

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



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of Debates  
(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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Wednesday  
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Mercredi  
20 novembre 2024

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Trevor Day

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 20 November 2024

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 novembre 2024

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFER STREETS, STRONGER  
COMMUNITIES ACT, 2024

LOI DE 2024 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE  
LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES RUES  
ET À RENFORCER LES COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 223, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system / Projet de loi 223, Loi édictant deux lois et modifiant diverses lois relatives à la sécurité publique et au système judiciaire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** It is my honour to be able to rise in this place and discuss the legislation that is before us. I want to point out that there are several schedules to this bill, most of which are supportive.

There is one schedule in this bill that is incredibly problematic, not just for those of us on this side of the House, but for health care workers, for people in my community, in Ottawa, in Sudbury, in Thunder Bay, in Toronto, in ridings all across this province. It's a schedule that we see further stigmatizes individuals with addiction and will ultimately, regardless of what the Minister of Health seems to think, claiming that no one will die because of that particular schedule—evidence shows otherwise. That particular schedule, schedule 4, is simply something that I cannot support in good conscience. I would ask the government why they put that in this bill with so many other things. Why not pull it out of this bill and let us actually debate the science and the evidence and the health care related to schedule 4? Why not let us work together to actually save lives, rather than further stigmatizing people with addictions?

Before I get into that part of my comments, I'm going to touch on the schedule that talks about sexual assaults and those who have been found guilty of sexual assault. On the surface, this seems like a really good piece of legislation, talking about not allowing convicted sex offenders to be able to change their names, to try to become someone else and to avoid continued accountability for a

crime that they have committed. The government is trying to make it sound like they are tough on crime, like they are serious about issues—specifically, this particular issue largely impacts women who are sexually assaulted, women who are targeted by gender-based violence, by femicide.

We've just recently seen a femicide in Oshawa. It is not an anomaly. It is happening in every riding across this province. This government will not declare gender-based violence or femicide for what it is, which is an epidemic. They seem ideologically opposed to actually being accountable for having to actually do something about it. They're great with words; not so great with follow-through.

I ask the government, when we're talking about people who are convicted of sexual crimes and are put on the registry and not being able to change their names, why is it that the government did not include my colleague's bill, Lydia's Law? Why was that not included in this? Why has the government—since May 14, months ago—chosen to leave that piece of legislation to languish at committee?

I want to be clear to the people who are listening to this or who will see this later: The government has a majority. They control the committees. They decide what gets called at committee. So while they're here trying to sound like they're really tough on crime and they're really supporting the victims of sexual assault—again, it's largely women impacted—they chose to play games with my colleague's bill, Lydia's Law. They wouldn't let it be heard here in the House. The day before it was to be debated, when there were hundreds of people, families, survivors of sexual assault, who were coming to this place to be heard, to be part of that debate, the government House leader—a man, I will point out—decided that it was best to just shut down that debate altogether. It wasn't going to happen. Without consulting with my colleague who brought that bill forward, or the survivors of sexual assault or their family members, the people who were going to come here, the government said, "We're not even going to hear about it. We're just going to send it right to committee." The government House Leader said, "I don't understand why all those ladies are upset, why all those women are upset. We're doing what they want. We're taking this seriously. We're rushing this through the legislative process. We're sending it to committee so that we can get it through that process and back into the House for third reading and get that law passed." That turned out to be horse hockey, because it has been sitting at that committee since May 14.

So I ask the government: Why will you not pass that bill? Why will you not honour the young woman that bill was named after? Why will you not honour Emily, who had a day in court where she had to go and relive the

trauma of being sexually assaulted, only to find out that the case was going to be thrown out of court because the time limit had elapsed, because this government is grossly underfunding and under-resourcing the justice system?

Speaker, it is absolutely unconscionable that this government would play games like this—absolutely unconscionable. These are real people who are impacted.

Between 2022 and 2023, there were nearly 3,000 sexual assault cases either withdrawn or stayed because they didn't have the resources in the courts to hear those cases. Nearly 3,000 victims of sexual assault did not have a remedy; they didn't have a day in court. They do not get justice. And this government's decisions continue to excuse these heinous offences and to further traumatize and try to silence the victims of sexual assault. I just wanted to make sure that I got that on the record.

While saying that those convicted of sexual assault should not be able to change their names—that's something agreeable. But what are you actually doing now for the women all around this province who are facing gender-based violence, who are being sexually assaulted and are being revictimized by a court system that this government refuses to properly resource?

I'd ask this government, for all the victims who have not seen justice and for, unfortunately, future victims—because there will be, because this government is not really doing anything substantive to educate and to prevent those assaults. We're going to see more and more people in this province, especially women, who are going to be failed by this government. They can't even deliver the basics when it comes to the safety of women in this province.

**0910**

Speaker, I only have 10 minutes left, and as you can see, I have quite the pile of notes here.

I want to point out that the government ran a study on consumption and treatment services—and I want to be clear that that's what it is: consumption and treatment services. These sites connected people to primary care physicians, to wound care, to social workers, to therapists, to health care workers. On a very personal and basic level, they built relationships with the people who accessed their supports and services. They built trust with these people, and in return—and in some cases, it absolutely took time. But in many cases, after building that trust with people with addictions—they got into treatment; they got the supports that they needed.

It's a broken treatment system, because this government is grossly underfunding mental health and addictions. For the people who are seeking support, who are ready to seek treatment, it is a disjointed system. They go in for detox, and then they could wait months for rehab, for withdrawal management. The evidence shows that because of those delays, oftentimes they relapse. But there's nothing the government is doing about that. "We're just going to put some words on paper."

The Premier himself said that it was not about evidence, it was not about data, it was not about proven treatments

that work; it is his personal opinion—his personal opinion—that these services should not exist.

We hear fearmongering from the other side, and that is dangerous, because as you stigmatize and you fearmonger, people who have addiction don't want to come forward and seek help, because of the way you are stigmatizing them. How is that helping the growing crisis that we are facing today?

In their own study into consumption and treatment services, the recommendation from their study—they are the ones who commissioned the study—said that it was wrong-headed and dangerous to be closing these sites.

I know the argument on the other side is, "Oh, we're talking about banning them 200 metres from schools or daycares." Then explain to me why the one in Windsor had to close. It is well outside the 200 metres from any school or any daycare. We had no incidences where there was police involvement. The crime rate dropped. Lives were saved. People were connected to supports and services that they needed.

When people have access to clean, safe supplies to use, we see a drop in the spread of diseases, such as HIV and hepatitis. But the government doesn't want to acknowledge that. We know, based on the government's own study that they choose to ignore—not surprising, because that is what we see with this government time and time again.

Look at their own housing task force. They did the same thing—their own commissioned report. When their report doesn't say what they want it to say, they then try to discredit the very people they hired to do the report and just do what it is they want to do, based on their own personal beliefs rather than on evidence.

Speaker, we have health care workers, we have workers who work in harm reduction—and it is harm reduction. I know the government talks about HART hubs. I'm not saying HART hubs are a bad thing; they are no substitute for consumption and treatment services. These HART hubs will not be able to provide clean supplies for people who have an addiction. Again, what we're going to see is an increase in infection. We're going to see a spread of HIV. We're going to see a spread of hepatitis C.

When the government wants to talk about, "This is about needles on playgrounds and in parks"—consumption and treatment services sites actually took people off the streets to use. They used in a controlled environment with health care workers and mental health and addictions experts. They had an ability to discard used paraphernalia in a safe manner so that it wasn't on our streets, so that it wasn't in playgrounds or the parks. But the government doesn't talk about that.

What the government is doing is fearmongering. They're fearmongering. They're stigmatizing people. I love that the government talks about, "We need to reduce stigma to encourage people to come forward." But what they are doing is further stigmatizing people who use drugs. The Minister of Health herself said yesterday—yelled it across the floor, actually—that it was about stopping people from



using illicit and illegal drugs. That's what she said it was about.

I'm not going to argue that there are people who are using illicit drugs—we are in a crisis. But taking away health resources that would actually save their lives—because if they are dead, they're not getting into treatment. You have to save their lives first.

Talking about them as though they are less than other people in this province, like they are dirty and should be discarded and that we would be better off without them—that kind of language that this government is putting out there to the public is absolutely shameful.

If it isn't someone in your family yet, if it isn't your neighbour yet, if it isn't someone you care about yet, it could very well be. So I want you to think about that, in the language that you choose when you are talking about people with addiction.

They only talk like that about people who use drugs. They have no problem when it comes to alcohol addiction; in fact, they pour all kinds of money into it, to make it available wherever people want to have it. Alcohol addiction, for the government, is okay. It's just those who use drugs who are the problem.

I don't have a lot of time left, and I had a lot that I wanted to read, but I'm going to build on something that I just said, on the language that we hear from the government side, the fearmongering that we hear from the government side. And they're going to try to spin it like we don't care about community safety over on this side. That is absolute garbage. They're going to say that we think it's okay that people use drugs and we just want to keep them on drugs. Absolute garbage. Absolutely. It's shameful that they would politicize it that way.

Speaker, I want to tell you a story in the last three minutes that I have left, and it's based on what the Minister of Health was yelling across the floor yesterday about illegal and illicit drugs—that these people are bad, bad people because they're using illicit or illegal drugs; that that is the only thing contributing to the crisis that we see in this province. I want to tell you about someone named Dan. Dan was a young man who played in a band, loved music, played guitar, played the drums, had a job. Dan was a passenger in a vehicle that was T-boned by another driver—I will point out, a driver who was intoxicated—and Dan sustained a back injury. He was given prescription medication to deal with the pain from that injury, and he became reliant on that medication.

**0920**

I would argue that there are probably people in this House right now who have struggled with that themselves or who have had family members struggle with that.

Over the years, as the pain meds weren't working as effectively and he would need more and more of that prescription drug, he turned to other drugs to deal with the pain. He used heroin. He used crack.

Ultimately, he sought help. He would go to the methadone clinic every morning and get his methadone, like many people who are trying to manage their addiction, with the hopes of beating that addiction.

He had another injury happen and was prescribed, by a doctor who knew that he had an addiction—he was the one sending him to the methadone clinic every day. That doctor prescribed him morphine to be able to take at home, unsupervised. Dan died of an overdose, alone in his apartment. It was not illicit drugs. It was not illegal drugs.

He was not less than. He was not a nameless, faceless person. He was someone who was loved, who was cared for, who wanted to be better, who wanted to get better, who wanted to beat the addiction. His problem was not illicit and illegal drugs; it was prescription medication.

Dan, that person I'm talking about, was my brother.

It is highly insulting when the Minister of Health and others on the other side of the House speak about people struggling with addiction as though they are dirty and they are less than and they are a scourge on our society. Speaker, I would argue that the folks on the government side who talk like that and think like that and refuse to look at the evidence are the scourge.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I'll remind our speakers to use parliamentary language when referring to members in the House.

Questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The member made reference to getting court cases through the court system faster.

Schedule 7 of this bill refers specifically to allowing retired provincial court judges the ability to come back after retirement and hear more court cases and to essentially expand the amount of time they're allowed to do that. Sometimes what happens is that a judge retires and they're not replaced right away, or judges get sick and they cannot show up for their court cases. This is a very useful way to get judges back in the courtroom—experienced judges, very talented judges—and to get those court cases heard and through the system. That's in schedule 7 of this bill. I think it's a very practical and very useful way to get things done.

I am wondering if the member across supports that section. And will she vote for it?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** If the member for Essex was listening to the beginning of what I said—I said every schedule of this bill is supportable, except for schedule 4. My request is that you take schedule 4 out of this bill, and let's actually debate data and evidence when it comes to schedule 4.

I will put this back to the member from Essex: Are you prepared—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Through the Chair.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** —and when are you properly going to resource the court system so that there aren't these delays, so that we don't have 3,000 sexual assault cases being withdrawn or stayed because your government is not properly resourcing the system?

We have courtrooms that sit empty while we have victims of sexual assault who will live that for the rest of their lives, and they are being revictimized because they cannot get their day in court.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank the member for Windsor West. She reminded me of a teaching from an Algonquin elder, Albert Dumont, back home, who has often said that healing begins now. When Albert tells me that, he's reminding me that we can use these platforms, sure, to fight amongst each other, because we're going to disagree—but also to offer up something personal sometimes, if it helps people get that rung of hope on the ladder that can help them out of a difficult spot.

When you talked about your brother, that took a lot of courage. Thank you.

I want to offer you another opportunity to speak to the government, because this has impacted my family too.

While we may disagree here about how to help people suffering from mental health and addictions, I want to believe that that should be a foremost priority for the government.

I'm wondering if you can talk about how expensive it is to not only have to be picking up needles in our streets but to be walking over dead bodies. That's what I'm hearing people talk about at home. If there isn't a safe place to consume, it's going to be in parking garages, it's going to be in alleyways, it's going to be in backyards. People have problems, and there's a cost associated to not having opportunities for those problems to be resolved.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I thank my colleague.

I think that's the heart of the matter. We are seeing a government that is not putting the resources in to properly deal with the crisis that we are seeing.

The government likes to talk about setting records. Well, congratulations, we have record numbers of people accessing food banks. Some of them are working people and seniors. We have record-high poverty. Toronto alone has the highest rate of child poverty in the entire country. We are seeing housing starts at the lowest they have been in 70 years.

We are hearing people talk about the gaps in actually accessing supports and services for addiction within the health care system.

So I would ask the government, what is the moral cost—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Question?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Returning to schedule 7 of the bill: The member quite rightly would observe that from time to time, a courtroom sits empty because there's no judge. That happens because judges call in sick. There aren't a lot of judges, so when a judge calls in sick, you have a whole list of cases that can't be heard that day, sometimes because there's no other judge available to hear that case. That's why it's so important to have back-up judges. As the system currently stands, a judge who is retired can only do a certain amount of time and they can't do any more. This schedule proposes to change that and to allow retired judges to come back for more time when and if they're needed.

It sounded like the member is not going to vote for this. Why not?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I don't know if the member needs to put his earpiece in and turn it up, but clearly, he's not

hearing what I'm saying. I've said it three times now, so let me be clear: Everything in this bill is supportable, except for schedule 4, which you should pull out of this bill. Pull it out.

I'm going to ask the member from Essex again, when we don't have court clerks, when we don't have other court staff—not just judges—to be running the courtrooms, how is that one particular issue going to stop 3,000 sexual assault cases from getting tossed out of court because they can't get heard within the time frame?

I'm talking about schedule 4. I've said I support everything else. Pull schedule 4 out of the bill.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I want to thank the member for an excellent presentation on this bill.

I would like to ask the member if she could talk about the consequences expected when consumption and treatment sites are shut down. I've heard a lot of concerns from health care professionals, from families, and from people who actually use those services about the consequences in terms of health and, frankly, in terms of mortality. I would appreciate an expansion on the part of the member on that issue.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** I'd have to go through the notes to find out for sure, but I believe there were 22,000 Ontarians who have died of overdose and lack of access to health care—because this is health care—since the Conservatives formed government in this province. Speaker, 22,000 people have died—family members, loved ones, neighbours, friends, community members.

So I ask the government, what price do you put on those people who have died?

I believe the number is, when you invest in consumption and treatment services and harm reduction—that every \$1 invested is \$7 in savings to the health care system, to the justice system, to first responders.

So invest in people in the first end. Make sure they have the supports and services they need. Save lives, and you can save money at the same time.

**0930**

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

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** My question is to the member opposite.

I'm going to quote the member from Toronto—Danforth, who asked a question about a shooting that took place in his riding. He said, “The shooting at Queen and Carlaw has caused people to question the presence of a consumption and treatment services (CTS) site for drug users at the South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC). Many people fear that the presence of the site attracts drug dealers and that this may be related to the recent shooting.” That was, in fact, before it was determined that the shooting of the employee at Riverdale was by an alleged client.

Does the member opposite now dismiss the concerns of your colleague and turn face and deny the safety issues that these sites pose for our residents?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Response? Please make your questions and responses through the Chair.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** To the member opposite: I have a copy of the government report, a commissioned report, that actually talks about how crime is reduced. It's specifically talking about that particular consumption and treatment service. It's very clear to me that either the member opposite has not bothered to read this lengthy and fulsome report, or he has chosen to pick and choose some items out of it.

If he would like to actually read the report that the government commissioned, that's talking about how these consumption and treatment sites, with the right tools in place—working with experienced health care workers, with law enforcement, with community—actually reduce crime, save lives and get people down the road into treatment—if he would actually like to read the fulsome report, I would be happy to send it over to him with a page.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** That is all the time we have for questions and answers.

We're going to move on to further debate.

**Mme Lucille Collard:** It is an honour, of course, to rise on behalf of my constituents in Ottawa–Vanier to speak about Bill 223, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024.

The ByWard Market in Ottawa is a popular tourist destination in my riding. But what you may not know is that just outside the market, there are three safe consumption sites within 700 metres of each other. Two are just actually 200 metres apart, which is far below the ministry's guideline of 600 metres. This concentration of services has a negative impact on the Lowertown community. Residents see drugs and paraphernalia in parks; they see the drug dealing, the drug use, the crime, and, yes, the overdoses.

Bill 223 proposes to ban consumption and treatment sites within 200 metres of schools and daycares. While I'll support this, it will result in 10 sites across Ontario closing, including the one at the Somerset West Community Health Centre in Ottawa Centre. The question is, where will those who rely on these services go? That centre is the only one outside of my riding. So most likely, they will come to Lowertown, exacerbating the existing challenges and increasing the burden on local residents.

To reduce demand for safe consumption sites and their negative impact, we need to connect people to mental health care, housing and primary care services. Safe consumption sites save lives. They are a vital harm reduction tool to keep people alive until they can access treatment, but they only work if treatment options and social supports are also available.

I've spoken with the organizations running the sites in my riding, and they've told me, clearly, that the treatment options are lacking. Even when people are ready for treatment, there's not enough support. They don't have housing, food and basic needs during and after treatment. If they don't have that, they will return to the streets and their addictions.

We need a holistic approach, with wraparound services including housing, health care and employment.

The government's proposed shift to homelessness and addiction treatment hubs sounds good, but there are two key issues.

First, these hubs cannot provide harm reduction services, making it harder to get people through the door and into treatment. Harm reduction services are essential for reaching people who are ready to get help. Without them, we miss the opportunity to get people into treatment. It's as simple as that. By offering harm reduction services, organizations gain access to the patients who need the treatment services at a moment when they may be willing to use them. By not offering those harm reduction services, we lose the opportunity to get people into treatment. As one expert put it, "It's like investing in a brand new, state-of-the-art hospital and then not putting in doors."

Second, the hubs will only work if the necessary wraparound services, like primary care and housing, are available. Unfortunately, this government has a poor record on those fronts.

After six years in power, the housing crisis has worsened, and affordable housing options remain scarce.

When it comes to health care, well, unfortunately, this government has failed again and again to provide the access to primary care services that Ontarians need. In my riding, over 22,000 patients don't have a family doctor. When a group of nurse practitioners proposed a new primary care clinic that would include services for those struggling with mental health and addictions, the government only gave them a quarter of the funding they requested. Instead of the \$10 million they requested, the government decided to give them \$2.5 million in funding. The impact is that the clinic has to downsize from 12 nurse practitioners to four, and that's denying thousands of residents access to the primary care they desperately need.

If this government is serious about addressing the mental health and addiction issues facing this province, then they have to put their money where their mouth is and actually fund the primary care and treatment services that Ontarians need.

I also want to briefly address schedules 2 and 3 of this bill, which focus on the identification of sex offenders. Schedule 2 amends the Change of Name Act to prevent sex offenders from changing their names, and schedule 3 requires them to report more personal information to police, including changes to their social media accounts, drivers' licences and passports. These are positive steps to better protect our children and ensure that convicted sex offenders face the consequences of their actions. We must make it as difficult as possible for offenders to distance themselves from their past crimes, as this only makes it easier for them to reoffend.

Many sex offenders and traffickers manipulate their victims, often using relationships and influence to break down their self-worth. These individuals are rarely strangers, and their tactics are not physical force necessarily, but rather manipulation. I've met with survivors of human trafficking, and I can tell you that they

not only need to heal from physical wounds but also from deep emotional and psychological scars. Rebuilding their self-image and learning to trust again are part of their journey.

The measures in this bill help to prevent offenders from finding new victims, and we must continue to take steps to protect vulnerable individuals.

Education is a key factor. That's why I introduced Bill 133, the Kids' Online Safety and Privacy Month Act. We need to equip young people with the knowledge to recognize online dangers, including child pornography and grooming, and understand how offenders manipulate their victims. We must also educate parents on better supervising their children's online activity, which Bill 133 would help achieve.

Furthermore, we need to support the victims and survivors of sexual exploitation.

A year ago, this House passed Bill 41 to protect human trafficking survivors from coerced debts, yet it has still not been brought into force. These debts perpetuate the trauma that survivors face, preventing them from moving forward with their lives—whether it is applying for loans, renting apartments, or getting a credit card. Survivors are still waiting for the relief they deserve. I urge the government to implement this bill without further delay.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** The member made brief reference to schedules 2 and 3. I'd like to ask a question about that.

Schedule 2 makes a change to the Change of Name Act, and schedule 3 refers to a sex offenders registry. The effect of these two schedules is to make it far more difficult for people who have been found guilty of a sex offence to essentially change their name and hide. That's the effect of these two schedules.

0940

My question to the honourable member is, does she support the provisions set out in schedules 2 and 3 and will she be voting for them?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you to the member for Essex for the question. The obvious answer, if you'd listened to my comments, is yes, I support schedules 2 and 3. Those are good measures.

We always think that the government doesn't go far enough to protect those victims. I think the IPV motion and the work that's being done around that needs to be more aggressive. We need real relief.

Again, I mention my Bill 41, on protecting survivors of human trafficking from coerced debt. It has been almost a year, and it's still not in force. We need to move forward with that. Survivors are waiting for that relief. They were so hopeful when we moved that process to the House. They were at committee, just praying that we were going to deal with that—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Response?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** It's taking too long. I really urge the government to do what's necessary to bring that into force, to bring real relief.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I thank the member for her presentation.

People across Ontario are saying that this government has stooped to a new low, conflating those fighting addiction with sex offenders.

My question: Will the member support our official opposition push to support all of the schedules in this bill except for schedule 4, and to remove schedule 4 from Bill 223?

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I do have reservations about schedule 4 as well. I think I spoke about this particular schedule at length.

