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Mercredi
6 novembre 2024

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Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 6 November 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 6 novembre 2024

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Next we'll have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HONOURING VETERANS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À HONORER
LES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 5, 2024, on the motion for 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): When we last debated this bill, the member for St. Catharines had the floor. She still has some time left.

I recognize the member for St. Catharines to continue.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning to everyone this morning.

It is a great honour to be able to rise in this House, and especially today, to speak about our veterans, the men and women who have fought valiantly for our country and our freedom, overseas and on foreign soil.

Mother, good morning. I know that you're looking forward to hearing me speak about your grandson and your grandchildren—your great-grandchildren, I guess—as well as your father and my grandfather. So, good morning, Mom, and welcome. And thank you all.

Veterans of the past paved the way for veterans of the future, but policies they established in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s paved the way for many of the foundational systems we still use and take advantage of as Canadians today.

Speaking of employment opportunities, I was glad to see this government acknowledge veterans' unique skill sets and provide an update to the skilled trades act contained in this new bill. Military service members often come out of duty having received very specialized training in many areas, like mechanics, engineering and construction, through real hands-on experience, whereas others need to attend skilled trades schools to get that same level of knowledge. From operating heavy machinery to working

with and understanding the intricacies of mechanical or electrical systems, it is these direct skills that make our veterans highly adaptable. More importantly, it makes them highly employable after being released from service. However, some might not be out of the services when they come back from war or conflict. Some might get a job, and some might stay in the services and be landed in their base. My son has been working for eight years now since he was deployed across seas, and right now he is in hiring and recruiting of new navy officers or navy skills.

When they return to their community, often service members return home and have to map out the next 10 years of their lives. Some of them will be retiring within the next 10 years; some will be continuing on with their skills. What does that look like? It could be a professional in the skilled trades. As my son says, he wants to be a Zamboni driver when he retires—a job that provides long-term employment and career growth and opportunity for entrepreneurship. This is coming at a time when the trades are facing a severe shortage. The halls are empty. We all know that on this side as well as on the others. Not many people want to get into the hands-on labour jobs nowadays, but they're some of the most critical and crucial roles to keeping our communities moving forward—to build housing, to lay the bricks, to install electrical or even plumbing.

So it is great to see the government acknowledge that veterans have unique, very specialized expertise that should translate into getting provincial certifications without needing to go back to school. This would ultimately provide a stepping stone to long-term financial stability for our servicemen and servicewomen.

Similarly, there's an organization which some of you might be very familiar with. It's called Helmets to Hardhats, or H2H. They provide second-career opportunities within the trades and the unions to veterans, reservists, senior cadets and even military family members. H2H makes the transition easier, going from military to civilian life. Here's a fun fact: A friend of mine, Derryk Fleming, was instrumental in bringing this organization to life and is also a national administration member of the Veteran Well-being Network.

Thank you, my dear friend Derryk, for all that you have done—and brought this forward.

Speaker, getting back to the bill: In 2022—March 1, to be exact—I stood in this very Legislature to put forward a motion that struck at the hearts of fairness and compassion in Ontario. My call was simple, but it was quite urgent: to end the clawbacks on disability benefits for our veterans and on crucial social support programs like ODSP and

Ontario Works. Clawbacks do not just take away the dollars and cents; they take away dignity. They take away the hope of stability. To claw back support from those who need it most, including those who have served our country with honour, goes against everything we stand for as a compassionate province. It is time we recognize that veterans, individuals with disabilities and those facing financial hardship should not be forced to carry the burden of balancing Ontario's budget. I'm disheartened that I even have to stand here today and remind this government that back in 2022 my motion to ban these clawbacks received all-party support, yet almost three years later, this government has not kept good on their promise. That would have been something really great to include in the new bill. I think we should be seeing it right here today.

Ensuring our veterans get every penny they're entitled to is how you show the community you really do mean business. Our veterans rely on their disability benefits to cover essential costs—costs relating to their health, housing and basic needs that arise from a lifetime of service.

Meanwhile, people on ODSP and Ontario Works are working hard just to meet their daily needs, and yet, with every dollar they earn, they are penalized by clawbacks that chip away at their already limited income. This practice traps individuals in a cycle of poverty, leaving them with less when they deserve more.

By bringing forward this motion, I want to affirm that we must protect these benefits, ensuring that those who depend on them can do so without fear of losing what little they have. We should be building systems that uplift people, not punish them. These clawbacks punish veterans and people with disabilities for trying to get ahead or supplement their income.

0910

Imagine serving your country only to find that the disability benefits you receive are reduced because you dared to seek extra income to cover rising costs—that could be by losing a limb; that could be coming back with the wounds without Band-Aids—or imagine relying on ODSP to make ends meet and being discouraged from finding ways to supplement that income due to penalties of clawbacks imposed on them. This isn't just a budgetary issue; it is a moral one. We, as a government, should not be taking from those who need our help the most, to balance the books.

I urge all my colleagues here to remember why we're in this chamber in the first place: to create an Ontario where everyone can live with dignity, live with security, and, most of all, live with hope.

I know that some may argue that budget constraints make it difficult to reform these systems, but I believe that compassion must guide our decisions, especially when it comes to supporting the vulnerable among us. As the cost of living soars, these clawbacks push people and service members closer to the edge. Veterans, Ontarians with disabilities and low-income individuals deserve our support, not penalties that pull the rug out from under them.

To everyone who stood with me in 2022—which is everyone in this chamber—who supported this motion and

who continue to fight for the cause, thank you. Our work is far from over, though, and I stand here committed to advocate for a fairer, more compassionate Ontario for all. Let us keep fighting to end clawbacks—that you voted for—and let us build a future where every Ontarian has the opportunity to thrive without fear. I would love to see that in this bill.

This bill also sets out suggestions on ways to honour our veterans—and at this time, speaking of honouring veterans, my member from Niagara Falls reminded me yesterday that I brought forward a bill in 2018, Bill 51, Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act (Preference for Veterans), and it passed second reading. Has anyone seen it since? No. It has not come back to this House, and that's quite shameful.

I would like to raise the point that if the pandemic taught us anything, it has raised awareness on how important it is that we look after our veterans, our seniors, and recognize how important long-term care is for our residents in Ontario.

I want to introduce to all the members this morning a common name in Niagara and Niagara Falls—someone we honour. We don't just honour him during Remembrance Week, we don't just honour him on Remembrance Day, but we honour him—and I'd love this chamber to honour him—every day of the year: Burd Sisler. Burd Sisler is 109 years young. Burd will be turning 110 years old on April 14, 2025. It's important that I raise your attention about Burd—Mr. Sisler. Burd gave 25 years working for the federal government and is a World War II veteran. Imagine that. Imagine the stories. Imagine the fear. Imagine what that man lived through.

If this government really wants to show support to our men and women in uniform and veterans like Burd Sisler, we should be debating and speaking towards Bill 51, Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act (Preference for Veterans), which was brought to this floor in 2018, and making that bill legislation—or add it to this bill.

Burd Sisler, thank you for everything you have done. We honour you, we respect you, and we see you. Thank you.

Again, this bill also sets out suggestions on ways to honour our veterans during what the bill recognizes as Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week, which, again, we're currently in. Veterans' Week has always taken place from November 5 to November 11.

The bill suggests actions for all of us to do, as Ontarians and as Canadians. It suggests attending or volunteering at a Remembrance Day event, visiting a war museum or a memorial or your local cenotaph, learning about the contributions veterans have made across Ontario, inviting a veteran to come and speak, appreciating veterans in a way you choose, supporting campaigns honouring veterans, and even volunteering and contributing to making sure cenotaphs are upkept—all such great suggestions, for sure. I would have loved to have seen a specific written suggestion about partaking in Legion activities.

Our boards and our Legions—and when I say “boards and our Legions,” I mean our poppy boards. Our poppy

boards and our Legions across Ontario are empty. Give an hour. Give two hours. Get out there. Say hello to your community; they'd love to see you. We're MPPs. We're policy-makers. We should be standing at our local grocery stores, not making our veterans stand there. They don't mind, but we should be thanking them by giving an hour in the rain. We're lucky; we have very good weather right now. We can stand there for many hours. I'm standing for an hour in this House. I can at least—I'm on the boards. I hope that my fellow members here will help out our Legions and sell the poppies. Fill those boards up, please.

Either becoming a member of your local Legion would be a good idea—volunteering at Legion events throughout the year is awesome, or even becoming a board member and being involved in decision-making at your local level. Again, put your name on those boards. Get involved in your community. Make those Legions active again. It is often an overlooked and forgotten volunteer opportunity, and more awareness-building around what a Legion is, their history and how they directly assist our veterans—I'm going to say that again: how they directly assist our veterans—camaraderie. It's the local shop steward who is there to say hello to that veteran. And remember, veterans are getting younger. It would have been really nice to see that laid out in this bill as a direct suggestion, at least.

My second thought was about barriers to doing this volunteer work and barriers to attending Remembrance Day ceremonies in our community—which, to be frank, is the fact that people have jobs to attend, especially those who are hourly paid and who don't get paid at all to show up at a local Remembrance Day service. It is a privilege to work in a government role, to be on salary and to get back to our communities for Remembrance Day services. We are all able to attend, laying our local wreath at a political level, which I hope you are not doing—you're laying it because you're honoured to do it. We're all, again, able to attend our local wreath-laying ceremonies, and even armistice dinners that are this weekend. I don't see anything in this bill that grants Remembrance Day as a paid statutory holiday across Ontario, and it's disappointing, because taking part in these events is how community members, students, our young children and grandchildren become familiar with their importance.

Speaker, in Halifax, on Remembrance Day, when my son, who is a service member, will be able to take my beautiful grandchildren Hazel Mae and Josephine by the hand, take them to the cenotaph and be able to show them what his brothers and sisters in the military helped him—be able to be honoured and thank his fellow service members, and his daughters will be able to thank their father. My son is only 42 years old.

0920

These children who are in our schools in Ontario—their parents are going to be laying wreaths at our local cenotaphs in Ontario. They want to see their fathers and their mothers, to be able to honour them because they were the children who were at home with their mothers or their fathers while their parents—one of their parents, or maybe even both of their parents. Joanne and Denis—I know Lily

will be there. They have to take their child out of school in Ontario so that these children can honour their parents for the service they did—to honour their mother or their father who stayed at home for, often, a year at a time, while they worried about if their significant other was going to come home. I really don't see that in here, and I would like to see it. I feel as though having that be an addition, or that being a direct focus of this bill entirely, would have sent a clear and a very strong message that Remembrance Day is of the utmost importance, and that Canadians' military history and veterans' sacrifices deserve our full attention at least one day of the year. There are only three provinces across this great nation, Canada, that do not recognize Remembrance Day as a statutory holiday: Manitoba, Quebec and Ontario.

Another day I'd like to acknowledge is November 8, this coming Friday, which is National Indigenous Veterans Day. Started as a local Winnipeg, Manitoba-based initiative, Indigenous veterans are now rightfully recognized for their sacrifice.

Interjections.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Yes, absolutely.

Having served in the Canadian Armed Forces across both world wars, the Korean War and many peacekeeping missions, Indigenous service members have played a significant role in Canada's military history. For decades, Indigenous members were ignored and often forgotten, which is quite shameful.

It is estimated that over 120,000 Indigenous people fought for Canada's freedom—fought for our freedom, their freedom. When they returned home, they weren't met with praise and applause. They were met with systemic barriers—frequently denied military benefits, lacked access to other comprehensive veteran supports, and returned to communities struggling in poverty with very, very limited resources.

To my knowledge, there is not a single piece of provincial legislation that acknowledges Indigenous veterans—not even mentions their contributions in a simple suggestion, as we see many other ideas outlined as in this bill. While the argument might be that the term “veteran” is all-encompassing, I don't really think that it is fair. The exact point of having a designated day to recognize Indigenous military members is because of their contributions being overlooked for far too long. It wasn't until 1994 that this day was even recognized for the first time, so that says a lot. It's an important distinction to have the word “Indigenous” listed in a piece of legislation. Being in writing, it solidifies their contribution, it codifies the importance of National Indigenous Veterans Day, and it ultimately shows that we understand the unique barriers and hardships they faced despite their military status.

As I was reading through this bill for the first time two days ago, I naturally took pause at schedule 4, which would amend the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, adding an additional objective of the program.

I remember, I think it was two years ago, my partner here from Ottawa Centre and I had a conversation about a veteran who was living in a tent with his family, with two

young children—and he fought for our freedom. He had a wife and his two children. They were living in a tent, in an encampment, and at that time is when I brought up the Soldiers' Aid Commission.

It's in schedule 4—it's great that it's coming and it's in here and we're bringing it to the forefront again. It has been buried for a while, but let's bring it to the forefront again. It's essentially adding that the commission would need to assist the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services with promoting this financial program for veterans. The way we can promote the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, in my personal opinion, is that when a homeless veteran comes to our office, we can ask them, "Do you need help? I can get you that. Do you need information?" "Yes." "Why are you homeless?" "I don't have a driver's licence. I don't have a place to live." That's how we can bring awareness to the Soldiers' Aid Commission. We are the people who should spread that news—not taking money out of this very special fund, this Soldiers' Aid Commission, for financial programs to promote it.

As I pointed out a few minutes ago, language is concise for a reason, and this section of the bill is very, very vague. It doesn't clearly define how the commission will be assisting the minister, what financial obligations are attached to that role. It's simply too ambiguous, and it's left open for interpretation.

I agree that the program should be and needs to be promoted. As I said, we should be promoting it in our own communities, as government. This government should also absolutely be doing the promotional work to ensure every military family and veteran straight across Ontario at least knows about the program, knows about the eligibility criteria, knows how to apply, and knows where to seek out more information if needed.

As I said, the poppy boards are empty at our local Legions. If we were over at our local Legions bringing back the funds that some people generously donated for a poppy, we could say to our local Legions, "Can you help us promote the Soldiers' Aid Commission? Do you know of anybody who might be in need of it?"—a military family; somebody who is a new veteran; somebody who fought in World War II, as Burd did.

It has been almost 110 years since the Ontario Soldiers' Aid Commission was established in 1915. Initially created to assist returning First World War veterans—Burd would probably know about this—the commission has evolved to address the diverse needs of veterans from various conflicts. It provides financial assistance to those facing financial hardships, covering essential expenses such as health-related items, housing and personal necessities.

May I say that back in 1915, when the Soldiers' Aid Commission was established, the monies that were put for our veterans at that time—man, that was a good help. It was a good leg up. It helped those veterans get back on their feet. It helped house them. It helped put food on the table for them. We're in 2024—\$300 to \$2,000. I don't know, but is it going to be clawed back? That's to be seen. I wonder if it will be clawed back. If you come back from the war and the federal government gives you compensa-

tion for losing a digit, this Ontario government claws back your ODSP dollar for dollar. I just said it. It's shameful. So I hope that—I don't see it in here, but I hope that it's going to be put in writing that we're not going to claw back this money.

This support aims to enhance the well-being and the stability of veterans as they transition to civilian life. Imagine that, coming back from seeing your best friend—you're walking side by side, smoking a cigarette maybe, getting ready for war. You had boots on. You were in trenches. It's raining. You see your buddies blowing up. You come back. You have to live a life here still, in Ontario. You still have to live a common life.

0930

My grandpa didn't say very much about the war. He never spoke about it, and I don't know why. Those are secrets that him and his friends came back to Ontario—actually, Halifax. They didn't speak too much about it. My boy came back—six months, three tours. He doesn't speak too much about it either.

These are funds that they need when they come back to Ontario to be able to put food—to be able to seek medical help. Maybe they are crippled; maybe they're in a wheelchair—by "crippled," I mean minus an arm. They can't get a decent job. They can't get into the skilled trades, possibly, because they don't have two arms to be able to get into them. The Soldiers' Aid Commission was established in 1915 to help them get back into the civilian world. Veterans—they transition into that life. Hardships in life pop up. We should not be clawing back from these veterans who gave us this freedom.

Speaker, up to \$2,000 in soldiers' aid over a 12-month period is what they get. I've heard a few stories from local residents in St. Catharines—veterans who received help from the commission, which is always so great to hear.

Mr. MacLean, I'm going to mention you today. Thank you for coming in and letting me know the Soldiers' Aid Commission helped you get that roof you needed. It makes a difference.

I remember distinctly, in 2020, my colleague for Ottawa Centre, as I said earlier, bringing this matter to our attention, and we addressed it at that time. I mentioned the military gentleman with his family living in a tent. The eligibility only included—through the soldiers' aid—veterans who served in earlier conflicts, before 1953. This meant that veterans who served in more recent conflicts, such as Afghanistan, Rwanda, peacekeeping missions, were ineligible for the assistance simply because of their age—so, back in September 2020, that was my main goal. I worked diligently with MPP Smith. We worked as a team with the associate minister—all sides of this House worked as a team, as they did on the fields. As I said, shoulder to shoulder, we worked as a team, and we got the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act—we got it so that we could improve the lives. It wasn't a lot, but it's a little help. As a result, the eligibility criteria was expanded, and now all veterans, regardless of age, can apply and receive much-needed financial assistance. Isn't that great—when we work together and we can say, "This might be needed in this bill"?

We know that previous to 2020, 60% of the Soldiers' Aid Commission's annual budget went unspent each year, and the hope is that now, that number is as close to zero dollars each year as possible, because our veterans deserve every fund, everything we can do, that this government has set aside for their benefit.

However, it is important that this government further clarify the language in this new bill, because we don't want any of the advertising monies to come out of the commission's annual budget that has been earmarked for our service members. Let's keep that in mind, and let's keep this a priority, please.

I look forward to working with the Premier and his ministers to ensure their public support of my initiatives in 2020 and 2021 aren't suddenly turned into this government taking money away from our veterans, and I hope I don't have to bring it to this floor—clawbacks, anything. I hope that the government does not take any monies away from veterans—and their families—who might need a walker, a medical device, a roof, a lawn keeper—there are so many things—somebody to hold their hand and talk to them and listen to their experiences.

In keeping on topic about modern-day veterans—as I said, my son is a modern-day veteran, and so are his buddies. We go to Halifax. They're great guys. We have good fun with them. Some of them speak with a really, really heavy accent. It's not a French accent. It's an eastern accent, I guess, from our country.

Anyway, in keeping on topic about our modern-day veterans and recognizing their needs, I want to speak to veteran homelessness for a moment.

Just last week, the National Post released an article reporting on high rates of homeless veterans. They spoke to the executive director of Veterans' House Canada, an organization that helps service members by providing permanent housing—I spoke with them myself. The article talked about two main points. According to a 2019 study on veteran homelessness in Ottawa, conducted by Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, unhoused veterans reported that they first become unhoused roughly 10 years after completing their military service. That means we're at year eight for Afghanistan and our peacekeeping missions—in two more years, we're going to have a boom. And Veterans' House Canada currently reports that they expect a boom—there you are—in unhoused veterans within the next year to two years, as those who served in Afghanistan reach the 10-year anniversary of their service. Maybe that's why that bill, the soldiers' aid act, came in 10 years after World War I. The government of the day—look at that—were looking into the future; they were looking at hope for the people. The government of the day realized that people coming back from conflict were suffering with wounds that we don't see.

