making profits from practices that put the safety of examiners, new drivers and all road users at risk. As one Serco employee put it, "We should not be pressured to manufacture the outcome of tests," but they are pressured to fit in more tests per hour. Examiners have near-death experiences daily, are forced to use dangerously unfit vehicles and are told to pass drivers who should be failed. Put that together with the scams that skip the training but give out certificates so that people can pay lower insurance rates, where they teach you just enough to pass the test on a specific route with a specific DriveTest location, and you have a disastrous number of drivers with G licences who should not be on the road.

Next, the training of commercial drivers: What good will it do if the G licence isn't legitimate, and the subsequent commercial licence isn't legitimate? Why are you not protecting the lives of new drivers and all other road users by making absolutely certain they are receiving the training they need? You have a responsibility to make sure that these new drivers are trained well, have received the mechanical training to look after their vehicles, know how to tie down their loads, are not forced to drive unfit vehicles and are not subject to wage theft. When rogue companies get caught, they just shut down and rebrand as a new company, and the government is doing nothing about this.

Next, new inspection stations: Data shows that there are only half the needed transportation enforcement officers in Ontario, and this was the case long before COVID. It's nothing new.

The result: The \$30-million station in my riding is rarely open. It is actually staffed by people from southern Ontario, who are flown up at great expense, put up in hotels and paid for meals and overtime.

The ministry can't recruit and retain inspectors because the wages do not reflect the level of danger and responsibility of the job. These officers are not only dealing with drivers, some of whom should not be on the road, but they are also dealing with criminal networks carrying stolen vehicles, and often, the nearest OPP backup is an hour away.

To be clear, the problems of bad driving on our highways are not just coming from new drivers. The most recent horrendous accident near Loon Lake Road was a driver from a local trucking company with a poor reputation passing over a double yellow line in a construction zone and likely under the influence. If this driver had been pulled over at an inspection station, would this company and driver still be in business? I doubt it.

Locals also tell me that when the inspection station is open, truck drivers hang out at the Flying J just down the road from the inspection station, and they wait there until the station is closed again. The station needs to be open 24/7, but for this to happen, the government must pay staff appropriately so that there's a full complement of transportation enforcement officers in Ontario.

1700

Finally, the scourge of Driver Inc.: Since 2018, governments have known that companies that pretend their employees are self-employed undercut legitimate businesses by—according to the Ontario Trucking Association—corporate and personal tax evasion, labour misclassification, misrepresentation of fleet registrations, insurance irregularities, under-reporting of vehicle use and fuel consumption and, in some cases, forced labour through various abuses of immigration programs.

The market distortion of Driver Inc. has directly resulted in the closure of a much-respected trucking business in Thunder Bay. Driver Inc. companies are offering mileage rates based on the year 2000. The result for this local company: They lost eight to 10 loads a day of a major contract coming out of Toronto and going to northern communities. Now this contract is going to a rogue company that probably pays its workers next to nothing. This has led to the loss of local jobs, losses to our local tax base, losses to provincial and federal taxes, losses to the WSIB and, of course, most importantly, losses of jobs and this company from our community. The province is not addressing this scam either.

The people of Ontario deserve so much more from this government. We will, however, be supporting this bill because, even though it is inadequate, it does finally acknowledge that there are serious problems regarding safety on our roads and highways, and this is at least a beginning towards addressing that. Thank you.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: As always, I'm deeply honoured to be speaking in support of the private member's motion focused on advancing road safety across Ontario and ensuring that commercial drivers are fully prepared to meet the highest standards on our roads on a day that I'm actually going to be looking forward—today is my nomination for the third general election. No day could be better than this.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to recognize the approaching Remembrance Day to honour the brave men and women who have served and sacrificed for the freedom that we are enjoying today. This weekend I had the pleasure of attending the 17th annual Sikh Re-

membrance Day Ceremony at the military grave of World War I hero Private Buckam Singh, organized by the Sikh museum alongside my colleague MPP Jess Dixon. As we come together, let's remember our heroes' legacy of peace, resilience and unity that they have gifted to us. We are forever indebted.