The problem of removing safe consumption sites is real. We do know that those sites save lives and that if we don't replace them with treatment, then we're just setting up people to die on the streets. I've seen that first-hand. I've been on patrol with police services, and what you see happening on the streets is just heartbreaking. Treatment is not happening fast enough.

The minister said that they're working on building hubs. This should have been done before we decided to close sites, because treatment is truly the only alternative to closing those sites.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you to the member and my colleague for sharing your story with us, and for your speech.

You seem to have lots of knowledge on this particular topic of supervised consumption sites. I'm just wondering what you are hearing from your riding of Ottawa-Vanier.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Madam Speaker, what's happening in the downtown-area core is having a devastating effect on the businesses, on the community. Like I said, we see heartbreaking stories. People have to deal with the impact of not having enough support and not enough treatment.

Unfortunately, I know of this first-hand, because my own brother died on the street, because he didn't have access to treatment. So, yes, this is an issue that is really something I care about.

When I go to these safe consumption sites and I talk to those vulnerable people, it's very clear that all they need is that little push to get access to treatment. But the treatment is not there. The government needs to invest serious resources to address this.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** As everybody knows, this government is proposing to introduce HART hubs. HART hubs are hubs where people can go to seek treatment, counselling. They can also, in a spoke-and-wheel model, get access to home services.

I'm proposing that the HART hubs are probably a very good \$378-million investment, and I would like to invite the member to share her observations regarding that.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** As I said, those hubs sound really good. My question is, when will they be implemented? What kinds of resources are going to be made available? Are they going to be sufficient to help the

increasing number of people who need help? The minister talked about 19 hubs; that seems a very low number when we consider the increasing number of people who find themselves on the streets struggling, in need of support.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Speaker, we are debating several schedules in a bill today. One of those schedules deals with what I will describe as drug injection sites; some people will choose to use other language to describe these locations.

Almost all of my comments today are going to be directed on something called the Community Engagement Report. The Community Engagement Report was a companion document to the South Riverdale Community Health Centre Consumption and Treatment Service Review.

As members of this House will recall, the South Riverdale location was a drug injection site which was related to—some people might even suggest linked to—a deadly shooting which occurred. This particular report was prepared by Unity Health Toronto, and it's dated February 28, 2024, so it was finally finished only a few months ago. It's very current to our discussion today. Again, it's the Community Engagement Report, the companion document to the South Riverdale Community Health Centre Consumption and Treatment Service Review, prepared by Unity Health Toronto, dated February 28, 2024.

I'll make one more comment before I start referring to the report: This particular drug injection site was commenced after the community health clinic. The community health clinic pre-existed the drug injection site. That's an important fact.

I want to provide the House with the first quote from this document:

"Several people reported incidents of harassment, including threats, and physical assault from CTS clients. Neighbourhood residents, business owners and employees emphasized that these experiences, which have been directed towards adults, teens and young children, have taken place when walking by the CTS, in nearby alleyways or when walking on streets close to the CTS."

My first observation is that this Community Engagement Report documented these incidents and that these particular sites were of grave concern with regard to these kinds of threats and physical assaults.

I want to quote further from this report:

"Many respondents, including service users ... were concerned about crowding and loitering outside of the CTS, when individuals outside of the CTS are visibly intoxicated, belligerent, and acting erratically.

"Many respondents were concerned about public drug use, including people overdosing in public (fatal and non-fatal). Drug use was observed directly outside of the CTS, in alleyways, on the street, in parks and other public spaces in the neighbourhood."

If that weren't concerning enough, the report went on to say this: "Schools and daycares have found people using drugs in their parking lot or in their entryways."

That's all in the Community Engagement Report. That, of course, is interesting information, because theoretically speaking, these drug injection sites are supposed to prevent all of that from happening. Theoretically, the drug injection sites are supposed to prevent people from taking drugs in public, but clearly they are not. Theoretically speaking, the drug injection sites are supposed to prevent people from overdosing in public, but clearly they are not. Theoretically speaking, the drug injection sites are supposed to prevent people from overdosing in public, but clearly they are not. Theoretically speaking, the drug injection centres are supposed to keep the drugs away from our schools and away from our daycare centres, but clearly they are not.

**0950**

People are tired of this. It doesn't mean that people do not have empathy for others who are suffering from addiction. It does not mean that people do not want these addictions cured or solved. On the contrary, people want people who are suffering from addiction to get back on the road to recovery. That's what we all want. That's what all 124 members of this House want. But what we don't want is people consuming drugs near our schools, at our schools, or, as this report clearly indicates, in parking lots and in the entryways to schools and daycare centres.

Let me go on to quote the report again: "Respondents have also observed garbage, excrement, used condoms, discarded needles and substances in the neighbourhood, including on the streets, alleyways, schoolyards, daycare property, soccer fields and near residents' private garages and driveways." That's a direct quote from the Community Engagement Report.

Once again, the theory that has been presented is that these sites are supposed to prevent all that from happening, but clearly it continues to happen. In particular, it seems to be happening where the sites are located at a greater rate—that is to say, greater than in the general community. We're referring to not just anti-social behaviour, but real, real threats to health and safety; real, real threats to the health of the community, including some of the youngest and most vulnerable members of our community.

To quote the report again: "Residents and daycare staff have witnessed individuals fornicating, defecating and urinating in public and on daycare property."

Imagine that. Imagine you're a mother or a father and you're on your way to work, and you pack your kids into the car—maybe you're driving a minivan, a quality vehicle built by a North American automobile company—and you drive your children in your minivan to the daycare centre, and you're confronted with people defecating, urinating or fornicating on daycare property. Imagine that. And imagine the effect on you as a parent. Maybe your children won't see it because you'll shield them from that. But imagine the effect on the person who is running that daycare, who thought that they were going to open up a daycare centre and take care of children and serve the community and serve parents, serve mothers and fathers. Instead of having to do what they want to do—that is to say, run a business, take care of children—now they have

to deal with this kind of behaviour occurring right on their property.

I'll quote the report further: "Many respondents were concerned about the effects on children of public drug use, disruptive behaviour, and discarded equipment and drugs. Respondents reported children picking up bags of drugs." Again, that's a direct quote: "Respondents reported children picking up bags of drugs."

Nobody wants that happening. Nobody wants that happening near our schools. Nobody wants that happening near our daycare centres. That's why, if this legislation is passed, we'll take steps to prevent that from happening.

One of those steps, I would suggest, is to impose a 200-metre protection zone around every school and daycare centre in the province of Ontario, because we don't want this behaviour and we don't want this garbage anywhere near our schools, and we don't want it anywhere near our daycare centres.

Here's another quote from the same report: "Others described children as being desensitized to seeing people injecting and consuming drugs."

Again, that's another reason why we should be imposing a protection zone around all of our schools and all of our daycare centres. We don't want our children being exposed to this kind of activity. There are people who will say that, theoretically, these sites are supposed to prevent that from happening; well, it's clear that they're not. We don't want our children to be exposed to this. We don't want them to be desensitized to it. Rather, we want them not to be exposed to it. That is a very good reason for us to impose a 200-metre protection zone around every school and daycare centre in the province.

I'll quote further from the report: "Several residents and businesses have experienced home and car thefts, property damage and break-ins. Theft has ranged from small items, such as delivery packages, to large items in stores. Several businesses have been burglarized multiple times, repeatedly suffering financial loss."

Criminal behaviour is not strictly isolated to drug injection sites. There's criminal behaviour in other places, too. But the significance of this appearing in this report is that it is being associated with the drug injection site.

Let me carry on with another quote from the same report: "Most business owners and employees felt that safety problems are acute, specific to the Leslieville neighbourhood, and not explained by city-wide trends." That addresses the point that I just made.

"Business owners who live outside of Leslieville compared the lack of sense of safety they experience at their business location with that in the broader Leslieville neighbourhood, which they attribute to the CTS."

That is the point I was making. While crime exists everywhere, these business owners had businesses located near the zone of the drug injection site, and they also lived or had experiences outside the zone, and they could speak personally to the experience that they were going through, observing that the level of criminal activity near the drug injection site was markedly greater than elsewhere. That was observed through their own experience, because they

had locations, or several locations, both near and far from the drug injection site. And we're listening to those business owners.

Another quote from the same report: "Many respondents emphasized that there is a noticeable presence of drug selling both outside the CTS and in the neighbourhood. For some, the presence of the CTS 'attracts drug dealers and drug users, and diverts them from the downtown core.'" That's a direct quote. Again, it's dealing with the same point that I was making just now, that these are people who have direct experience and are speaking from the direct experience.

Another quote: "Respondents also fear that sellers are armed and 'directly' responsible for an increase in guns and violence in the neighbourhood."

I note that there will be some police officers here today. I understand that there are police officers from the Windsor Police Service—Kent Rice, Rick Derus and Shannon Tennant—and I understand that there are also police officers here today from the region of Durham.

I would suggest that we could all take an opportunity to speak to our police officers, as some of us do on a regular basis, and ask them about their personal experience in dealing with these issues. It is, of course, often the case that police officers are called in when business owners and mothers and fathers experience the things that this report is talking about, and it's the police who have to deal with this. They would rather be dealing with keeping people safe and, quite frankly, not inviting further drug activity, not inviting further drug trafficking and not inviting gun violence, which these drug injection sites seem to attract.

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I'll quote further from this report: "Residents led an initiative to complete an alleyway cleanup of discarded needles, garbage and condoms."

In other words, the problem has gotten so bad that residents have to take matters into their own hands and start cleaning this mess up. Remember, the drug injection site is not supposed to cause all this, yet this is what's occurring around the drug injection sites. Theoretically, the site is supposed to prevent this from happening, but rather, the opposite is happening; it is actually intensifying around the drug injection site that is being described in this report.

A further quote: "Many children have been avoiding the alleyway behind the CTS when walking to school and some parents do not allow their children to walk in the neighbourhood alone. Some parents no longer feel comfortable sending their children to the local elementary school and have pulled their children out of the local daycare." Again, that is a direct quote.

This is occurring at the drug injection site that is described in this report. It is having a negative effect on the local school. It is having a negative effect on the local daycare centre. That is yet another justification for us to impose a 200-metre protection zone around every school and every daycare centre around the province of Ontario. These schools are losing students because of the drug injection site. This daycare is losing clients because of the

drug injection site. That is the upshot of this Community Engagement Report that was prepared only in February of this year.

Further quotes from the same report:

“Parents gave examples of their children avoiding playing and spending time in the neighbourhood, taking different routes home from school, and avoiding eye contact with people outside the CTS.

“Some daycares have implemented safety measures and programming changes. One daycare has changed the location of their evacuation site to be farther from the CTS. Staff now inspect and sweep their property for needles before bringing children outside, such as for fire drills”—again, another example of the residents and the business owners of the community having to pick up after the drug injection site, having to clean up after the drug injection site.

The theory is that this is not supposed to happen, that the site is supposed to prevent this from happening, but clearly that is not occurring. The opposite is occurring. The drug injection site is intensifying this type of behaviour and activity in the neighbourhood.

Another quote: “Businesses have installed security cameras and many avoid keeping their doors open in the summer. Some businesses are picking up and disposing used needles on their own. Survey responses shared several accounts of individuals who have stopped visiting businesses near the CTS because of safety concerns.”

It’s perfectly understandable, when this kind of activity is occurring and your business happens to be unfortunately located near one of these sites, and you are subject to all of this negative activity, where you have to pick up needles and pick up garbage and put up with all sorts of what I will describe quite euphemistically as anti-social behaviour. It’s no wonder that people are avoiding going to those businesses. It’s no wonder that people are pulling their children out of those schools. It’s no wonder that people don’t want to drop off their children at those child care centres. As a mother or a father, you don’t want to expose your children to that kind of stuff. As a business owner, you suffer. As a child care operator, you suffer.

Madam Speaker, I’d like to remind all members of this House that all of the information I presented today is not conjecture; it comes straight out of the Community Engagement Report. This is the Community Engagement Report which is the companion document to the South Riverdale Community Health Centre Consumption and Treatment Service Review. It was prepared by Unity Health Toronto. Those are the facts. There’s no denying that.

I’m glad we’ve introduced this legislation today. I look forward to further debate and to passing this legislation, because every school in Ontario and every child care centre needs to be protected from this kind of activity. That’s why we need a 200-metre protection zone around every school and every child care centre in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Before we move on to questions, I’d like to recognize one of the members in the Speaker’s gallery: Cheri DiNovo, member

for the riding of Parkdale–High Park in the 38th through 41st Parliaments.

Welcome.

*Applause.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** While my colleague from Essex did refer to some things in the report, there was an awful lot that he chose to totally disregard from the report that he was quoting from.

In fact, that report, which the government commissioned and chooses to ignore, explicitly states that we need to be expanding consumption and treatment services; that there needs to be community engagement; that there is a role for the province to play—whether we are talking about needle boxes for safe disposal of needles. I have talked about the fact that you are potentially going to increase the number of people in parks and playgrounds, on the streets—the increase in HIV and hepatitis spread.

So I’m going to ask the member opposite: Why is it that you wilfully choose to ignore the advice of your own expert panel who are telling you that when you engage in health care professionals and law enforcement—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Response?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** In fact, needle boxes are located not only inside the drug injection site, but also immediately at the entranceways and exit ways of the drug injection site. That’s where the needles are supposed to go. So you’re not supposed to find needles on the sidewalk. You’re not supposed to find needles in your child’s playground. That’s the theory. But it’s just not working. The drug injection sites have needle disposal boxes, and they’re not being used. Rather, the opposite is happening: The incidents of needles appearing in playgrounds, close to these drug injection sites, is actually intensifying. It’s happening more and more and more. That’s why we need the 200-metre protection zone.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the honourable member from Essex.

For a long time, advocates have been saying that there have been no deaths linked to supervised consumption-of-addictive-substance sites. How do you respond to that assertion?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I think all 124 of us can take it as obvious fact that cocaine use leads to death, that heroin addiction leads to death, that hard drug use leads to death. Anyone who suggests otherwise is not dealing with the facts.

I used to appear before a judge in the provincial courts who was a very excellent judge. When she was dealing with drug traffickers, she would have an excellent line that she would use. She would say, “When you are dealing with drugs, you are dealing with death. Those who deal drugs deal death. That is the result. Hard drugs lead to death.”

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to ask the member for Essex a question by way of a metaphor. I want the member to imagine that he can see people flailing about in the water and there are weights around their ankles and they're struggling to stay afloat. I feel as if schedule 4 of this bill is asking those people to stop drowning or to drown in a more polite and less-recognizable way.

I want to invite the member to consider that instead of thinking about the consumption and treatment services we have as being flawed and problematic—how can this government, this province, work with them to be better? How could we pair the HART hub opportunities the member talks about with what we have, so people could get treatment, housing and employment and renew their lives, so we're not telling people who are drowning, "Could you please drown with more dignity?"—because that's not the Ontario I want to live in. I want to live in an Ontario that gives everybody an opportunity to succeed, particularly people who are struggling.

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**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** To carry on with the honourable member's metaphor: If somebody were drowning, I would not throw a child in with them. I would not throw a student in with them. I would not throw somebody else in with them.

That is why the drug injection centres do not belong near our schools and they do not belong near our daycare centres. That is why we need a 200-metre protection zone around every school and every daycare centre. None of this should come anywhere close to the children of this province, or to our schools, or to our child care centres.

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

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** I want to thank my colleague for his excellent presentation this morning, which was based on factual community input and a cogent argument about a safety zone around our schools and daycare centres.

I also want to commend him on his comment that it is a common theme in this House that we want to help those who are suffering from addictions.

I'm wondering if my colleague could please tell this House what this government is doing to provide supports and programs for those who are suffering from addictions, to help them through.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I thank the honourable member for this question.

Of course, this government has introduced the concept of the HART hub. HART stands for homelessness and addiction recovery treatment—a hub where a person can go if they are seeking a path to recovery. These HART hubs will not give you needles. These HART hubs will not give you hard drugs. We will not be dispensing those at a HART hub. A HART hub is a place where you can go if you want to get back on the path to recovery. There are great, great people in this province who will help you do that. They're talented, they're experienced, they're trained, and they're professionals. We're going to invest

\$378 million in these projects, and I hope that people will take advantage of them and use them.

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

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** To the member for Essex: Then explain to me why you closed SafePoint. Why did you close SafePoint? They weren't giving out drugs to people. They were letting them use inside, where it was safe, where they could have clean paraphernalia to use, where they weren't spreading HIV and hepatitis and other diseases. The needles were not being discarded anywhere except for on the site. We had not a single—not a single increase in crime. In fact, it decreased. It is nowhere near a school or daycare, and yet your government still closed that site.

The experts will tell you—you are entitled to your own opinion; you are not entitled to your own facts. Data shows that when you do not provide this type of health care service, more people will use in community. They will use in parks. They will use in our streets. They will die. They will have more interactions with police, more interactions with firefighters, more interactions with paramedics, which is an increasing cost to community.

So explain to me why you keep going back to this false narrative that these—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member for Essex for a response.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Madam Speaker, I know that the member from Windsor West dearly, dearly wants to believe that these sites are working, but I just spent 20 minutes quoting from a report which continuously reported on the experience of the community members who flatly contradict everything that the member from Windsor West says. These sites attract drug trafficking. These sites attract crime. These sites attract violent behaviour. It is all set out very, very clearly in the Community Engagement Report, which I have read very carefully and shared with the members of this House, and have been very, very fair in making sure that everything set out in the report was accurately quoted—which, I might add, several times members of the NDP have not accurately quoted—by members of the government side.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We have time for one quick question and answer.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the honourable member from Essex.

Can you explain a little bit more how the HART hub model, which focuses on addressing addiction, will help to cure and prevent addiction and help people on the way back to recovery?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I thank the member from Sarnia-Lambton for that question.

I understand that his community might be interested in submitting an application for one of the HART hubs. I would suggest that that's a good thing to do.

The HART hub model is set up in what we like to call a wheel-and-spoke model, where somebody can go to the centre, and if the service is not immediately available there at the centre—it should be immediately available, but if it



is not immediately available there at the centre, then it will be made immediately available at one of the partners which have partnered with the particular centre in question.

HART, again, stands for homeless and recovery treatment. If you are suffering from an addiction and that has caused you to become homeless, you might go to the centre and they might connect you with somebody who can give you temporary shelter, for example.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We're now moving on to members' statements.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### BENJI COVANT

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Last August 6, Thornhill experienced an unimaginable tragedy with the loss of a bright, young life. Seventeen-year-old Benji Covant tragically passed away from anaphylactic shock while at camp. This unexpected loss has left a deep void in the hearts of not just his family, but throughout our entire community.

Benji was known for his radiant smile and his genuine kindness, qualities that touched everyone around him. His warmth and generosity made a lasting impact on all who had the privilege of knowing Benji, and his joyful spirit will be deeply missed.

To Benji's parents, Lisa and Neal, siblings Brooke and Brayden, and the entire family: My heart is with you.

Lisa and Neal are here today in the gallery.

The Covant family has shown incredible strength in turning their grief into a powerful force for good. They've created "Benji's Impact," a project dedicated to raising awareness about food allergies.

This tragedy serves as a reminder of the fragility of life and the profound impact of food allergies. We have to continue to raise awareness, educate, and be prepared to respond to these allergic reactions.

And we remember Benji. Let his honour, his memory be the embodiment of the compassion and love he shared with everyone around him, and may his legacy inspire us to spread kindness and support one another in any way we can.

### TRUCKING INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Last week was constituency week, and I went to tour a local trucking company. Wayne Lafrance Logging has about 40 employees, and he has another 60 brokers working for him. We spent a lot of time talking about trucking. One of his biggest issues is that he can't get drivers because insurance costs are so high. For a new driver, it's \$60,000 or \$70,000. It's ridiculous.

What really struck me was, on my way home, MTO was doing another blitz of commercial cross-country truck traffic. Thank you, MTO, for doing this, but the trucks were pulled over—I went back a little while later—and

there was Kal Tire repairing the tires. What is wrong when the local trucking company that is doing everything right, runs really good equipment and can't get insurance for drivers—yet on Highway 11, commercial truck traffic goes by. The last time that we saw documentation from the blitz, of 72 trucks pulled over, 36 didn't pass inspection—36. What is wrong? It's the Ontario government that is letting this happen. I thank the MTO people who are out doing the blitzes. But what is wrong with our trucking industry that is regulated by the Ontario government? Who is letting this happen?

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mr. John Yakubski:** I participated in my 22nd Remembrance Day last Monday, and each and every one of them would count among the most moving experiences of my time as an MPP. Remembrance Week, of course, falls under that category as well. All the similarities, the reverence and the respect for those who have fallen and those who returned, is still front and centre in all of its fullness. The ceremonies and those in attendance have certainly changed over the years.

### 1020

Focusing on two of those events—the veterans' dinner in Petawawa, which I have attended many of those years, has a crowd that is vastly different from my first such experience in November 2003. While some of the veterans I've been honoured to join on those special evenings are still attending, many have joined their comrades in the next life.

The Remembrance Day service in Pembroke shares the same characteristic of fewer veterans able to attend and participate in the service. What has not changed is the support of the community. It continues to be a gratifying and emotional experience to see thousands of citizens, both military and civilian, lining the area around the cenotaph and, indeed, overflowing onto the adjacent streets. They are there to pay their respects and honour those who have served and continue to serve.

For my wife, Vicky, and I, the privilege and the honour of meeting and getting to know so many of these veterans will be one of the most lasting and impactful memories that we have. We think of them, not just on Remembrance Day, but every day.

Lest we forget.

## SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** The education ministry knows full well that the school transportation formula does not work for students in northwestern Ontario. I have letters from parents, afraid for their children, who must now walk in the dark along highways, cross major intersections and, once the snow flies, stumble along ice-covered streets without sidewalks, at risk of frostbite and easily hit by cars when the snow is piled high. And as the ministry was warned, 38% of students no longer eligible for busing are missing school.

Why is this happening? The Conservative government has significantly cut funding for school transportation. And yet, they claim to have increased funding—a claim that can only be made by using creative accounting, by ignoring inflation, by not budgeting for vans needed to bring special-needs students to school, and by basing costs on rates from 2018. Boards have \$1,500 less per student because of cuts to education. The costs to parents and the risks to students are enormous, but this government is all about manufacturing a crisis in education to create demand for private schools.