I hope this government of the day will look into homelessness now. I'm giving you a two-year warning, I guess.

Interjection: Mental health care.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Mental health care, PTSD, homelessness—it all comes under one umbrella, not 15 ministries.

This was so interesting and alarming to read because, again, touching on what I mentioned at the beginning, veterans are often seen as a federal entity. They're over there and we're here, and we can operate in a hands-off approach. The federal government does have a Veteran Homelessness Program that provides rent supplement funding to veterans at risk of or already experiencing homelessness. However, the issue is not a lack of funding for veterans at the federal level. The issue is that there needs to be more acknowledgment that issues like homelessness are plaguing our veteran population more than ever. Most unhoused veterans are not aware they are entitled to wraparound services and rent supplements in the first place, for a variety of reasons—it could be mental health issues, which could be one of the major barriers for someone who has served our country. Federal government employees are not doing the on-the-ground work, local work, meeting veterans where they are. Remember, they're homeless—we have to meet them where they are.

Housing is a provincial responsibility, so why not incorporate more initiatives for homeless vets into our legislation? When we make bills like this, we can incorporate it—again, work together.

MPP Wayne Gates: Tiny homes.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Tiny homes, yes.

Meet them in our communities. Get those people who are on the ground, who are already working—the RPNs who go out on the streets. May I say, there are boots on the ground, and they're meeting our veterans—because a lot of veterans will not admit that they're homeless. They're too proud. They've already fought for our honour—to be able to stand in this House, quite frankly, and to be able to say, with freedom, what we have to say.

We really have to look after them. We owe it to them. I think I hear that every Remembrance Day—“We owe it to our veterans.” You're damn right we do.

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Veterans need organizations to provide ongoing intensive case management support. They need assistance in accessing permanent housing and assistance connecting to community health supports. We owe them that. While the federal government provides the financial support—and you push it to the feds all you want—as I said, the provincial responsibility is housing. The federal government provides the financial supports that veterans need after service. It's the provincial government that is responsible for keeping veterans housed and that provides lower-tier governments, municipalities and regions, with the funding needed to operate their community service departments so we can meet them where they are, so we can identify them.

Dominion Command, the Legion of Ontario, wants us to do this program. They want to identify their veterans. They're proud; they want to do all they can.

Unhoused veterans need to be identified and to be connected to health care, to be connected with mental health resources. This is where specific outreach and data collection comes in to connect veterans to services they need after so bravely serving our country, coming back to their motherland, trying to fit into the community. But you

can't do that if you're unhoused, if you have mental health problems, if you have wounds that don't have Band-Aids. People don't understand that. PTSD is serious. We, as a government, can help our veterans get those mental health supports.

We need to recognize the ongoing needs—we have to look at and recognize the sacrifices that each and every one of our Ontario veterans has done.

Through its provisions, we have a unique opportunity to address issues such as veteran homelessness right here, improve outreach for provincial support programs, again, expand the visibility of services like the Soldiers' Aid Commission, expand our verbal and written commitment to recognizing Indigenous veterans, and ensure our veterans have long-term financial stability.

For veterans who dedicated their lives to serving our country, this bill is a recognition that their service doesn't end at the battlefield—and any battle that was fought on foreign soil. However, the bill needs work, through the addition of clear, concise language, and we need to be careful that this bill doesn't come across as simply performative.

As I mentioned earlier, we are policy-makers in this House. We need to put down our colours and our stripes and our differences. Yes, we have a chance to be able to agree to disagree—however, they didn't do that when they went to fight for our freedom. The men and women who have fought for our freedom, who have seen things that we never possibly will, need our help. They need their policy-makers in Ontario to look beyond the political parties, may I say, and join together—as the associate minister said yesterday, we on this side of the House, we're a team. Well, we want to be part of that team when it comes to our veterans. I want to be part of that team—each and every one of us on this side of the House, including some of their members.

I'm going to say right now that it is time that Ontario stands up; I know, every November 11, which is coming on Monday, we do—I know each and every one of us, and I know, and I take it and I feel it. We all honour our veterans. We all respect what they've done. But we need to do better.

As I said earlier, there are barriers within this bill. It says we should do certain things on Remembrance Day, like visit our local cenotaphs, make sure you volunteer to keep the upkeep of the local cenotaph, to fill the poppy boards. I'm doing a big advocacy for Branch 350, my local Legion. They're in St. Catharines. I hope they're watching this morning—probably not.

Good morning to Branch 350; Branch 24, downtown St. Catharines; 138; and also 425. I have four Legions.

It does say in here that we have to do these things—and it's right in the bill. But, again, what I don't see is the ability for children to go and honour our new veterans, our veterans like Burd Sisler, who does go, every Remembrance Day, to his local cenotaph. Imagine—109 years old. Three provinces all across our nation and all across Canada—Ontario is one of them that doesn't identify it as a statutory holiday and puts those barriers up.

In the legislation we're passing today, it says that we should go to our local cenotaph and we should lay our wreaths and we should be honoured.

Like I said, my two grandchildren—and I have pictures in my office. Every year—my son with his whites on and Hazel Mae in Mama's belly; Josephine, this big, holding her daddy's hand, quite honoured. They live in Halifax. Josephine is now 10. Hazel Mae is now seven. They still hold hands. They have them every year, and they honour their father. There are many fathers and mothers and significant others at the cenotaph. They flow out onto the street to honour their military family, to honour our veterans, to honour—to thank, quite frankly, our military, our men, women, the families who were left behind for years at a time. They have a statutory holiday. I think that should maybe be in here. You can argue with me—“Oh, the children will learn more if they're in school. They'll learn more about their veterans.” I don't think my grandchildren will learn any more about their father and what he did and what he sacrificed than by standing at a cenotaph, with their dad and their dad's friends in uniform, with valour on their chest—I mean racks—because each and every one of them have fought in the Afghanistan war, peacekeeping.

The mothers and the fathers who stayed home with those children, who taught their children why their dads were serving their country and fighting for our freedom, deserve just as much respect here in Ontario as they do all across Canada—except for Manitoba and Ontario and Quebec. Maybe we should start looking at that.

Maybe next November, on Remembrance Day and during Veterans' Week, I'll see that when we're government; we'll see that when we are standing together, united in this House, and saying, “We're going to let the little people who suffered without their parent at home, when they had tonsillitis or appendicitis”—Josie, I hope you're feeling better, baby. Things like that are what we need to do as policy-makers, to make sure those children respect and they learn.

Do you know what? I was at my local Legion, and I was a judge, I guess I'll call it—Judge Jennie. They did poetry. There was a little boy there, and he got up and recited his poetry. He mentioned his mother, who fought in the Afghanistan war, and how important it was for him to know that his mother is participating in Remembrance Day, and it was important to him to know that he could stand beside her now. This poem was really good. It was quite interesting. Maybe I will read it out on Decoration Day next year. I will get a hold of that young fella and get it.

It is important, as I said, that we knock down the barriers for not only little people, but for everyone in our communities to be able to go and say thank you—not only thank you to our veterans, but thank you to our local Legions for putting on such wonderful ceremonies at the local cenotaphs.

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Evie is from my local Legion, and she makes some of the best darn chicken noodle soup. You're only going to

get it on Remembrance Day. Do you know who else is there getting the best chicken noodle soup? Our veterans. It would be nice if the little people could come and have some chicken noodle soup that Evie makes every year—because they're not at school and they can say thank you to those veterans: "Mom, Dad, thank you." "Thank you to Burd for all he has done." I did mention that's something we should actually look for.

These men and women put their lives on the line to fight for our freedom and our democracy, and they fought and restored peace in times of conflict. They fought piracy in the seas around this world. On November 11, on the 11th day of the 11th month, we do remember them; we will remember them.

We also need to take time to say "thank you"—that's two small words. When we walk out of this chamber, we see peacekeepers and we see the police and we see our Sergeant-at-Arms—he's standing at the back there. Our Sergeant-at-Arms is also a veteran. Every day, I make a point, when I walk through the halls of Queen's Park, to say thank you not just to our Sergeant-at-Arms but to each and every one of the members who keep us safe, who stand and guard us every day. Take a moment and say thank you. It's like the old saying, "A smile is free"—so is thank you. They fought, as I said, in conflicts for us to be able to say thank you—"Thank you for all you do. Thank you for everything." We should be recognizing them not just this week—please, not just this week, not just on November 11.

Go visit a veteran in long-term care. Hold his or her hand. They would love for you to say—"The first thing I want to say is, thank you for what you've done. You have given me the freedom so that I can walk in my country and in my neighbourhood and in my community. Thank you for that." And listen to their stories.

As I said, in 2018, I put forward Bill 51. I don't see it in this bill. For our veterans, I put forward Bill 51, Long-Term Care Homes Amendment Act (Preference for Veterans), and it was passed at second reading—yay! Everybody came over and shook my hand—"Good for you, Jennie. That's great. You got it." I've never seen it again. I don't even know if it went to committee—I hope it did. I have never seen it on Remembrance Week—to bring forward—

MPP Jamie West: Even in this bill.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I don't see it in this bill. All it was was to recognize our veterans, to say that now we recognize them, as new veterans—not just World War I and World War II veterans. We recognize that our veterans are getting younger, that some of those veterans need long-term care for fighting for our freedom. That's what that bill was basically about. It was about veterans, our seniors, and recognizing how important it is to give them a step up when they have to get into long-term care—not waiting on waiting lists, which they do. They shouldn't—our veterans should be the first to be able to get care. Think about that.

MPP Jamie West: First in battle.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Yes, that's right, Jamie—first in battle, first off.

Imagine: You get to a strange land—God, I've only got three minutes left. Wow. This went by fast—and you're running with your friends—and I'm just going World War I and World War II. We've all seen the movies.

My husband watches Saving Private Ryan and—oh, my goodness, he watches them over and over again—Top Gun. My husband—I don't know what it is. My son and him, they get on the—anyway, they watch them together. It does show you something—Saving Private Ryan.

MPP Jamie West: It's an important movie.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It's a very important movie. It shows us what they really did—blood, the trenches, the bullets, the bombs. We live in Canada. We don't experience it; we shouldn't.

We should thank each and every one of our men in uniform. Remember, they're not wearing their uniforms all the time, but we should be respecting them.

God darn it, I hope that in this bill—I'm going to sum up; I've been very clear—in the Soldiers' Aid Commission Act, we don't claw back anything that we're giving our veterans. Don't give with one hand—I don't care if it's coming from the federal government. It's up to Ontario to make sure that these soldiers and men and women who have fought in our battlefields and fought in trenches—it's important.

Lock yourself up in this room. Can you imagine? I said to my son, "What is it like to be in the naval ship?" He said to me, "Lock yourself up at Queen's Park. Shut all the doors. Shut all the windows."

MPP Jamie West: God help us.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Right?

"Stay in that room for six months. See how long you get along." I said, "Oh, my goodness."

In this bill, I want to make sure that there are no clawbacks to our veterans. Veterans deserve long-term support. Veterans deserve the support that this provincial government can give them.

No veteran should ever be homeless in Ontario—never. They should always be able to put food, a house—and a roof over their head. Let's get to them. Let's make sure we address them. Let's go to them. Let's make sure we have proper services in place, for mental health and homelessness, for our veterans. We must go beyond symbolic gestures.

I see us all wearing a poppy—a sea of poppies. I love it. We all do this to remember.

Ensuring that their contributions and sacrifices are reflected in practical and accessible supports is our duty, as policy-makers. This commitment is personal for me. As an advocate and as the critic of military affairs and Legions, who has a son serving in the Canadian navy—this bill isn't just about abstract policies; it's a matter of family and future generations for all.

Let us all remember that this bill—

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

Questions for the member?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I really liked the speech from the respected member from the opposition.

I would like to just highlight that this bill is not only adding honouring the veterans who did contribute; it's also adding more financial assistance for the veterans existing in the system. It's also putting our money where our mouth is. This government is creating pathways for integrating those veterans, after they finish serving their country, into civilian jobs.

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Can you please tell me if you are going to support this bill, which, for the first time, makes tangible contributions to help veterans integrate back into our society after they finish serving?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you for the question.

I did mention that the federal government also has a Helmets to Hardhats program that provides opportunities for veterans after they come back to the city life—it's a great program. I see that in this bill.

However, when you say you're putting your money where your mouth is—I find it very hard to say this to you, to the members opposite—you're also taking money out of the hands of a service member when you claw back on ODSP dollar for dollar. When they get money from the federal government and you take it dollar for dollar, that's not putting your money where your mouth is.

I'd seen the announcement yesterday—I watched it just before the great election. I saw the member—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We're out of time for the response.

We're going to move to the next question.

MPP Wayne Gates: I would like to thank my colleague for her one-hour lead. It's never easy to do that.

I want to rise—and I see these young people who are here today. I am so proud to stand and say that my dad was a World War II veteran. He served over in Europe from 1939 to 1945. When it comes to Remembrance Day, it's an honour for me to participate, just thinking about what my dad would have gone through in 1945.

I also think of my good friend Burd Sisler. This is a good story that I think everyone should listen to. I met Burd—Burd was still bowling at 101. He was calling bingo at 101. He was driving around the community at 101. I had known Burd for a few years—I asked him to nominate me, at 101. I was so honoured when he said yes. Then I got a chance, surprisingly, to ask him again when he was 105. And then I've got a chance to—sorry, I'm going to do this quickly—when he's 109. He's going to nominate me in three weeks to get me to do this job again.

I want to say to Burd, thank you very much for your service. Thank you for everything you do for our community.

During Veterans' Week, everybody get out and support our veterans. They mean so much to us.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My grandfather Griffin was on a minesweeper outside of Halifax—and the member from Niagara Falls made me realize this. During the war, the navy ship he was on, at the time, had no guns. Imagine that? They rigged up telephone poles—it's a fun fact—to make it look like guns were on the navy ship. That

was just in case the Germans spied on them and saw them. So they had telephone poles on there. My mother gave me the old newspaper clip from Halifax, so that's why I know that. I just thought I would—I bet you Burd probably even knows about that too.

These are the things that our servicemen and servicewomen did to protect us off the coast of Halifax, let's say.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member from St. Catharines for her address today and thank her family for their service. I hope I have time later today to speak to items of that nature, as well.

I did listen to the entire address, and I appreciate your passion.

I've been here for over 20 years, and I have never seen a government bill, from any side of the House, that answers all the questions—or they'd make War and Peace look like a bedtime story. It just doesn't happen.

You talk a lot about what's not in the bill, but on balance, this is a very positive bill for our veterans, showing respect and honouring our veterans. I have to ask the member: Can you talk about some of the positive things, and will you stand in your place and support the government as we try to honour veterans, and vote for this legislation?

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Thank you to the member.

I did list off a whole bunch of positive things in this bill. I don't think you were listening that well. It's great that we're going to support the veterans at their local Legions and that we're going to make sure that we go to local cenotaphs and lay down wreaths. There are so many great things in this bill. I am not arguing that.

I agree that we can't put everything in the bill, but I think if we work together and we communicate as a whole, especially when it comes to veterans and our military families—we can all agree that when this side of the House brings Bill 51 for long-term care—and I brought the soldiers' aid act, back in 2022, to recognize our veterans who were homeless.

I do believe there are really good things in this bill, but I really do believe there are things that need to be taken a little step forward, and they could be added in this bill—not a whole list of things; there were three asks that I asked for.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We need to go to the next question.

MPP Wayne Gates: I didn't get a chance to finish talking about our veterans, but I do want to talk about something that Jennie talked about, quite frankly, for about 20 minutes: the importance of our Legions.

I can tell you, when my dad went to the Legion and joined Branch 24—actually, it was in St. Catharines. When he passed away over 30 years ago, my mom continued to go to the Legion. That was where her safe space was.

So I say to the Legions every single day, “You're helping somebody. You're helping somebody who may be homeless.”

I'll tell you what we need when it comes to housing for our veterans: We need tiny homes—the same way they've done in Kingston. They built tiny homes for veterans. Why can't we do that right across the province of Ontario? There shouldn't be one veteran in Ontario, in Canada, one of the richest countries in the world—to not have homes to go to. That shouldn't happen in this province.

So my question—

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

The member for St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Any home that—for a homeless veteran is a home. They need somewhere where they can feel that they have accomplished what they set out to do. It's not their responsibility to find a home, to make sure they have home, but it is the Ontario government's job to make sure that—housing is a human right. They deserve a roof over their heads.

It's not up to the Ontario government, as I said before, to claw back dollar to dollar on ODSP. It's not up to them to put barriers up for health care for our veterans—it's for us to be able to put services in place for homeless vets so that we can outreach to them, we can tag them, we can find where they are and give them the human right of food and housing.

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Thank you for the answers from the respected opposition member.

I see that you are focusing on the stuff which is not in the bill for the majority of the time—more than stuff in the bill. Why don't we talk about the good points inside the bill, not the points that are not inside the bill? This is the first part.

The second part is that we are already, in this bill, talking about more benefits to the veterans, including some authorization in the municipalities to give them housing—it's covering your point—as well as giving them some free riding in the GO stations, public transportation, to make sure that they can enjoy their time and be able to go wherever they need to go.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Back over to the other side: GO isn't in here. It doesn't say that it's in here. It's not written in this bill. Another thing is that if the consultation between both sides of the government were done, I could have put that in this bill. There are a lot of good things in this bill—but when we don't work together as a team, nothing gets done.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: Given the time on the clock, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Mr. Yakubuski has moved the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading debate adjourned.

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

Mr. Anthony Leardi: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The House stands in recess until 10:15.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1016.

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

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to wear lapel pins in recognition of scleroderma awareness day at Queen's Park—and I'd like to welcome them all here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to wear lapel pins in recognition of scleroderma awareness. Agreed? Agreed.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

4-H CLUBS

Mr. John Jordan: On this date, November 6, we shine a green light to celebrate the achievements of 4-H clubs throughout our province and across Canada, spotlighting our vital connection to our agricultural community.

At a recent Tri-National Agricultural Accord in Virginia, where I was honoured to represent this province, it was agreed that one of our most pressing challenges is the engagement of our youth in honing their skills to take on future leadership roles in agriculture and agri-food industries.

Mr. Speaker, this is where 4-H clubs shine. Sowing the seeds for future entrepreneurs and integrating learned experiences with the driving force of new thinking and new technologies, our 4-H clubs are catalysts for change, as we challenge the next generation to look at agriculture and agri-food industries through a different lens.

At this time, I want to thank 4-H club volunteers, and I want to give a special shout-out to the Lanark and the Frontenac 4-H club contingents for bringing a prize-winning tradition of excellence to this year's royal winter fair. Many of these 4-H members will go on to pursue careers in multi-generational farming, agri-food marketing, biodiversity, veterinary sciences, and some will engage in the challenges of global food security.

When the light shines today honouring 4-H clubs throughout Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, may it illuminate the path forward for leaders in the future of sustainable agriculture.