Back to the motion, Madam Speaker: The motion requests the Minister of Transportation to consider implementing a mandatory waiting period for class G licence holders before they can even apply for a commercial licence. Technically speaking, it is a motion that the wonderful member from Brampton West—it's another way of listening to his residents and acting on it and giving back to the community he's serving, so a big round of applause for our member from Brampton West.

This proposed waiting period is essential, allowing drivers to gain valuable experience in operating standard vehicles before progressing to larger, more complex commercial ones. Look at the data: In 2022, the Ontario Provincial Police reported 9,110 transport truck-related collisions, marking the highest provincial total in over 10 years. It's another example—looking at the data, when you see a trend going up—of the member, rather than looking at the data, he decided to take action.

According to the OPP, these incidents, which made up around 12% of the total collisions in 2022, led to 71 fatalities, most of which were preventable. Those are not just 71 lives, they are the 71 families, which were affected directly, and maybe over 700 families affected indirectly. This alarming trend highlights the need for targeted measures to improve road safety, especially when we talk about residents of Mississauga–Malton. Many of my constituents have expressed their concerns about commercial traffic licences.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada had MNP, a professional services firm, analyze the factors affecting insurance costs for commercial truck operators. MNP found that drivers with less training and experience had a higher likelihood of collision and costly claims compared to those with more extensive training and experience. So it's not just saving lives; it is actually helping those who are alive and reducing the cost of their living and doing business. This motion seeks to directly address those concerns by proposing a waiting period to allow drivers to build their skills, confidence and situational awareness, which are all crucial for safe commercial driving.

Madam Speaker, Ontario's licensing system has always aimed to balance efficiency and safety, particularly through initiatives like the graduated licensing system. By aligning these approaches, we are helping our people of Ontario. A safer trucking industry means fewer accidents, reduced insurance costs and a lighter load on emergency response resources. By establishing a one-year waiting period, we are investing in a safer, stronger Ontario. So I will urge all the members to support the member from Brampton West.

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to start by first thanking my colleague MPP Amarjot Sandhu from Brampton West for bringing this motion forward. In fact, he has always been a strong advocate on behalf of the trucking industry. I remember last year when he advocated, through a PMB as well, the removal of the air brake endorsement, which has helped save hundreds and thousands of hours for truck drivers across this province.

This now builds on what we have been hearing from the industry for quite some time now. We have some of the safest roads in all of North America and in the world right here in Ontario. We're very proud of our highways, our roads, the engineers that have built them. I'm very proud of our MTO inspectors and enforcement officers who work day and night protecting our roads, keeping our roads safe. But ultimately, what this motion is exploring and looking at is putting in a minimum of a one-year G driver's licence experience before granting or allowing an individual to drive a truck.

That is important for many reasons, Madam Speaker. One of those reasons is familiarity with our roads. It's about making sure that the younger drivers or those who come to the province of Ontario who might not know or appreciate different weather conditions, especially when we speak about Highway 11/17 and the harsh winters that we face, that they have an ability to drive in those conditions before they are able to apply for a commercial licence vehicle.

I believe it also helps address the issue of non-residents, which we have heard about in the past from many in the industry, who are using a loophole to try and work using and getting a commercial truck licence in this province. What that does is, for example, a visitor comes into this province, doesn't have status, is able to get a commercial vehicle licence and then drives with an individual or a company that is not following the rules, unfortunately. This would then also prevent those individuals, who would require a year's worth of experience before being able to apply for a driver's licence.

Ultimately, we're cracking down on bad actors and we're cracking down on safety here and ensuring that we have safer roads, but we're also ensuring that those who then do become drivers are doing so in a way that is safe, with experience and with the ability to keep our roads moving across this province.

We have a significant commitment to the trucking industry, whether it's fighting the carbon tax, whether it's building Highway 413, building the Bradford Bypass, investing in more infrastructure, like a \$30-million new station in Shuniah and all the way up in Thunder Bay or whether it's increasing enforcement officers across this province. We will always do whatever we can to support the trucking industry, the truck drivers and the safety and integrity of our system, and look at measures that continue to support that.