A responsible government would remove barriers and prioritize funding our public schools so that every child can travel safely to school, have the supports they need, and receive the world-class education they deserve.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's an honour to rise in the Legislature and share some exciting news from Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the government of Ontario, under the leadership of the Premier and the Minister of Health, has been taking bold action to ensure that Ontario has a strong physician workforce today and for many years to come.

One such action taken by our government was to increase the number of residency positions available in Ontario for physicians completing their medical training. This important initiative is set to have a profound impact on Sarnia-Lambton, thanks to the historic increase in residency positions made available by our government and the strategic partnership between Bluewater Health and Western University's Schulich school of medicine.

Beginning in September 2025, Bluewater Health will host five new medical residency positions annually, for physician training at the Sarnia and Petrolia hospital campuses. Through the immersive residency program, these new doctors will gain in-depth experience in the many departments of the hospital, build meaningful relationships with staff and the community, and gain a better understanding of all the benefits of setting down roots in Lambton county.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Bluewater Health CEO Paula Reaume-Zimmer; the hospital's chief of staff, Dr. Michel Haddad; and the entire team at Bluewater Health for pulling together this important program for the hospital and our community.

I look forward to sharing more great news from Sarnia-Lambton with you again soon.

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** November 25 is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In Sudbury, many community organizations work to support women and children who have experienced violence. Organizations like the Sudbury Women's Centre, Centre Victoria pour femmes, YWCA Geneva House,

Voices for Women, victim services, and Réseau Access Network all provide essential services like counselling, shelter, legal advocacy and community outreach. These organizations are part of the solution. They deserve our support.

On November 26, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence will start. It is a global campaign that calls for an end to violence against women. This period, which runs until December 10, Human Rights Day, brings us together to raise awareness, advocate for systemic change, and show support for survivors.

The Wrapped in Courage campaign also starts on November 26. The YWCA will launch their Threads of Action purple scarf campaign. Each purple scarf represents our shared commitment to fighting violence and supporting survivors.

On December 6, we will mark the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women with a candlelight vigil to honour the victims of gender-based violence, to remember those we've lost, and to commit to ending violence. This commitment requires action.

We have a duty, as legislators, to declare intimate partner violence an epidemic. Let's get the bill out of committee and take action to protect every woman.

### ST. CLAIR SAINTS FOOTBALL TEAM

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** November 9 was truly a proud day for Windsor-Essex. For the first time in 25 years, the St. Clair Saints men's football team delivered an incredible win at the Canadian Junior Football League national championships. I was privileged to join over 2,500 fans at Acumen Stadium as St. Clair hosted the 115th edition of the Canadian Bowl. It was the first Canadian Bowl win for Windsor since 1999, when the team was known as the AKO Fratmen. The team has now won the Canadian Bowl four times out of their eight appearances dating back to 1952.

This game was looking dicey. The Saints went into halftime down 15-6 to the visiting Okanagan Sun. But after allowing one more touchdown by the Sun in the second half, they exploded in the third quarter, scoring 28 unanswered points to beat the Sun 37-22, to secure the Canadian Bowl title.

I want to thank the CJFL for having me for the ceremonial coin flip for this incredible night.

Finally, a special congratulations to the general manager of the team, Mike Morencie. He was named a CJFL Life Member for his hard work and dedication to the championships.

To everyone who's a Saint and a wannabe Saint, thank you for making our community proud.

Let's let our call be heard across the country: Go, Saints, go!

### TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** It being 10:29 a.m., as per the requirements of the Trans Day of Remembrance

Act, 2017, the assembly shall now pause and observe one minute of silence in honour of trans people who have died as a result of anti-trans violence.

I'm going to now ask the members to rise and observe the moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Members may take their seats.

1030

We will now continue with members' statements.

### ETHEL CÔTÉ

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Aujourd'hui j'aimerais rendre hommage à un des piliers de la communauté francophone ici en Ontario, qui s'est malheureusement éteinte le mois dernier.

Ethel Côté était une femme remarquable qui a travaillé chaque jour pour bâtir une communauté francophone plus forte et résiliente ici en Ontario. Ayant reçu plusieurs honneurs, y compris l'Ordre du Canada, l'Ordre de l'Ontario, l'Ordre de la Pléiade, le prix Saphir et l'ordre des caisses populaires, Ethel a servi sa communauté avec passion, vision et compassion.

Ethel portait beaucoup de causes importantes, et c'est elle qui m'a contacté pour soutenir le Centre espoir Sophie, la seule halte-accueil francophone pour les femmes à Ottawa. Sa fille Marissa a d'ailleurs rendu un vibrant hommage à sa mère lors de la levée de fonds du Centre espoir Sophie vendredi dernier, auquel j'ai assisté. Le centre est une des centaines d'organisations à but non-lucratif qu'Ethel a soutenu par son travail.

Ethel croyait profondément dans le pouvoir de l'économie sociale où notre effort collectif mène à des réalisations importantes pour la communauté. Sa vie remarquable est, pour moi et pour tant d'autres, une inspiration, et je sais que son héritage durera longtemps.

Son service commémoratif aura lieu samedi prochain, le 30 novembre, à La Nouvelle Scène Gilles Desjardins dans ma circonscription.

### GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

**Mr. John Jordan:** I had the privilege of attending many events over the summer and constituency week in Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston, announcing funding from this government to some of our dedicated organizations.

My thanks to Minister Flack in agriculture, food and agribusiness, as this government invested in local farms like Indian Creek Orchard Gardens in Pakenham and Clarence Fulton Pure Maple Products in Almonte.

The town of Carleton Place received just under \$35 million through the Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund from Minister Surma and the Ministry of Infrastructure. The funding will support the expansion of the town's waste water treatment plant, while enabling the addition of 1,605 housing units.

Many organizations and communities in the riding received funding through Minister Raymond Cho in

seniors and accessibility. The Seniors Community Grant and new and expanded seniors active living centres are helping seniors and older adults stay fit and socially connected.

And through Minister Stan Cho in sport, tourism and gaming, some of our youth centres received funding for their after-school programming, including YAK Youth Services in Perth and Lanark Highlands Youth Centre. The ministry also provided funding through the seed grant stream to organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County and ConnectWell Community Health.

These are just a few of the amazing organizations that received funding through this government, as we continue to invest in the programs and services needed for our growing communities.

### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I rise today to reflect on this past Remembrance Day and to recognize what it requires us to remember: that democracy and freedom are not free. We often speak of freedom as a right, but it is also a responsibility. Our society is founded on the courage and very real sacrifices of those who came before us—generations of Canadians who went to war and sometimes made the ultimate sacrifice, to protect our way of life, freedom and democracy.

As Jordan Peterson recently noted, the West is built on the idea of voluntary self-sacrifice, not the idea of power or the pursuit of hedonistic ends. This vision finds virtue in the idea of giving something for something of greater value. Our society is built on courage and personal sacrifice in the service of our children, our family, our community, our country and our future. Notably, this vision respects the history of the sacrifices made by our forebears to build a better world and is antithetical to the post-modern idea that power rules.

On Remembrance Day, we recognize that courage and voluntary sacrifice in the service of what is highest secured for the West our cherished values and the democratic system that is built upon it.

But we must acknowledge that this struggle is not over. As Rory Gilfillan wrote recently in the *Financial Post*, "The despots haven't stopped. Evil and tyranny did not die in a bunker in Berlin and those who would take the freedom of others did not disappear."

Even as we remember those who sacrificed for us, we must in turn be courageous, prepared to make personal sacrifices, and ever-vigilant to propagate and protect this rich legacy for future generations.

### TRANS DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I understand the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington has a point of order that he wishes to raise, and I recognize him.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in recognition of Transgender Day of Remem-

brance, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Bresee is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in recognition of Transgender Day of Remembrance, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group, and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government. Agreed? Agreed.

I recognize the member for Toronto Centre.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Good morning to all the good colleagues and all those in the gallery today. Today is the Trans Day of Remembrance. On the Trans Day of Remembrance, we gather to mourn the trans, non-binary and two-spirit community members we have lost, and we celebrate those who are still with us.

As a member of the trans and non-binary community, a person who uses "they" and "them" pronouns, and the very first MPP to do so, I am honoured to bring our Trans Day of Remembrance remarks on behalf of the official opposition Ontario NDP.

It is vital to honour the trans people—friends, neighbours, co-workers, family members—and to remember their impact on all our lives and our communities. It's important to listen to trans people, especially trans people of colour, when they say, "Give us our roses while we're still here."

Today is the 25th anniversary of the first-ever Trans Day of Remembrance, organized in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith. The very first Trans Day of Remembrance was held in Boston, in the form of a vigil to honour the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998.

I'm grateful to be surrounded by so many community members, including Rev. Cheri DiNovo, whose private member's bill is the reason why we're here to recognize Trans Day of Remembrance and have our moment of silence today.

Being trans is beautiful, and gender expansiveness has existed across time and culture. There is nothing that politicians can say or do, or fail to do, that can erase trans people, no matter how hard they try.

Being trans has always been an experience that has been fraught, but after several seasons of progress, we are now seeing right-wing backlash that is targeting trans people. It's scary right now—especially how trans people are being used in America, in the American election, by Donald Trump, who stoked hatred and fear in order to secure a win.

In Ontario, we can do better. Horrifying legislation is being passed in Alberta and New Brunswick which will result in trans children taking their own lives. We know this because it has happened in other places, under similar laws. Many people are making safety plans, taking legal and other steps to protect themselves and their loved ones in the face of these new laws and threats. In Ontario, we can do better.

But we are not immune to transphobia here in our province. This very government voted against my bill to improve and expand access to gender-affirming health care in Ontario. I am worried that people in Ontario are being misled and fed false narratives about what it means to be trans and what gender-affirming care is.

The truth is, most people who receive gender-affirming care are not trans people; they are cisgender people, those whose gender assigned at birth matches up with their internal understanding of their gender.

Men and boys who are diagnosed with gynecomastia or abnormal, but not harmful, breast tissue and growth are eligible for surgery to flatten their chests.

Women who undergo mastectomies, lumpectomies and other breast surgeries as a form of cancer treatment are immediately eligible for breast reconstruction surgery. It's discussed as a part of the cancer treatment plan.

**1040**

Most people who receive hormone replacement therapy or puberty blockers are not transgender people but cisgender people who need hormone support.

These are types of gender-affirming health care, and there is no need for them to sign petitions, to table legislation, to fight for funding, or even to debate it at Queen's Park. Those medical interventions and others offered by OHIP are not offered because they are necessary for the physical survival of the patient. They are offered because they affirm the gender of the patient and alleviate very present mental distress that they experience, which can be life-threatening. These procedures are funded, and they should continue to be, just like the gender-affirming care and surgeries that many trans folks require.

Most people in this room remember when radical conservatives were trying to tell us that gay marriage was something immoral; that our society would crumble if you allowed gays and lesbians to marry, if you allowed us to adopt children, allowed us to have children, allowed us to be legitimate family members. But we know that all that has come to pass. Society has not crumbled. We are flourishing as a province because of that equality.

This is the same thing that we want for trans communities. We will continue to strive for it.

Today, we will be raising the transgender flag at 2:30, sponsored by the Friends of Ruby. This is a 33-bed shelter in my community, one of the first ones ever set up in Ontario. I welcome all members of this House to join us, followed by a 3 p.m. reception. As we like to say in our community, all are welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Next, I'll recognize the member for Ottawa South.

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's my honour to speak today on the Transgender Day of Remembrance. Today, we remember the trans and gender-diverse lives which have been lost and the violence that has been done to people over the years and right now—heartbreaking things that are just too common, still. We have to continue to raise awareness. Today is really important—that we're doing this in here.

There are not many opportunities that all of us have to do something that lasts, that goes beyond us, that stays here.

I know that Cheri DiNovo is here. I want to recognize her and all the people she has worked with to make today possible, and all the other work that she has done. It's just incredible. I'm glad and proud to have called her a colleague, and I consider her a friend.

I spent some time in North Carolina in October. I said the other day that I watch a lot of football. I watch a lot of TV. I saw a lot of ads there too. The ads were pretty hateful, were pretty cruel. Even in talking to people in the supermarket, I'd hear ads repeated verbatim. I'm not going to repeat them here—discouraging and disheartening, to say the least. If there's a message that I want to leave you with today, while we remember, while we recognize, while we acknowledge, while we commemorate, it's that we're not immune. We sometimes like to think of ourselves as totally different, but we can look around Canada and see where it has happened in other places not too far away. The thing that we have to remember today, next year and every day: We are not immune. We have to stand up for people, provide them a voice, protect them, keep them safe and get them the health care that they need, because we are not immune.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener Centre.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Today, I rise on Transgender Day of Remembrance with a heavy heart but also with a commitment to stand up and remember two-spirit, transgender and gender-diverse individuals across our province and country who have tragically lost their lives to hate. They lost their lives for no other reason than trying to be who they are and living their lives as their authentic selves. These are our friends, our family members, our neighbours, our colleagues, and each life lost leaves a wake of grief.

According to the 2SLGBTQI+ Action Plan Survey, 39% of 2SLGBTQIA+ Canadians experienced violence due to discrimination in the past five years. Over half of two-spirited individuals and trans women report experiences of physical and sexual violence. And 91% of these incidents go unreported for fear of mistrust and inaction.

We must all collectively push back against all forms of hate and rhetoric online and in our communities.

I want to say thank you to the leaders of my community and across this province who work tirelessly to support the lives of our 2SLGBTQIA+ community members.

And to the transgender community: We see you, we grieve with you, and we are committed to standing with you, celebrating you, not just today, but every day.

Speaker, it is our responsibility to ensure that our words and actions in this chamber and online never perpetuate hate but instead work to dismantle the systemic inequities that put transgender lives at risk, because trans rights are human rights.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I'm pleased to rise today, on behalf of the government, to acknowledge Transgender Day of

Remembrance, a day when we honour the memory of transgender individuals who have lost their lives due to acts of anti-transgender violence. Today, we remember those who have suffered simply for being who they are, and we reaffirm our commitment to justice, equity and respect for all.

Ontario is home to a vibrant and diverse transgender community, including transgender women and men, non-binary, gender-queer and two-spirit individuals who come from all walks of life and enrich our province in countless ways. Their courage, their resilience and their contributions make Ontario a better place for all of us.

Incidents of hate and discrimination against the transgender community have no place in Ontario and do not represent the values that we hold dear.

As you all know, I'm a very proud father. One of my children is a transgender adult, and through her, I have come to understand some of the concerns and the challenges and the threats faced by her and others in the transgender community. Their struggles are not abstract to me; they're the lived experience of my own family. And although I was an ally for decades before, this personal connection fuels my dedication to advocating for equity and inclusion within this assembly and across all of government.

As this is a day of remembrance, I feel it right to highlight some of the people we need to be remembering. Julie Berman was a well-known transgender rights advocate based in Toronto for 30 years, and in 2019, she was tragically murdered. Sumaya Dalmar was a Somali Canadian transgender woman and activist who faced significant discrimination and adversity due to her gender identity and her race. In 2015, Sumaya was found dead. These are two tragic examples of too many more Ontarians being discriminated against, facing barriers and fearing for their safety.

Maya Angelou once said, "We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter what their colour."

I say to you, Speaker, that to reach true equality we need to acknowledge and address the barriers faced by the transgender community.

**1050**

Over the past century, we've witnessed tremendous progress in human rights. And yet, it's important to recognize how recent many of those protections for transgender individuals are. It was only in 2012 that Ontario passed Toby's Act, amending the Human Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression as protected grounds. These advancements are significant milestones, but they also highlight that the journey toward full inclusion is still under way. Policies protecting transgender rights are only a decade old. I'm reminding us that these rights are both precious and, unfortunately, still contested by some.

Along with policy changes, our government has made considerable investments to keep the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities safe, recognizing that action must accompany words.

We have allocated \$25.5 million over two years, through the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant, to enhance safety and security measures for community events and spaces. This funding is crucial in ensuring that spaces celebrating diversity are protected from those who seek to undermine them.

Through the Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Grant, we've funded projects around intersectionality and online hate.

And under the leadership of the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, we've invested over a million dollars last year alone to support Pride organizations across this province.

Speaker, education plays a pivotal role in fostering understanding and acceptance. Our schools must be places where diversity is celebrated and where all students feel safe and included. Our government updated the curriculum to promote the inclusion of diverse family structures, relationships and identities, and enacted the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

But let us be clear: Funding and policies are necessary, but they are not sufficient on their own. We must work to shift societal attitudes. This means challenging transphobia wherever and whenever it appears, whether in overt acts of discrimination or in subtle, everyday interactions.

Speaker, incidents of hate and discrimination against the transgender community have no place in Ontario and do not represent the values we hold. Let us commit today to building a province where equity paves the way for true equality—a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive regardless of their gender expression or identity.

On this Transgender Day of Remembrance, we honour those we've lost by dedicating ourselves to the ongoing work of creating a more inclusive and equitable society. Let their memories inspire us to action, to compassion and to unwavering support for the rights of all. Together, let us build a future where every person is celebrated for who they are.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I want to thank the members for their eloquent tributes, as we have come together this morning in recognition of Trans Day of Remembrance.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Today the Minister of Sport and I had a great opportunity to play bocce ball with some incredible athletes who are here with Special Olympics Ontario. I would like to say hello to Stephen Graham, who is from my riding of Simcoe North.

I would also like to introduce representatives from the South Simcoe Police Association of Ontario: President Jon Day, Trish Milligan, and Jon Ellis.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** It is always a good day when the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care is in the House.

The halls here have been filled with young parents and babies, and I want to welcome them here today, along with public policy coordinator Carolyn Ferns and Davenport resident Brynne Sinclair-Waters.

I also want to recognize and say it is always a pleasure to see and welcome my friend and, of course, former MPP Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, here for Trans Day of Remembrance.

Thank you for all you do and continue to do, and welcome to your House.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** Speaker, I have a number of introductions today, starting with Jason and Karen Fitzpatrick from KJS Print Service in Guelph, who are here in support of the Rotary Club of Guelph.

I'd also like to welcome all members of the Police Association of Ontario, especially Guelph Police Association members Phil Perrins, Matt Jotham and Jaime Groff.

Finally, I'll like to welcome my friend Nicki Ward and other trans advocates who are here at Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Later today, a couple of Brantford–Brant paramedics will receive the Governor General's Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal. I'd like to welcome, later today, Russell King, for 30 years; Neil Vanderpost, for 30 years; Michael Polgar, for 30 years; Vito Tuori, for 30 years; and David Dungey, for 40 years.

On behalf of the Brantford Police Association, here in the gallery today is Dave Minutillo.

Thank you for your service to our community and the people of Brantford–Brant and for keeping us safe. Welcome to your House.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to welcome the Special Olympians who have joined us at Queen's Park today, with a special welcome to Hamilton students, with their teacher and coach, Linda Siena. The students are Lucas D'Onofrio, Jack Wiseman, Sebastian Carrara, James Wiseman, Klara Pasalic, and Avery Hedley.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Congratulations on all your gold medals. We're super proud of you. Keep up the great work.

I have one more, Speaker. Joining the Police Association of Ontario here are the Hamilton Police Association folks—so a special welcome, on behalf of my colleague from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas and myself, to Christina Eisno, Petros Tremis, and our president, Jaimi Bannon.

I also see that our chief of police, Frank Bergen, is here with Special Olympics Ontario.

Welcome, everyone, to Queen's Park. Have a great day.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Good morning, everyone. It's a beautiful day.

I'd like to welcome some energetic east-enders: magnificent Melissa Hudson and notable Nicki Ward, founders of Trans Women's Association. Welcome to your House.

I encourage everyone to go to the flag-raising today.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I'd like to wish a warm welcome to three members of the Windsor Police Association: Kent

Rice, Rick Derus, and Shannon Tennant. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I would like to welcome Mark Chrabalowski, vice-president of external affairs for Brock University Students' Union, and Carleigh Charlton, vice-president of university affairs for Brock University.

I want to thank all of the BUSU members for keeping the spirit of Brock University alive and well across our province.

I'd also like to welcome our Police Association of Ontario members here from the Niagara region, and members of the Niagara regional police. Thank you. Welcome to your House. I'm looking forward to the meetings later on this afternoon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Assuming the House agrees, I'd like to continue with introduction of visitors.

**Mrs. Karen McCrimmon:** I, too, would like to welcome all the members of the Ottawa Police Association and their president, Matthew Cox. I look forward to our meeting this afternoon.

I'd also like to welcome Ranya Abdel Rahman, the aunt of my legislative assistant.

Welcome to your House.

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** As the former chair of the Belleville Police Service Board I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome everyone from the Police Association of Ontario, as my colleagues have as well.

A special welcome to my grandfather Bob and my uncle Rob, who are here today.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to welcome Ontario Student Voices, and in particular, the board members I had the privilege of meeting with this morning: Ajané Adams, Kara Mei Herrera, Vivian Evie, Rofiyat Olawoyin. Thank you very much for your attendance.

I want to also extend my personal thank you and welcome to Reverend Cheri DiNovo. Of course, many of you know her as a friend, but also just a reminder that she passed more 2SLGBT-friendly bills on this side of the House than any other MPP.

And, of course, I want to also extend my welcome to Melissa Hudson and Ward 13 Toronto Centre resident Nicki Ward.

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**Mr. John Fraser:** November is pulmonary hypertension month, and today, the folks from the Pulmonary Hypertension Association are with us. Bear with me; there's a lot: Brooke Paulin, Robin Latour, Jane Macleod, Duncan Macleod, Heather Rossi, Kirsty McGeown, Kathy Ilano, Cindy Waters, Aura Dholakia, Joel Dholakia, Robyn Kalda, Robin Martin and Stephanie Levee. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** I'd like to very warmly welcome Churchill Meadows Public School. They are in the House today. Welcome to your House. I would like to thank the principals and the teachers for all the jobs they are doing in Mississauga—Erin Mills.

And I would like to take the opportunity to wish our Premier, Doug Ford, a happy birthday. Today is his birthday.

**MPP Lisa Gretzky:** It is my privilege to welcome members of the Windsor Police Association: Shannon Tennant, Rick Derus, Pete Mombourquette and Kent Rice. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for all you do in our community.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I'd like to welcome Darcy Pettie and Cam Gough of the Kingston City Police Association, and Dr. Rajeev Suryavanshi of Mississauga. Welcome to your House.

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** I appreciate the opportunity to rise here today to thank Special Olympics Ontario for their time this morning, specifically CEO Cody Jansma and all of the delegation.