RIDING OF WINDSOR WEST

MPP Lisa Gretzky: I'm honoured to share with the House how incredible the arts community is in Windsor.

Windsor is home to some of the most talented, hard-working entrepreneurs, artists, filmmakers and creators.

This year, the Windsor International Film Festival celebrated its 20th year and just concluded its annual film festival, which showcased 13 feature films, 23 local films, 58 francophone feature films, 46 films selected from TIFF, 141 films from world-leading film festivals, 75 feature documentaries—and 42 countries represented. Like every year, WIFF drew long lines of eager viewers from Windsor-Essex, nearby communities, and our American neighbours. Thank you to Vincent Georgie and the entire team at WIFF for another incredible festival.

Congratulations to Windsor resident Heidi LM Jacobs on her book, *1934: The Chatham Coloured All-Stars' Barrier-Breaking Year*. This week, it was announced that the Speaker of this Legislature chose Heidi's book for the Speaker's Book Award. The book was published by Biblioasis, a local independent publishing company and bookstore—a true gem in Windsor.

Lastly, I joined Hiatus House, Dr. Patti Fritz and Fartumo Kusow, whose daughter was killed by her partner last year, for a panel discussion about intimate partner violence hosted by Art Windsor-Essex. The message was clear: Declare intimate partner violence an epidemic, and provide necessary resources and funding to support women and keep them safe. It is long past time for this government to join the nearly 100 Ontario municipalities that have declared IPV an epidemic. I am truly grateful to the team at Art Windsor-Essex for hosting that crucial discussion.

KEMI BADENOCH

Mrs. Robin Martin: While some people may be focused on the results of the US election, I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the new Conservative leader of the UK Tories, chosen on November 2, Kemi Badenoch.

Badenoch was born in London, England, but was largely raised in Lagos, Nigeria, the home of her parents. She's a computer engineering graduate. She's feisty, fierce and outspoken. I like her already.

As Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Badenoch noted many times, "Government doesn't create growth. You do"; and "What government needs to do is create the environment for entrepreneurs to thrive—and then get out of the way. That is the Conservative vision. We celebrate aspiration and provide opportunity.... Conservatives know that economic growth and rising living standards come from flourishing businesses and dynamic entrepreneurs—not from red tape, race monitors or compliance consultants.... Conservatives believe in capitalism, we believe in the power of business to do good, we don't think profit is a dirty word and we are optimistic about our future."

Badenoch is a supporter of free speech and describes herself as "anti-woke." She has spoken out against identity politics and critical race theory, and she has promised to fight what she describes as "left-wing nonsense."

She has argued, "Identity is multi-faceted and Conservatives do not pigeonhole people based on visible

traits.... I am Black, and also a woman, a mother, a politician, an engineer, British and Nigerian. All of these things have an effect on my views ... more so than my skin colour."

Congratulations, and best wishes to Kemi Badenoch for every success in promoting a conservative vision.

POLITICAL DISCOURSE

Mr. Joel Harden: I've been up since 4 a.m. this morning, I think probably like a lot of Canadians. I have a lot of friends in the United States—people who worked hard in the recent election.

I want to begin this member statement with a question: Is our movement for justice that we're all working for big enough? Does it include the person in the United States who's doing the dry cleaning for the congressman on his way to the office, who may not have perfect citizenship papers? Does it include the gig worker who can't put food on the table and who's struggling, who doesn't feel seen in American politics, and perhaps even in our politics—or people from the same experience? Does it include the woman who wants the right to control her own body and not to have someone else tell her what her health care decisions should be? Does it include people who may think differently than us?

This is where I want to make a desperate plea to folks who are thinking about the American election in Canada today. I want to invite us to consider no one's political supporters as garbage, no one's political supporters as deplorables. I want us to try to move past the toxic vitriol that politics has become, not just in the United States and our country, but around the world, because the young people who are here in the gallery today, the elders who gave us our democracy, expect better. We can fight for better, and we can organize for better. We can demand better. That's my message for today.

FLU AND COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Billy Pang: As we enter respiratory illness season, I urge the people of Ontario to protect themselves and their loved ones by staying up to date with vaccinations.

This year, flu and COVID-19 shots are widely available across the province to support our health and reduce strains on hospitals.

Recently, I visited Unionville Guardian Pharmacy to receive both my flu and COVID-19 shots. The process was safe and convenient—showing how easy it is for all Ontarians to protect themselves this season.

I want to emphasize the importance of vaccinating, as it not only safeguards each of us but also helps protect those unable to be immunized, making our communities healthier and stronger.

Taking these simple steps means we can reduce unnecessary visits to hospitals and lessen the load on our health care system, keeping Ontario healthier and better prepared.

Thank you to everyone for prioritizing their health, and to our pharmacies, health care providers and public health partners for making vaccinations accessible throughout the province.

Let us all do our part in ensuring a safe and healthy Ontario for ourselves, our families and our communities.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: The Ford Conservatives have been in power for six years, and the housing crisis is out of control. The government's own Housing Affordability Task Force said that Ontario needs 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years; that's 150,000 new homes that need to be built every year. The Ford government failed to meet the target, so they lowered it to 125,000 homes a year. They failed to meet even that adjusted target, so they lowered it again, to 88,000 homes. Now we learn that the target has been lowered again, to about 81,000 homes—far below the original goal set by the task force and the adjusted lower targets they set for themselves.

The only type of housing that is increasing dramatically is encampments. There are over 1,400 encampments in Ontario. According to the Ford government's own numbers, there are over 234,000 unhoused people.

Can the Premier tell Ontarians how confident he is that his government will hit the three-times-adjusted lower target?

Take a moment to think about it, because we will hold you accountable come election time—and we know that the Premier is preparing for a snap election.

Why should the people of this province give you another four years when you have done nothing in six?

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Steve Pinsonneault: As we approach Remembrance Day, I rise to honour the courageous men and women who have served and continue to serve Canada and to recognize the ongoing efforts in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex to keep their memory alive.

Today, I want to recognize a special initiative in my hometown of Thamesville, led by Darren Carther, a firefighter, Legion member and a long-time friend to many in our community. Darren has created a powerful video projection display in the town hall to honour local veterans. This touching tribute, presented in collaboration with Thamesville Legion Branch 367, includes heartfelt images of Thamesville veterans, each with their name and rank. This display, which will run every night until Remembrance Day, serves as a reminder of the legacy of those who served and those who will continue to serve our country.

I'm also proud to acknowledge the beautiful work being done in Strathroy-Caradoc, where I attended the recent unveiling of their Poppy Project. Led by Museum Strathroy-Caradoc, with support from local Legion branches, this initiative commemorates the 100th anniversary of the Strathroy cenotaph. With the help of

countless community members who donated over 10,000 knitted and crocheted poppies, the installation, displayed until November 11, now cascades down Strathroy town hall and fills dedicated space at the Caradoc cenotaph in Mount Brydges.

Mr. Speaker, it is initiatives like Darren's video tribute and the Poppy Project in Strathroy that help educate young people about the significance of service and sacrifice. In today's world, where these stories are less frequently taught, our veterans' legacies must be passed on, ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten.

I would also like to acknowledge the role of our local Legions in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, who serve veterans and their families year-round. Through their annual poppy campaign, they fund essential programs that directly support those who have sacrificed so much for Canada.

1030

This Remembrance Day, let us remember to honour, support and reflect on the courage and resilience of our veterans. Together, we can ensure their legacy endures for future generations.

RIDING OF DON VALLEY WEST

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Don Valley West is home to terrific neighbourhoods and active community groups.

Recently, I attended the Leaside Sports Hall of Fame, which honours local residents who have made an impact in sport—this year, it was Olympic gymnast Cassie Lee, who made us so proud at the Summer Olympic Games; Leaside High School's varsity girls hockey team; Phillip Francis; and the late, great Pete Conacher. Congrats to the award recipients, and thanks to the volunteers who put on this great event every year.

But there are challenges in Don Valley West too.

Almost 30,000 people, 29% of my constituents, don't have a family doctor—that's even more than the 28% in the Premier's riding who don't have a family doctor. While they wait for a provider for primary care, people like Amal wait long hours in the ER—with his screaming-in-pain toddler. Too bad this government has given people a map to the nearest booze outlet when what they need is a government that gives them primary care.

Then, there are the infrastructure issues. On Halloween night, Thorncliffe Park residents had no power for eight hours and were the last to have their power restored. In the summer, Leaside residents' homes were flooded.

We need a government that fixes these serious issues people face every day instead of one focused on booze and deal after deal to help their insider friends.

HATE CRIMES

UKRAINIAN REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Many of us have seen the videos, over the weekend, of a violent attack against worshippers at a Hindu temple in Peel region.

Unfortunately, in the past year, we have seen too many incidents of hate, violence and vandalism against religious institutions and places of worship. Religious intolerance, including anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and anti-Christian rhetoric, is on the rise.

At Merciful Redeemer Catholic parish in my riding of Mississauga–Erin Mills, there have been multiple incidents of vandalism over the past year—three times in two months.

At Qasimul Uloom Islamic centre in Streetsville, there was also an incident of vandalism.

In Ontario, we respect the right to protest and express disagreements, but we don't tolerate violent acts of hatred and intolerance. It's very simple: "No tolerance for intolerance."

We must stand firm in supporting religious freedoms for all Canadians.

This weekend, I also attended the Ukrainian Remembrance Day ceremony with the member for Etobicoke Centre. It was a solemn moment of reflection, and I was honoured to attend. Thousands of Ukrainians served as members of the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War, including at the historic Battle of Normandy. Many sacrificed their lives and are buried there for our freedom.

My bill, Bill 215, the Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, would, if passed, provide opportunities to reflect on and celebrate the contributions of Ukrainian Canadians to our Canadian multicultural fabric. I'm looking forward to discussing it further on November 27.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. David Smith: I rise today to honour the solemn occasion of Remembrance Day and to pay tribute to those who have served and sacrificed for our country and the world. This day holds profound personal significance, reminding us of the courage, resilience and dedication of Canada's Armed Forces past and present.

In Ontario, we join Canadians from coast to coast to coast in wearing the poppy and standing in silence to remember those who gave their lives for the freedoms we enjoy today. These heroes' bravery and commitment inspire us, underscoring the values of peace, freedom and sacrifice that define our nation.

I would like to acknowledge Royal Canadian Legion Branch 617, which plays a vital role in the riding of Scarborough Centre, supporting veterans, preserving their legacy, and fostering a sense of community. I'd like to extend my gratitude to Debbie Chafe, president of Branch 617, and her team for their unwavering commitment to our veterans and their families.

As we honour their sacrifices, let us also commit to ensuring their stories and legacies live on for the future generation. Lest we forget.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kevin Holland: I've got a few guests here in the House today.

First of all, I'd like to welcome Florin Pendea, representing Lakehead University.

As well, I'd like to welcome my good friends the mayor of Red Lake, Fred Mota, and Henry Wall from the Kenora DSSAB.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I would like to welcome the Ontario Autism Coalition, who are here today—Kate Dudley-Logue, Bruce McIntosh, Ashley Ferreira, and Benjamin Schifman. They're joined by Jenny Tozer, the mother of 18-year-old Logan, who went missing in the town of Havelock just recently—thankfully, brought home safely.

I would also like to welcome Charlise Hillen, who is a former page and the daughter of my executive assistant. She's here today for Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Welcome to Queen's Park, everybody.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Today is Take Our Kids to Work Day, and so my daughter, Zidra, and her friend Skyler are here to visit us.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I would like to welcome my constituency office executive assistant, who's joined by her daughter Nina Kang, who is a wonderful, great volunteer as well.

Kam Sandhu, Nina Kang, welcome to your House.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I would like to give a very warm welcome to OCUFA, who are here today at Queen's Park. I want to recognize my good friend and executive director—or maybe CEO; I forget the title—Jenny Ahn. Welcome.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: It is my pleasure to introduce to the House today my very best friend and partner, Sergeant Brad Adams, and his very fine nephew Colby Adams, who is here with me today for Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Welcome to the House.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I, too, have a guest here for Take Our Kids to Work Day: Kaia McKay. Kaia is the daughter of Edyta McKay, my executive adviser.

Welcome to all the students who are here visiting us on Take Our Kids to Work Day.

Mr. Joel Harden: Joining the welcome to folks from OCUFA—it's nice to see you here today.

Kate Dudley-Logue, it's nice to see you here today.

Nothing happens in Ottawa Centre, in our office, without the great Erica Braunovan, executive assistant, who is here today with her daughters Ashena and Shania.

Thank you, girls, for your sacrifice in bringing your mom to our team.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: It's my pleasure to also welcome the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations to the Legislature today. I'd like to introduce the president, Nigmendra Narain; the president-elect, Rob Kristofferson; the amazing executive director, Jenny Ahn; Mayurika Chakravorty from the Carleton University Academic Staff Association; Tyler Chamberlin from the University of Ottawa, and OCUFA treasurer; and Anna Zalik from the York University Faculty Association.

Welcome to your House.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've got a couple of introductions I'd like to do today: June McCarthy, who is the page captain today; her father, Sean; and her grandfather Brian. They're here in the gallery today.

Welcome to Queen's Park, and congratulations on your daughter's and granddaughter's service.

MPP Jamie West: [*Inaudible*] the House—I want to particularly introduce Fabrice Colin from the Laurentian University Faculty Association.

Bonjour, mon frère.

1040

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I too would like to welcome all OCUFA members to Queen's Park today, with a special shout-out to Helen Booker from the University of Guelph.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: I have a few introductions.

First and foremost, I'd like to welcome OCUFA here today. I'm looking forward to our meeting this afternoon.

On Take Our Kids to Work Day, I'm actually taking my parents to work. My mother, Karen, and Frank Quinn are here today to see.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I also would like to introduce the members from OCUFA, especially the faculty from Brock University.

Welcome to your House. I'm looking forward to our meeting this afternoon.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'd like to introduce a young woman named terrific Tess Disturnal, who's here to learn about legislative affairs. She's accompanied by my dynamite daughter, Rebecca McMahon—who is much older than grade 9.

Welcome to your House.

Mr. Deepak Anand: I'd like to introduce Deborah Flint, the president and CEO of the Greater Toronto Airports Authority, and the rest of the crew, who are here to showcase their major expansion.

Please join us in reception room 228 at noon.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd also like to add my voice and welcome to OCUFA. In particular, I see my dear friend Jenny Ahn, the president of the organization, as well as a dear family friend, Kimiko Inouye.

Mr. Kaleed Rasheed: Today is Take Our Kids to Work Day, and I would like to welcome my daughter Mariam Rasheed and her friend Sara Al-Dawood. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Graham McGregor: Coming today to Queen's Park to talk about auto theft is the CAA delegation. We've got Marianne Bridge, the board chair; board member Quentin Broad; two senior vice-presidents, Shoshana Fruitman and Anita Mueller; and president of CAA insurance, Matthew Turack. Elliott Silverstein is here as well.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'd to welcome to the House Bianca Mehrotra, a political science student at Innis College, my alma mater. She's going to be shadowing me this year and learning about how this place works.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I, too, would like to welcome the members from OCUFA—but also welcome Blair Ostrom from the Greater Toronto Airports Authority. I look forward to having a chat with you later this afternoon.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Today is Take Our Kids to Work Day, so I brought my daughter number two, Nayomi Bailey, to the House to shadow me today.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It also gives me great pleasure to welcome individuals from OCUFA, including Amanda Di Ponio, Ozden Sungur, Ben Muller, Nig Narain, and Johanna Weststar.

Welcome to the people's House. I look forward to our meeting.

Hon. Doug Downey: I'm pleased to note that Elliot Nahshony is the page captain today. His father, Sam, is here with us, and his mother, Efrat Nahshony, is watching on TV.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I have a few welcomes.

First, I'd like to welcome Noah Freedman, wildfire crew leader and incident commander, and Mark Belanger, veteran wildfire incident commander and safety officer, representing wildland firefighters.

Thank you and welcome.

Mr. Ross Romano: I would like to offer my congratulations and happy birthday wishes, on behalf of our entire caucus, to Minister Stephen Crawford.

Happy birthday, sir.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to extend a very warm welcome to London West constituent Nig Narain, who is also the president of OCUFA and who is here today with members of faculty associations from across Ontario.

Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope all MPPs are taking advantage of the opportunity to meet with you today.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: On behalf of the whole PC caucus, I am pleased to welcome members of the Scleroderma Society of Ontario who have joined us today, including the president, Jennifer Botelho; board members Maureen Sauvé and Scott Heard; the executive director, John Malcolmson; and staff members Karol Bedoya-Carvajal and Kylie Wolfenden.

Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I also would like to welcome to the House Ryan Ladner with OCUFA and Wilfrid Laurier, and Rob Kristofferson, a constituent. Thank you very much for being here today.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would also like to welcome members of the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations: Florin Pendea from Lakehead University, Fabrice Colin from Laurentian University, and Darrel Manitowabi from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. I look forward to meeting with you later.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL PR55

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 89(a), the Clerk has received a written request that Bill Pr55, An Act re-

specting Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries, be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

The order for second reading of the bill is therefore discharged and the bill is deemed referred to the committee.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier.

After six long years, we all know how this government works. The Premier cuts deals, insiders cash in, and the people of Ontario are stuck paying the price.

Fresh reports from the Narwhal tell a familiar story of missing records, interference from the Premier's office—and a familiar name when the Premier needs to apparently get something done: Ryan Amato. It turns out that Mr. Amato, the same staffer who was passing brown envelopes from lobbyists and government members to sell off the greenbelt, was also involved with another scandal-ridden government project: Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass. So my question is, what role did the Premier have in the rerouting of these routes?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Our intention couldn't be more clear with the 413 and the Bradford Bypass: We're going to build both highways, and we're going to continue to build Ontario.

Let me give that member, the Leader of the Opposition, a bit of a history check here. What happened on June 2, 2022? Let me remind you: Your members and your party opposed the building of the 413. And what did that result in? You lost every single seat in Peel region. You lost three members.

It's about time you and the Liberals get on board and support building highways across this province, because we need to get people moving. The people of this province spoke loud and clear about their need and desire to see this province move forward with those highway projects. Nothing will stop us from moving forward and getting those highways built.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: That was a lot.

Before he became a key figure in the greenbelt scandal, Ryan Amato worked as a senior staffer for the Ministry of Transportation. Records show—and there are very few records; I'll get to that later—that Mr. Amato refers to directions coming directly from the Premier to him to explore the rerouting of the Bradford Bypass. I'm going to quote something that Mr. Amato wrote: "He wants to know the cost of moving it further north," said Mr. Amato—and that "He" is the Premier.

1050

So I want to go back to the Premier again. Can the Premier clarify what direction he gave Mr. Amato about rerouting the Bradford Bypass, and why?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, this government is following the direction of the people of this province, who elected us on June 2, 2022, with a historic majority mandate to build highways. Which highways? The Bradford Bypass and Highway 413, which the Liberals and NDP continue to oppose.

I ask that member, the Leader of the Opposition, to come to our communities in York region and Peel region and Brampton and Mississauga to see the gridlock firsthand.