I once again want to thank my colleague from Brampton West for his advocacy, for always listening to our commercial truck drivers and bringing this forward.

1710

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

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: It's great to rise and talk about my colleague from Brampton West's motion for introducing a waiting period before getting a commercial vehicle licence. I think he's doing a great job for the community. He brought a similar motion earlier when it came to supporting truck drivers and supporting the industry. I think he's doing an amazing job listening to his constituents and bringing meaningful motions here into the House that make a real impact to the way our society operates and works. So thank you, the member from Brampton West, for the great work that you do.

Speaking to this particular bill, I think it's a great idea because today, in our new world that we live in, we're seeing a lot of new immigration, and with that comes a new energetic workforce that is ready to work and make Ontario thrive and make it the powerhouse that we are. With that, we want to ensure that our drivers that are on the roads come in and they have the experience necessary as they progress. I think the motion, which requires a time limitation before they get their commercial vehicle licence, really gives them that opportunity to get adjusted to our roads, to the way things operate, and to understand the best and the safest practices.

When I was the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, I got the opportunity to learn a lot about Ontario's transportation network. We have the safest roads in Ontario for a reason. Even though we have some of the rigorous testing requirements to ensure that the drivers we put on the roads are safe drivers, they're responsible drivers, this adds an additional measure to support that.

I really thank the member from Brampton West for bringing this into the House. The debate that we're having today is amazing because, at the end of the day, we want to ensure that all Ontarians are protected, our roads are safe, and we're ensuring that the life everybody has is safe on the road—because driving is not a right, Speaker. Driving is a privilege, and we want to ensure that that privilege involves safety. We want to ensure that nobody gets injured on the roads. I really feel like this waiting period is going to be very beneficial for all of us.

I also like the fact that he included an exemption for our members of northern Ontario, or agricultural Ontario, because they, at a young age, start operating farm equipment. They start working with their parents, whether it's their family business or whether they're working with somebody else, and they generate experience at a much younger age. That exemption that you've put in there for agriculture farm workers is really amazing as well, so it doesn't impact their ability to go in and get their farming—so they can use that experience that they've gained in the farming industry when they're operating these commercial vehicles. I know a lot of the members in this House appreciate that exemption that you've put in here.

The reality is, handling a commercial vehicle, whether it's a large truck or bus, requires a far greater level of skill, experience and judgment, rather than a standard passenger

vehicle. By mandating drivers to have that waiting exemption or waiting period put in their experience before testing for a commercial licence, we're giving them the crucial time to acclimate to Ontario's road and conditions and build their skills, give them a little bit of extra confidence, and then enter the commercial world, because we do know that driving a truck is not an easy task.

Our commercial operators are extremely hard workers. They ensure our goods make it to the marketplace. It's absolutely because of them that we have food on our tables to eat every single day. It's a great industry. We thank them for their hard work, and I thank the member for introducing this motion to make it that much safer to be a truck operator.

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to rise in this chamber and discuss this very important issue. I also want to acknowledge the work of the member for Brampton West, the Minister of Transportation, the member for Brampton East—for their comments on this.

I recognize that between the member of Brampton West and Brampton East, we have two of the top 10 ridings in the province of unattached patients without a family doctor—27,500 people in the member for Brampton West's riding and 30,000 in the member for Brampton East's riding. I do find it a little bit peculiar that amidst such a health care crisis in the midst of their own ridings, they're choosing instead to focus on transportation.

That being said, I do realize that this is a problem, that there has been significant inaction on the part of the government, including by putting forward this motion. And so, I'm glad to have the opportunity to articulate my thoughts on this and some of the steps that need to be taken in order to move forward.

First, this has been put forward by a government member, so I do find it incredibly peculiar that this was brought forward as a motion. The government doesn't need to present motions. If they have a concern with the transportation and trucking licensing process, they can just walk over to the Minister of Transportation and say, "This needs to change."

A motion is symbolic. The way it is being proposed by the government member, it is simply passing time and representing a distraction from the issues that matter most, such as the massive number of patients without family doctors in these members' ridings.