I'd also like to thank all the athletes, because what they have done for me and everyone else this morning is light a fire under our butts to let us know what sport is all about. Thank you to the athletes and thank you to the parents.

And, Chief, great job in Hamilton supporting the Special Olympics.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I just want to welcome police officers from the Waterloo Regional Police Service. I'm going to be meeting with them later today. Welcome to Tim Reparon, Lorena Mills, Mark Egers and Mike Nagy. Welcome to your House.

**Ms. Goldie Ghamari:** I wanted to welcome all members of the Police Association of Ontario, and especially, from the Ottawa Police Association, President Matthew Cox, and Ottawa Police Association directors Staff Sergeant Barmak Anvari and Sergeant Chris Lavergne. Thank you for everything you do to keep Ottawa safe, and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Donna Skelly:** On behalf of the government of Ontario, I would like to welcome the men and women that we support each and every day, especially those who reside in my riding of Flamborough—Glanbrook and across Hamilton: Chief Frank Bergen; and from Hamilton Police Service, Jaimi Bannon, Christina Eisnor and Petros Tremis. Thank you on behalf of the government and on behalf of the Minister of Sport.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have three groups that I want to thank this morning and introduce. I'll start with the Sudbury Police Association; I see their president looking at me right now, Matt Hall, with Travis Warnock, Jacques Roberge and Steve Train.

The second group is the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. We had the pleasure to meet with Brodie Norwich from Wilfrid Laurier, Staysha Kasunich from Laurentian University, Onella Kulatunga from Waterloo and Carleigh Charlton from Brock University, as well as Rai Muhammad Ali from Ontario Tech.

The third group, the Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada—I had a very moving meeting with them this morning: Joan and her daughter Brooke Paulin, as well as Aura and Joel Dholakia, who are all here today. Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I'll ask the members to make their introductions as brief as possible.

The Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy:** I would like to give a shout-out to page Jonah Martin-Nguyen from my riding of Pickering-Uxbridge, who is the page captain today. He's hiding right to your left there. Jonah, way to go.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I have three groups I'd like to introduce. I'd like to welcome Detective Gary Bezaire and Kinga Wisniewska from the London Police Association who are here for the Police Association of Ontario lobby day.

I'd also like to welcome students from Fanshawe College for Ontario Student Voices: Siddarth Singh, Tal Sarig, Sara Ortiz, Chris Fullerton and Hish Clifford.

Thirdly, I'd like to welcome religious leaders from the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, who are meeting from 12:30 till 1:30 in rooms 228 to 230. Thank you for the work that you do.

**Hon. Graydon Smith:** I'd just like to welcome Alex Pritchard, a constituent and child advocate from Parry Sound and the great riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** From my statement earlier on, I would like to thank the parents of Benji, Neal Covant and Lisa Covant, and Jennifer Gerdt from Food Allergy Canada.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I would like to welcome from Niagara Falls virtually a very special little boy. Happy sixth birthday to my superhero, Greyson Uhryn. Grammie and PPJ love you. Happy Birthday.

**Mr. John Jordan:** I want to introduce Michael Touw, the CAO for the beautiful town of Perth, and his family: Janelle, Benjamin and Lincoln. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Also, it's my pleasure to welcome the athletes from Bishop Tonnos, a school in my riding of Ancaster. I want to thank you so much for sharing your bocce skills and to your coach and teacher, Linda Siena. Thank you for bringing these amazing athletes to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'd like to welcome Donna and Humphrey Stephen from Whitby as they witness their daughter, Donnique, as our page captain today.

**Hon. Nolan Quinn:** I'd like to welcome the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance to Queen's Park today, who are here for their student advocacy week. I see many of the students in the gallery—too many to name, Speaker. I encourage all members to meet with them, and I look forward to our meetings this afternoon.

As well, Speaker, I'd like to welcome Matt Dupuis from the Cornwall Police Association here today.

**Hon. George Pirie:** Good morning, Speaker. I'd like to welcome page Elissa Wakeford, who attends the École secondaire publique Renaissance in Timmins. Welcome, Elissa.

**Ms. Stephanie Bowman:** I'd like to welcome all of the faith leaders from ISARC who here today to talk about the homelessness crisis in our province.

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I'd like to welcome Mississauga-Streetsville residents: Joan Paulin and Kimberley Brunelle and all of the advocates from the Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Canada to Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** I would like to welcome some employees from Xpertek Construction: David Ryan, Mykola Dron, Leonid Zakharov and Vladyslav Zakharov. This company from Vars in my riding has received a grant of \$498,000 through the Skills Development Fund from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills. They will be using that funding to address the labour shortage in the construction industry. Thank you for your commitment to strengthening Ontario's workforce and economy, and welcome to Queen's Park.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** J'aimerais reconnaître Melinda Chartrand. Elle est une leader dans la communauté francophone, portant de nombreux chapeaux et représentant de nombreuses organisations, dont l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. Bienvenue.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** On the off-chance there's someone here who wasn't yet introduced, I want to welcome them to the Legislature today and thank all the members for their patience as we've introduced our guests this morning.

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## QUESTION PERIOD

### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** In early September, Tony Miele, the chair of the Conservative Party fund, sent cabinet ministers an email with fundraising quotas, requiring them to host a minimum of two to five fundraisers each by the end of the year. Folks might recall Mr. Miele; he solicited donations from greenbelt lobbyists and developers on behalf of the Premier's daughter and son-in-law at a time when the government was considering changes to the greenbelt.

My question to the Premier is, did Mr. Miele or anyone else acting on behalf of the Conservative Party give anyone a reason to believe that a donation would provide access to government decision-makers?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply for the government? The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Everybody knows that Ontario's regulations level the playing field for all of us. All political parties, whether in power or otherwise, follow the same rules. This ensures the fundraising process is fair and is clear. Every donation is recorded. It's publicly available, and voters can scrutinize the money behind political campaigns regardless of party. It's legal, it's transparent and it's accountable.

Political fundraising ensures that all parties, from major to minor, can have a voice at the table during elections and between elections. That is how our system is built.

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



**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Let me be clear: New reporting from Global News today has confirmed that a lobby group, the Ontario Trucking Association, asked members to donate to an upcoming fundraiser that was hosted by the Premier and the Minister of Transportation. This association said these donations would allow the group to raise its concerns about the trucking industry directly with the minister at the fundraiser. In fact, the notice described these donations as “investments” and said, “This is the only way to win this battle.”

Can the Premier explain why this organization believes the only way to get the attention of his government is to fundraise for the Minister of Transportation?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** As I said yesterday, the Premier gives out his phone number, he texts and he returns calls. He’s very accessible. I didn’t hear an answer to my question yesterday about the Leader of the Opposition and her personal phone number.

What I can tell you—I did forget. Sometimes you say something and then you think about it afterwards and you say, “I should have said that. I forgot.” I mentioned Fred Hahn’s 86 individual donations to the opposition, but I didn’t mention the \$45,000 that adds up to.

So if you want to talk about access—the Premier is available regardless of fundraisers, but it is a way for individuals to show support for the great work that we’re doing here in Ontario.

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I will say, Speaker, the Attorney General should know that ministers of the crown are subject to different rules and standards. This isn’t about this specific group, even; the problem is that this government has broadcast that lining their pockets is the only way to get things done. That’s the thing.

Even to pass good legislation requires coughing up thousands of dollars. Tickets to this event are selling for between \$1,000 and \$3,375 per ticket. The goal, according to the association, was to sell at least 50 to 60 tickets to demonstrate their support for the government.

To the Premier: Do members of the public have to be prepared to donate thousands of dollars to be heard by this government?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** It is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition thinks that there’s a difference for fundraising rules between the governing party and the opposition party. It wasn’t that long ago when the Leader of the Opposition—the previous leader, to be fair—was expensing clothing at Holt Renfrew, was buying chi-chi clothes, was buying T-shirts for 200 bucks. Here’s what the NDP said, “Like other political leaders, she is provided with party funds—not public dollars—to purchase ... attire.”

We treat all money like public funds, and that is the difference between these two parties and nothing else.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** They’re really grasping at straws over there.

I want to get into this a bit further. The OTA notice, this association, asked members to let their association know about every donation, so that “we can tally up what our association has raised and present to the minister.”

I’m going to remind the Premier that earlier this week, we learned that the chair of the Conservative Party’s fundraising arm had assigned fundraising quotas to cabinet ministers.

So, Speaker, back to the Premier: Were stakeholders with business before this government, including the OTA, told to provide a tally of donations to the Minister of Transportation in order to be heard?

*Interjections.*

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

The Attorney General.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Mr. Speaker, the NDP are out of gas; that’s all I can say about transportation.

Look, I want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for her “fundraising blitz” this summer—10 weeks of fundraising blitz to raise \$1.1 million. Congratulations on that hard work.

Speaker, on December 10—for those that are interested in supporting the NDP—they’re doing training sessions specifically on how to do fundraising, because that is kind of what political parties do. And so it’s a little bit disingenuous to have the Leader of the Opposition—

*Interjections.*

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

I’m going to ask the Attorney General to withdraw the unparliamentary comment and conclude.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Withdraw.

Sorry, Mr. Speaker, but the words of how they’re trying to portray to the public how politics works and that all parties have to raise money—the leader of the Liberal Party is doing a \$3,300 fundraiser in December, Mr. Speaker. I haven’t heard anything about that.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary question.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Earlier this year, Speaker, we learned that the town of Brighton had hired the Premier’s friend—that’s Amin Massoudi, he of the good-luck ritual massages in Vegas. They hired him to lobby on their behalf.

The town’s council was very frank about this, right? We’ll all recall that. They needed “a lobbyist to work the backroom.” Otherwise, the government wasn’t going to hear their concerns. A town councillor said, “As much as it sometimes burns me that this government sometimes talks to its friends more than other folks, it might as well work for us from time to time.”

Can the Premier explain why so many people believe that the only way to be heard by his government is to make a donation or hire one of his friends as a lobbyist?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Mr. Speaker, I don’t have the numbers at my fingertips, but I do know, when we were in

recess, in our constituency offices, that we were doing hundreds and thousands of meetings with stakeholders, with constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard members of the opposition say, "Oh, that was a great break that we had. That was a very long break that we had." We were busy in our ridings and with stakeholders, doing meetings, Mr. Speaker, and there was no charge to do those. That is, in fact, our job.

Now it's important that the opposition actually create some transparency in how they raise money and how things are done. They say that we're not accessible; the Premier gives out his number to tens of thousands of people. People phone him. They text him. He responds. Things happen, Mr. Speaker.

The moment question period is over, keep the cameras rolling. They'll be coming across the aisle to talk to us, and we'll be talking to them.

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

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Well, yes, Speaker: Ontarians have his number. They sure do.

Fundraising quotas, donor tallies—I want to remind everyone here that the Liberal government was brought down because of their cash-for-access schemes. Conservative cabinet ministers were in the opposition benches then, demanding resignations, but now they're the ones cashing in, Speaker.

Pay for play, cash for access, backroom deals, RCMP criminal investigations—this is the legacy of this Premier and his Conservative government. Don't Ontarians deserve better than this?

*Interjections.*

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

The Attorney General.

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**Hon. Doug Downey:** Mr. Speaker, the moral superiority in that question—this from a leader who couldn't find somebody to run against her because nobody else wanted the job. Beyond that, she's now losing members to the federal party by the droves—three so far. I heard there's a fourth, but we'll see how that goes.

Here's my question, Mr. Speaker, to you: When the Liberals were so bad that we caused the rules to change, their—I can't say that word. The extremely expensive dinners, exclusive—the things that they were doing. Why in the world did the NDP prop them up when they're so morally superior?

*Interjections.*

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

It's getting louder and louder in here. I'm going to start calling members out by name if they are interjecting and they don't have the floor. It's against the standing orders to do so.

*Interjections.*

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

Start the clock.

The next question.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Premier.

Six months ago, the Ontario Science Centre was a world-class institution in a vibrant community. But today, because of this Premier, it's locked up, boarded over and reduced to scraps in a strip mall.

Just hours after the government's announcement in June, with school field trips still inside, the science centre was permanently closed. The government said it was because of new information they had learned, but internal emails obtained by Global News reveal that the government began working on the plan to close the structure and sell its story to the public at least 10 days before the closure announcement was made. The government suddenly stripped a community of its beloved institution, and that community deserves to know the truth.

My question for the Premier: When did the government decide to close the science centre?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply for the government, the government House leader.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, through you to the honourable member: I think the Minister of Infrastructure has been very clear about investigations by the Integrity Commissioner.

I do want to say to the member, her line of questioning is very interesting, given the fact that she's well aware of the engineering report associated with this facility. I want to correct her record: The decision to close the science centre came from the board of directors itself. The report, as we all know, highlighted critical safety concerns—structural issues with the roof of the Ontario Science Centre—deeming the building unfit for its continued operations. There were mitigation measures, but again, Speaker, the report is crystal clear on the challenge. The decision was made by the board.

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

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Again, my question is to the Premier.

The Ministry of Infrastructure, pointing to this engineering report, has repeatedly stated that the closure was necessary due to the risk posed by panels in the roof of the Ontario Science Centre.

On June 11, the ministry had already begun preparing the communications material about the closure, and that was before they got the results of the engineering report that they keep enthusiastically citing.

Internal emails show the Minister of Infrastructure had ongoing correspondence with Infrastructure Ontario about the closure of the science centre. She knew, but she didn't tell anyone.

So my question, back to the Premier: Why did the minister keep their plans to close the Ontario Science Centre a secret from the public?

*Interjections.*

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

Government House leader.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, this government refuses to compromise the safety of Ontarians.

The government made a decision after the board decided to act upon the report. The opposition would be the first ones to howl if this board ignored the recommendations from this report. The government worked with the board, provided mitigation measures—but again, Speaker, the safety of Ontarians is of the utmost importance to this government. The board acted. Again, the opposition would be the first ones to howl and howl and howl that this board ignored the report. The board did not ignore the report, and the government did not ignore the report.

### TAXATION

**Mr. David Smith:** My question is to the Minister of Energy and Electrification.

Families are struggling to get by. The rising cost of living is hitting everyone. Groceries are more expensive. Filling up at the pump drains wallets. As we head into the winter, heating bills are becoming a real worry.

At the centre of all of this pain is the Trudeau and Crombie carbon tax. It makes everything even more expensive. Families shouldn't have to choose between heating and eating.

Ontario needs affordability, not Liberal members who want to tax more.

Speaker, can the minister commit to fighting this harmful tax?

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

He is absolutely right; the carbon tax drives up the cost of everything. Be it groceries, be it home heating, be it fuel—everything is driven up by the carbon tax. The members on the opposite side know that as well.

Our government has taken decisive action to lessen that burden on families. For example, we have reduced the cost of gas by 10 cents a litre, and we are extending that measure beyond, into 2025, to try to help people through this very difficult season. Additionally, our Affordable Energy Act focuses on practical, affordable solutions like expanding non-emitting nuclear energy, which is both cost-effective and reliable.

Speaker, if the Liberals across the way are truly concerned about cost and affordability for families in Ontario, they would talk to their federal cousins and convince them and suggest very strongly that it is time to axe the carbon tax.

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

**Mr. David Smith:** The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax hurts people at the pump. It hurts people's heating bills. It impacts everyone. Families feel it every time they go to the store. The prices of milk, bread, vegetables keep rising because of this tax.

Meanwhile, the Bonnie Crombie Liberals want to increase the carbon tax on everyone. They've had every chance to stand against this tax but refuse to do so.

Our government needs to take action that would provide financial relief to everyone.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please share how we will help make life more affordable for Ontario families?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member is absolutely right—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Yes, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke may reply.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you. I jumped the gun there.

Speaker, the queen of the carbon tax, Bonnie Crombie, loves that carbon tax. But on this side of the House, we are committed to doing everything we can to get the federal government to do the right thing and scrap the carbon tax.

Our government here is putting affordability first. The people on the other side could learn from that lesson. In addition to reducing the fuel tax, we have ended tolls on the 418, the 413; we've added One Fare, which is going to save the average commuter in the GTA \$1,600 per year; and we have scrapped the licence plate renewal fees.

Speaker, we are focused on the cost of living and affordability. It starts with the scrapping of the carbon tax. Let's get rid of it and make it a happy Christmas for the people here in Ontario.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Minister of Education.

Parents in my riding are scrambling after three for-profit child care centres announced they're leaving Ontario's \$10-a-day program. Families are facing double and triple fee increases. They're making agonizing decisions, like whether one parent will quit work to stay home with the kids. This is a direct result of the Conservative government's failure to expand child care spaces to meet increased demand.

Minister, we've warned you for years. How are you going to fix this?

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

Minister of Education.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** When it comes to supporting parents in Ontario, we will take no lessons from the NDP. The NDP called on us to take the first child care deal; that would have been \$10.2 billion over five years—a decision that would have omitted over 30% of Ontario's predominantly female-owned businesses from accessing the program. And yet, they still voted against the program when we secured an even better deal of \$13.2 billion over six years.

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The members on this side of the House know that Ontario is not alone when it comes to the federal government's ideology and funding shortfalls of their signature

child care program. However, under the leadership of Premier Ford, we will continue to invest over \$33 billion for child care in Ontario, three times more than the federal government is providing in their signature program.

I've met with child care providers across the province on this issue, as well as families and my federal counterpart.

What is clear to me is that Ottawa must provide more funding to ensure the sustainability of the program, lift the cap on for-profit providers, and give more flexibility so that providers can cover their costs and create necessary spaces for families.

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

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Speaker, of the 14 Toronto child care centres that have announced they are leaving the \$10-a-day program, all of them are for-profit, and at least half are part of the same corporate chain. It's clear that big box child care can't be counted on to put families first. But the minister keeps asking the federal government to allow unlimited expansion of corporate operators while at the same time adding red tape to make it harder for high-quality, not-for-profit child care to expand.

Why is the minister doubling down on a failed approach instead of actively expanding not-for-profit child care?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

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

The Minister of Education can reply.

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Speaker, I find it very ironic that the member talks about the for-profit organization when she actually came to my ministry asking for more money for that for-profit provider.

Mr. Speaker, we believe Ontario families deserve a larger investment from the federal government, and we have been clear on that since day one. The \$10-a-day child care program is a national program. Ontario is doing all that we can to ensure the success, including announcing increased wages for ECEs last spring.

Unlike the Liberals, we took action to finally make child care affordable, resulting in a 50% reduction in fees for working parents.

Liberal ideology and poor planning have put this program at risk all across the country, and Ontario families and child care providers deserve better.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll remind members that if you repeatedly ignore the Speaker's request to come to order, you'll be warned, and then the next consequence is that you'll be named.

The next question?

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** My question is for the Minister of Rural Affairs.

Ontario's rural communities are the backbone of our province. I'm talking about communities like Cottam, Harrow and McGregor. But life in rural Ontario is becoming more difficult. Families and businesses are struggling to pay bills. That's because of the crushing Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax, which is a policy that punishes the rural communities for their way of life. Every time the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax goes up, it takes more money out of the pockets of rural Ontario. It makes it harder for businesses to grow, hurting economic development.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to stand up for rural communities and help them thrive—communities like McGregor, Cottam and Harrow?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I appreciate the question from the member from Essex.

Under the Liberal rule, we lost 300,000 jobs, many from rural Ontario. Quite frankly, the Liberal government completely turned their backs on communities throughout rural and northern Ontario. We at home in Huron-Bruce and across rural ridings saw nothing but higher taxes and higher costs of doing business.

The Trudeau-Crombie legacy is continuing to exacerbate that terrible record, with their support of ideology that sees us bear the brunt of a carbon tax day in and day out.

Speaker, I'm really pleased to share with you that our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, has a different approach. We believe in creating the right environment in which businesses can prosper. We're bringing forward programs like the Rural Economic Development Program, which I look forward to speaking to in the supplemental.

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

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** People in rural Ontario have known hard times. High costs have made it harder for families to stay in their communities.

The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is just another burden. It makes everything more expensive, like fuel and groceries—even heat for your home. Businesses in rural Ontario are feeling the pressure. They can't afford to hire more workers. Farmers are already working hard to feed our province, and now they're paying more to operate their equipment and get their products to market. I'm talking about farmers like Gerry Drouillard in my riding. This is a tax that hurts businesses and people. But rural Ontario is strong, and with the right support, they can grow and thrive.

Speaker, can the minister please share more about how our government supports rural economic development in light of the harmful impact of the regressive Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax?

**Hon. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm very proud to stand in this House today and share that, since 2019, the Rural Economic Development Program has invested over \$27.4 million, and it's a cost-shared program that ultimately has leveraged over \$200 million of investment.

When municipalities work with our provincial government and recognize the priorities of stakeholders and community, good things can happen. That's good governance, Speaker—as opposed to the queen of the carbon tax, who is hiding and not doing anything in terms of bringing forward good ideas for rural Ontario.

This week, the Ontario pork producers were in this House meeting with everyone, meeting with MPPs. The vice-chair from eastern Ontario said his daughter wants to pursue the family business in producing good-quality pork, but it's the carbon tax that is costing them so much. Their cost of production is going through the roof, much like small businesses in our small towns throughout this province.

We need to continue on the path that our government is on to make sure that families and small businesses alike have confidence in the future, because we're setting—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Waterloo will come to order.

The next question.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Education.

Today, members of the child care community—parents, workers and operators—are rallying outside Queen's Park as part of the 10 Days of Action for the \$10aDay Child Care Plan, a national initiative advocating for effective implementation of the Canada-wide early learning and child care program. It's about building a system that respects and supports the essential workers who make quality child care possible, and about providing families with the long-awaited, affordable, reliable child care they need.

Alarm bells have been rung time and again about the critical workforce shortage that threatens the very foundation of the CWELCC program.

Will your government commit today to concrete and transparent actions to ensure this workforce crisis is addressed?

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** Thank you to the member for that question.

I want to thank all of our ECE workers and child care providers for the incredible work that they do every day to support our young ones, but also to support our women and our working families.

Informed by extensive consultations with the child care sector, our new cost-based funding formula prioritizes a simple and easy system that is representative of the true cost of operating child care. In fact, after the new funding formula was announced, the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care came forward, saying that the funding formula changes were well received by many non-profit centres.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that Ontario families deserve a larger investment from our federal government, and we've been clear on this since day one. I would urge the

members opposite to join us in that fight against the federal government. We've had the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, 444 municipalities, reach out to the federal minister asking for the same, for flexibility for our families across—

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

The supplementary question.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Your government has been touting this child care workforce strategy since 2023, yet no one beyond your government insiders really knows any of the details.