The NDP don't want anything built in this province. Whether it's supporting public transit; whether it's supporting and making sure we are building the highways that we need, whether it be the 413, the Bradford Bypass, or supporting Highways 11 and 17—they want to stop every single one of our projects. They want to build roadblocks against every single one of our projects.

We have a message for the NDP and Liberals: We're going to get shovels in the ground in every single one of those projects, and nothing will stop this government.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I've got to tell you, it seems impossible that with a massive project like this, there would be so few records at the Ministry of Transportation that are related to what they consider one of their signature highway projects. The limited records we do have show that Mr. Amato emailed the Ministry of Transportation bureaucrats, asking about the cost of rerouting the Bradford Bypass at the Premier's direct request, and then, nothing—nothing. No more paper trail, no more emails, no more notes—it just all disappears magically. You would expect to see, at the very least, I'm going to say, some kind of follow-up after a request directly from the Premier. But, strangely, the trail ends there.

So my question, again, to the Premier is, where are the records?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The 413 and Bradford Bypass have been discussed for 20-plus years. We've got studies on the books from 20 years ago—environmental assessments, public consultations.

But here's the difference: Whether it be the Liberals or the NDP—the Liberals who didn't do anything for 15 years. The reason we're in such gridlock today is because they opposed every one of our projects, didn't build public transit, highways. The NDP are no different. They don't want anything built. They just want studies and consultation. That's the difference between our government, Premier Ford and the PCs—we get things done, Mr. Speaker. We get shovels in the ground. Whether that's Highway 413, Highway 7, the Bradford Bypass, or

public transit across this province, we're building. We're building for the future. We're building for the next 10, 20, 50 years—a vision that the NDP and Liberals just don't have, because they don't want anything built in the province. They want to oppose every single one of our projects. They want to oppose public transport that moves 400,000 people a day, with the Ontario Line. They want to oppose the 413 that saves people 35 minutes—

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

I hesitate to interrupt question period, but this pattern continues, where members don't make their comments through the Chair.

I am going to remind the Minister of Transportation to make his comments through the Chair when he is responding to questions. Thank you.

Start the clock.

The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm not getting clear answers—and not from the Premier, clearly—so I'd like to ask the minister responsible at the time if she can shed some light. This question, then, is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Despite his senior role in the Minister of Transportation's office, the Narwhal reports that there are very few records of Mr. Amato's work on Highway 413 or the Bradford Bypass, including route changes. It's almost like he was a ghost.

We've seen this happen before, Speaker. In her report on the greenbelt, the Auditor General revealed a pattern of Conservative staff working on the greenbelt file deleting emails and using personal email accounts to get around the rules.

So my question to the minister is, did government or ministry staff, under your watch, delete emails related to work on these highways?

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

The response, Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, the people of this province have spoken loud and clear on these projects, whether it's the Bradford Bypass or Highway 413.

We won every seat in Brampton—three that were held by the NDP. We won every seat in Mississauga. We are winning seats across this province that we never had because of our vision to build this province—whether that's in Windsor and building highways in Windsor or the investments that we're seeking in Windsor; whether that's in Peel region; whether that's up north or in Waterloo, where we're building Highway 7.

This is a government committed to building highways—\$27 billion over the next 10 years.

Public transit—\$70 billion over the next 10 years. And guess what? The NDP and Liberals have opposed those

investments every step of the way. Every LRT project, every subway project this government has put forward, they have opposed, and that's a shame, Mr. Speaker—because this government will continue to get it done.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, let's recap: In his role at the Ministry of Transportation, Mr. Amato would have been in very close contact with anyone impacted by the changes to the highway route, but there are no records of these interactions. He would have been in contact with powerful landowners who would later find themselves benefiting from preferential treatment from this government. The Toronto Star and the National Observer have all reported that a large number of these same landowners are friends of the Premier or donors to the Conservative Party. Some of these same people stood to gain from the greenbelt carve-up.

My question is, again, back to the President of the Treasury Board: Was she aware that the Premier made requests to her staff in her office to reroute the Bradford Bypass?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, the Premier has been clear. The people have been clear on this project. We took these projects to the people of this province—whether it be the Bradford Bypass, Highway 413, Highway 7, or projects across Ontario—and guess what? We got a resounding response from people, a historic mandate from the people.

I think the NDP should ask themselves what benefit they get from opposing these projects.

There's a reason construction workers are leaving your party in droves and joining the PC coalition, under the leadership of Premier Ford and the Minister of Labour. There's a reason you are losing historic support. It's because you don't have a vision. You don't want to build. You want to do exactly what the Liberals did for the last 15 years, which was build absolutely nothing in this province, and that's a shame.

This government will stand up for workers, good-paying jobs, and will make sure we get transit and highways built in this province.

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

Again, I hesitate to interrupt, but this continues.

I'm going to ask the Minister of Transportation to make his comments through the Chair. I'm going to ask all the members to make their comments through the Chair. If they don't, I'm going to stand up and interrupt either their question or their reply and remind them in the middle of their question or their reply. This is a Parliament. We make our comments through the Chair.

I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition.

Start the clock.

Final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, do you know what the people of Ontario didn't vote for? They didn't vote for a government so deeply—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The government side will come to order.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Again, I'll tell you what the people of Ontario didn't vote for: They did not vote for a government that is so focused on making deals for their insider friends that the people of Ontario are left behind every single time.

You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Does anyone—anyone—in this government know what is happening in their own ministries, Speaker?

Here's what I'm seeing: Time and time again, the Premier cuts deals, insiders cash in, and the people of Ontario are stuck paying the price.

Was this another signature attempt to make a few of the Premier's insider friends rich while Ontarians are left holding the bag?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader will come to order. Members will take their seats.

1100

To reply, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'll tell you who the people of this province voted for and what they voted for—

Interjections.

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

I'm going to call the Minister of Transportation to order. You have to make your comments through the Chair.

Start the clock.

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Through you, Mr. Speaker: Let me tell you what the people of this province voted for. They voted for a government that believes in building Ontario. They voted for a government that wants to build highways. They voted for a government that wants to build public transportation, not a government or an opposition that has no vision for this province, that calls projects “fantasy projects”—projects that they doubted every step of the way and which we have shovels in the ground on, whether that be the Ontario Line, whether that be the Bradford Bypass or Highway 413.

I have a message for the Liberals and NDP: Nothing will stop us from building in this province. Nothing will stop us from building Highway 413, the Bradford Bypass and Highway 7. We will continue to leave a legacy of building infrastructure in this province. That is exactly what we're going to do. We're going to get it done.

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE FUNDING

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier.

Speaker, this government's failure to ensure the financial stability of Ontario's post-secondary sector is putting our province's future at risk. Students can't thrive, our economy can't thrive, our communities can't thrive when our post-secondary institutions are underfunded year

after year after year. Almost half of Ontario universities are facing deficits this year. Colleges and universities are bracing for the impact of a multi-billion dollar loss of international student tuition, which is going to mean program closures, cuts to student services, staff layoffs.

Speaker, does this government understand what is at stake when it refuses to properly fund our post-secondary system?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Speaker, that's why our government made a historic investment of \$1.3 billion earlier this year to stabilize and modernize Ontario's post-secondary sector. We did not stop there.

As a small business owner—as well as working and volunteering in the not-for-profit sector—I know that any business or organization can always find ways to be more efficient.

That's why we launched the Efficiency and Accountability Fund—so that our public colleges and universities can undergo third-party reviews, to identify institutions where they can drive long-term savings, for positive outcomes for the students and for the communities they serve. The response to this fund has been overwhelming. Schools right across this province, including those with very strong financial stability, have asked to be part of this great initiative.

Our schools understand that the opposition refuses to acknowledge that the solution to long-term sustainability and success is not always found by throwing taxpayer dollars at the system.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, you're not going to fix a \$2.5-billion shortfall with efficiency reviews; I'm sorry.

One year ago, this government's own panel of experts said \$2.5 billion was urgently needed just to keep the sector afloat—and that was before the changes to international study permits. This government's response? Half of what the panel called for, with nothing to address the loss of international student tuition.

For decades, Speaker, Ontario has had the lowest per student funding in Canada and has happily allowed international student tuition dollars to fill the gap in public funding. Instead of pointing fingers at the federal government, why is this Premier refusing to accept its basic responsibility to properly fund our colleges and universities?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Nolan Quinn: Part of that \$1.3 billion was \$903 million of the Postsecondary Education Sustainability Fund, Speaker—\$700 million went, over three years, across the board to all institutions. On top of that, we also have a \$203-million fund that allows institutions that are in larger financial need to be able to be financially stable.

Speaker, 20% of our colleges and universities received a 15% increase over last year's base funding; on top of that, 22% of our institutions received a 10% increase.

We are fiscally managing the situation, and through this targeted approach, the ministry will be providing significant financial support where it's needed the most in the sector.

As the member opposite spoke about tuition, Speaker, I think something for the people watching at home—under the NDP government, tuition went up 36% while inflation was only 13%; under the previous Liberal government, tuition went up 77% when inflation was only 29%.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Electrification.

The previous Liberal government damaged Ontario's energy system. Under their watch, electricity rates skyrocketed, increasing by 300%. These out-of-control prices made it harder for Ontario families to get by and for businesses to thrive.

Speaker, our government must be focused on reversing this damage. That's why it is critical that we demonstrate leadership and ensure that Ontario families and businesses have access to affordable energy.

Can the minister please explain how our government's reforms, including the Affordable Energy Act, will lower energy costs for new homeowners and promote economic growth?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Thank you to the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Speaker, the previous Liberal government's costly energy experiments placed an unfair burden on Ontario families. They signed long-term energy contracts at prices up to 10 times the market rate, and families bore the brunt of these expensive experiments.

Our government is taking a different approach—one that prioritizes affordability. Through the Affordable Energy Act, we are extending the amortization period for energy infrastructure from 25 to 40 years, which will lower the cost to homeowners. This reform will save families thousands of dollars in connection fees, making home ownership more affordable. Additionally, this modernized framework ensures that businesses can expand without the excessive costs they faced under the Liberals' failed policies. These reforms are a key part of our strategy to build an energy system that works for everyone—not one based on ideology.

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

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Clean, reliable and affordable energy is essential for a strong economy.

Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government's policies increased costs for families and businesses in the province and drove away investment. Under the Liberals, Ontario lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs, and businesses

faced some of the highest industrial electricity rates in North America, which harmed our competitiveness.

In contrast, our government must build for the future, with a focus on keeping energy rates affordable.

Speaker, could the parliamentary assistant explain how the Affordable Energy Act will address Ontario's growing energy demand while keeping costs down for families and businesses in the riding of Newmarket–Aurora, and beyond?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the parliamentary assistant and member for Mississauga–Lakeshore.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I want to thank the member for that question.

Speaker, the Affordable Energy Act is about Ontario's future. Energy demand is expected to increase by 75% by 2050.

1110

Unlike the Liberals' failed approach, which left us with high bills and unreliable power, our plan is focused on affordable solutions. Expanding nuclear energy, which currently provides over 50% of Ontario's electricity, is central to our strategy to providing reliable, affordable energy. It is emission-free, and the Ontario Energy Board confirms it is one of the lowest-cost sources of power—cheaper than wind or solar.

Our government has created 860,000 jobs and attracted \$45 billion in EV and auto investment.

Affordable, reliable energy is key to attracting investment and ensuring a prosperous future for Ontario, without repeating the costly Liberal mistakes of the past.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Premier: This government closed ServiceOntario sites run by Ontario business owners and handed them over to Walmart and Staples. They're handing over LCBO sales and revenue to Circle K and 7-Eleven.

Yesterday, we saw the 34 bids submitted to redevelop Ontario Place, including many from Ontario entrepreneurs and businesses. But instead of showcasing Ontario ingenuity, this government chose to hand over Ontario Place's parkland for free, with a \$1.5-billion subsidy to Austrian and American corporations.

My question is, why does this Conservative government continually shun Ontario entrepreneurs?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Again, I will respect the process of the Integrity Commissioner.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would be more than happy to speak in this House about the progress that we're making on the Peel Memorial phase 2 redevelopment in Brampton. We issued the RFP recently. This new hospital will be serving Bramptonians.

Let's talk about the Grandview Children's Treatment Centre in Durham region—the construction was completed in early October.

So while the members opposite will be busy protesting and filing complaints, this government will focus on building Ontario and providing the services that are important to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: The CEO of Infrastructure Ontario admitted that all applicants were not told that the government would pay for the on-site parking at Ontario Place, at a cost of \$650 million of taxpayer money. Now that we have seen the list, we know that all applicants did not receive the information.

So my question to the minister is, why did the Conservatives give Therme preferential treatment?

Hon. Kinga Surma: The members opposite can spend all day disrespecting the Integrity Commissioner's office, but I will not.

What I will do is talk about, for example, the Michael Garron Hospital and the brand new patient tower that we are building. They are going to serve hundreds and thousands of constituents in Toronto.

Let's talk about the Mount Sinai Hospital redevelopment, which I had the privilege of touring this summer, which will also serve and provide health care to hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of constituents.

While they don't know what's important to the people of Ontario, this side of the House does, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to build this province and improve health care across the province of Ontario.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

As we know, our population is rapidly growing, and it's important that we have the transportation infrastructure needed to keep up with the people. We need to keep our people moving in our communities all across the province.

Families in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore tell me every day that they are so tired of bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Whether it's going to a medical appointment, dropping off their kids at school or extracurricular activities, or just driving home to see their families, gridlock is making life harder.

The previous Liberal government knew there was a need to build our future, but they sat by as the problems got worse.

We can't afford to wait any longer for new roads and highways, and—I would be remiss if I didn't mention the voices of the riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore—removing those bike lanes on Bloor Street.

Speaker, can the minister please share how our government is building highways for the future?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Parliamentary assistant, the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Ric Bresee: Because of this Premier's strong leadership, our government is focused on getting people out of gridlock.

That's why the Minister of Transportation introduced the Reducing Gridlock, Saving You Time Act, which will allow 24/7 construction on our priority highway projects. This new legislation, if passed, will designate priority highway projects so that we can build faster and keep people moving. Priority highway projects mean faster construction and less time for commuters stuck in traffic, and more time for them to spend with their family. We are reducing gridlock, not removing traffic lanes.

We know that after 15 years of Liberal inaction and endless gridlock, Ontarians need relief. By cutting red tape and streamlining the construction process, we're building faster. After 15 years of Liberal inaction, we can't afford to wait any longer, Speaker. We need to build.

Under the leadership of this Premier and this Minister of Transportation, we are building Ontario.

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

Ms. Christine Hogarth: We know that the Liberals don't want to see transit built in Ontario. They voted against it every time. Their leader, Bonnie Crombie, is on record saying that she never supported the 413. And she certainly doesn't support the concerns of the people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

The people of Ontario deserve better. They are tired of spending valuable time in traffic, instead of at home with their loved ones. People want common-sense solutions that make their lives easier.

Our government must do everything they can to build highways faster and get drivers out of gridlock and get them where they need to go.

Can the minister please outline how this legislation will benefit our highway projects and get people home to their loved ones quicker?

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the amazing member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for all of her advocacy.

By designating priority highway projects, such as the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413, we can build faster and avoid construction delays. Ontarians are already seeing the benefit of 24-hour construction.

Under our plan to tackle gridlock, we've accelerated construction of the Gardiner Expressway. The Gardiner's accelerated timeline is now four months ahead of schedule.

Speaker, it's clear that the status quo approach from the NDP and the Liberals simply will not tackle the gridlock crisis.

Tearing down highways and removing car lanes only makes gridlock worse.

Speaker, we're the only party with a serious plan to build and get construction projects done faster.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Working without protective equipment, wildland firefighters, treated by this govern-

ment as second-class first responders, are exposed to life-threatening levels of toxins 16 hours a day for six months, all while working and sleeping in carcinogen-saturated uniforms. It is critical to recognize their level of exposure by counting fire seasons as full years of service. The minister claims to have done this, yet it is not in the latest Working for Workers act.

Can the minister please explain why the government voted against the NDP's amendment to count a single fire season as a full year of service?

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

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Through you, Speaker: We did what the previous Liberal government did not do in 15 years of service. We included wildland firefighters in the same presumptive WSIB coverage for occupational cancers and heart injuries as municipal firefighters, because they earned it.

Bill 190, Working for Workers Five, passed last week, with unanimous support from the NDP and Liberals—to centre supports for our front-line firefighter heroes. Within that committee, we recognized that already our Ministry of Natural Resources does recognize the season as a year. We committed to Mr. Freedman in that committee that we will examine what is being looked at under WSIB, and we continue to work with WSIB to clarify this issue.

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

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: Last spring, the Minister of Labour promised to change the classification of wildland firefighters, to get them the protections and pay they deserve, and yet, now he says that only the Treasury Board minister has the power to make these changes.

Speaker, these wildland firefighters don't need excuses. They need protection and results.

1120

Minister, will you uphold your commitment to reclassify these workers and make a single fire season count as a full year of service, as they deserve?

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Natural Resources will reply.

Hon. Graydon Smith: As the organizational review of firefighter classification by the OPS is under way, it would be inappropriate to comment further. But we have heard comments from the PA of labour this morning on the expanded presumptive coverage piece.

Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about is how we've invested in wildland firefighters in Ontario. The opposition and the Liberals did not increase the budget to \$135 million, a 92% increase; we did. The opposition Liberals did not put \$5,000 in the pockets of wildland firefighters in Ontario and other support workers within AFFES; we did. The opposition Liberals and the NDP did not make sure that on-standby and on-call entitlements were put into action; we did. They also did not create 100 new FTEs in the last years; we did.

Mr. Speaker, we have been behind our fire rangers all the time, all the way. We will continue to be there—

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

The next question.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Speaker, what is it going to take to make this government take the family doctor crisis seriously? This government is failing Ontarians in every corner of the province.

In the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore's riding, 21,000 people do not have a family doctor. And in the member for Mississauga–Erin Mills's riding, 23,000 people do not have a family doctor.

This government is willing to borrow \$3 billion for a pre-election giveaway, but they won't spend a third of that amount so that every Ontarian can have a family doctor. So it's quite clear we can afford better health care. This government doesn't want to invest in the people of Ontario. They just want to invest in the next election.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government side, come to order.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Ontarians want family doctors, so I'd like to ask the Premier, why doesn't his government?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, the member opposite can have her own stories, but she can't have her own facts, and the facts matter in this.

There is no doubt that our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, has been investing in primary care in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Independent members, come to order. The member for Ottawa South, come to order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, when you have new medical schools that are starting in Brampton, in Scarborough, in Vaughan—

Interjections.

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

I'll remind the members, if you refuse to respond appropriately to the request of the Speaker to come to order, if I have to speak to you again, you will be warned.

Interjection.

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

Start the clock.