Now, before we even talk about the length of time between getting a G licence and getting a more advanced licence, such as an A or D licence, I want to reflect a little bit on just some of the shortcomings in getting a G licence in the first place.

In my riding of Don Valley East, we have a DriveTest centre, the Toronto Metro East DriveTest Centre, and there has been an issue that I have flagged repeatedly to the Minister of Transportation on three separate occasions and have flagged to the Ministry of Transportation, and it is this: The route that is taken to test for G licences is never

switched. For years now, it has always been the same route. So much so, that for years now, that route has been published online as a YouTube video and as you go down the list of comments people are literally saying, “Thank you very much for posting this video. It is still the same route.”

I have constituents on Cornerbrook Drive who, despite, again, my efforts to reach out to the Ministry of Transportation and the Minister of Transportation—on three separate occasions—repeatedly tell me that there are people who practise the route over and over and over again, completely defeating the purpose of testing for a G licence in the first place—because it is not a blind test—and, of course, creating safety concerns for my constituents who live on Cornerbrook Drive. Yet, this government refuses to do anything about it at all—three times to the Minister of Transportation and no action.

I’ve already established that the current process for getting a G licence is already flawed. But assuming that it wasn’t, now apparently, waiting an unspecified amount of time before proceeding to get an A or D licence will all of a sudden solve this problem. But what is the standard during this unknown waiting period? Is there a requirement not to have had any accidents, not to have had any tickets, not to log your hours or report them to a commercial driving lesson organization? There are no such requirements for this.

In fact, once you do—let’s say this arbitrary period is passed, and as I mentioned, it doesn’t have any requirements—then you go for your advanced licence test, an A, AZ or D licence. Well, CBC Marketplace recently pointed out that the testing process for commercial A, AZ and D licences is fraught with corruption, fraud and bribery and it’s also something that is echoed by the Ontario Trucking Association, which says, “Our board agrees it is time to rethink how commercial driver training and licensing are addressed in Ontario.”

Everyone is calling for a change, meaningful change—not words, but real action—and there is nothing in this motion that supports that.

The final thing that I will say: My excellent colleague MPP Hsu from Kingston and the Islands highlights on behalf of his constituents that there have been numerous complaints concerning dangerous and damaging behaviours from truck drivers—multiple accidents as recently as Halloween that have resulted in fatal collisions. There have

been repeated calls to action in order to make sure that the—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We’re out of time.

I’m going to go back to the member from Brampton West for a two-minute closure statement.

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I would like to thank the members from Mushkegowuk–James Bay, Thunder Bay–Superior North, Mississauga–Malton, Brampton East and most importantly, the Minister of Transportation for his unwavering commitment and support to this private member’s motion.

Thank you to the member from Don Valley East, also, even though I don’t agree with the remarks regarding this bill, because when they were in power for the last 15 years, they did nothing to enhance the safety on our roads. The member also speaks about the health care issues. They did nothing. They trained fewer doctors when they were in power. They never built enough medical schools when they were in power.

But coming back to the bill, I’ve been hearing from the community from the last six years since I’ve been elected that road safety, especially on highways, is one of our residents’ top priorities. And by giving new drivers the chance to gain valuable experience, we are ensuring that those behind the wheels of large trucks are more prepared, confident and equipped to navigate our roads safely.

Madam Speaker, this is about protecting Ontarians. This is about safety. This is about reducing accidents and building a safer future for our families. Again, as I said, this motion represents a commitment to road safety, public accountability and an improved standard of readiness for commercial drivers.

I want to thank all the members for their support on this private member’s motion.

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

Mr. Sandhu has moved private member’s notice of motion number 131. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2024.

The House adjourned at 1721.

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	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of 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	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	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	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
		Premier / Premier ministre
		Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (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	
Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)	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	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
		Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)	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	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)	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
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Electrification / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Électrification
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	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	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)	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	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences Deputy Government Whip / Whip adjointe du gouvernement
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	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	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	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	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources / 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
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	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	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	