Meanwhile, parents are still waiting for new spaces to open, and child care workers continue to face unsustainable working conditions.

To support both families and the workforce, will you commit to putting a wage grid in place to help solve these problems and support the workers who keep this system going?

**1140**

**Hon. Jill Dunlop:** We know that retention and recruitment of high-quality child care and early workers is critical to the success and implementation of the CWELCC system and will help achieve system growth and ensure increased access to high-quality, licensed child care in Ontario.

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

Again, I call on the members opposite to join us in the fight against the federal government to increase the funding to their signature program. We currently provide three times the amount of funding that the federal government does, and this is their signature program. I also ask the federal government to look at the flexibility for our child care providers. Parents want access to child care spaces, regardless of if it's not-for-profit or for-profit, and we will continue to fight for our families in Ontario.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Mr. Speaker, when family medicine students do their rotations and reach the end of residency, that experience scares them away from being Ontario family doctors. In this Premier's Ontario, they joke that they're looking for an "exit strategy." One resident I spoke to said that 80% of their circle are instead going into sports medicine or other specialties. One is doing an optional rotation to check out British Columbia, where the government treats family doctors better, like for their time spent on administrative work. No wonder 2.5 million Ontarians don't have a family doctor.

Does the Premier of Ontario—who has 32,000 people in his riding without a family doctor, including 5,700 children—really understand why family medicine residents are looking for an exit strategy?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Perhaps the member opposite, who is a member of the Ontario Medical Association, can explain how we are actively working with the OMA on some pilot projects, including doctor scribes, that ensure that physicians have more time to have face-to-face interactions with their patients and less in front of the computer.

But I have to say: In the province of Ontario, for two years running, we have had 100% matching of CaRMS. That's pediatricians; that's every single specialty that has been matched, in the province of Ontario, with a residency student and their preferred match. I think we're doing just fine in terms of physicians and students who want to practise in the province of Ontario as we expand the opportunities here in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** Well, Speaker, I'm having dinner with some residents soon. I'll just tell them that minister thinks everything is just fine.

Some constituents in Kingston and the Islands travel to Oshawa, Ottawa, Markham and even Brampton and Mississauga to see their family doctors. They're afraid to get on this government's wait-list for a local doctor, Health Care Connect, because they first have to give up their family doctor in exchange for years of uncertainty. Even worse, many unattached people don't even know about Health Care Connect. I've checked a couple of ways and something like one out of three people without family doctors don't know about this lifeline.

Why can't the Premier use the millions of dollars spent on feel-good vanity ads to instead make sure people without a family doctor, like the 100,000 folks in Etobicoke, know about the basic waiting list for family doctors?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** As I see expansions that are happening, including in your own community in Kingston, where we have expanded primary care expansion—you know, last week, Speaker, I was in Innisfil. In Innisfil, we now opened a primary care nurse practitioner-led clinic, and we have 10 nurse practitioners who are now practising in an expanded clinic in Innisfil. Those are the expansions that we are doing. Of course, there is Periwinkle in Kingston, and we have 78 other examples of those primary care expansions.

But I have to remind the member opposite that it was actually a Liberal government that cut the number of seats available for physicians—the number of students who couldn't learn and practise in the province of Ontario because of a cut of 50 every year. That's 350 physicians who weren't able to train in the province of Ontario—

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

#### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Ontario is home to people from all over the world. Skilled immigrants bring talent, expertise and drive. They want to

work in their chosen professions and contribute to our economy. Sadly, they too often face roadblocks: barriers like licensing delays or difficulty finding jobs in their field. That's why immigration programs need to work. Programs like the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program help skilled trade workers settle faster. These programs help fill critical gaps in our labour force, especially in areas like health care and the skilled trades.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program is helping skilled immigrants find jobs in their field and meet Ontario's labour needs?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ajax and parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you to the member from Burlington for that important question. The federal government has shattered the consensus on immigration. They have broken a once celebrated and envied system across the world. The reality is, we need a targeted immigration system that prioritizes the most critically in-demand labour that we cannot currently fill.

The Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program is the best tool that the province has to do exactly that. The objective of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program is to ensure Ontario's economic and labour needs are met, especially for priority sectors such as health care, technology and the skilled trades, including construction. That is why in 2023 the OINP issued over 70% of our nomination allocation to skilled workers in these sectors. OINP is also very effective, with our application processing times ranging from 30 days to 120 days on average—versus the IRCC's six to 18 months.

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

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** Thank you to the parliamentary assistant for her response.

Skilled immigrants come to Ontario ready to work. They have the training, they have the experience and the drive. They want to contribute to our province, support their families and grow our economy, but they need a fair chance.

We've all heard stories of workers facing unfair treatment—some are underpaid, some are overworked and some are misled by bad employers. This hurts workers, it hurts their families and the reputation of our province. Ontario must protect all workers, including skilled immigrants, from exploitation. It's not enough to attract talent; we must also safeguard their rights.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to protect skilled immigrants from bad employers and unsafe working conditions?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you to the member from Burlington for that question. We have the crown jewel of immigration systems, a blueprint of what the federal government should follow. Further to that, today we announced that we are cracking down on immigration scams through the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program, ensuring more transparency, accountability and tougher

penalties for those who think that they can cheat the system. It is unfair for new immigrants to be taken advantage of, and we will continue to advocate for good workers while cracking down on bad actors who try to cheat our system. This is about levelling the playing field, protecting our workers and ensuring Ontario remains a place where workers are treated fairly and honestly.

We will crack down on bad actors from immigration representatives who violate our OINP to bad employers who put their employees in unsafe conditions. We're committed to protecting our workers and making Ontario the best place to live and raise a family. We will continue to advocate for our immigration system.

1150

### HEALTH CARE

**MPP Jill Andrew:** This question is to the Premier. While this government spends upwards of \$40 million of taxpayer money on partisan ads patting themselves on the back, seniors on fixed income in my community, like Wendy Winders and Barbara, have both been blocked from accessing OHIP-covered care if they wouldn't pay upfront fees. Wendy says she had to pay \$900 in hidden fees to access her cataract surgery. Barbara says she was blocked from accessing an OHIP-covered eye exam until or unless she paid \$85 for a retinal scan. In both cases, these fees were not disclosed up front, Speaker. In fact, one of our seniors said she found out in the waiting room minutes before her procedure.

My question is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier. Can this government take a moment from their \$1,000-a-plate, cash-for-access fundraisers and ensure Wendy, Barbara and others accessing health care aren't being gouged?

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

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** To Wendy and Barbara, I'm pretty sure that they would be pleased with some of the changes that we have made through legislation that actually ensure when we have these community-access surgical diagnostic centres—that we have changed the policies to ensure that those are publicly available and they can see what parts are OHIP-funded and what parts are additional if they choose to have.

But I think it's really important that the member opposite is suggesting that there is no opportunity to expand community access in surgical and diagnostic. We have over 800 different diagnostic and surgical centres right now. Yes, we are expanding, but I think it's also important—to quote the Premier, "Its not an either/or." We've also expanded 49 MRIs in the province of Ontario that are in hospitals.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary question.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** It's clear that Wendy and Barbara will have to hold on to hope and a prayer.

Hospital parking fees, rostering fees, block fees for care—all of these make it difficult and expensive for those who can't pay to play to access the health care they need. Our communities deserve a fully funded public health care system, Minister and Premier, where all you need to access care is your health card and never your wallet.

*Interjections.*

**MPP Jill Andrew:** My question to the Premier, if the government will stop talking and listen: When will this government stand up for Ontarians, eliminate these scalping fees and end your scheme on privatizing health care? Shut up and answer my question.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will take their seats. The Associate Minister for Auto Theft and Bail Reform will come to order. The government House leader will come to order.

The Minister of Health will reply.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Respectfully, I think there's a little bit of a disagreement in that party, because I've actually had letters in support of expansions for diagnostic and surgical centres in their communities. There are members in the NDP caucus who seem to understand the value of ensuring that we have more access across Ontario; that people don't have to drive hundreds of kilometres to get critical cataract care, to get diagnostic services. That's why we continue to expand MRI, X-ray, CT scans across Ontario, and that's why we have continued to ensure that the people of Ontario will get their care closer to home because of these expansions that members of your party have been supporting and sending me letters in support of.

*Interjections.*

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

The member for Toronto St. Paul's will come to order. The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas will come to order. The Associate Minister for Auto Theft and Bail Reform will come to order.

**Hon. Graham McGregor:** I didn't say anything.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Oh, yes, you did.

### HEALTH CARE

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today not just as an MPP but as a mom. My son recently suffered a severe joint dislocation. His coach rushed him to a hospital where they met a cruel reality. My son, in excruciating pain, was told to wait. The wait was unbearable. They drove him to a second hospital where again he waited. Finally, he was seen at the third hospital. This is a reflection of our failing health care system. It mirrors what one might endure in a Third World country, and I can say that with the authority of having lived through both realities.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. It is evident that our health care system is facing serious

challenges. So I must ask, how can this Premier continue to support a minister clearly struggling with the critical responsibility of our health care system?

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** We will have a defibrillator ready.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I understand as a parent that it is always very stressful when your child ends up in an emergency department and needs care, but I hope the member opposite, the next time she has an opportunity in a budget, in a fall economic statement, will actually support the expansion of the Scarborough General Hospital. When we have investments made with the Scarborough Health Network where we're expanding services in your own community, that you would actually see the value and importance of that: \$50 billion across 50 different hospital builds, whether they are new, expanded or renovations.

The Scarborough Health Network is, frankly, a community that has been ignored for far too long. We're making those commitments. We're making those commitments with an expanded medical school. We're making those commitments with the Scarborough Health Network, with long-term-care expansions—all of those pieces are benefiting your community and the good people of Scarborough. Stand up for your constituents.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I say to the Minister of Health, I try to do that every day. I try to stand up for my constituents every day.

Please make your comments through the Chair.

Supplementary question.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** To the minister: I bleed Scarborough. I've been bleeding Scarborough from 2012, and I supported many hospitals in Scarborough.

Mr. Speaker, it's been six long years and the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. I can't hear the member who has the floor to ask a question because of the din on this side of the House. I ask the members to come to order.

Start the clock. The member can continue her question.

**MPP Andrea Hazell:** Today is National Child Day, a time when we should be honouring children's rights, including their fundamental right to health, yet this government has chosen to neglect our children. So listen up. Here are the staggering numbers of children without a family doctor in just a few of your ridings: Mississauga–Malton, 10,996; Mississauga–Lakeshore, 8,446; Parry Sound–Muskoka, 7,265; Etobicoke Centre, 6,204; Etobicoke North 5,735. And, listen up, in Scarborough, the numbers are even worse: 17,365 children without care.

Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: You still haven't answered my question. I'll ask again because it's not just

me who needs answers; it's the families of Ontario who are desperately crying out for help.

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'll ask the Minister of Long-Term Care to come to order.

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you. I'm happy to share some investments that have been made by our government. With the greatest of respect, while you may bleed Scarborough, it's actually—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the Minister of Health to make her comments through the Chair.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, it's actually the members in the Progressive Conservative government who got it done for Scarborough. Those investments include TAIBU family health centre. We have a Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities. We have Unison Health and Community Services. I could go on and on.

There were 78 expansions that happened in February of this year, and we're already seeing those expansions happening, recruiting and retaining, bringing on brand new patients.

Speaker, we know that our health care system was under siege under the previous Liberal government. We know that the previous Liberal government cut medical seats that amounted to over—

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

*Interjection.*

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

The next question.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. John Jordan:** My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business.

Small businesses are the backbone of our communities and Ontario's economy, driving innovation and creating good jobs.

Last month, we celebrated Small Business Month in our province. I visited businesses in my riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston and heard about their successes, thanks to the positive business environment our government has fostered.

**1200**

However, many small businesses still face challenges such as high operating costs, labour shortages and adapting to new technologies.

On top of these challenges, the Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is making things more expensive.

Can the associate minister outline what steps our government is taking to address the concerns of small business owners?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** I want to thank the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston for the important question



and the amazing work he is doing to support small businesses in his riding.

Speaker, our government understands that small businesses are critical drivers of innovation and job creation in Ontario.

That is why I've been travelling the province, holding round tables with small business owners and stakeholders in diverse sectors—manufacturing, retail, agriculture, technology, and more—to hear directly from them. We want to ensure we're aware of their pressing challenges, from rising costs to digital information. While many businesses have seen success as a result of our government's actions, we also know there's more to be done. These conversations and feedback will help inform our policy decisions, including our upcoming small business success strategy.

But one thing is clear, Speaker: The Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax is hurting small businesses and needs—

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

**Mr. John Jordan:** Thank you to the minister for outlining the valuable work being done through these round tables.

I'm proud to be part of a government that stands against the harmful, job-killing Trudeau-Crombie carbon tax and that knows the importance of small business.

Speaker, with economic and technological advancements being a constant feature of our world, small businesses must adapt and innovate to stay competitive and satisfy consumer preferences.

That's why, in addition to listening to business owners, it's critical that our government addresses challenges that small businesses are facing.

Can the associate minister highlight the specific initiatives our government has implemented to address issues raised by small businesses regarding technological adoption and competitiveness?

**Hon. Nina Tangri:** Thank you again to the member for the question.

Speaker, our government is committed to providing practical and meaningful support to Ontario's small businesses.

One key initiative is our \$10-million investment into the Digitalization Competence Centre program, which is delivered through the Ontario Centre of Innovation and is projecting thousands of jobs created and nearly \$400 million in increased sales and revenue from this investment. The DCC program serves as Ontario's premier knowledge centre focused on driving the digital transformation of our SMEs. It helps businesses adopt digital technologies and modernize their operations to remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace.

From digital training workshops to support for technological adoption, we're equipping small business owners with the tools and resources they need to adapt, grow and succeed.

Our government will always be focused on investing in tools and supports that will empower—

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

The next question.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Speaker, the Minister of Health should know that Hamilton-area hospitals serve over two and a half million patients, and they are now facing a funding shortfall of \$136 million. This is a direct result of this government's health care underfunding and privatization agenda.

We know hospital workers are already overworked and dangerously understaffed. Programs are already being cancelled—like cancer studies that once were the lifeline for patients who have run out of any treatment options. Hospitals have also run out of options, and the minister knows full well that this is a crisis and that patients' lives are being put at risk.

So, my question to the minister: How are you going to fix this?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Please make your comments through the Chair.

The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Speaker, I know you do this—I know you speak directly to your hospital CEOs.

It's unfortunate that the member opposite didn't actually pick up the phone and talk to the Juravinski Hospital CEO, like I did earlier this week. In fact, they are hiring right now because they want to expand the number of cancer pathways and treatments.

With the greatest of respect, when I went with the Minister of Sport and with MPP Donna Skelly last week and announced that we are expanding pediatric ICU capacity at the Juravinski Hospital—those are the investments that we are making. To suggest that the Juravinski Hospital system is doing anything other than exceptional service is really a disservice to her community and her constituents.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas will come to order. The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

The supplementary. The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

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

Hospitals throughout the north are also struggling. We do talk to our hospital CEOs.

For example, Blanche River Health runs two hospital sites. Their deficit, right now, is 12%. What causes that deficit? A ballooning cost of agency health care workers, which was caused by Bill 124.

Agency health care workers are a lot more expensive in the north. Even when the government tried to provide compensation for 124, it only covered 75% of that cost.

My question to the Minister of Health: For Blanche River Health and for the other hospitals across the north, what does she suggest they cut to make up that deficit? She knows it's there. What do they cut—or is she going to make up that deficit?

*Interjections.*

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

The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** Through a pandemic, through a rebuilding of our hospital system left, frankly, decimated by Liberals, propped up by the NDP, we've had the hospitals' backs. We've had two consecutive years of 4% annual budget increases. We have always worked directly with our hospital partners to make sure that we are part of the solution. We continue to work with them actively now as they start to see those first- and second-quarter numbers. We will continue to do that.

I will say, because of the investments that we have been making in nursing and in primary care, we are seeing a stabilization of the use of temporary staffing agencies. We want to continue on that pathway, and we will have our hospital partners as part of those conversations.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hamilton Mountain is warned.

The next question.

#### SPORTS AND RECREATION FUNDING

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** My question is for the Minister of Sport. Sports play a significant role in our lives. They bring people together. They inspire young athletes. They build community spirit.

But sports also do something else that's very important: They bring money into our province. Every time Ontario hosts a big sporting event, our hotels fill up, which we saw in Quinte West in October, when we hosted the Toyota U-17 soccer nationals. Our restaurants get busy. People spend money in local shops. These events create jobs and boost tourism. In fact, sports are more than just games; they are a smart investment. But some people don't see that. They don't understand the value of these events. They don't see how sports help grow our economy.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how sports boost Ontario's economy and why it's essential to keep investing in them?

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** I appreciate the question—especially, in the sport world, coming from a rookie. Well, you know what I mean.

You're absolutely right; our government is working towards maximizing sport in our province.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** A rookie here—I know you're not a rookie across the sport. You know what I mean. You can't be in sport and get your feelings hurt. It can't happen, all right? It's just not allowed to happen.

Mr. Speaker, I apologize, through you, of course, for the rookie comment.

Sports is a huge economic driver. I'm going to outline a few major events that have taken place in Ontario. The 2024 RBC Canadian Open saw an economic impact of \$86 million. It was at the Hamilton Golf and Country Club, by the way. The Honda Indy, this past year, saw an impact of

\$53 million. The 110th Grey Cup, not to be confused with the one that just happened, but the previous year's in Hamilton—part of the festivities were in Niagara Falls—had an economic impact of \$75 million.

Let me also be clear—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** Good teamwork.

The point is, the impact is massive, and we have to continue to do things like that because it drives the economy. It impacts small, medium and large businesses, and we care about them all in this party.

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

**Mr. Tyler Allsopp:** When big sports events come to town, everyone benefits. Local businesses see more customers. Hotels get booked. Restaurants are packed. But these events don't happen by accident. They need support. They need funding.

Since 2018, our government's support for sports has brought millions of dollars back to Ontario. But, sadly, the Liberal and NDP members don't seem to get it. They show up for the photo ops, but when it's time to vote for funding, they say no. That hurts our communities. It hurts local businesses.

Speaker, can the minister please tell us more about the impacts of local sport-hosting events and what they mean to communities across Ontario?

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** When we talk about winners in sports, we usually talk, in golf, about one winner; in football, one winner; in other sports—driving, the Indy—there's one winner.

When we talk about sports in our province, there are multiple winners; there's not just one winner. It's small, medium and large businesses. It's the people who participate. It's the people in this Legislature who should take the opportunity to allow that to grow within each of your communities, because what you are doing, if you do that, is building up small business and creating a great culture around sport, and that needs to happen. We need to be better at that so that there's never one winner; there are multiple winners. That's what we focus on—multiple winners within our community and within the sport community.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Thornhill has informed me that she has a point of order.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Please join me in welcoming, just outside the doors on the first level, 96-year-old Royal Canadian Navy veteran Richard Ratcliffe. I'm going to be joining him for lunch.

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

*The House recessed from 1212 to 1300.*

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 20, 2024, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

## INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

### CUTTING RED TAPE, BUILDING ONTARIO ACT, 2024 LOI DE 2024 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES ET À FAVORISER L'ESSOR DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill 227, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 227, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

**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 like to briefly explain his bill?

**Hon. Mike Harris:** I'll try to be as brief as I can, Mr. Speaker, but I did want to say thank you. The proposed Cutting Red Tape, Building Ontario Act, 2024, part of our broader fall 2024 red tape reduction package, contains proposals from 14 ministries, and it includes 27 schedules. This legislation, if passed, will establish measures to help build a stronger economy, save time, keep costs down and improve service delivery for businesses and the people of Ontario.

If you'll indulge me for a second, as it is my first government bill, being able to introduce that here today, I did want say a huge thank you to my team at the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction in my office and also in our officials' office as well for all the hard work that they've done to put this together. Fourteen different ministries, Speaker—it is not easy, but we are getting it done for the people of Ontario.

## PETITIONS

### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I have a petition here entitled "Stand Up for Local Conservation Authorities." I would say, just like all our communities across Ontario, people are very concerned about wetlands, and they're concerned about

their natural spaces, and the fact that we are allowing developers to dig, build and excavate without oversight from conservation authorities is a particular concern for people.

I would say now that the very fact that the Royal Botanical Gardens, the RBG, has been forced to lay off 15 employees and the RBG is responsible for such beautiful natural areas that run along Cootes Paradise—it's a protected area, it's a beautiful area, and the fact that now we are losing staff that will help to preserve this, not just for us but for future generations.

So I really think that this is an important petition. We see a government that has made reckless and harmful changes to conservation authorities. We also see this government that has let wetlands move out of protection, has watered down environmental protections and doesn't seem to be concerned, as most people are, with the preservation of our natural green heritage.

I will add my name to this petition, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be happy to pass it to Charlotte to take to the table.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### SAFER STREETS, STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2024

### LOI DE 2024 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES RUES ET À RENFORCER LES COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 20, 2024, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 223, An Act to enact two Acts and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system / Projet de loi 223, Loi édictant deux lois et modifiant diverses lois relatives à la sécurité publique et au système judiciaire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Kiiwetinoong.

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

*Remarks in Anishininiimowin.*

It's always an honour to be able to stand up for the people of Kiiwetinoong. Kiiwetinoong is a very unique riding. Kiiwetinoong is 294,000 square kilometres, with 31 First Nations and four municipalities. And out of those 31 First Nations, 24 are fly-in First Nations.

I know this government has named this bill the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act. I'm not sure how this bill will make the First Nations, will make the communities in the north stronger or safer. Because one of the things that it does is that it ignores the truth. It ignores the evidence—the evidence provided from within the government itself. An example could be safe consumption sites. But also, it disregards the solutions put forward by communities themselves.

There's so much to talk about. We all know this is a wedge bill, and I'm going to talk about that a little bit.

Yesterday, I had leaders, community members, leadership from Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg, also known as Pic Mobert First Nation. I want to acknowledge my colleague the Solicitor General, who put the bill forward. When the chief and council—they were right up there; they were in my office—of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg were here at Queen’s Park, just yesterday, they declared a state of emergency in their community because of the crisis in public safety, because of the crisis in policing. Mr. Speaker, the situation in their community is dire.