The Minister of Health still has the floor.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. The inconvenience of hearing the truth from our side is getting the opposition upset.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Orléans will come to order. The government House leader will come to order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm going to continue to remind the members opposite that as we're expanding medical schools in Brampton, in Scarborough, in York region—the party opposite, when the Liberals were in power, were cutting residencies, Speaker. They were cutting medical spots. We are making the investments so that, for decades to come, those people are going to have opportunities to train and teach and learn in the province of Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Don Valley East will come to order.

Supplementary question?

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: Here are the facts. Here is the truth: 2.5 million Ontarians don't have a family doctor. And each week, when the cabinet ministers, the most powerful people in this province, meet, they do nothing but accept the status quo—no help for the people of Ontario, not even their own constituents.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Colleges and Universities will come to order.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: The truth, Mr. Speaker: In Chatham-Kent–Leamington, the Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness has 31,000 constituents without a family doctor. The Minister of Agriculture, the MPP for Elgin–Middlesex–London, silently accepts that 38,000 of his people don't have a family doctor. And to top it off, the Minister of Infrastructure does nothing to help the 40,000 people in Etobicoke Centre without a family doctor.

I'd like to ask the Premier, on behalf of all of his cabinet, why do these 109,000 people in just three ridings not deserve a—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister for Red Tape Reduction will come to order.

To reply, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: When I see over 300 nurse practitioners practising in the province of Ontario, in multidisciplinary teams—three million Ontario residents who are accessing nurse practitioners in multidisciplinary teams.

But, Speaker, imagine, if you would, that the—

Interjection.

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

The Minister of Health still has the floor.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Imagine, Speaker—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is warned. The Minister of Health has the floor, and I want to hear her answer.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, imagine if the Liberals, when they were in power, hadn't cut those 50 residency spots, those medical seats. We would have 300 physicians in the province of Ontario—we would have 300 young people who didn't have to go overseas to get their medical training. Imagine if they'd actually planned and understood that Ontario's population was aging and growing. We are making those investments, we will continue to

make those investments, and I just hope at some point, when they get an opportunity to vote—

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

The next question.

VETERANS

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

We all know how much veterans mean to our province. They fought for our freedom and safety, putting their lives on the line. These veterans gave so much to build our communities, and they deserve our respect, not just in words, but in real actions. These actions must respect the dignity of our veterans and honour their contributions to Ontario and Canada.

The Honouring Veterans Act is a chance for us to stand up for our veterans and give them the respect they deserve. Speaker, how will this act ensure that all veterans are honoured and respected for their service and sacrifice to our province and country?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the member for Markham–Thornhill and parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for that important question.

Veterans played and continue to play a pivotal role in securing our nation's past and our future.

The Ontario government is proposing changes to the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, that would, if passed, better recognize and honour all veterans, including those who served as well as those who gave their lives. Our government is proud to honour the invaluable contributions of our veterans. In partnership with the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command and local community partners, we will be introducing a new award to recognize and celebrate the significant impact veterans have made to the broader community. This bill will build on our commitment to give veterans the recognition they deserve, including their contributions—

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

The supplementary question?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for the great response.

I'm proud to say that family members fought in World War I and World War II for our country. And the current veterans have put their lives on hold, faced dangers and fought for our freedoms, as those before them did.

Today, when they come back home, many veterans face challenges, like finding new jobs or getting the help they need. And we must also recognize the sacrifices of their families.

This new act promises to make life better for veterans. It promises them more support, more opportunities and more recognition.

1130

Can the minister please explain how this act will connect veterans and their families with new opportunities

for employment and financial support when they return home?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to my colleague for the supplementary question.

Our government is honouring veterans not only by working to expand provincial recognition, but also by increasing the financial and community support for veterans and opening more career pathways for veterans and military families as well.

The legislative and regulatory changes in this bill, once passed and implemented, would increase financial assistance and improve access to services and benefits for veterans and their families. Veterans have made tremendous sacrifices to make our country and the province what it is today, and we need to be there for veterans when they need us. That's why we are proposing to increase the amount of funding an eligible individual can receive through the Soldiers' Aid Commission, and to make it easier for eligible veterans and family members to apply for funding.

This government stands with the brave men and women who serve our country—

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

The next question.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Finance.

This week, there was a tragic incident in Cobalt, and our thoughts and prayers go out to the victim of the attack and the families involved, and our thanks go to the OPP and the first responders.

Last week, the Minister of Finance talked about the increase in the OMPF funding and what it was going to mean to municipalities. To the municipality of Cobalt, that increase was \$16,600, but the increase in the OPP bill to the town of Cobalt is \$110,704. If fully transferred—a 15% municipal tax increase.

I will ask the Minister of Finance which basic services he suggests that the municipality of Cobalt and others cut.

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

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: To my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane, I'll repeat what I've said in the House before: We will absolutely listen to our municipalities. This morning, I met with the mayor of Red Lake, who is with us today. I will continue to engage in discussions. We will continue to review the invoices that were sent to the municipalities.

At the end of the day, as I've said in the House before, the OPP, which is a flagship police service, second to none in Canada, takes care of almost 75% of the land area. Over 300 municipalities depend on the OPP.

Our government will always prioritize our public safety, and we will work with our municipalities as well.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, to the Minister of Finance: This government has often said they are proud that they have never increased taxes.

Last year, the municipality of Cobalt had to raise their taxes 13% to provide basic services. This year, they will have to raise their taxes 15% just to cover the OPP bill. We agree they need the OPP. This isn't about the OPP. This is about the provincial government abdicating their role in municipal services.

When will the province step up to the plate and actually help municipalities, before they actually can no longer provide basic services to their residents?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'll repeat it again: We are going to engage our municipalities. We will listen to them.

Two million calls were received by the OPP last year, and the OPP responded to an incredible 1.2 million calls throughout Ontario, throughout the enormous size of Ontario—75% of the land area is protected by the OPP.

People who put on the OPP uniform deserve to be paid a fair wage for the incredible work they do. That's why our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, will always listen to the municipalities.

We are reviewing this matter, and we will continue to prioritize our public safety morning, noon and night.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: My question is to the Premier. As he is aware, there is a proposal from Empire Homes to dump a city of 40,000 within one of the province's largest industrial parks at Nanticoke. This hare-brained idea was tried in the 1970s at Townsend, just down the road from Nanticoke. It was to be a hub, with shops, trails, schools, an athletic centre, a train station. Large swaths of farmland were turned into wide parkways; municipal offices were put in. But it was not the field of dreams. Nobody came. In fact, only 161 hectares of the slated 35,000 were ever developed—one of the largest development failures in the province's history.

You can imagine I get asked why Empire Homes is not being encouraged to develop where infrastructure already exists and where conflicts with new home buyers and their industrial neighbours can be avoided—and God knows we need to retain those jobs at the Nanticoke industrial park.

The Ontario government continues to hold on to 567 hectares of land at Townsend, and my constituents are curious.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Could you please inform the people of Haldimand–Norfolk what the plans are for the 567 hectares at Townsend?

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

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you very much for the question. I'd be happy to take this back and sit down with you and meet with you.

The province does own real estate, as you know, in the province of Ontario. There is a process that is followed. There's due diligence work. The federal government, municipalities, can come forward and raise their hands if

there's a purpose—and then, of course, there's disposition that occurs.

I'd be happy to sit down with you.

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

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: You see, the reason I'm asking the question is because the people of Haldimand–Norfolk are quite wary of land deals as of late. They've seen a bunch of bad ones. They look at what's going on down the road, in Wilmot township.

Over the past few weeks, my office has been trying to pin down which jurisdiction the 567 hectares of land is in. In an attempt to pin this down, we were told the land is being held for “social purposes.” We don't know what that means.

It is my understanding that the land is actually currently being held by the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

Speaker, through you to the Premier: Why has this government transferred the Townsend land assembly to the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Well, “social purposes” means that there may be an opportunity to build long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario; there may be an opportunity to build affordable housing. Whenever we are looking at government lands, we are assessing to see if long-term-care homes or affordable housing or any other social purpose can be met. I think that is a good view for government to have, especially in a housing crisis, and especially when we're doing our best to build 30,000 beds across the province to service our most vulnerable.

Again, I will take it back; I'm happy to sit down with the member opposite.

We've accomplished a great deal with surplus properties and building more long-term care and affordable housing units in the province of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr. Brian Riddell: My question is for the Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Under the previous Liberal government, Ontario's health care system struggled. Hospitals were crowded, wait times were long, and there were not enough health care workers to meet the growing demand.

But our government is working to fix that. Under the Premier's leadership, we've made big investments in health care. We're building new hospitals, supporting health care workers, and making sure people get the care they need.

A strong health care system can only happen if strong colleges and universities educate our medical leaders.

Can the minister please tell us what the government is doing to help Ontario students train for health care jobs so they can work in our communities that need them?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: As the Minister of Colleges and Universities and a proud college graduate, I cannot say enough about the incredible work that's being done in our

post-secondary system to build up Ontario's health care workforce.

I'm sure the member from Cambridge is well aware that in the last school year, our government introduced the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. This grant covers the full cost of tuition, provided they study and work in an underserved area across the province. I'm pleased to report that, in this short time, the Learn and Stay grant has already helped close to 7,500 students begin training in nursing, paramedicine and medical lab technician programs across the province. Let me repeat that again: Close to 7,500 students will soon graduate as health care workers for underserved communities throughout this province—in the north, the east, the south and the west. Speaker, they will be delivering the critical health care services families in Ontario rely on each and every day.

Unlike the previous governments, this government is taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to supporting students in every way possible.

1140

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

Mr. Brian Riddell: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's good to see that our government is taking real action to fill health care jobs in our communities.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, our government is focusing more on medical training and helping more students become doctors. It's great to see how our government is expanding medical programs, unlike the Liberals, who cut medical residency positions.

In the recent fall economic statement, there were new plans to improve the Learn and Stay grant to provide even more support to health care students. Speaker, can the minister please tell us about the changes to the grant and how they will help medical students?

Hon. Nolan Quinn: ‘Thanks again to the member for that question.

Speaker, I'm very excited and proud of our government, with the expansion we are making to the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant, and I believe it will be a game-changer for our health care system.

Just the other week, alongside the Premier, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Finance—our government announced that starting in 2026, medical students willing to practise as family doctors will be eligible to have their full tuition costs covered under the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. This expansion will support over 1,300 future family physicians, getting us closer to the reality that everyone who wants a family doctor in Ontario will have one. We're also requiring that 95% of Ontario graduate medical student spaces will be reserved for Ontario students—because we know that when people study, they'll stay.

This government is proud to be supporting our doctors, nurses, medical lab technicians, and more. From the classroom to the practice, we're building a pipeline of health care workers. Unlike the last Liberal government—

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

Next question.

LICENCE APPEAL TRIBUNAL

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: My question is for the Premier. This week, the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association released a report revealing a disturbing trend at the Licence Appeal Tribunal. In 2023, adjudicators sided with insurance companies over injured people a whopping 90% of the time.

So does this government really believe that 90% of those injured in an accident don't deserve the help they paid their insurance companies for—or is something else happening at the LAT?

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

Hon. Doug Downey: I look forward to being able to address this. It's quite interesting.

The Ontario Trial Lawyers Association are a very important part of our justice ecosystem, and they've done reports over time.

What I can tell you, pulling from that report: In 2017, when the Liberals were in charge—I was going to say “running the province,” Mr. Speaker, but there wasn't much happening—there were 367 decisions coming out of the Licence Appeal Tribunal. Well, I can tell you that now there are 300% more happening.

When we came to government, we were asked to deal with the backlog in the Licence Appeal Tribunal, and I can tell you we have achieved that. We have dealt with the backlog, and we are meeting our targets. The NDP and the Liberals were saying, “You have to deal with the backlog,” so we did, and we got to balance.

Now they're asking us to interfere in independent decision-making by a tribunal—that, we will not do.

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

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: Speaker, 90%—but it gets worse: That same report by the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association found that a major insurance company hired an adjudicator while they were still working at the tribunal. Rather than immediately resign due to conflict of interest, this adjudicator continued to work for the tribunal for months. And during that time, this adjudicator sided with insurance companies, including their new boss, over injured people 100% of the time.

So what is this government willing to do to ensure that injured people finally receive fair justice when going up against big insurance companies at the Licence Appeal Tribunal?

Interjections.

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

The Attorney General.

Hon. Doug Downey: I'll tell you what the government is prepared to do. The government is prepared to let an independent tribunal be independent, Mr. Speaker.

We receive recommendations for appointments from an independent process. We process those appointments. They are administered independently. If there is a concern with an individual adjudicator or an individual decision,

we maintain an appeals structure. We want to make sure that the initial hearing is heard by somebody who is appointed through an independent process, who hears matters through an independent process, who has an ability to do appeals if the decision doesn't appear fair to either party. That's what we'll continue to do, Mr. Speaker. We will put more and more resources in, as we have.

I would welcome the support of the NDP and the Liberals as we put tens of millions of dollars into the tribunal system, but to date they have supported none of it.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Ross Romano: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development. In northern Ontario, we know that our businesses face unique challenges. Resource-based industries are the backbone of many communities in the north. These industries create jobs and keep our towns alive, but they cannot do it alone. Unfortunately, they must deal with higher costs, from energy to transportation, making it harder for them to stay competitive. Without support, it is hard for them to grow, to keep people employed and to contribute to the local economy. We've seen programs come and go, but the need for sustained support remains, Speaker.

Can the minister please tell this House what our government is doing to reduce costs and provide ongoing support to northern Ontario businesses?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you to the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I appreciate that question.

Speaker, the Ministry of Northern Development has two incredible programs that support large-scale businesses in the resource extraction industry. The Northern Energy Advantage Program and the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund assist businesses with energy costs and support municipalities in improving roadway infrastructure so that these businesses can keep working.

All 144 municipalities are eligible for the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund, and funding is distributed to eligible municipalities by March 31 of each and every single year.

And, Speaker, we are increasing our investment in NEAP, expanding the program's budget from \$120 million annually to over \$206 million annually by—

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

Supplementary question.

Mr. Ross Romano: Northern Ontario doesn't just rely on our resource industries alone; it depends on partnerships with Indigenous communities to grow economically. These communities deserve to benefit from the region's land, resources and developments.

We know resource revenue-sharing agreements are a way to bring much-needed funds back to First Nations and Métis communities. These arrangements help create

health, education and economic development opportunities, building a stronger future for everyone in the north. But we hear from communities that they need more agreements, collaboration and support in order to reach their full economic potential.

Speaker, can the minister please share how our government is working with Indigenous partners to expand resource revenue-sharing as we support our northern Ontario communities?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you again to the member from Sault Ste. Marie for that great question.

Speaker, in addition to the support that we are providing the north through programs like NEAP and NORDS, we are putting money back into First Nations communities through resource revenue-sharing agreements. Resource revenue-sharing agreements represent an important part of economic reconciliation by enabling Indigenous communities to share in the economic prosperity of aggregates, forestry and mining developments.

Our government has eight RRS agreements with First Nations and Métis organizations—six agreements representing 40 First Nations communities, and two agreements with organizations representing Métis communities.

We welcome the opportunity to work with First Nations on signing further agreements—

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

The next question.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Last week, Community Care for St. Catharines and Thorold, one of the region's major food program providers, reported their highest number of families served through their food banks in a single day: 269 households—listen up over there. Last year, over a 12-month period—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I will remind the member to make her comments through the Chair. I am listening.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I apologize.

Through the Chair—103,000 residents used the food bank in St. Catharines and Thorold. As of September 2024, they had already surpassed that number—a whopping 40% increase in the total number of clients served through the local food bank.

Speaker, to the Premier: When will this government finally commit to doubling social assistance, stop claw-backs to veterans on ODSP and—

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

Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank my honourable colleague for the question.

This government has taken tangible actions to improve. At a time with the rising cost of everything across the country, we've taken actions to reduce costs for Ontarians, Mr. Speaker.

We increased the Ontario Disability Support Program by 17% in two years. And we went a step further. It's

indexed to inflation so that it can keep up with the rising costs every year.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for St. Catharines will come to order.

Hon. Michael Parsa: We invested in the Student Nutrition Program so that no child or student goes hungry in school, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the ODSP program that the member referenced—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Michael Parsa: —we increased the earned income threshold from \$200 to \$1,000 so that those who want to work are able to do so without it impacting their benefits. Mr. Speaker, this is on top of—

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

That concludes our question period for this morning.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Brantford—Brant has informed me that he has a point of order.

Mr. Will Bouma: I didn't have the opportunity earlier, but very quickly, I wanted to welcome Ivy McCreary, my co-op student from my constituency office to the House today. She should be proud, and her parents should be even more proud, of the work that she does for our community. Thank you.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate a special page from Scarborough Southwest, James Allgeier, who has been with us for the past couple of weeks, and to welcome his proud mom, Rebecca Allgeier, to the Legislature this morning. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 26 relating to the 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.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1153 to 1158.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Romano, Ross
Bailey, Robert	Holland, Kevin	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Jones, Sylvia	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jones, Trevor	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bouma, Will	Jordan, John	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bresee, Ric	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Byers, Rick	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Calandra, Paul	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cho, Stan	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Clark, Steve	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Coe, Lorne	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Crawford, Stephen	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Pinsonneault, Steve	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Pirie, George	Yakabuski, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Quinn, Nolan	
Hamid, Zee	Rae, Matthew	

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

Nays

Andrew, Jill	Gates, Wayne	Rakocevic, Tom
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Jama, Sarah	Stiles, Marit
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Karpoche, Bhutila	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 70; the nays are 39.

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

Motion agreed to.

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 1203 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

ELECTION FINANCES AMENDMENT ACT (QUARTERLY ALLOWANCES), 2024

LOI DE 2024 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE FINANCEMENT DES ÉLECTIONS (ALLOCATIONS TRIMESTRIELLES)

Mr. Downey moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 220, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act /
Projet de loi 220, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Doug Downey: The Election Finances Act is amended to continue quarterly allowances for registered parties and registered constituency associations for 2025 and 2026. The commencement of the amendments that would end such allowances is changed from January 1, 2025, to January 1, 2027.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

DAY OF REFLECTION FOR INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LA JOURNÉE DE RÉFLEXION SUR LES PENSIONNATS INDIENS

Mr. Mamakwa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 221, An Act to proclaim the Day of Reflection for Indian Residential Schools and to amend various statutes to establish the Day of Reflection for Indian Residential Schools as a provincial holiday /
Projet de loi 221, Loi proclamant la Journée de réflexion sur les pensionnats indiens et modifiant diverses lois afin d'instituer cette journée de réflexion comme jour férié provincial.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Yes.

Remarks in Anishininiimowin.

This report will be republished to add the transcribed remarks once available.

The bill proclaims September 30 in each year as the day of reflection for Indian residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission published 94 calls to action to shine the light on the legacy of the Indian residential schools and its journey to begin the walk towards reconciliation as Ontarians.

This bill will allow Ontario to complete call number 80 which calls “to establish, as a statutory holiday, a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour survivors, their families, and communities, and ensure that public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.” Meegwetch.

PETITIONS

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Mrs. Betty McIsaac from Val Caron in my riding for these petitions.