One of the things that happened yesterday too is the Solicitor General, along with the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, cancelled a meeting with the chief and council—very last minute. And it was unable to be rescheduled for later on yesterday, while the chief and council were still here in Toronto. Just imagine the cost to come to Queen’s Park, to come to Toronto, to try to come up with a solution, to work together. And yet we are here today talking about safer and stronger communities.

The leadership of Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg pointed out in their press conference that the unsafe situation on the First Nation, on the reserve, would not be accepted or tolerated anywhere off-reserve in Ontario. Anywhere else in the province, the government would already have ensured the community is adequately resourced with police officers to bring the violence and the criminal activities under control.

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Speaker, as First Nations, as reserves, we live under a system of oppression. We live under the systems of colonialism and racism, and what’s going on here right today is exactly what’s going on.

The leadership is already on their way back to their community.

Again, I say it’s not under control in this community, in this reserve, in this First Nation, Netmizaaggamig, where for years they have been experiencing drug trafficking by gangs from Toronto, addictions and mental health struggles, sex trafficking. But the police presence is still almost non-existent. For example, a young man was beaten and held at gunpoint. A call to emergency responders for help was not responded to for four hours—four hours.

Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg knows the solutions to the public safety crisis in their own community, in their own reserve, in their own First Nation, but they need more resources if they’re going to implement these solutions themselves. What they are asking for is accountability in policing, in justice and for local laws to be enforced quickly and consistently to curb the intense organized crime and violence. One of the things that they’re asking for is they’re asking for improved funding for mental health services in the community. For example, they need to see greater investment in local detox, treatment and aftercare.

All in all, all they’re asking for is to be treated equitably. This government of Ontario needs to stop having different standards for safety. Pic Mobert First Nation—Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg—and all First

Nations, for that matter—that they have other parts in Ontario.

You have to remember, as well, this Bill 223 makes amendments to the Community Safety and Policing Act. This is the same Community Safety and Policing Act that the Chiefs of Ontario are bringing the government to court over because the act says, “Adequate and effective policing does not include,

“(a) the enforcement of municipal or First Nation bylaws, other than prescribed bylaws.”

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has described discrimination as “an action or a decision that treats a person or a group unfairly or negatively for reasons such as their race, age or disability.”

There’s no question about this. The deliberate and the explicit exclusion of First Nation laws from being enforced under the Community Safety and Policing Act is discriminatory and needs to be changed to ensure that First Nations laws are respected and acknowledged—not only that, that they are enforced.

I want to jump onto something else. The Minister of Health stated, very clearly, “There will be no further safe injection sites in the province of Ontario under our government.”

Speaker, Ms. Mskwaasin Agnew is a member of Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction who told CBC News, “Harm reduction is sacred and it is an integral part of the health and well-being of many Indigenous people’s lives.” Regarding the closures of supervised consumption spaces, Ms. Agnew said, “We will see an over-representation of Indigenous people paying the price.”

Speaker, one of the 10 safe drug consumption sites that this province is forcing to close is in Thunder Bay. It is called Path 525, and it’s operated by the NorWest Community Health Centres. Path 525 is only the safe consumption site in Thunder Bay. There will be no alternative space when it’s forced to close. That’s probably the only one in northwestern Ontario.

Vanessa Tookenay, a member of the Fort William First Nation who is now in recovery, told CBC’s Sarah Law that, in the past, she overdosed a couple of times at Path 525, and then this is what she said: “Had I not been there, I wouldn’t be alive.” These are her words.

Speaker, an internal document from this very government’s staff flags that limiting access to harm reduction and overdose prevention services has a high risk of having a high number of negative impacts, including death.

I want to talk about where the bill talks about the Sex Offender Registry. I want to talk about some of the issues that we face in northwestern Ontario. Every now and then, I’ll bring up a former OPP officer, a former Anglican minister and a former Boy Scout leader who is living today. His name is Ralph Rowe. He is one of the most prolific pedophiles in Canada. Where I come from, he abused over 500 boys—where I come from. I know this bill, but he’s still out walking. He’s still living. He hasn’t changed his name. It talks about addressing the Sex Offender Registry, and it has an impact. One of the biggest

causes in Kiiwetinoong of mental health struggles and intergenerational trauma is because of this man. I know this government likes to talk big about being tough on crime, but still, one of the biggest criminals in Ontario is still walking freely.

**1320**

I want to know, why is Ralph Rowe still free? Why doesn't Canada, why doesn't Ontario know about Ralph Rowe and the crimes he committed against young First Nations men, children in the north as young as five years old? At that time—in the 1970s, in the 1980s—Ralph Rowe was a trusted person. As I said before, he had positions of authority with the Boy Scouts, the Anglican church, OPP. And he had a float plane, a ski plane. He had full access. All these institutions were complicit in what happened in northern Ontario.

In 1994, Ralph Rowe struck a plea agreement with the crown in that there are certain crimes that the crown can be prevented from seeking additional imprisonment for if they occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. Some crimes were even more serious than the ones from the plea agreement. He was sentenced to three years in 2007, and subsequently to a concurrent year in 2009. In 2012, he served a two-year conditional sentence under house arrest after making a guilty plea. In October 2023, the court approved a \$13-million settlement in a class action lawsuit against Scouts Canada, the Anglican Diocese of Kiiwetinoong and Ralph Rowe.

I'm going to quote this gentleman: "My heart and soul screamed out in agony, crying, so lonely, scared, sick, trembling in pain." These are the words of John Fox, one of the survivors of Ralph Rowe. When I went to see him last month, he talked about the terrible impacts of Ralph Rowe's abuse on his life, on his mental health and the choices that he made.

For a time, John sold drugs, alcohol, weed—whatever he can do. That's what he told me. And this is what he said to me: "I was just thinking, well," eff "you God, you want to do this? Then fine. And I wanted to hurt God. So how do you hurt God? You hurt his people." And that's why he sold drugs for 20 years, sold booze. But today, John is in a good place. He's doing much better.

Ralph Rowe took so much from so many people with his crimes. One of the things John Fox said is, "I have seen so many poor"—where is the justice for the survivors of Ralph Rowe, for their families? This is all I have to say about 223 today. Meegwetch.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic):** Questions?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member for his comments. Certainly, we all are concerned about how to deal with these very, very challenging issues that are everywhere in society and how to help people best.

I think the difference is, we have maybe different views of what the priority should be. Having seen what happened at the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, Peter Tabuns said the shooting there caused people to question the presence of the site for drug users, and many people fear that the presence of the site attracts drug dealers. This

was before the arrest of an employee at that site for their alleged involvement with drug dealing.

My question is: Do you understand the concerns that your colleague Peter Tabuns has for his constituents and the concerns that people have for children and ordinary people just walking by a site?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** When we talk about Ontario, Ontario is a very big place. The only time I come to Toronto is—I go to my apartment, I go to Queen's Park and that's it. I don't spend much time with what's going on here.

But there's a lot of stuff happening in northern Ontario, in the riding of Kiiwetinoong. As I mentioned, I represent four municipalities. I represent 31 First Nations. Out of those 31 First Nations, 24 of those First Nations are fly-in First Nations. The amount of drugs, the amount of suicides that I see—I think the youngest funeral of a girl that died by suicide was 11 years old. That's the reality in the north; that's the reality in Kiiwetinoong. I think sometimes the people who make the decisions here do not understand who we are in the north. Meegwetch.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tom Rakocevic):** The member for Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I want to thank the member from Kiiwetinoong. Time and time again, we have all sat here and watched as he brings truth to this House, and time and time again, we have seen the government make the choice to ignore these difficult truths.

He is representing his people, who only want what we would all want, which is fair, equitable and just treatment. The fact that there was leadership here from the Anishinabek, and the minister of mental health and addictions and the Solicitor General chose to snub them and to turn their backs, is shameful.

Now that this member has shared with all of us the horrific crimes of Ralph Rowe, I want to know, through the member: What is this government going to do to set these intergenerational harms and traumas right?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch to the member, my colleague, for the question. I think in one of their statements specifically for Pic Mobert First Nation, they had specific requests. I think the policing approach would not work. They have a different-tier approach to policing, and that's what they're asking for. They're asking for mental health services.

**1330**

Again, I've been here about six and a half years or so, and I bring the stories of what's going on in Kiiwetinoong. I bring the truth of what's going on in Kiiwetinoong. There are just far too many needless deaths and unnecessary suffering that is happening. We need to come together. At least hear us, at least hear the people who are crying for help in the north, not just the people that are your people, not just the ridings that are blue. We are people too.

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

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank the member opposite for his comments on the bill and the consequences of such. I had in my region, as well, a

consumption treatment site that closed. Even though I did have a chance to speak to so many involved, I'm trying to reconcile how the cycle of addiction is broken by the supply of drug paraphernalia and a location in which to consume. How do you separate the drug from the user so they can pursue a path to recovery? I'm hoping the member opposite might be able to share how that's achieved through this consumption treatment site.

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Meegwetch to the member opposite for the question. Sometimes we try to deal with issues downstream. Sometimes it's so much better to address things in an upstream way, like why are people doing drugs. In our community, there is so much intergenerational trauma. I just spoke about the Ralph Rowe intergenerational trauma, where this Anglican minister, this supposed Cub leader, this former OPP officer—who was a white man who had a float plane or a ski plane to access all these First Nations in northern Ontario, who abused over 500 boys in the north. We lost a lot of them and we still continue to live that from the intergenerational trauma. What it leads to is the addictions, the mental health. I think, again, we need to go back to upstream solutions.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I want to thank the member from Kiiwetinoong as well. I agree with what the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas said. There is profound truth you always bring.

But something I feel that many people don't recognize in respect to you, which I do and I know members of our caucus do, is that you were a professional health promoter before you came here. I'm thinking about victims' services and I'm thinking of the lack of support in this particular bill to offer resources to the north, to Indigenous communities. I'm thinking about the children who are brought to my city, dislocated from their communities, who suffer and, in the most tragic instances, decide to take their own lives.

I'm wondering if you have advice for the government about how the bill could be amended so those upstream resources could be invested in Kiiwetinoong, so youth and their families could have hope?

**Mr. Sol Mamakwa:** Before I became an MPP, I did a lot of health policy work with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents the 49 First Nations in northern Ontario. When we talk about safety, when we talk about adding what needs to be able to say—I think health transformation in northern Ontario needs to happen. Before the arrival of the settlers, as First Nations people, as the first peoples of these lands, we always had our health system. We never had hospitals. I think that's one of the things: We need to be able to bring services closer to home, whether it's health care—when we talk about these health services, when we talk about mental health.

One of my goals when I was a health adviser, I wanted to eliminate suicide in Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory. I didn't want to just cut 20%. I wanted to eliminate suicide in NAN territory, even if it took 50 years, if it took 100 years. But that was always the goal. Meegwetch.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We don't have time for further questions.

We'll now move on to further debate.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I'm happy to be here today to speak to you a bit about my thoughts about the current bill. I will focus on the CTS part of the legislation.

A CTS site exists in my riding. The community came together—city, health care providers, community—to put that in place with support of the daycare centre across the street.

I'm here to share with you today that my community resoundingly continues to support the CTS being there. The city of Kitchener passed two motions, with regional council, labour organizations, health care, medical staff, the child care centre across the way, faith communities, citizens, neighbours, students from university all coming together with unanimous support for the CTS site in my community.

Yes, we need these HART hubs. I appreciate the additional funding. I think we can all agree, across all parties, that addiction treatment funding and mental health treatment funding is needed. We need that more than ever. But not at the expense of harm reduction, which is statistically and evidence-based shown to save lives.

Some 22,000 people have died from an opioid or drug overdose since this government came into office. One death in every two and a half days takes place in my community. It is not because of this drug policy. At our CTS site, zero deaths have taken place. So I ask this government if they could please start by following the advice of, "Not about us without us."

In this document, I don't see evidence—and I don't see the voices of the people working on the front lines. Just the other day, the Working Centre had me over. They had outreach workers around the table. They were sobbing, they were broken. These are front-line workers who are burnt out. They are falling apart. They remember the times during COVID when people were dying at record pace from overdoses and they say, "I can't go back there."

I had a young woman—she's in her twenties, she had her shirt on saying, "November comes at the same time every year," because that's about it being cold and not having enough shelter beds. She said, "I can't go back there. I can't go back there where more and more of my clients die."

Imagine you all as nurses, business owners, see all your customers die. So imagine as a family member, we see people—maybe those in our family have gotten a diagnosis. Maybe they got a cancer diagnosis that says, "You're stage 4; you have a few months to live." Imagine our own government giving thousands of people that news, that on March 31, you will die.

Unfortunately, folks who use drugs come forward and say, "Aislinn, I will be dead on April 1." How do I sit with someone in my constituency office with that news, that they face death because this is life-saving health care that is being removed from them?

This, we know, is kind of a bit of smoke and mirrors for the fact that we are failing on housing. We know that

housing is health care. More and more, when I dig into why we're facing this opioid crisis—we know there has been a massive amount of evidence that talks about the pharmaceutical companies that are enriching themselves for decades now, benefiting and profiteering off of these addictions that have been created from well-meaning, working Ontarians.

We need to start pointing the finger in the right direction. We need to be providing the supports like housing, which we know is health care. If you spend one week without shelter, we know that your well-being goes into the garbage. Quickly, your mental health deteriorates and you run the risk of exacerbating your addictions or having addictions. So it's important that we recognize the need for housing.

Even at the University Health Network they saw this: 55 of their patients were responsible for 4,000 hospital visits. Think of that—it's staggering. Now, they see that they provide supportive housing to those 55 individuals to alleviate the pressure on our health care system. I think we need to heed the warnings that we run the high risk—by reducing access to harm reduction and overdose support, it will result in increased emergency department visits, health impacts, overdose and death.

We know Indigenous, Black and low-income individuals may be more adversely impacted as they face higher barriers to health care, and for Indigenous populations, disproportionately higher rates of opioid-related deaths.

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So we need to look at health care being for every individual, and if folks aren't getting the health care they need, we need to ask why. Instead of kicking out the rungs on the ladder that lead people to thrive, we need to be building more rungs on the ladder to ensure every single person has access to a better life in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I listened to the member opposite talking about different steps. One of the things that this bill recognizes, that these offenders under Christopher's Law—these heinous individuals who commit crimes against children so terrible that I can't repeat them—they also go on to make application to change their name and hide their identity and go back into the communities.

I was just wondering if the member thinks that this legislation is positive, given these are positive steps to stop these offenders from making application to change their name.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Thank you for the question. Of course, this is an important step, but I will remind the government that prevention is better. We want to prevent someone from being sexually abused as a child.

In Ontario, I know of—this is just what I know of—three federal programs and one provincial program that are funded to reduce people's recidivism. They're data-proven programs like circles of support that ensure that offenders don't reoffend. They have no funding. They no longer exist. If we truly want to protect the vulnerable from being offended sexually, from being abused sexually,

we need to ensure that all four of these programs are funded again and we ensure that every—whether they're young, adult, convicted or not—get the help they need to ensure they no longer are at risk of offending and abusing a young child sexually.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** To the MPP for Kitchener Centre: I want to share that we on this side of the House—that bill—protecting children from sexual predators, it makes sense. So much of this, almost all of this bill, makes sense, but why have they put in this bill schedule 4, which essentially withdraws any kind of treatment for people? My sense is that this government doesn't understand that these people seeking treatment, they're professionals, they're our mothers, they're brothers, like the member Windsor West talked about, who are suffering from pain from an accident.

So we feel that this bill is supportable but that they should withdraw schedule 4 and have a whole rethink on this, because the harm that they are doing, the deaths that we are going to see—I don't think they understand the damage that they're causing by withdrawing any kind of treatment for people.

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** I think it's unfortunately a political strategy. I hate that we politicize people's lives. I want to work across party lines with every party in this House. I believe that there are good people all across, and I know that this is hard to hear, because I know that maybe many in the government don't want to see people die. I know they don't want to see people come into harm's way. I think you're caring individuals that care for people's families, care for good health care. I believe in you, and I'm hoping you'll stand up for that, because I don't like to feel so divided, and I don't like creating a bill that puts us in a place that says we support something that encourages sex abuse. That's just an awful thing to say about anyone in this House.

So I don't like these things being put together. I think it was a tactic, and I don't think we should be playing politics with people's lives.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the member for her comment. I can say that I'm pretty certain that everyone in this House cares about the lives of Ontarians and Ontarians who are struggling, and wants to find the best solutions.

In my former role as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, we had started with a new kind of consumption treatment site focused on treatment, and the issue, I was told by the experts, was that you have to come to a consumption site every time—that's the only way you get saved there—and that the average patient needs to use it four or six times a day and only comes to the consumption site once. So how is that protecting people?

**Ms. Aislinn Clancy:** Because I have talked to the people who work there and I've talked to the people who use the sites—they tell me that this saves their lives, and the data says that. I live in this neighbourhood. These are

my neighbours. Before the site came into place, I found needles on my street. Since then, the peer support workers, because they respect their neighbours, scour throughout the community. I'm worried that that daycare centre across the street is going to find dead bodies and needles. Those don't happen right now.

So, with all due respect, I agree we need more investment in addictions and mental health supports, wholeheartedly, but I think the data and the people I spoke to that use these sites—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for further debate.

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** It is a privilege to rise today as a member of provincial Parliament for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, representing a vibrant and resilient rural community. In my capacity as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Rural Affairs, I have the honour of bringing forward the concerns, values and priorities of rural Ontario to this esteemed chamber.

Today, I'm here to speak about the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act. This legislation amplifies the principles that guide our government: the pursuit of safer communities, robust economic systems and an enhanced quality of life for every resident in Ontario. This bill is comprehensive in its scope and bold in its vision. It addresses critical issues, including auto theft, reckless driving, fraud prevention and regulation of commercial vehicles, all while ensuring that Ontario's rural and urban residents alike benefit from the result of improvements in public safety.

Public safety is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is the bedrock upon which communities, whether urban or rural, thrive. For more rural communities like those in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, safety takes on a special significance. In these communities, where distances between neighbours can be measured in kilometres and access to emergency services can take longer than in urban areas, safety measures must be both proactive and practical.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act recognizes these unique needs and ensures that rural Ontario is not just included in the conversation but is at the forefront of it. This bill is not merely about enforcing laws. It is about creating an environment where families feel secure, where businesses can operate without fear and where communities can grow stronger.

One of the most pressing issues this legislation tackles is auto theft, a crime that is not only disruptive but deeply personal. For rural Ontarians, a vehicle is often much more than a mode of transportation. It is a vital tool for daily life. It is commuting to work, taking a loved one to a medical appointment, transporting goods or tending to farm duties. Losing a vehicle could mean losing one's livelihood, an impact far beyond the individual.

Auto theft has become increasingly sophisticated, often tied to organized crime networks that exploit loopholes in existing systems. One prevalent method is VIN fraud, where criminals steal the vehicle identification numbers from legitimate vehicles and use them to disguise stolen ones. This not only deceives buyers but undermines the integrity of our entire vehicle registration system.

To combat this, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act introduces a new provincial offence for knowingly providing a false VIN during a transaction with the Ministry of Transportation. The penalties for this offence are intentionally severe, ranging from \$50,000 to \$75,000 for a first conviction and escalating to \$100,000 for repeat offenders. These fines are complemented by potential jail time of up to six months and the suspension of driving privileges for up to a year.

For rural residents, these measures are a welcome assurance that their vehicles and, by extension, their livelihoods are being protected. It is a decisive step towards restoring public confidence in our system, ensuring that criminals are held accountable for their actions.

### 1350

While penalties are important, prevention is equally as critical. Our government is investing in advanced technologies and operational safeguards to close the gaps that criminals exploit. The Ministry of Transportation has implemented VIN verification software, a tool that automatically cross-references vehicle information against secure databases to detect irregularities. This technology ensures that fraudulent transactions are identified and stopped before they can cause harm.

ServiceOntario has also enhanced its fraud prevention protocols. Identity verification processes have been strengthened, and transaction data is now monitored more rigorously to flag abnormalities. These measures are especially significant for rural residents who rely on ServiceOntario for essential services. By ensuring that these services are secure, we are protecting individuals and communities from the far-reaching impacts of fraud.

These are excellent and welcome additions by the Minister of Transportation, Prab Sarkaria, and Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement, Todd McCarthy. Thank you for these important changes.

Madam Speaker, auto theft is rarely an isolated incident. It is often part of a larger web of organized crime that includes drug trafficking, gun violence and human exploitation. Recognizing this, our government has adopted a holistic approach to dismantling these networks.

Through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy, we have allocated over \$358 million to combat organized crime. A portion of these funds is directed specifically towards tackling auto theft, with \$51 million dedicated to initiatives like the OPP provincial auto theft and towing team, or PATT, for short. This specialized unit collaborates with municipal police forces to target and dismantle organized crime networks responsible for auto thefts.

In addition, Ontario's major-auto-theft prosecution response team provides law enforcement with the resources needed to build strong cases against offenders. By ensuring that these cases are prepared and prosecuted effectively, we are not just addressing symptoms but attacking the root causes of crime. For rural communities, where law enforcement resources are often stretched thin, these initiatives provide critical support. They ensure that rural residents are not left vulnerable to the ripple effects of organized crime.



Another cornerstone of the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is focusing on reckless and careless driving. Preliminary data from 2023 highlights a concerning trend: 14 fatalities and over 1,200 personal injury collisions occurred in parking lots across Ontario. These spaces, often considered low-risk, have become hotbeds for dangerous behaviours like street racing and unsanctioned car rallies.

The legislation expands the scope of careless driving laws to include private parking lots. This change empowers police to address reckless driving behaviour in these areas, protecting not only drivers but also pedestrians and other road users. For rural communities, where parking lots often double as social and commercial hubs, this change is particularly impactful.

Additionally, this bill extends the limitation period for laying charges in cases of careless driving from six months to two years. This allows law enforcement more time to conduct thorough investigations, gather evidence and ensure that justice is served.

Safeguarding our families—responsible zoning for supervised consumption sites: The safety and well-being of children and families remain a top priority for this government. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act introduces zoning restrictions that prevent supervised consumption sites from operating within 200 metres of schools, child care centres and family hubs. This policy responds to the concerns of parents and communities, while maintaining a commitment to addressing addiction through evidence-based solutions.

I know myself, as a father, it would have brought me great concern if I took my children to a school where there were supervised consumption sites next door. Existing sites within these zones can be transitioned into HART hubs, which provide comprehensive care and treatment. This balanced approach ensures community safety and public health are both prioritized.

For rural families, these measures provide a sense of security, knowing that their children's environments remain safe and focused on their well-being. Those that need care will be able to access services they need, and the community will feel safer at the same time.

Rural Ontario depends on heavy commercial vehicles. From transporting agricultural products to delivering goods, trucking is a lifeline for rural communities. However, the increase in commercial vehicle traffic brings with it significant safety challenges. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act strengthens the oversight of the commercial vehicle operator's registration, or CVOR, program. It gives the Ministry of Transportation more authority to intervene early when the operators demonstrate unsafe behaviour. Introducing administrative penalties and legislation ensures that violations are addressed swiftly, reducing the burden on the court system. These measures not only enhance road safety but also support the long-term sustainability of rural economies by ensuring that commercial operators meet high safety standards.

We are investing in driver training and testing. Proper training is the foundation of road safety. Ontario was the

first jurisdiction in North America to implement mandatory entry-level training for commercial drivers. This program sets high standards for driver education, ensuring that individuals have the skill and knowledge they need to operate large vehicles safely. Our government is now working with the industry stakeholders to update these training requirements, reflecting the evolving needs of the trucking sector. These updates will further enhance safety standards while supporting the economic vitality of rural Ontario, where trucking is a key industry.

Empowering communities through collaboration: Madam Speaker, legislation alone cannot solve all the problems. Effective implementation requires collaboration among government, law enforcement and the communities. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act reflects this by understanding and including provisions that empower local police, improve inter-agency coordination and engage residents in safety initiatives.

For rural Ontario, this collaborative approach is especially meaningful. I heard in our rural consultations the importance of sharing best practices and working together. It ensures that residents have a voice in shaping safety measures and that local concerns are addressed. By working together, we can build communities where everyone feels safe and secure.

In closing, the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act represents a bold step forward in our government's commitment to public safety. It is a comprehensive and thoughtful response to the challenges facing our province, from auto theft and careless driving to fraud prevention and commercial oversight.

For rural Ontario, this legislation is a positive step forward. It addresses unique challenges faced by rural residents, protects their livelihoods, and ensures that their communities remain safe and vibrant.

I want to thank again the ministers involved in this legislation for taking the multi-sector approach to these pressing issues. As a representative for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, I am proud to support this bill and the vision it represents. Together, let's build a safer, stronger Ontario, one where every resident, regardless of where they live, can thrive.

**1400**

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thanks to the member for his really quite elaborate conversation on all of these topics, because there's so much to hit on with this bill being so encompassing.

He talked about being a father and the benefits that this legislation, if passed, will have on families and particularly schools, and he talked about the 200-metre buffer zone on consumption sites. Could the member opposite please talk about how this will make things a little safer around schools and daycare centres for those locations that do have these sites?

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** Thank you to the member. Honestly, as a father, I would have serious concerns of a young child going to a site that's next to the school. I have

spoken to a lot of families in my riding; they share the same concern. There's a time and a place for everything. This is not the place.

I just think, if this bill passes, you're going to see a sense of relief where parents, myself included, can feel safer about their child going to school. They're not going to worry about what happens in these sites. I think this bill is going to make my riding and myself personally and the parents I represent feel safer.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I thank my friend from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for his comments. Look, our health care system is in crisis. We have millions of people without family doctors. We have emergency rooms, like in my community, that are closing. I understand the argument about proximity to daycares and schools, but here we have legislation that takes away yet another health care service, one that a lot of people are dependent on for their lives, but it replaces it with nothing. Bringing forward a piece of legislation like this, don't you think it's the government's responsibility to replace it with something since you're taking yet another health care service away from people who desperately need it?

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** What we are doing is creating a safer place for our daycares; a safer place for our schools. These existing sites are going to be transitioned into the HART hubs. This bill is dealing with safety. We will be transitioning these into the HART hubs, and that should suffice for that.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to ask the honourable member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, my neighbour, in addition to what is proposed in this legislation, what else is the government doing to continue to prevent auto car theft?

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** We have taken auto theft seriously. I don't care where you go in Ontario; it affects everybody. The government is increasing the offences. They're making the fines higher. They're adding in jail time. We're investing \$51 million just into auto theft, realizing that we do have a problem there. We're organizing crime networks to put thieves behind bars: the creation of the Ontario theft and towing team by the Ontario Provincial Police and a new community safety grant that targets this exact problem.

We're going to work on preventing auto theft. This bill pushes towards that.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'm glad we're talking about auto thefts, because no one wants to see auto thefts in the province. I had my Crown Vic stolen. It's a cop car, so it's surprising to me that it would be stolen, but it was.

But what you're doing here is after the fact. These are provisions that are after a crime has occurred. We've had the member from Oshawa, Jennifer French, say time and time again that VIN fraud is occurring all across the province. In fact, 59 arrests and 302 charges were laid after

phony VINs were being issued by employees at Service-Ontario. So why has this bill completely ignored the preventive measure to make sure VIN fraud does not occur, so that stolen vehicles can't be re-VINed?

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** By putting stiffer penalties in place, that is going to deter auto theft. Honestly, we are spending money into this. We understand a lot of it is organized. We understand that it is an issue right across the province. We are investing 51 million bucks into it to recognize that it is a problem.

But this bill will deter auto theft. This bill will make it so that people, when they do six months behind bars, will think the next time about whether they want to steal a car or not. The auto rings are the ones that we're going after, and this will have a ripple effect. This bill will be effective.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to my colleague the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for your comments. This bill is really about public safety. We had the Police Association of Ontario here today, so I'm just wondering if you've had any discussions with police officers or the Police Association of Ontario and if you have any thoughts on what the police think of the changes proposed in this bill.

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** Thank you. My partner's brother is an OPP officer, and he does think these are positive changes. We are making it easier for them to do their job. They are able to enforce what is going on.

Let's face it: It's been a wild ride to this point with auto theft and it has been getting worse. We are putting the right tools in place. We are giving authority to the right people, and at the end of the day, we are going to fix this problem.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** To my friend from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex: Thank you for your comments. I want to provide a thought on a pilot in our community and get your reaction to the thought. The Ottawa police have been working with community health centres and with small businesses. Particularly it started in the market in the downtown area, if you're familiar with that: the ByWard Market.

What they have been trying to do is identify leaders who are in the drug-user community to help restore a kind of social order and social compact with small businesses. As those neighbours—and they are neighbours; they live in my city too—are struggling with their addiction issues, they actually can respect someone from within their community. And the police officers are saying to the small business owners, to the elected officials like me, “We have to find a way to reach people to persuade them to take a path of wellness.”

This is one measure, a pilot measure. It's called the Block Leaders program, where these folks from within the drug-user community—folks who use drugs—are tapped as leaders and empowered to try to help people not cause disturbances, to engage in social behaviour. I'm wondering what you think about that, as a pilot idea.

**Mr. Steve Pinsonneault:** Honestly, I'm not familiar with that particular pilot project you're talking about. I do know in several communities within my riding they have the community watch program, which is in itself quite effective.

To answer your question, I'm not familiar with that and I'd honestly have to do some research before I could really give you an opinion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** That's all the time we have for questions and answers. We're going to move on to further debate.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm always honoured to take my space, to stand in this Legislature, to be able to add voice and hopefully some reason to bills that come before us. Today is the Safer Streets, Stronger Community Act that is before us. There are several schedules within this bill that talk about public safety, that talk about policing. There's some good stuff in there, stuff that we would improve for sure, as you've heard. Our critic for transportation, the member for Oshawa, has put forward several thoughts and ideas that could have improved this bill. Unfortunately, the government didn't see it necessary to act on that.

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But the part that I am going to focus on today is schedule 4, talking about safe consumption sites, the removal of them from our community, Speaker—as you are from Hamilton also, as well as the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas—and what that does to our communities. Because, let's face it, people who use drugs in our communities are people too. They are our parents; they are our brothers and sisters, our cousins, our neighbours. There are probably not many people who can actually say that they don't know somebody who has used drugs or has become an addict and fallen to the awful addictions that we see in our community.

We don't have to go far in our community to see people suffering from addictions on our streets. And, unfortunately, we are seeing our streets be more unsafe. We see our neighbours scared to go to some parts of our communities and our neighbourhoods. We see needles in our parks. We see a community that we just don't recognize any longer. But the portion, schedule 4, that is within this bill that will remove all consumption sites from our city—we only have one. We had another one in—the Minister of Sport is here, also another member from Hamilton.

This move is not going to help solve the problem, unfortunately. I wish there would be a day in our community where we wouldn't need these sites, but we do need sites. We do need the opportunity to save people who want to be saved while they're using drugs that they're addicted to. Nobody grows up as a child and says, "I want to be an addict." It's something that happens through prescription medications. It's something that, possibly, many homeless people are facing in our community. They possibly may not have been drug-addicted before they were homeless, but they find themselves using narcotics and using drugs to either stay awake and not fall asleep for their own safety, or they're taking drugs on the opposite

end of the spectrum: to sleep through this time in their life. And it becomes a terrible situation.

My heart breaks when I see people on our streets who you can clearly tell are under the influence. I spend many a time on the street with our Social Navigator Program, talking to people, building relationships with people, trying to understand how they got to that position. And none of it is pretty. None of it comes from a good-news story. They have fallen through the cracks somewhere at some point of their lives, to have found their way to a narcotic, and that narcotic has taken over their lives.

So, as a government, as legislators, as leaders in our communities, we should be finding every possible solution to help that person through that scenario. Not everybody is ready for recovery. Not everybody recognizes the fact that they need recovery. But when we don't have the available option when that person is ready for recovery, then we are failing way before any of this schedule could help or not help.

People need access to detox and to rehabs, first and foremost. People need access to safe, affordable homes. People need access to family doctors. People need access to mental health care. All of these things, and lack thereof, lead people to a place where they don't want to be. Let's face it. And are there folks out there who found their way to drugs through a party? Sure. Absolutely that's happened. But at that party, they probably weren't expecting the fact that they would be next on the street, barely being able to keep their clothes on or barely being able to stand up straight and not being able to walk a line and finding themselves using these awful narcotics. Their parents can't do anything about it while they're watching their loved ones on the street or finding themselves in jails because they're stealing or they're doing criminal offences to find that next drug. This is the reality of what real people in our community are facing.

To take away a place of safety that someone has made a conscious decision to enter—they're not in the park leaving their needles and pipes; they're in a safe place with health care officials who will ensure that they're not going to die. This is what is being removed with this schedule.

This is not a way forward. This does not fix the addictions in our community. Not one stitch of this will fix it; it will actually make our communities less safe. We're going to find more paraphernalia in parks. We're going to find more paraphernalia in the bus stops. We are going to find more people overdosing literally on our sidewalks.

Our paramedics are already busy, our police are already busy—and they're here today. They're going to be running, trying to save that person's life. Are they going to make it on time? Where are our health care systems going to be?

What is this lack of good judgment, I have to say, going to do for the finances that the Conservatives seem to think about instead of worrying about the health and the true life of our constituents? That is the concern, and that is why this schedule should be removed from this bill.

This bill is about safer streets, stronger communities. Safer streets and stronger communities are not going to

happen when we remove safe consumption sites in our community. It's not going to happen; it's going to make it worse. If you don't believe that it's actually going to make it worse, then you're not paying attention.

More people will die. More people will be in ambulances. More police will have to attend the site. More families will be at gravesites saying goodbye to their loved ones that they desperately wanted to help and didn't have the tools to do so.

That is not the direction that I'm sure anyone in this Legislature wants. That cannot be the direction that anyone in this Legislature wants for their community or for their own family members, because I'm sure there has got to be a family member somewhere on the government side who is affected by drugs.

Let's talk about a mom who goes to work every day. She's functioning. Many people who have drug addictions are functionable. They're not all on the streets. They're not all presenting in that sort yet, possibly—and hopefully never are.

She's coming home from work or he's coming home from work—mom or dad. Kids are at home. Before they get there, they want to make sure that they're taking what they need because their body is addicted to these drugs, so they're going to the safe consumption site to use. They're not hiding in their bathroom. They're not hiding in their car. They're in a safe environment where, if something goes wrong, there is somebody there immediately to fix them and to help them through that so that they can get home to their kids safely. That's what a safe consumption site does.

Are there problems in the community around safe consumption sites? Sure. Do you know why that is? Because those same sites don't have the resources to be able to manage what's happening on the streets around them. There are actual studies. It's proven. It is very proven, and it was the *Lancet* that did a peer medical review that safe consumption sites save lives in and around the site. That's actual fact.

**1420**

But due to public pressure, I guess, that the Premier was getting, due to the scene that people are seeing on their streets and in their neighbourhoods and in their parks—this is a knee-jerk reaction. This is not the solution. Like I said, if people are not using in a safe consumption site, they are going to be in the parks, they are going to be in their cars, they are going to be at bus stops, they're going to be wherever they can find space to use. And when nobody is there with that Narcan to give them that instant injection, they're going to die.

The number of overdoses: If I can—I haven't even looked at my papers yet. The number of overdoses that we have seen in our community is quite large.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** It's 22,000 deaths in Ontario.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** It's 22,000 deaths in Ontario.

Let's look at this: Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre had 61,667 total visits. That was 6,122 unique clients, 400 non-fatal overdoses—non-fatal because somebody was there to protect that person. That's a

big number. When I've met with urban core, they've told me they have not had one death, not one. How many deaths are we going to see if we don't have these sites available to us? That's not okay.

RNAO: They've spoken out very clearly, stating the need for safe consumption sites for the ability to save lives. These are our nurses. These are our health care workers. These are the same people who are going to either be trying to help people once they've overdosed and been taken to an emergency room or the same people who are going to put the toe tag on the people who didn't make it. These are our health care workers. These are the people whose voices we should be listening to when we're dealing with situations like this.

Now, the minister has talked about the HART hubs. The minister has said that the HART hub is the model that will be in place to replace the safe consumption sites. The HART hub will reflect community needs. That's great. Safe consumption sites are doing that now; they're building relationships. They're providing all the supports that they have the ability to. They could offer shelter beds. They could offer addiction care. They could offer primary care. They could offer supportive housing. They could offer employment support. That's a lot of "coulds".

What the minister said the HART hubs won't offer: They won't offer supervised consumption sites, they won't offer safer drug supplies and they won't offer needle exchange programs.

Let's talk about those needle exchange programs for a moment—and it's not just needles; it's also the glass pipes that are used. If they're sharing those tools, we are going to see an increase in HIV and in hepatitis. It's inevitable. It's absolutely inevitable. People have worked years to be able to get to the point where we are. They have worked off their feet while we see the explosion of drug use in our communities.

I would like to know what the government is doing to help the crisis and the epidemic that we're seeing on our streets when it comes to drug use. You're not doing anything. You're not doing anything to ensure that people have a way out, and that's what we need.

We need immediate detox. If someone says, "I want help," we should be able to take them by their hand and walk them right there, right then, no questions asked, immediately. Telling them, "Come back in 48 hours and we might be able to find you a bed," that's not going to work, and that's just for detox. And then, once we get them detoxed, which is an awful, painful, terrible thing to have to go through and that is done under supervised health care because people could die from detox, we have nowhere to send them. We have nowhere to help them, to give them the rehabilitation, to help them rehabilitate back into community, into a healthy life, drug-free.

You are offering none of those programs. They are wait-listed, and people are dying. People's kids are dying on the street daily. Absolutely daily, people are dying on our streets. It's an epidemic.

By removing a safe consumption site that somebody has made a conscious decision to enter, where they are

getting some of those supports, where they are making relationships, where they do have the hope of possibly getting into a detox and a rehab centre, you're taking it away. You're taking it away for the Premier to be able to say, "I'm cracking down and making our communities safer." No, Premier, you are not. You are not making our communities safer. You are actually making it worse.

We talk about moving the safe consumption site away from schools. Okay, I get it. Move them. Do what you need to do. But let's not forget that some of those children in those schools have parents who have addiction issues, who need sites like this so that they're not overdosing in the bathroom at home in front of their children. This is the reality. What you've put forward in front of us today is so anti-reality and is so blindsided by public appeal or policy that you think you know about. You are so wrong. You are so wrong.

I'm literally begging the government to remove this schedule. Remove this schedule. Let's put together a study. Let's work together for the betterment of our communities, to try and address the crisis that we see in our communities, to stop the overdoses, to stop the deaths. But we need to make sure that we have housing available, that we have shelter spaces available, that we have detox available, that we have rehab programs available, that we have health care available, that people can have a family doctor, that people have a roof over their heads, that people have access to employment and hope at the end of the day.

Because if you have a drug addiction and you're literally living on the street—maybe you don't even have a tent because somebody stole it or your encampment has been cleared out—what hope do you have? What hope do you have? Why would you want to get clean at that point? I might as well just stay drug-addicted and not have to pay attention to it. These are the things that our communities need. We're desperate. People are desperate.

Please, let's not forget. We cannot keep looking away. There is nowhere else to look. It's in every direction. People are people, regardless of their addiction, regardless of who they are. Something needs to be done. We need to start today by removing this schedule, by ensuring that people have actual, real services that will save lives in our communities.

Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. John Jordan:** I want to start by saying that nobody is arguing that people who suffer from addictions aren't people, so I take exception to that implication. When you talk about taking away all your injection sites, I think the proper wording would be that injection sites that are close to our schools and our daycares—we're taking those away.

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This bill is not about abandoning people. That's why we have the homeless, addiction and recovery centres. It's about helping people to get better. So my question to the member opposite: Is the member opposed to saying that safe injection sites should not be near our schools and our

children? And is the member opposite in favour of homelessness, addiction and recovery centres?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I am not opposed to any service that will save lives in our community. But I'm not going to turn my head and pretend that these services aren't part of a necessary plan to ensure that we do take care of people in our communities.

As I said in my remarks, I don't want kids exposed to this—absolutely not—but nobody can look away. You can't look away without seeing somebody in your community. This is not going to stop that. It's actually going to push more people into the community.

We only had one in Hamilton. We're losing it and there is no hope of getting another. All of the ones we are losing are not able to be replaced, and the ones that aren't being removed are not getting any more funding. So you're really actually taking them all away.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I want to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain for explaining and describing this crisis, this epidemic, that is in all of our communities. I know you know Hamilton so well. We met with the police from our community this morning. They talked about having to deploy Narcan two, three, four times a day. They said, "This is not our job," but they are doing it.

I know that you've gone on with the Social Navigator Program, that what you're talking about, you have seen with your own eyes. I think this idea that this government's saying, "We're closing these sites near schools"—sure; nobody wants to put our kids at risk. But you're closing all the sites. Hamilton has a population of 500,000-plus. We had one, and it's being closed. Can you describe what you have seen when you work with the Hamilton police and our social navigator program?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. I want to be really clear, and I said it through my remarks: We have kids who live and go to those same schools whose parents use those safe consumption sites, because they're in their neighbourhood and that's where they live. So those kids are not able to get away from it regardless.

That's where it comes to the government further investing in sites to ensure that community safety around it is there, and that there's relationships built. Just because you have an addiction doesn't make you a bad person. People do have their issues; there is no doubt. I can't sugar-coat any of that. Boy, I would love to, but I cannot.

We need community services, wrap-around services that look like all different types of things to ensure that our kids are safe and that we're not leading them to a life of addiction and to a life that nobody chooses for their kids.

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

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Question to the member opposite: I have friends, first-hand, who were drug addicts. Now they have quit. I can tell you none of them—zero, none—support this type of injection site.

Across Ontario, addiction treatment centres, that the HART hubs are modelled on, refuse to allow drugs to be

consumed on the premises where recovery and treatment is offered. The key is that recovery and treatment is offered. We applaud the hard work and dedication of the places. The staff, the team, day in and day out, are helping those recovering from addiction without enabling drug habits.

So are you saying that these fine health workers are wasting their time? Or do you recognize that there is more than one way to keep addicts safe?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** His last line meant everything: There is more than one way to keep addicts safe—yes, there is, and this is one of them.

Do his friends disagree with this? Possibly. That's okay. Not everybody is going to agree on everything, but your friends had the ability to get rehab, to be able to get clean. Maybe they were able to pay for it. We don't have these resources in our community to be able to do this, and let's not forget the fact that detox is a severe thing. People die from not having drugs, the drugs that they need—people die from that.

So we need to ensure we have proper detox facilities, proper rehab facilities and that we do have a mix of things. But taking away a safe consumption site and forcing people back on the street or into dark hallways where they could die and overdose is not the solution to help people get the recovery that they need, it's just not.

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

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thanks to the member from Hamilton Mountain for your comments. There has always been something I've found confusing about this particular debate and the way it is framed; it is almost as if we have to choose, like we have to choose between housing, treatment, employment options or safe places for people to not die because we have a poisonous illicit drug supply out there—it is like folks are playing Russian roulette with their lives often out there.

When I look at the evidence, when I talk to people at home, they say we need both. I want to say to the government, in all honesty, if the government had approached the community health centre in my riding that is slated to close the consumption treatment services on March 31 and said, "We want these services to be more of the focus than the CTS. We want us to work together," they would have, with open arms, said: "We have been waiting for these resources for 15, 20 years. This is great." That would have been the response. Instead, it was a press announcement at AMO in the summer that no one had any notice of, and you're dealing with centres that are helping people in extreme trauma.

I guess I'm asking the member from Hamilton Mountain, can't we have both? Can't we have a more collaborative way to doing community health and safety?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member from Ottawa Centre. Yes, absolutely, we have an epidemic on our hands. It is an extreme crisis that, as you heard, people know of people—from the other side, from the government side—so we need all hands on deck and that means all services on deck: safe affordable housing, proper detox,

proper rehab—on time, not rehab in two months because God love them if they even make it that far, or if they still want it at that point of that day.

We need all resources available to someone when they need it—immediately—and that's investment, I get that, but it's investment in our communities, it's investment in our kids, it's investment in our communities—it is the safety that our community members are asking for.

This is not going to solve the problem because what are you going to cut next when things are only worse after these are closed?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We have time for one final question.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I want to thank the member opposite. We talked about different sites, and I'm going to refer to them simply as sites. Sometimes these sites often see less than 100 clients a month, these CTS sites.

Could you clarify how many duplicate or repeat overdoses are being prevented on the same persons over and over again? Instead of helping them recover, I think we have to look at this in a quality way and I'm just wondering if she has any comments on that.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would love for people to have more services and better access. While they're in those facilities, they are getting supports but those same people are handcuffed about what supports they can offer to the people who are using.