The petitions are called “Coverage for Take-Home Cancer Drugs.” I don’t wish cancer upon anybody, but if you do have it and you need drugs, if they are administered in the hospital, everything is covered. It doesn’t cost you anything. But more and more treatments for cancer can be done in the comfort of your own home—but then you have to pay for your own cancer drugs. Some have private coverage, there’s a little bit of government coverage, but they would like this to change.

British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec all cover the cost of take-home cancer drugs. The Canadian Cancer Society has called on the government to cover take-home cancer drugs and they have data to support that this access to take-home cancer drugs saves lives. The people have signed the petition asking the provincial government to prioritize access to cancer treatment by developing a provincial program that will provide full coverage for eligible cancer drugs that are taken at home.

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

POST-STROKE TREATMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition from Kingston and the Islands entitled “Timeline for a Post-Stroke Rehabilitation Program.” It calls on the Ontario government to commit to a timeline for rolling out the new post-stroke rehabilitation program, which was announced by this government in 2022. Why a timeline is so important is because, if you delay, it’s going to have adverse effects on mind and body. Why the program is important is because all of this does cost money.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I have a petition which asks the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to build road capacity all throughout the province given that road networks are essential for getting goods and people from place to place in a reasonable amount of time.

I’ll certainly affix my signature to it.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It’s my honour to present the following petition on behalf of Sally Palmer, professor emeritus at the School of Social Work at McMaster University. It is titled “Petition to Raise Social Assistance Rates.”

This petition talks about the Market Basket Measure poverty line and how current social assistance rates are incredibly low—they don’t cover the cost of food or rent. This petition recommends the social assistance rate be doubled. It also talks about the CERB program, which, at its inception, decided that people needed \$2,000 a month in order to survive, and yet, people on social assistance are kept well below the poverty line. Indexing people below the poverty line is legislated poverty. Double the rates now.

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

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Ted Hsu: I have a petition, also from Kingston. It doesn’t have a title, but it’s about family and work. It asks the government to reduce the clawback to ODSP recipients who have an income-earning partner—so, a clawback on the income of their partner.

Why is this about work? Because there should be an incentive to work, not a disincentive to work with a 50% clawback of ODSP recipients’ partners. Why is this about family? It’s because we want people to be in the same household, part of the same family, taking care of each other, and the current rules disincentivize that when one of the partners is on ODSP.

1510

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. John Jordan: This petition is concerning something that’s been raised in this House by all parties, and that is the increasing incidence of auto theft, currently concerning the federal bail system. It’s calling on the federal government to enact stronger bails, especially for repeat offenders regarding auto theft.

I’m going to sign this petition and pass it to page Rishabh.

TENANT PROTECTION

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Bring Back Real Rent

Control.” We know that rent control on buildings built after 2018 does not exist. We also know that it’s never been more expensive to rent, and that people are being evicted from their rental units at a staggering rate. This petition asks that rent control be brought back in on all buildings.

I fully support this and will give it to Blythe.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Brian Riddell: My petition is from a person from Toronto, and it’s to take immediate action to increase the construction of new homes, streamline the development process and implement policies to ensure affordable housing accessible to all Ontarians.

I give it to Graham, our page. Thank you.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition entitled “We Can End Homelessness.” The people who signed this petition support stronger tenant protections so people aren’t evicted into homelessness, as well as increasing minimum wage and social assistance rates so people request afford their rent. And they’re calling for a plan to build more non-market and affordable homes to house people who have no home at all.

I support this petition, and I’ll be giving it to page James.

ONTARIO PLACE

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is entitled “Save Ontario Place.” It talks about the history of Ontario Place, how it’s been a cherished public space for 50 years. It’s owned and operated by the people of Ontario. It was designed to celebrate Ontario ingenuity. The IMAX theatre was an Ontario technology and that was the world’s first IMAX theatre. Eb Zeidler was the architect and Michael Hough was the landscape architect, and they launched their international careers. The Children’s Village at Ontario Place also had the world’s first ball pit, so if your children or grandchildren or anybody has ever enjoyed a ball pit, that’s due to Ontario ingenuity.

They’re saying that this should not be sold off or leased out to a private, for-profit spa for 95 years. They’re asking the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to halt any further development on Ontario Place, to terminate the lease with the private, for-profit spa and to transfer the public land back into public hands, so that it’s there for future generations of Ontarians.

I fully endorse this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Blythe to take the table.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Louise Baliski, from Hanmer in my riding, for these petitions.

They’re called “Let’s Fix the Northern Health Travel Grant.”

As you know, Speaker, people living in northern Ontario cannot always access the full service of our health care system, because the services are not available up north, so we have to travel to southern Ontario to get them. In order to reduce the burden on northerners, we gain access to the Northern Health Travel Grant. That gives us a little bit of money for transportation and accommodation.

Unfortunately, the money that we get is a far cry from the money that it costs to come and gain access to health care services in southern Ontario. The minister has announced some small changes. Rather than getting \$100 a night, we’re supposed to get \$150 a night when we have to rent a hotel room in Toronto in order to access health care services down here, but none of those changes have come into effect. So the people have signed the petitions to say the Northern Health Travel Grant has to be there for the people of northern Ontario to gain access to services that are not accessible to us, and it has to be robust enough to compensate, to make it feasible for everyone.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Nikki to bring it to the table.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Richard Lagrandeur from Hanmer in my riding for these petitions. They’re called, “Improve Access to Primary Care.”

Speaker, medicare is a program that defines us as Ontarians, as Canadians. Care is based on our needs, not on our ability to pay—whether you go to the hospital or go see the doctor, it will be free. But right now, 2.5 million Ontarians do not have a family doctor.

Yet even in northern Ontario, there are solutions. There are community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, Indigenous primary health care, community-governed family health teams that could all take on more patients, give them access to primary care, if only the government would fund them.

So the people who signed the petition are asking the government to immediately increase funding to community health centres, Indigenous primary health care teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics and community-governed family health teams, so that everyone, including people in northern Ontario, gains access to primary care.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and give it to my good page Nikki, who’s very patient.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Charles Tossell for these petitions. It’s called, “911 Everywhere in Ontario.”

Everybody knows that if you face an emergency, you dial 911. We teach our kids—ask the pages; they all know. We teach them to dial 911. Unfortunately, 911 is not available in huge parts of northern Ontario, including in most of my riding. The services are there—there are

ambulances; there are firefighters; there are police officers available—but you have to memorize a 1-800 number that nobody knows. That 1-800 number changes about seven times through my riding, so people in the north—we know we don't have 911—we all have this little sticker in our car and by the phone, so that we know who to call.

Ontario is the only province that does not have 911 everywhere. Every other province has done it. I don't know why Ontario is not doing this. It puts people's lives at risk every summer. This summer again in my riding, there was somebody dialling 911 following a drowning, and 911 did not work. This has to change, Speaker. We can do this. Everybody else is doing it; Ontario should be doing it, too.

So I support this petition, I will affix my name to it and ask my good page Nikki to bring it to the Clerk.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, I'll remind the members that the standing order provides for a brief summary of the petition, as well as, if you wish, an indication of the number of signatures, but we ask that you not engage in continued commentary expressing support for the merits of the petition.

PRÉVENTION DU VAPOTAGE CHEZ LES JEUNES

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais remercier Nicole Beaudry de Hanmer dans mon comté pour cette pétition qui s'appelle « Protéger les jeunes du vapotage ».

En ce moment, on en connaît très peu sur les effets à long terme du vapotage sur les jeunes. Par contre, on sait que l'industrie du tabac met beaucoup, beaucoup d'emphase pour aller rendre leurs produits désirables par les jeunes. On a appris des leçons importantes sur les effets du tabagisme sur la santé, et ça, ça ne doit pas être répété avec le vapotage.

On a de plus en plus d'agences—les Médecins pour un Canada sans fumée, etc.—qui veulent s'assurer que les jeunes n'aient pas d'accès au vapotage. Et ça, ça serait, en passant, mon projet de loi, le vapotage n'est pas pour les jeunes.

J'espère que tout le monde va être d'accord. Je suis d'accord. Je vais ajouter ma signature et je demande à Nikki de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Michael and Sabrina Harris for this petition. It's called "Enact Anti-Scab Labour Law."

Strikes and lockouts are rare in Ontario: 97% of all collective agreements are negotiated without any work disruption. But anti-replacement worker laws have existed in Quebec since 1978 and in British Columbia since 1993, and under the NDP government in the 1990s, but it was repealed by the Harris government as soon as they came into power.

Anti-scab legislation reduces the length and the divisiveness of labour disputes. The use of scabs—replace-

ment workers—during lockouts is damaging to the social fabric of our community. It brings a lot of tension, a lot of hatred and a lot of division within communities. The people who signed are asking the provincial government to pass the anti-scab labour bill to ban the use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING ONTARIO FOR YOU ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À BÂTIR L'ONTARIO POUR VOUS (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 4, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 216, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Piccini has moved second reading of 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 some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1522 to 1552.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Members will please take their seats.

On October 31, 2024, Mr. Piccini moved second reading of Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Hardeman, Ernie	Pinsonneault, Steve
Anand, Deepak	Harris, Mike	Quinn, Nolan
Babikian, Aris	Hogarth, Christine	Rae, Matthew
Bailey, Robert	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Barnes, Patrice	Jones, Trevor	Romano, Ross
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Jordan, John	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Kanapathi, Logan	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Kerzner, Michael S.	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Dave
Clark, Steve	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, David
Coe, Lorne	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Smith, Laura
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Downey, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay

Dunlop, Jill	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Flack, Rob	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Hamid, Zee	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.

Bailey, Robert	Jones, Trevor	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Jordan, John	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bouma, Will	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Byers, Rick	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Cho, Stan	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Clark, Steve	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Coe, Lorne	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dixon, Jess	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dowie, Andrew	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Downey, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dunlop, Jill	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Flack, Rob	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Pierre, Natalie	Yakubuski, John
Hamid, Zee	Pinsonneault, Steve	
Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan	

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McCrimmon, Karen	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 63; the nays are 23.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

BUILDING ONTARIO FOR YOU ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À BÂTIR L'ONTARIO POUR VOUS (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 216, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of 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 of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1558 to 1603.

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

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved third reading of Bill 216, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): All those opposed to the motion will now please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Begum, Doly	Harden, Joel	Schreiner, Mike
Blais, Stephen	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Kernaghan, Terence	Stiles, Marit
Clancy, Aislinn	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	McCrimmon, Karen	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Pasma, Chandra	
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 64; the nays are 22.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

REDUCING GRIDLOCK, SAVING YOU TIME ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR LE DÉSENGORGEMENT DU RÉSEAU ROUTIER ET LE GAIN DE TEMPS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 212, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various Acts with respect to highways, broadband-related expropriation and other transportation-related matters / Projet de loi 212, Loi visant à édicter deux lois et à modifier diverses lois en ce qui concerne les voies publiques, les expropriations liées aux projets d'Internet à haut débit et d'autres questions relatives au transport.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 212, An Act to enact two Acts and amend various Acts with respect

to highways, broadband-related expropriation and other transportation-related matters.

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

All those in favour of the motion, please say “aye.”

All those opposed will say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

AFFORDABLE ENERGY ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 SUR L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 30, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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 / *Projet de loi 214, Loi modifiant diverses lois sur l'énergie en ce qui a trait à la planification énergétique à long terme, aux modifications touchant les codes appelés Distribution System Code et Transmission System Code et à la recharge des véhicules électriques.*

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Lecce has moved second reading of 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.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on the Interior.

HONOURING VETERANS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À HONORER LES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2024, on the motion for 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 Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're continuing debate, and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had the floor.

1610

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is an honour to be able to stand in my place today to speak to Bill 218. I'm not actually going to speak much about the contents of the bill, but I am going to talk about respect for veterans—which

this bill is all about—and my own little history, because you never know when you get another chance to talk about veterans in this wonderful, august chamber.

When I was growing up, veterans were a different breed. I grew up watching veterans from the First World War march in parades in my little hometown of Barry's Bay. I had the honour of addressing this chamber back in 2010 when John Babcock, the last surviving veteran of World War I, passed away. That was a distinct honour that I'll never forget. And all those years that I saw those World War I veterans, I saw World War II veterans, like my father, march in those parades as well. They were young men, relatively speaking.

Next week, I'll be attending the Pembroke Remembrance Day parade. There will be no veterans from the Second World War in that parade—at least marching in the parade. There will likely be none from the Korean War. Times they have changed. But in my time in this chamber, one of the great honours for me is to have met so many veterans over my 20 years—nine Legions, thousands of veterans in my riding. Those are something that I might never have experienced had I not been elected to this House.

When we talk about veterans, it touches close for me because, as I say, my father was a World War II veteran, and I didn't even know that my father landed at Normandy until after he was dead. I know Ms. Stevens talked about how her grandfather never talked about the war. I guess I could take it to another level and say, “Yeah, I guess my father certainly never talked about the war. I didn't even know what part of the war”—and then I learned he landed at Normandy, fought in the battle of Caen. I had the honour, in my time, of meeting people who my dad actually served with—people like Syl Apps.

Let me talk a little bit about this chamber. When my dad was here from 1963 to 1987, this place was populated with many members who served Canada valiantly in wartime. They came home from the war, and you know what they were told? “Get going and build this country. That's what you've got to do.” And everybody from different walks of life and on every side of the aisle—it wasn't a Conservative movement, a Liberal or, at that time, the CCF maybe or the NDP. Every single person who was a Canadian, regardless of their politics, might have ended up here as a World War II veteran.

I met a few on the trails that actually served with my father as a member of the SD&G Highlanders—the Glens, as they called them. I heard some stories, that's for sure, but there's a closeness and a camaraderie between those people that it's hard to even describe. I'll talk about one—well, Hayden Francis, we had some great times with him. He didn't die that long ago. George Skerkowski—I knew George very well.

A man by the name of Mac Scobie, who Dad served with as well. I happened to go to Mac's funeral. Mac was in the common area one day in the villa in Arnprior and he says, “I want you to come to my room.” He had recently moved from his house into the retirement home, and do you know what you get to take when you go to a retirement

home? You get to take next to nothing, right? You've got a little, wee room. But he calls me to his room, "I've got to show you something." This is how those people felt about one another because they could talk about the war amongst themselves, even if they couldn't talk to their children. Mac takes me to his room, and he pulls out a card that my dad had: "Sorry I missed you for the 1977 provincial election." That was one of the things that Mac actually kept when he left his home to go to the retirement home, where you have, you know, enough to fill that desk and that's about it. That's how much serving together meant to those people.

I'm sharing my time with the member for Thornhill, and she told me don't go over. Well, she was good enough to give me half her time, so I'd better not go over.

To be able to have those experiences—the number of veterans that I've met at the respective Legions throughout Renfrew county in the past over 20 years, they're some of the most wonderful experiences I've had. Maybe my dad would have shared those stories had he lived longer, but the stories that they've shared have touched me in a way that just reminds me how fortunate, lucky and blessed we are to be elected to this chamber. Each and every one of us, regardless of your political stripe—as my dad used to say, "You will rub shoulders with people that you would have never met otherwise." This job gives us an opportunity to have those experiences. For those people who have not been here as long as me, remember to cherish each and every one of them.

When you have that experience with a veteran—I know I'm talking more about the Second World War because that happens to be the one I have the most attachment to, but each and every soldier that has served this country so bravely and valiantly, regardless of the conflict they may have been involved in—the peacekeepers, Korea, Bosnia, Afghanistan. Every single time that—and I know MPP Stevens speaks of how proud she is of her son, who is, I understand, a current active member of the Canadian Armed Forces in the navy. And well she should be proud of him, as we should all be proud of any one of our children or anyone we know who serves in the military. Not that long ago, I was able to be at a 100th birthday for Joe Baxter in Barry's Bay. I think I gave a statement in the Legislature about Joe's birthday and how, after I got talking, Joe spoke for about 35 minutes. It was just unbelievable, going on about every aspect of his life. At that age, to be that vibrant and that vital, how impressed and amazed I was.

You know, a few years ago, they started this banner program. Maybe in some of your communities you've seen it. Right now, during the time leading up to Remembrance Day and through Remembrance Week, there's banners—there's a banner there in Barry's Bay of my father and my uncle, his brother, Lornie. They were both World War II veterans, the only two sons of my grandfather, and they both went overseas in World War II. I must say, the member for Niagara, Mr. Burch, his grandfather Stanley Beeching—there's a banner of his grandfather in Eganville because his grandfather lived in Eganville, in my riding, at the time when he served.

I know I haven't talked much about the bill, but I just didn't know when I might get the next opportunity to speak about my respect and obviously my special feelings—I don't want to get too emotional about my father and the fact that he served and then served here. I got the honour not of serving there but certainly serving here and being able to share this with my colleagues here in the Legislature. Whenever we have that opportunity, whenever it presents itself, for any one of our men and women in uniform today or who have ever worn the uniform to serve our country, God bless them. They deserve our respect, and we're blessed to know them. Thank you very much.

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

1620

Ms. Laura Smith: I'm so happy and proud and honoured to rise along with my colleagues in support of the second reading and passage of the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024. I want to thank my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his very touching conversations, because that's what they are. I'm going to share a bit of mine, with my family, but first, we'll get to the business of the bill.

I also want to thank the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for bringing forward this bill, which is going to do so much good for so many veterans and their families across Ontario. The minister was correct when he said we should honour and thank our veterans every day, not just in the days and weeks ahead of Remembrance Day. As he noted, the government and veterans have a lifelong relationship. All of us in government have an obligation to help our veterans to lead a life of dignity and purpose, whether they are in or out of uniform. This means being there for them the same way they were there for us. It's really quite that simple. Our veterans did not balk or make excuses when it came time to serve. They showed up, they stood on guard and they kept us safe and free. A lifetime is not enough to repay this debt, but as a society we must keep the faith with all of those who answered the call. That, in essence, is the principle behind the Soldiers' Aid Commission. Our government is helping the commission reach more veterans, including a younger generation of veterans and their families.

There are some very positive changes contained in the bill and a regulation our government is looking to amend.

My colleagues in the House may know the Ontario Soldiers' Aid Commission was the first of its kind to exist in the entire country. In fact, it even predates federal institutions like the Veterans Affairs Canada organization. The Soldiers' Aid Commission was created in 1915 to provide critical supports and resources to our brave veterans who were returning from World War I, and their families. Later, the government expanded the commission's mandate to support veterans who had served in World War II and the Korean War.

What we heard upon taking office in 2018 was that the commission needed to be modernized. As a result, our government expanded the mandate of this agency in 2020

to help new organizations of veterans and their families no matter where and when they served. The commission administers a financial assistance program for eligible veterans in financial need. It provides financial support to help with life's many typical expenses: health, mental-health-related supports, housing-related expenditures, basic clothing and personal items and employment-related supports.

Funding from the Soldiers' Aid Commission is in addition to any financial assistance—from Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program—that a veteran receives. The payments from the commission do not impact veterans' eligibility for social assistance or the amount of their monthly benefit.

Veterans and their families can face so many challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder, physical injury, unemployment and homelessness. Often, the challenges that veterans and their families face are unique. They face things during a time of service, and it comes back to haunt them. So, the need is real and growing.

I know the incredible sacrifices that veterans have made, and I have that through my own family experience. Believe it or not—and you can do the quick math if you want—my father married very late in life, and my mother had me later on. My father joined the air force after his home in London was bombed during a Second World War air raid. He joined at such an early age. He was very tall. He was part of the clean-up crew to WWII. He bore witness to the horrific monstrosities of concentration camps with his own eyes. He placed service above self and passed that solemn but important lesson along with our family, from generation to generation.

My grandfather served in the First World War, and he came home with his war bride, my grandmother. They settled in High Park.

My uncle was a proud tankman. A Sherbrooke fusilier, he landed in Normandy and carried the scars of a tank on his back. When I buried him, he still had those imprints on his body.

That, Speaker, is why I wholeheartedly support our veterans and this bill. It's a reality with each passing year: The number of living veterans who served in the Second World War and the Korean War decreases. Until our reforms in 2020, younger veterans, who served more recently, were ineligible for support through the Soldiers' Aid Commission. In fact, most veterans in Ontario were not eligible for any supports from the commission. This included a long list of Canadian men and women in Ontario who served their country throughout the second half of the 20th century to present day. We must not forget these veterans who served in UN peacekeeping in the Balkans, Rwanda, Somalia and elsewhere and all of those who fought in Afghanistan.

Speaker, our government had a choice to make regarding our veterans. We faced the option of winding down a commission that had truly been groundbreaking over the course of more than 100 years. We had to modernize it to support a whole new generation of veterans and their families. We chose the latter route. We

chose to keep faith with those who served and protected us. We know that our veterans enjoy an overwhelming level of public support, and we know that Ontario wants veterans to be supported as they build quality lives after service.

Today, the majority of veterans are under 60 years old and may have a whole second career ahead of them, and these younger veterans are facing unique challenges, which include things like finding a job, finding housing, access to health-related items and reintegrating back into society. Veterans have given so much to their country, and our aim is to keep the Soldiers' Aid Commission as an integral part of a strong veterans' community.

The soldiers' aid is there to help veterans and their families at their time of need. Yesterday, I was so proud to announce, along with the minister, that we plan to enhance the financial assistance available through the Soldiers' Aid Commission for veterans in need. The intended changes increase the maximum amount of financial assistance eligibility, and veterans and their families can receive through soldiers' aid—we increased it from \$2,000 to up to \$3,000 over a 12-month period. Information—this is good: Applicants may apply multiple times over the 12-month period until they have received the maximum amount of \$3,000 for their eligible expenses. So if both spouses are in a household and they're both veterans, they can each apply.

Speaker, this increase in financial support will give veterans more help to pay for essential services and supports, and we're planning to make things easier for our veterans to apply for financial assistance from the commission. Right now, veterans must apply for funding through any other veteran-specific program before they apply to the commission and, under our plan change, veterans will only need show that they have made reasonable efforts to get federal veteran support before applying to the commission.

Our government is also proposing in this bill, if passed, to add to the legislation a new mandate for the commission: to support the ministry in building awareness of this financial assistance program. This act, if passed, would also support expedited career pathways for veterans and military families into the skilled trades.

Speaker, the Honouring Veterans Act, 2024, if passed, builds on work already under way to improve services and outcomes for veterans and their families. Some of these includes exploring opportunities to partner with municipalities and organizations to support veterans in need on matters of housing and removing transit fares. This is good information.

Canadian Armed Forces veterans and active members will be able to go on GO Transit for free, starting March 1, 2025, with plans to extend the benefits on UP Express later in the year.

These are positive works that we're working on, and other government work that we've done prior has to do with eliminating recreational fishing fees for both veterans and active members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

We've also eliminated the property tax for our Royal Canadian Legion halls, which is really important work.

We are so glad to have some great people at the Soldiers' Aid Commission supporting the cause. The commission is currently comprised of 11 board members, and these board members are passionate about helping Ontario's vulnerable veterans and their families.

The Honouring Veterans Act, if passed, will allow our government to better assist our heroes and their families so that they can thrive in communities across Ontario. I urge the House to give it speedy and unanimous passage, and I'm asking you not as a politician but as the daughter, the niece and the grandchild of a veteran.

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

Further debate?

1630

Mr. Joel Harden: It is, as other members have said, a great honour to rise for this debate. I'm not supposed to pick favourites in my job; I'm supposed to work for all of the people in Ottawa Centre—and I'm sharing my time with the member for Spadina–Fort York, Speaker—but I love veterans. I know my job is criticize the Premier all the time, and I'm proud to do my job, but I want to thank the Premier for bringing veterans into the House this week and opening up the caucus boardroom for the government so I could visit with them. That was a real pleasure. It was a real pleasure.

I agree with my friend upriver from me, who said any time we get an opportunity as elected officials to interact with veterans, it's a good day. I wholeheartedly agree with that. I expect to hear an earful when I go around Remembrance Day events. From Saturday all the way through to next Wednesday, there are going to be events in the schools. I learn a lot. There are needs, and I'm glad this bill is going in some direction to meeting some of those needs.

I also want to begin by thanking my friend from St. Catharines. Sometimes when you run for office and you don't become a member of the government, the question gets raised, do you really have much influence as an opposition politician? Can you really effect much change? Well, I just want to acknowledge for this House, for this debate, that my friend Jennie Stevens, from St. Catharines, in her capacity as the critic for veterans affairs and veterans services is, I believe, one of the people who inspired this bill today.

Why do I think that? When the member first rose in her capacity a number of years ago to bring to light the fact that 60% of the budget of the Soldiers' Aid Commission was going unspent year upon year, and when she was acknowledging for the House that only veterans who served our country before 1953 were eligible, she was raising pertinent issues for this House. She was talking about the members, as she talked about today in her one-hour lead, who are suffering, who are homeless, who are dealing with, in some cases, undiagnosed health issues, and I want to salute her today, because I think what the government has done in aspects of this bill is extremely

positive, offering financial support, but it's offering financial support to all veterans, a universal approach, and I salute the government for doing that, but I also want to acknowledge for the record my friend from St. Catharines, who has been the advocate for military families strongly for the opposition, and she's done a fantastic job, so thank you. Thank you.

In the time I have left, because I serve downtown Ottawa. I feel obliged, inspired by veterans and the name of the bill being "honouring veterans," to name a couple of aspects of veterans' history pertinent to the community I serve.

I want to talk about Carleton University, which is my former workplace, where I used to teach in legal studies, which began as a place for veterans, in 1944, its first class. If people know downtown Ottawa and you've heard of Glebe high school, that was the site of what was then Carleton College. Founded by a happenstance conversation between two business leaders in our community, three years later, sponsored by Veterans Affairs, grows an impressive post-secondary offering. To whom? To veterans. And those were the folks that built the first journalism program, now the David Suzuki school of journalism and one of the leading journalism programs in Canada and indeed around the world. It started there and it started because our country was compelled to realize the sacrifices veterans had made and the peace they and their families deserved upon coming home, that they had deserved an opportunity to earn the training they need to get ahead.

Henry Marshall Tory, who was one of the two founders of what was then called Carleton College, said the following: "I learned very early ... that it is people, not buildings, that make up an institution." The people Mr. Tory was talking about were veterans. That is who extended post-secondary education to the 24,000 people who now study at Carleton University today. That's the origins of that place. We owe that place to veterans. And I'm sure all of us in our communities, we can point to institutions that are bequeathed to us because of the sacrifices of veterans.

I also want to acknowledge a journey that I personally had. Last summer, my family had saved up for a trip to Europe for a number of years, and we had one particular stop we wanted to make on that trip, and it was the historic interpretive site that the government of Canada runs at Juno Beach to acknowledge the sacrifices made, as the member from Renew–Nipissing–Pembroke mentioned, on D-Day, on June 6, 1945, the largest water-borne military engagement in world history, where his family member landed at that beach. My grandfather did, too, five days after D-Day—five days. My grandfather, like the member's family, didn't like to talk about this very much—believe me, I tried. I pried. I was a young kid. I had these adventurous ideas of what being a soldier was like. I wanted him to spill the beans, and my grandfather would always change the subject. He would usually say something to the effect of, "Joel, my generation fought that war so you would never have to. I want you to honour that

sacrifice, I want you to never forget that sacrifice, but I don't want your generation to go the way that mine went."

So going to Juno Beach last summer with my family was powerful for a number of reasons. I just want to say for the record that the government of Canada runs a fantastic interpretive centre there, where you get to go into some of the bunkers where people lived. The member's family fought in the battle of Caen; it is incredible to appreciate the sacrifice. You can watch a movie like *Saving Private Ryan* to appreciate the sheer brutality of that moment, what it must have been like.

My mom tells me what she was able to get from my grandpa. I mean, here he is in a boat, roaring towards shore with about 25 other people, hearing ahead of time that most of the people who jumped off the boat—half of them were shot on sight. So he jumps off the boat, chest deep into water—my mom said he apparently had a Bible over his heart. He had a little Bible he stuffed into his breast pocket, not in some vain idea that would prevent a bullet from killing him, but he was a man of faith and he was hoping that he wouldn't just reach the shore, but he'd perform his objective and he'd be able to get home safe to my grandmother and his family back home, then in Cornwall, Ontario.

When I went to the beach after taking the tour with a terrific history student from the University of British Columbia, I was thinking, "How do I soak in this moment, all this history?" My grandfather was a joker. He was a complete prank artist. He loved making people laugh. Despite what he had seen, that was his thing. Everybody in my small town where I grew up in in Vankleek Hill had a story about my grandfather playing some kind of a trick on them.

So when I was thinking before going over to France with the family of what would honour that moment or that sacrifice, what would help me connect with what went down on D-Day and the generation who made that sacrifice, I thought, "Well, why don't I bring a kite? Why don't I pack a small kite, the kind of kite that I like to bring canoe camping when I don't have any electronics and I can unplug from the world and just try to connect with what's going on in my brain?" I flew that kite, and it went up about 50 or 60 feet, and I wanted to think, as abstract as it is, that it was a little closer to him in the great beyond, but also raising the ambitions of my generation like the kite was raised in the air, that we can work for a world of peace.

I know I'm going to hear that again when I go around the community soon for Remembrance Day events. When I talk to veterans and family members, I do a lot of casework, quite frankly. I do a lot of casework. I hear about folks who are struggling with having ODSP benefits clawed back. I hear about housing issues. I hear concerns around prices for the cost of essentials. So if we think about that metaphor for a second, how do we make sure that bills like this get translated in a way that—yes, as it's doing—we afford some income to folks, but we also extend the generosity to veterans that was extended to us and we don't squander that peace that was won?

So I think about the situations going on—there are so many awful conflicts happening all over the world right now, and I wonder every single day when I walk into this place, "What is our generation of elected officials doing to create that context of peace?" I think about a poet who I've been inspired by, who recently passed away in the horrible conflict going on in Gaza and Lebanon. His name was Refaat Alareer, and the poem was called *If I Must Die*. Mr. Alareer talked about the fact that if he must die, let his memory be a story for the generation of those to go forward to work for peace. I think that's consistent with what veterans are trying to tell us today: Let's support them when they come home from battle, but let's work to train our generation of people to fight for peace.

1640

With that, I will pass it to my friend from Spadina–Fort York.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I just want to pick up on the words from my colleague from Ottawa Centre. First of all, I want to thank our fellow colleague Jennie Stevens for all the work that she's done for veterans over the years. There has been a number of bills that she has brought forward to this House, and that we've got a bill before the House to honour veterans and to extend supports to veterans I think is largely due, or partly due, to the work that she has done over decades.

Also, I want to acknowledge her son, who is a chief petty officer in the Canadian navy. I think he was posted in Halifax the last time I spoke with her—

Interjection.

Mr. Chris Glover: Yes? Okay. I'm getting acknowledgement that I've got that right.

I met him once and he's an incredible young man. I can see why she is so proud of him and why she so often speaks about him and why she fights so hard in this House to support his colleagues and our other veterans.

She has brought in bills, for example, to extend emergency funds through the Soldiers' Aid Commission because that funding was not actually getting to veterans. She fought for the poppy licence program. Veterans are allowed to have poppies on their licences. It was only some vehicles that could have it. She fought for the extension of that so the veterans who are driving RVs or green vehicles could also have the poppy on their licence plate so that we would all know who the veterans are.

So first of all, I want to thank Jennie Stevens, our colleague from St. Catharines, for all the work that she's done on behalf of veterans.

I want to thank the government for bringing this bill forward. It actually extends supports to veterans. One of the things that it does is that it will ultimately allow veterans to ride GO Transit for free, and I think that's a small token of support and a thanks for the sacrifices that they've made.

Remembrance Day is coming up on Monday, and it's a day when all of us reflect on how we got to where we are and the responsibility that we have as elected legislators in

a democracy. I just want to give a shout-out to some of the people that I have met who are veterans. Some of them were family members.

My great-uncle Alec was a veteran of World War I. He went to war with his father. He was 15 years old in 1914; he was born in 1899. His father was very patriotic, and so he signed up as soon as the war started. He already had five children, but he signed up for the war, and he took his 15-year-old son with him. They both fought at Vimy Ridge. My great-grandfather, his father, was injured there. He was gassed and part of his foot was shot off. He ended up spending the next 10 years in the Christie Street hospital, which is not too far from this Legislature right here. Then he eventually died of his wounds.

But my uncle Alec, his son, I knew quite well because he was around when I was growing up. He didn't talk much about the war, but he was very proud, and he was very proud of being a Legion member. I remember in the 1980s my grandmother saying to me that her brother, my uncle Alec, was at the Legion, and they asked all the World War I veterans to stand up. He stood up, and he was the only one. He was the last of the veterans in the Oshawa Legion. I think that must have been a tough moment for him and also for all of the veterans. Now we're getting to the point where there's just so few World War II veterans still with us.

I've got a great uncle from Peterborough who passed away in 2020, George Martin. He and his brother were in World War II together. They didn't actually start off together. George was older, and his younger brother Rob joined later on because he was too young to go initially.

They met in the Netherlands in 1945. The older brother didn't know that the younger brother had signed up, but he's standing on the side of the road in the Netherlands and this Jeep goes by. George, the older brother, says to the guy he's talking to, "That's my brother." His brother had just driven by in a Jeep. And so, they met in the Netherlands during the war.

Anyway, he lived in Peterborough, and he passed away just a few years ago. I wanted just to acknowledge the sacrifice that they had made.

There's a couple of other veterans that I've had the honour of knowing in my lifetime. There was a gentleman named Lad Kaliska from northern Ontario. His nickname was "the mad trapper," and he lived—when I met him, anyway, he was outside of Kenora. I was on a forest fire crew, and we got called in to a fire in the middle of nowhere, literally 50 miles from the next thing. There was a lumber camp—I don't know—20 miles away or something, and I think that was the nearest place, but it was in the middle of the bush.

Anyway, we got onto this fire, and we were fighting our way around the fire. As we were fighting away, the wind changed direction. Usually, you'd start at the back of the fire and you'd work around to the front. What had been the front of the fire became the back and the back became the front, so the fire reversed direction on us and it burned out our hoses. So we're in the middle of the fire and we've got no water, which is not a good situation. We walked back

through the burn, and we had enough pump and hose just to clear a space and keep to ourselves. We were radioing in for assistance, but we couldn't get anybody on the radio.

Anyway, this guy comes up. He's an old guy, and he's got grey hair like I do now. He's got nothing on but shorts, and he's got a little canoe with a small motor on it. He says, "Hey, my cabin is down the lake. I want you guys to come and save my cabin." He was known as "the mad trapper." We ended up staying in his cabin for about a week and a half as we were working on that fire. He had also been a forest firefighter. He was a wonderful guy, a really nice human being—a little bit crazy. He told us all kinds of stories.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's called being a northerner.

Mr. Chris Glover: My colleague from Nickel Belt says, "It's called being a northerner."

One of the stories that my forest fire crew leader said: My forest fire crew leader was in a bar in Kenora, and he said he's sitting there and he's having a beer with another guy, another forest firefighter, and somebody comes into the bar on a motorcycle, riding a motorcycle. He rides the motorcycle around the bar twice, and then goes out the door. The guy who's drinking with my crew leader says, "That's my dad." That was Lad Kaliska. He survived the war, and he made quite an impression. He left quite an impression, certainly, on me.

I want to thank all of the veterans who have done so much. There were 650,000 Canadians who fought in World War I. There were half a million who fought in World War II. Some 125,000 have served in peacekeeping missions—dozens and dozens of peacekeeping missions, including the Congo, Cyprus, Somalia; so many places that people have gone to fight or to support and represent Canada.

In my last couple of minutes, I want to pick up on something that the member from Ottawa Centre said. The way that we truly honour veterans is not just wearing a poppy; it's fighting for peace. It's fighting for a world with peace. The thing that we've learned in the history of humanity is that the way to get to peace is to fight for a strong democracy, because if we can resolve our disputes, if we can come to agreements through democratic processes like this, if we can have Legislatures and fair elections and representative democracy, and if we can actually come to agreement—even when we don't agree, but agreement on the process of what we're doing—that's how we protect. That's how we protect and fight for peace and how we honour our veterans.

I will say, at this time, we have to be courageous as well. We have to call it out when our democracy is under attack. Democracies around the world are under attack right now, and what people are afraid of is that this is going to lead to another conflagration. It has in the past. It did in the buildup to World War II. Germany in the 1920s was a democracy until it became a fascist dictatorship. Other countries have fallen this way as well. We're seeing it around the world, democracies being whittled away.

Even here in Ontario, our own democracy is being whittled away. There have been three bills before this

Legislature that stripped Ontarians of their charter rights, their fundamental rights and freedoms under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is a dangerous precedent to be setting, and I think it dishonours the veterans who fought not just to protect us, but fought for our democracy. We must honour that democracy. We must honour those veterans by fighting for our democracy and calling it out when our democracy and our democratic rights and our democratic processes are being infringed upon.

I thank you all for listening to me this afternoon. It is an honour to speak on behalf of the veterans of this country, the people who fought for everything that we have now. Also, it's an honour to speak on this, because we must remember—not just remember what has been sacrificed in the past; we must fight for a future of peace and democracy going forward.

1650

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Any questions?

Further debate.

Mrs. Karen McCrimmon: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa South.

It is right to show our gratitude to veterans in this country. It's the right thing to do, no doubt about it. It's the right thing to do to acknowledge their service and their sacrifice to this country. They deserve our support. They deserve our acknowledgement. I thank the government for putting this bill forward.

My mother told me that she thought she was already in heaven. I said, "What made you think that?" She said, "I've not had to send any of my children to war," unlike her mother.

What do you think she thought when her daughter shows up in a uniform? And her daughter volunteers to serve in some pretty perilous places around the world? Even though I frightened her—I probably took a few years off her life—she always let me know how proud she was, and how much it mattered.

I agree that service, sacrifice and our democracy—what a gift we have been given. We have been given a gift beyond measure. When you've been to more than 75 countries around the world—and some of them not when they're at their best, either—when I come home, I realize just how lucky we are.

But it wasn't an easy fight to get here. It demanded tremendous sacrifice and tremendous service. To those who follow behind, who have inherited this gift of this magnificent country, it's our responsibility to pick up that mantle and to actually serve and support the members who come back after serving their country.

I would like to thank the government for this bill. It's a start. It is right to honour veterans. It is right to extend the supports.

I would like to suggest there was an oversight in this bill. I've tabled a motion and I've given a copy to the House leader. The motion says: "That in the opinion of this House, Metrolinx must ensure that active members of the Canadian Armed Forces reserve are not excluded from the program for veterans and active Canadian Armed Forces"

members "to receive free fares on GO Transit and the UP Express."

We cannot forget the sacrifices and the service that our Canadian Forces reservists give to us in all of our communities. I don't know about you, but my community has suffered floods, tornadoes; other communities have suffered forest fires and other kinds of community emergencies. Who do they call? They call the reservists. They call your local reserve unit, who steps up and steps into the breach, in order to support and serve their community.

That's why I gave that suggested amendment to the House leader, because I think that is something—it was an oversight and it's something that we should all want to fix. So I think it's important.

I do some casework as well, like the member from Ottawa Centre, because people come to me looking for help. One of the biggest things—and if we could find some way to do this—that the veterans have a challenge with is people to help them do their paperwork for ODSP and VAC supports. When people are unhoused and they're hard to get a hold of and they're struggling just to put one foot in front of the other, whatever we can do to help them take advantage of the supports that are already there, I think, would make a great deal of sense.

So far, when I've been able to connect that member who needs support with the Legion, the Legion has been able to step up and help. Why not ask the Legions to do that all the time? Why not have provincial health care talk to the Legions about what it can do to actually help veterans fill out this paperwork? There's just an idea. It's something that would make an immediate impact in a lot of lives.

To end, I just want to thank the government for thinking about veterans and for putting this bill forward. It's a step in the right direction. But, more importantly, I believe that it's about all of us thanking veterans and all of us being willing to go the extra mile to make sure that they get the services and the supports that they need once they return home, because that's the most challenging of times—after you've been around other parts of the world, to come home and deal with the realities we see here every day. So I just wanted to say thank you to all of you who have spoken so eloquently about requiring and needing better supports and services for veterans. It is exactly the right thing to do.

And as long as we remember that they are the ones that have given us this great gift of Canada and without them we would not be where we are today—we have a lot to be grateful for, a lot to be thankful for. With that, I say thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd just like to extend to the member from Kanata–Carleton—we've all given her thanks for her years of service. We're really lucky to have her here in our caucus. She's very thoughtful. She knows a lot about democracy, democracies across the world, what the world is like, why it's important that we defend that and that that comes at a cost.

I want to thank the government for putting forward this bill. First of all, it amends a bill that I was very fortunate to be included on that was put forward by Jim Wilson in this Legislature and also co-sponsored by Cheri DiNovo that established Remembrance Week. The change that the government is making to the name of the bill is great, to Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week. I think that it's a good change—and I'm very proud to have had my name on that bill.

The measures in this bill are going to help veterans, but as my colleague said, there are everyday things that we need to be able to do to help veterans: filling out forms, making sure people have access to the services that they need. Mental health for what they call "new veterans" now is very important, and making sure that it's not just the federal government's responsibility. If we can help, if we can provide some support, then we should do that. The soldiers' commission—anything we can do to let people know the things that we can do for them is really important, so I'm going to support this bill.

I want to take this opportunity because we're talking about veterans right now and honouring them. It's going to be Remembrance Day tomorrow. I'm not going to have an opportunity when we do statements here to be able to do a statement. I don't have one until a couple of weeks from now.

1700

The thing that I think is important for us to remember around Remembrance Day or Remembrance Week is families. Just like my colleague said, her mother was grateful she never had to send anybody, and then the member went ahead and did it anyway. Most families have stories. I heard the member from Renfrew-Nipissing tell his family story.

I didn't really have a family story until I got married that I didn't discover until later on, when I learned about the battle of Dieppe and what happened there just by fluke, a series of events. My wife had an uncle that she never met, Ansley Cavanagh, a navy commando who died at Dieppe at 19 years old. My mother-in-law, Yvonne—it was a family of six. She lost her younger sister in a car accident, and her brother Ansley was closest in age to her. They just connected in the family. They were like two peas in a pod, and she lost him.

That was really hard on her. It was really hard on her when she was young. She never forgot, though. There was a scar that was there that never healed.

Sometimes those scars that don't heal are painful, but they're a blessing too because you don't forget. She used to keep a picture of Ansley right beside her bed for 75 years—on her bedside for 75 years. She would look at him every day. That scar, that hurt was something that never went away, and I don't think she wanted it to go away because that's where she put the picture.

Let's remember to remember families who get left behind, who suffer the loss of a son or a daughter, brother or sister, aunt or an uncle. I think it's really important, and I appreciate everyone's attention and the opportunity to say this. Thank you very much.

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

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour today to rise to speak to Bill 218, Honouring Veterans Act. I want to thank the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for bringing this bill forward. We should honour veterans not only on Remembrance Day but each and every day. We should support veterans each and every day.

Today I want to take a moment to honour one of Guelph's most beloved veterans, and I want to do it not only because he served as an officer of the Royal Canadian Navy during World War II but because I think he would have supported this bill and he would have spoken out forcefully in support of this bill because he spent his entire post-war career advocating and fighting for benefits for veterans. That veteran is Dr. William C. Winegard, a mentor to myself and a beloved member of our Guelph community.

He moved to Guelph in 1967, and he served at the University of Guelph as president until 1975. He was elected as a member of Parliament in 1984 and re-elected in 1988. Bill served as a cabinet minister in the Brian Mulroney government.

Most importantly for people in Guelph is that everyone just said, "Bill loves people, and he loves Guelph." He organized not only the Remembrance Day ceremonies in Guelph but made sure we had Decoration Day ceremonies in Guelph. He organized and personally funded the winter wreath memorial program at Woodlawn Memorial cemetery, where every year we put out wreaths for the veterans who are buried there.

He has a school named after him in Guelph, William C. Winegard Public School, where every year up until he died in 2019 at the age of 94, he would go and read books to children. We're talking a former cabinet minister, an honoured vet and former president of the University of Guelph who would go and read to elementary school children each and every week, and talk to them about why it was so important to honour veterans.

One of the most memorable speeches I ever heard Bill Winegard give was in the early 2010s at the Remembrance Day ceremonies at the Sleeman Centre in Guelph. Bill broke protocol that day, strong protocol that you do not engage in partisan politics during the Remembrance Day ceremony speeches. Bill got up as a former MP for the Conservative Party and took the current Conservative Party to task for their lack of support for veterans. You could hear the gasps in the room, but we all agreed, regardless of your political stripe: If there was anyone who would've gotten away with that, it was Bill Winegard, because Bill Winegard dedicated his life to supporting veterans. I want to honour him today in today's debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Any questions?

Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to start by saying that I will be splitting my time with the member for Nickel Belt and the member for London North Centre.

It's always an honour to stand in this place to speak on behalf of the people I represent, but it is a special privilege to do so during Remembrance Week as we participate in a debate that has such strong support on all sides, because all of us in this place recognize how vital it is to honour veterans, and the legislation that is before us will do that.

This debate is also a welcome opportunity, a rare opportunity, to highlight the contributions of the veterans who we know from our own communities and to show our appreciation for their selflessness, their service, also at the same time acknowledging the challenges that so many veterans face, from mental health to homelessness. Today's debate allows us to remember and pay tribute to the sacrifices that have been made and continue to be made by those who serve on our behalf to defend our values, safeguard our freedoms and protect our democracy, both here and abroad.

Today, I want to honour two veterans in particular from London West: 99-year-old Allan Brunsdon, who enlisted in the navy as a teenager during World War II and served on HMCS Uganda, and Officer Cadet Brett Cameron, who died by suicide in 2016 at the age of 20.

I first met Allan Brunsdon at the Byron Legion—one of the biggest legions in Ontario, I'm proud to say—shortly after I was elected. I always looked forward to chatting with him at the annual Battle of the Atlantic ceremony that's held every year in May at HMCS Prevost in London. Allan is profiled in a two-part segment that's being shown on CTV London tonight and tomorrow night, so I encourage anyone who is able to tune in.

Allan is a kind man with a gentle smile and a friendly twinkle in his eye. He is impossible to miss because of his constant companion, Bo, his service dog, who helps Allan deal with the PTSD he has been living with for 80 years since his return from the war. Allan has told me how difficult it was for his wife and his family to watch him struggle: the night terrors, the screaming that woke up his wife, the anxiety and the panic.

Here is some of what Allen told CTV in his interview: He enlisted at age 18. Combat was so intense that he wrote a farewell letter to his mother. He said he told his mother that he loved her and that he was afraid he was not going to return. Shortly before he returned, there was a kamikaze pilot attack on his ship. He describes, "with shaking hands nearly 80 years after it happened," some of his memories of that attack. He did survive, but he talks about the experience of having to bury people at sea and how upsetting this was for him at the time. But "eight decades later, that upset has never left Allan." He says, "I keep thinking about them, and you know, I think too much about them, and it's upsetting to me, and I, I try to put it out of my mind, but it's impossible." Allan told me that nothing was helping him until he got his therapy dog, Bo, about 15 years ago, and that has made such an enormous difference in his life. So, Speaker, honouring veterans means making sure that veterans like Allan get the support they need at the time that they need it.

1710

The second London West veteran that I want to recognize is Officer Cadet Brett Cameron. From the age

of 12, Brett knew that he wanted to join the military. He went to the 614 air cadet program at Wolseley Barracks in London and dreamed of becoming a pilot. He got two pilot licences as a cadet and was accepted into the Royal Military College of Canada in 2014. In his second year at RMC, one of his close friends, also an RMC student, died by suicide on a day when Brett was scheduled to write three exams. He went on to write those exams but failed all three of them, understandably. He worried that he was going to be kicked out, and 10 days after his friend died, Brett also took his own life. A board of inquiry was launched into the deaths of Brett, his friend and a third officer cadet who also died by suicide at RMC in the very same year, 2016.

Last month, I was invited by Brett's parents, Angela Cameron-Jolly and Bill Jolly, to attend the presentation of a Memorial, or Silver, Cross to Brett's mother, Angela, which is issued as a memento of personal loss and sacrifice by the government of Canada to loved ones of those who died in service or whose death was attributed to their service. The family was also awarded a Sacrifice Medal, Memorial Scroll and Memorial Bar in honour of Brett's service. Speaker, it took 10 years for Angela to secure this recognition from the government of Canada for the service of her son. Who knows what help could have been provided to Brett if community mental health services had been in place, if campus supports had been in place at the time that Brett was struggling.

A third London West resident that I want to honour today is Reverend Frank Mantz. Frank Mantz is the much-loved padre for all the Royal Canadian Legions within the city of London, and he works especially closely with the Byron Legion in my community, playing an important role every year in organizing the Remembrance Day parade and ceremony, which always takes place on the Saturday before November 11.

Since 2007, Frank has been on a campaign. He has been the driving force behind the creation of a monument that will centre the Byron Legion Remembrance Day service in a new home, and that monument is going to be located at Springbank Park, also in London West. City council has approved the construction of this new veterans' monument in the park, which will be available year-round for Londoners and visitors to the city to reflect on the service and sacrifice of members of the military. There are going to be placards with QR codes so you can scan the code and learn more about the stories of the wars and the important peacekeeping missions that Canadians were involved in. It's been designed by South Korean artist Kay Jang. There has been a close connection in London and, I'm sure, other communities across the province with the Korean Society of London and the Korean War vets. So it's very fitting that this monument has been designed by Kay Jang.

The monument is to be complete for Remembrance Day services in 2025, and it's being built with fundraising money and money from the community. Now, Frank has contacted me to ask if there is any access to Ontario government grants that would help support the installation of this monument. So I'd like to suggest to the government

in the bill that we are debating today—it talks about suggestions for how to honour veterans during Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week and identifies contributing to the upkeep of a memorial or cenotaph as one of the important ways that Ontarians can do that. So resources to enable the construction and installation of monuments like the one that Frank is leading in London would be greatly appreciated, I know, by Londoners, but I'm sure that there are other communities across the province that would like to do similar things.

Thank you very much, Speaker. I have really appreciated this opportunity to participate in the debate and just highlight three residents of London West who are certainly deserving of being honoured as this bill enables us to do. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Like many others, I'm the daughter of a veteran. My dad served in the Korean War, as well as the Cold War. He was in aviation for the Canadian army. He was first deployed in Zweibrücken, which is a part of Germany, and then he served in northern Africa in Morocco. For our family, Remembrance Day is something very important.

I have many, many veterans in my riding and a number of Royal Canadian Legions. So I would like to invite everyone to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 553—that is in Chelmsford—on Saturday, at 10:30, we usually go from the Legion hall to the cenotaph in Chelmsford. They do a beautiful, beautiful service. Their president, Wayne Bartlett, as well as first vice-president Tim Morgan and Claire Hamilton, poppy chair, do a very nice job. Everybody is invited, and it's supposed to be pretty good weather on Saturday, so please come out.

I would also like to invite people to Royal Canadian Legion Branch 336—that is in Falconbridge and Garson. They will have their Remembrance Day service on November 11 at 11 o'clock, but everybody is invited to get there a little bit earlier. President Stuart O'Neil, as well as poppy chair Nicole Givoque, will also be there. This Remembrance Day service is indoors because, on November 11, in northern Ontario you never know what kind of weather you're going to get.

In the afternoon, please join us, as well as president Jeff Dane, poppy chair Joanne Martel and treasurer Kathy Moggy, for a ceremony at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 503—that is in Onaping Falls, but the ceremony takes place in Levack. They also have a ceremony at 11 and one at 1 o'clock. I will be at the one taking place at 1:45 and everybody's invited. At that ceremony, they always have the children from the different schools from Onaping and Levack who come and take part. They do a beautiful job of showing pictures of the veterans. As I said, I have many, many veterans in my riding. This ceremony is also indoors because we never know what the temperature is going to be like. The one in Levack at 11 o'clock on the November 11 is outdoors.

There's also Royal Canadian Legion Branch 179—that's the Capreol Legion. They invite everybody to join them at 10:30. That's president Laura Depatie, first vice-president Simon Le Henaff, as well as second vice-president Merv Allum. There's also Capreol Army Cadets that are very involved. They have a beautiful cenotaph outside in, really, the centre of Capreol, and everybody is invited to come and join in.

1720

I also have the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 564. That's the Lockerby Legion. They will be having their Remembrance Day service at 1 o'clock on Remembrance Day. President Jennifer Huard, as well as public relations officer and veteran Rick Smith, are the ones organizing it. It is partly indoors, partly outdoors. They have a brand new cenotaph attached to the Lockerby Legion that is just beautiful.

Veteran Smith has been really active in our community. He started a program with students, and the students from St. Charles College actually participated in doing holiday greetings and doing cards. Veteran Smith made arrangements for those cards to be sent out to people who are in active service so that they have an opportunity for their spirits to be lifted up. Although they are not able to be home for the holidays, they can still be connected to where they come from.

Although the Legion in Lively, also in my riding, has been amalgamated with Branch 564, they often hold Remembrance Day services in Naughton. Again, I encourage everybody to join in.

No matter which areas of Nickel Belt you come from, there will be services for Remembrance Day on the 11th—some of them at 11 o'clock in the morning and some of them in the afternoon. Please try to attend. I realize that not everybody is able to do this. If you cannot attend, I would say, take two minutes at 11 o'clock on the 11th for a moment of silence to remember and honour everybody that has served. It's the minimum that we can do.

J'espère être capable de rencontrer beaucoup de gens de Nickel Belt qui pourront participer soit à Chelmsford le samedi ou à Falconbridge à 11 h lundi ou à Onaping à 1 h 45, encore le lundi, le jour du Souvenir. Vous êtes tous invités à vous joindre à la Légion d'honneur pour une cérémonie du Souvenir. Tout le monde est invité et tout le monde est bienvenu.

Merci beaucoup, et je vais partager mon temps.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member from London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: This Monday, on the 11th month, the 11th day and the 11th hour, we will mark Remembrance Day, a time to reflect in honour of the courage of those who served and those who continue to serve. It's hard for many of us to imagine the bravery, the valour, the strength of will of these heroes. They put their lives at risk for us to stand up for freedom, to stand up for democracy, to stand up for human lives and to stand against tyranny. We owe them so very much.

This year, London will be honouring veterans with banners of those brave heroes who served, all around Victoria Park and London city hall. I'd like to acknowledge Randy Warden, a veteran of the Canadian Forces, United Nations peacekeeper, Legion commander, St. John Ambulance executive director, who also chairs London's Remembrance Day committee. Randy was instrumental in implementing this new project.

One of the heroes shown on a banner is Tom Hennessy, who recently passed away at the age of 101. Tom served as a flight lieutenant in the RAF and was a World War II spitfire pilot. Two years ago, at the young age of 100, Tom walked 100 miles in London to raise money for homeless veterans. Tom is survived by his loving wife, Joyce Hetherington. Looking up at her husband's banner, she said, "You were much more than you said you were. The fact that the people in London can see you and know you, matters to me. And I think it matters to a lot of us."

Tom was a wonderful man, and I know all of us will miss his smile, his sharp wit and his singing.

I also want to thank a respected and retired educator. He was a school administrator and provincial administrator for the deaf and blind, who is also a recipient of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award, Gary Martins, and the Lambeth Lions Club for their enormously successful lawn poppy campaign supporting local Legions.

I also want to recognize at this time the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 317 in my riding, the Victory Legion, and thank them for all of the work they do for veterans.

I strongly believe Ontario should pay their respects to veterans by stopping any financial clawback that the province places on veterans and mark Remembrance Day as a paid statutory holiday. It's the least we can do to honour the veterans and their sacrifice.

I encourage everyone to mark November 8 as national Indigenous Veterans Day, and on Monday, attend a service at their local cenotaph or Legion.

Thank you to all of the veterans and their families for your service. Lest we forget.

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

Mr. McGregor has moved second reading of Bill 218, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to honouring military veterans. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

HONOURING VETERANS ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À HONORER LES ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Mr. McGregor, on behalf of Mr. Michael D. Ford, moved third 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 Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the minister to start debate.

Hon. Graham McGregor: I've been very moved by the speeches thus far. This is a great bill, and I want to thank all our colleagues in the House for their support in second reading and humbly ask for their support in third reading. Thank you.

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

Mr. McGregor has moved third reading of Bill 218, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to honouring military veterans. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order: I move we see the clock at 6.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Is there an agreement to see the clock at 6? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Julia Douglas): Ballot item number 28, private member's notice of motion number 132: Ms. Hogarth.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): No business having been moved, the House stands adjourned, then, until tomorrow at 9 a.m., which would be November 7.

The House adjourned at 1729.

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		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	