It's a whole thing; it's not something that you can just use one piece of the puzzle and think you're fixing something because you're not—you're actually making the problem worse by what you are doing.

By providing more supports in our community, by ensuring that we are offering all of those things, those sites would love to have those options and services available to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It is time for further debate.

1440

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** My thanks to the Solicitor General and the Associate Minister of Bail Reform for their amazing work, and to all my colleagues who contributed to this bill.

It is an honour and responsibility to stand up before you as the voice of the community and the region of Durham. Today, I want to talk a bit about the shared commitment that lies at the very core of what we do as public servants, parents and community members. It is about ensuring the safety of our streets and the strength of our communities.

As we look at the challenges that confront our province, one thing is clear: Public safety must be a priority and cannot be an afterthought. That is why I'm proud to stand behind the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024, which is not just a collection of laws but a powerful road map for creating safer neighbourhoods, supporting victims and holding those who break the law accountable.

This bill also provides the Solicitor General with the ability to create long-service and good-conduct medals for the municipal emergency workers, and I just want to thank the Solicitor General for that as I had the privilege to

introduce that private member's bill just a couple of weeks ago. This is an important step towards honouring their service, celebrating their sacrifices and showing them that Ontario stands behind them, now and always.

In Ajax and across the Durham region, we're incredibly fortunate to live in one of the most dynamic and diverse communities. Ajax is a place where families work hard, where businesses thrive and where we constantly build towards a greater future. As our community grows, so do the challenges that we face. Whether it's the troubling rise in auto thefts, the dangers of reckless driving or concerns around the safety of our children in public spaces, these issues remind us of the need for bold and decisive action.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is not just about addressing crime; it's about addressing the concerns of families like yours and mine. It's about ensuring that every child can walk to school without fear, that every parent can drive to work without worry and that our neighbourhoods continue to feel like home.

Let us talk about the rising impact of auto theft. In Toronto, a car is stolen every 40 minutes. In my community, residents have experienced this first-hand. Vehicles are stolen from driveways, shopping centres and public spaces. Sometimes the same person might have lost their car twice, to be victimized more than once. These aren't just statistics; they are stories of disruptions, of families left stranded and of hard-working people burdened by costs they should never have to bear.

This legislation takes action against auto theft. It creates new provincial offences for the fraudulent use of VIN numbers and enhances penalties for those who participate in this growing crime. It also supports police services, including in my community of Durham, with targeted funding for dismantling organized crime networks behind these thefts. Because it is not just about the stealing of the car; it is all the other pieces that are connected.

We do recognize that organized crime is a big part of this. And what comes out of organized crime? We have money laundering. We have human trafficking. We have sex exploitation. For a community like Ajax, where many families rely on their vehicles to commute, run errands and care for loved ones, the measures that we are putting in place are most urgent.

As a mother, one of the important aspects of this legislation to me is the protection it offers to children and families. Many parents have shared their concerns about supervised consumption sites that are located too close to schools, child care centres and family hubs. I recognize that this is a polarizing discussion. We have support on both sides. I have spoken to families who do not support safe consumption sites, families who have said that if their family member was able to really hit bottom, they probably would still be here alive.

Our government is continuing to look at the ways that we can help and support people who are suffering from addictions. We do not say that it is the wrong pathway to take. We say and we have continued to hear that we need more wraparound offerings to be able to do this. That is why in our government's Roadmap to Wellness, our

government has taken action to build a modern mental health and addictions support system that is focused on providing people with the right care in the right places.

While we must be compassionate for individuals struggling with addiction, we cannot ignore the impact on our communities, especially our most vulnerable. We should have an expectation of people recovering. We should have an expectation of people being able to recover and live full lives.

The members across talk about a parent that has an addiction that a child has to deal with. These are long-lasting impacts on not only those children, but on those families as well, and so we really should be talking about what we are talking about now: the supports that we want to put in place, wraparound supports that help people to get past addiction. It is not easy; we do not say it is. We do not say that it will happen overnight. But we do think that we should expect better for people who are in addiction; that we should not continue to perpetrate and keep them in a state where their quality of life is so diminished.

The act abolishes sites from being within 200 metres of schools and child care centres, while providing a pathway for these sites to transition into homelessness and addiction recovery hubs. These hubs will be a game-changer. They focus on treatment and recovery, while offering critical supports like mental health services, addiction care and housing. These ensure we are addressing addiction compassionately, while prioritizing the safety of our children and the integrity of our communities.

We are offering people who are struggling with addiction the opportunity to get help and wraparound support, bringing dignity back to those who are suffering from addictions. The fallout from being in the throes of addiction is long-lasting, and we know it leads to many more things. People who are in the state of addiction are in an altered state where the most important thing for them is their next shot. We have seen this, and this is why our government is committing to building these HART hubs, to have a crossover that will give people who are suffering from addictions additional supports.

The next thing that we are tackling within this bill is dangerous driving and recklessness. We have seen the devastating impact of dangerous driving, whether it's collisions in parking lots or the chaos of illegal street racing. These actions endanger everyone. This legislation strengthens penalties for careless driving, extends the time police have to lay charges and, for the first time, applies these laws to private spaces like parking lots. This means reckless drivers will face consequences whether they endanger lives on a highway or in a local mall. For families in Ajax, where shopping centres, community hubs, are vital to daily life, this sends a powerful message: Safety comes first and reckless behaviours are not tolerated.

Durham region is fortunate to have dedicated law enforcement officers who work tirelessly to protect our communities. This act gives them the tools they need to monitor sex offenders, prevent name changes for individuals on the Sex Offender Registry and investigate sex crimes more effectively.

Additionally, this legislation removes the limitation periods for victims of terrorism to pursue justice, ensuring that no one is denied their day in court simply because too much time has passed. These measures reflect our government's unwavering commitment to supporting victims and standing with those who serve and protect. It is important.

We are extending the drug treatment centres that are connected to courts. These are drug treatment courts that combine judicial supervision with structural substance programs. This is what we're talking about when we're talking about looking at holistic ways of helping people who are suffering from addictions: giving them options, giving them the opportunity to regain their lives and to regain dignity. Through these programs, it provides alternatives to incarceration for individuals facing charges related to non-violent criminal activities and associated with substance disorders. They provide intensive case management, frequent court appearances and random drug testing. Successful completion of these programs can result in a non-custodial sentence, and it is a collaborative approach, and we've talked so much about that and the import of these wraparound services. It's a collaboration between a judge, the prosecutor, counsel and treatment providers to help these individuals to choose a different path from the continual cycle of addiction.

**1450**

We are also talking about some of the things that we have invested within our government. We have heard through our colleague on the other side about this government really not doing anything to help people that are suffering, and I disagree with that. Our government has continued to invest in mental health and addictions. We have created the Roadmap to Wellness, where we have invested \$525 million since 2019, and that has covered a range of addiction treatments and supports, including the rapid access addiction medicine clinics, which provide quick access to addiction services without the need of a referral. We have expanded our youth hubs. Our youth wellness hubs offer evidence-based mental care, substance use and primary care to youth 12 to 25 years. Since 2020, our government has opened 23 new youth hubs, including in northwestern Ontario. We have launched virtual intensive treatment programs which are six-week intensive programs for moderate to severe substance use that people from across Ontario can access across the Internet. We have structured psychotherapy programs, offering convenient, free cognitive behavioural therapy to Ontarians across the province. So this that we're talking about are just some of the things that we are investing in that offer support around mental health and addictions.

We have also, within this bill—we have talked a little bit more about the long service and good-conduct medals for emergency workers.

Actually, before I go to that, I'm just going to pull this up: When we talk about the hubs—the integrated treatment court hubs that offer drug treatment—I want to talk about that a little bit more.

We talk about the judicial supervision, which is integrated treatment. The courts are involved, and regular

judicial oversight, with judges playing an active role in monitoring progress with participants. These provide a really non-adversarial approach. These courts use a collaborative, non-adversarial model, including judges and prosecutors. And that's what we're talking about: really having different options for people that are suffering from addiction. The comprehensive integrated support that these court services offer provides access to a range of services, including substance abuse treatment, mental health support, social services, and tailored to individual needs. These programs have a great success rate. That is why we are continuing to support programs like those that help people to recover and to get back to living—because a drug addiction is not living; it is really living in a heightened state of emergency at all times.

And I know families that have accessed this. I have been in close contact with people that have been addicted to drugs as well. They wanted somebody to lift them out. They wanted somebody to help them. Our colleague across the way is right: Sometimes you're not ready, and you have to make that decision. But how do we do that? How do we help them to make that decision if we continue to keep them in this altered mental state where they cannot make rational decisions?

So this is—I really disagree; we are being painted with a brush of “people that don't care.” I know we have gotten it in our constits: “There's blood on your hands. There will be blood on your heads.” But I also attended a high school recently, and it was the ACT program that was teaching high school kids first aid, and they had taught quite a lot of kids across Ontario first aid. And now in that first aid treatment they're now training them how to administer naloxone kits. That is where we are in our province, where we are training in so many different areas. Our kids are being trained on that, as well. That is important because when there is somebody in crisis, you want to have somebody that can help you.

We'll move on, and I'll talk a little bit about the long-service and good conduct medal. In addition to our law enforcement officers, it's important that we recognize the municipal emergency workers, recognizing that they face similar dangers and challenges as their counterparts. In Ontario, we are proud to have a diverse range of front-line emergency workers, from urban communities, such as Toronto, to smaller communities, such as Thunder Bay and Cornwall.

Within this bill, it now gives the Solicitor General the opportunity to explore how to put in place a long-service medal for those that have served for a long period of time. I don't want to say how many years because I'm not sure what he is going to come up with as of yet. I think this is so important, and even as many of us have met with police officers within our communities today, that we recognize. We recognize that policing has changed. Policing has become the catch-all for so many of our social services and it does take a toll on them, as well. We're seeing officers that are not staying as long as they used to stay. You know, of the officers that I met, one of the officers today was actually retiring after 33 years of service; I don't know



how many of the young officers will stay that long anymore.

It is so important that we recognize their work and the work that they do. I can say that every organization has their challenges, and the police do, as well, because policing has changed. As an organization, they need to look at how they change, how they talk about and deal with the challenges that they are facing today. How do they do that when training is the same? We need to talk about what our communities look like now.

What makes the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act so important is that it doesn't react to crime; it works to prevent it. By proclaiming November as a community safety and crime prevention month, we're fostering a culture of awareness and action. That also goes to the point where we need to acknowledge and appreciate our front-line workers, because the work they do is so essential. The act also expands justice centres that we've set, which is also an amazing piece in crime prevention.

These initiatives are about breaking the cycles of harm and ensuring that people receive the help they need before they reach a breaking point. When I look at Ajax, I see a community filled with potential, as do many of us across the province. I see young people walking to school with big dreams, families building their futures and seniors enjoying the peace that they have worked so hard to gain. The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is about preserving that potential and protecting the quality of life we all cherish.

This legislation ensures that no family has to live in fear and children can walk to school and experience their playgrounds in a safe space. No one is left without support. It's creating a province where every Ontarian feels like they belong and feels like they are safe. The road to safer streets and stronger communities starts with us. It starts with full action, with listening to the voices of our residents, and with a government willing to put people first.

The Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act is a testament to what we can achieve if we work together, and it is my commitment—and I thank you for your partnership, your dedication, and your belief in the power of community. Together we can and will make Ontario a safer and stronger place that is more united.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's now time for questions.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to thank the member for her very thoughtful speech today. She mentioned auto theft, and it's something that we are all very concerned with. Certainly, in the time that the government has been in office, it has been a growing problem. In fact, auto thefts in the province of Ontario are up by more than 100% in the six years since the government has held power. I know during that period of time, the government has met with different industries and different businesses. We hear about it all the time.

One of the industries and one of the places that they have not invested their time is talking to auto manufacturers who want to sell cars in Ontario and what they

can do about making these cars safer. This is something that law enforcement and police have talked to us about, how easy it is, when you have those remote key fobs and other things, to be able to break into these cars.

**1500**

Will the member commit to talking to her colleagues and ministers about how important it is to speak to these manufacturers to ensure that cars that are sold in the province of Ontario have the highest standards of protection? I think this is something you can do, and I hope you'll do it in a very public way, if you do so.

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you to the member for that question. Of course, we continue to explore every option that we can to make Ontario safer for Ontarians. We talk about technology and the reality of government is, technology moves ahead so much faster than we do with legislation, so much faster than we do, and we're often behind the eight ball when it comes to regulating technology. I think this is what we are seeing with car theft.

It's easier for us to be able to press a button and get into our cars. I went into my friend's car the other day, because they lent it to me, and I kept looking for the key to put it in the hole, and now it's just a push button. It is something that—old school, I don't how to say it, but definitely the conversation continues to figure out how we can do better.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Thank you for the really informative speech from my colleague. I would like to ask her and also tell the opposition, we hear from our Associate Minister for Auto Theft and Bail Reform how much is needed to change to require keeping criminals where they belong, behind bars. We hear many stories about cars thefts and break-ins, where people can take the keys and flee with the cars; many cars get into accidents and we discover that they are stolen. Stories about thieves who actually go to court and then the same day they get bailed out and they do another incident to collect money for the lawyers.

What is the government doing to aid the collection of these bail statistics to support the recent calls for Criminal Code reform?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you for that question. We recognize that car theft is a crime of opportunity. Before you had one or two cars that were stolen across the province. It wasn't that lucrative. Now it is. It's a part of organized crime. It funds so many other things. We can't just think about this as just a car going missing. There's so much more, the implications. We continue to work with our federal counterparts in regard to how to stop this crime and break down this crime. Because we can be concerned about what's coming in, but we now need to really look at what's going out. Part of that is the amount of cars that are flowing out of our country and into other countries are really creating a cash system.

The ministry is collecting bail data on behalf of the Ontario Court of Justice and we'll continue to look at that and analyze those—

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member for her comments and debate today. I think people across Ontario are growing very tired of political games. Of all the schedules in Bill 223, we support them all, with the exception of schedule 4. This government seems ideologically opposed to not only providing supports for people who are struggling with addiction and mental health, but also providing affordable housing for anyone who needs it.

I'd like to ask the member: We see the proliferation of Doug Ford's encampments across the province. Does the member not agree that it is cheaper and more humane to house people with supports than it is to leave them languishing on the streets?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Again, I take exception to the statement that says that we are playing games. You don't play games with peoples' lives. That is why we are invested in our Homelessness Prevention Program, and we've rolled that out to municipalities across the province. We have invested \$700 million into that program. That is a substantial investment. That is just one program out of the many that we have put in place as a government to support people that are suffering from homelessness, addictions and mental health.

We continue to ask the opposition to continue to support these programs. We know they are concerned about it. They can vote and can support the rolling out of funding for these programs.

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

**Mr. David Smith:** I want to thank my colleague from Ajax.

We heard from the Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform that change is required to keep criminals where they belong, behind bars. What is the government doing to aid the collection of bail statistics to support the recent call for criminal change reforms?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** Thank you, sir. I'm extremely proud of this program because we had out in Durham region—when I was on the police board, they had come up with this bail tracking dashboard. I remember when they showed it to us on the police board, and it was such a great thing to be able to look in real time about people that are out on bail and where they were stationed. It really gave the police officers in Durham at the time the ability to be able to locate perpetrators that were out on bail. We have since rolled that out province-wide, which is a fantastic opportunity for officers to be able to—what we say, “Tools to do their jobs.”

I had mentioned before that the OCJ reports on their website, and they collect and analyze and report reliable data on bail, which is crucial to supporting the proper administration of the bail system and addressing concerns about public safety. So we're really starting to look at that data, really digging down into that, and continue to work to keep people in jail.

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

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I wanted to, on behalf of the member from Oshawa—who has been bringing up time and time again the fact that this government is not cracking down on VIN fraud. You had a perfect opportunity in this bill to include that. We know that earlier this month, Toronto police made 59 arrests and filed 302 charges after they uncovered a scheme involving the phony registration of VINs, vehicle identification numbers, by employees of a ServiceOntario location.

We've been calling time and time again for preventative measures to stop the fraudulent use of VINs, which is a clearly important component to vehicle theft. Vehicles are stolen, they're re-VINed, they might be sold unwillingly to people in the communities, or they might be shipped off, but this is a huge piece of your attempt to stop auto theft. It's a huge, huge component that you've completely overlooked. Why is that?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** I say to my colleague across the way, we continue to look at ways to be effective. This legislation is the first step towards that. Of course, we have never said or ruled out the possibility of implementing technology that can actually track and do what you're talking about in regard to tracking VIN registration.

The proposal in this bill is to actually create an offence for re-VINing vehicles because we don't have that now. The proposed legislation would create a new provincial offence under the Highway Traffic Act for providing a false VIN number when applying for a vehicle permit. Penalties would range from \$50,000 to \$75,000 for the first conviction and \$75,000 to \$100,000 for subsequent convictions, with the possibility of up to six months in jail. So I think we're making the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It is now time for further debate.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'm pleased to be here in the Legislature today to speak to the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, Bill 223. What a bill—wow. What a divisive bill we have here.

A few days ago, I was sent a photo of a man called Jonah by his mother, Katherine McCloskey. Jonah is holding his two-year-old son, Hendrix, on a TTC train because Hendrix loves trains. Jonah died of an overdose on June 2, 2024. Hendrix lost his dad at a time in his life where he will probably never hold memories of him, and Katherine McCloskey lost her son.

**1510**

Jonah's mother, Katherine, spoke about her son at a press conference we hosted at Queen's Park in September of this year. I cannot believe she came. Her son had just died. She says, “I could not protect my adult son Jonah from being killed by Toronto's toxic drug supply, but the Conservative government can choose to protect some of this province's most vulnerable sons and daughters.”

The Conservatives are not listening to Katherine's plea. This bill is a bill that will close 10 consumption and treatment sites by March 2025, and ban new sites from opening up anywhere in Ontario. Those sites include the consumption site in Kensington on Augusta Avenue.

Let's be clear about what consumption and treatment sites are. They are essentially a room where people go and inject their own drugs under the watchful eye of a nurse or a health care worker who can revive them if they overdose. That's essentially what it is. These sites can also help people access health care and other services, such as getting a doctor's appointment with a family doctor or getting on a wait-list for supportive housing, because often that health care worker in that room is that person's only point of contact for services—their only point of contact for services.

The statistics are horrific. They are horrific. According to Public Health Ontario, in 2022, 2,531 people died of an overdose. That's a lot. There were also 2,044 hospitalizations and 12,144 emergency room visits—to our overcrowded, overburdened hospitals. I had someone come up to me and say, "You know, when someone goes to the hospital with an overdose, it's not like they just come in and walk out." Some of them do, but some of them don't, because when people overdose, oxygen to the brain is reduced, which can lead to permanent brain damage. So we are having situations where often young people, under 40, are in a situation where they are experiencing permanent brain damage because we do not have an easy and safe place for them to use and survive an overdose addiction. It is an absolute shame. It means people will die, people like Jonah: sons, daughters, fathers, mothers.

I also want to be clear. When consumption and treatment sites close, the problem of addiction does not go away. People take drugs elsewhere. Instead of using them at the site, they will use them in nearby washrooms. They will use them outside businesses, which they currently do in Kensington. They will use them in schoolyards. The entire neighbourhood becomes a consumption site if we don't provide a safe, secure location with health care workers present for people to use and survive if they overdose. That's the facts. That is the facts.

Now, the Conservatives say they'll set up 10 abstinence treatment centres to help some people struggling with addiction. I'd like to know when. It would be good to know when. But, quite frankly, an abstinence-only approach is as dangerous as instructing a drowning person on how to swim instead of throwing them a life jacket.

The Minister of Health was asked by a reporter from the Trillium, Jack Hauen, if research had been done about how many people will die as a result of this decision to close consumption sites. And her answer is astonishing. Her answer is, "Jack"—that was the reporter's name—"people are not going to die. They're going to get access to service." Do you really believe that? Do you honestly really believe that?

I really question why the Conservatives are taking such a dangerous approach to addressing addiction. I question it. And I fear, I fear it is because an election is coming up and the Conservatives want to play a divisive game of securing votes by choosing wedge issues and targeting vulnerable people instead of showing leadership and addressing the crisis of addiction.

Municipalities, hospitals, nurses, public health experts and even two provincial government-commissioned reports recommend keeping consumption sites open. There is sometimes an issue of crime, no question. And consumption sites have approached this government and said, "Why don't you help us with that issue by providing us with additional social workers and security so we can tackle that specific issue?" The government chose to ignore that recommendation.

The truth is the Ontario government can and must meet people where they're at by keeping them alive and preventing them from having an overdose by keeping consumption sites open. The truth is the government can and must provide more treatment, health care, counselling and housing to help people recover and rebuild their lives. And the truth is—and I never hear the government talk about this; I never hear them talk about this—the government can do more to help people from becoming addicted in the first place by tackling root cause issues like poverty, a lack of housing and abuse. Where is your plan to stop addiction from happening in the first place? Because I don't see it.

We recently organized a rally in our neighbourhood of Kensington. We did outreach to the businesses, we went one-on-one. We know there are challenges with the consumption site. We're not going to pretend that there isn't. So we went one-on-one to the businesses, we went one-on-one to residents in the area, we gave out flyers, we worked with the local neighbourhood group that runs the consumption site to hold a rally. To say this community understands that this consumption site is valuable to our community because it saves lives, and it contains the issue of drug use within a specific area instead of having it go everywhere. And we had many people come out, and I want to read some of their quotes.

One of them is from Patricia Au. She's a local parent at Kensington Community School—within a 200-metre radius. Kensington actually supports the consumption site because before the consumption site existed, people were using in the schoolyard. They were using in the schoolyard, because that's the reality of Kensington.

The Kensington Community School, the principal, supported the consumption site being established, and Patricia, who is a local parent and a member of the parent council, also supports it. And her quote is: "Closing the site undermines our community's efforts to create a safe environment for the most vulnerable members and to offer them the support they need to manage their addictions. As a parent in this neighbourhood, with children who attend the local elementary school, we have taught our kids the values of compassion and humanity towards those in need. Safe injection sites play a crucial role in breaking the cycle of addiction. If school-age children can grasp this concept, the government should step up and understand this too."

Here's another quote. This comes from an individual who uses the consumption site in Kensington. They've chosen to remain anonymous, so we're going to call them a client. This is their quote: As a client of the Kensington site, "I have to say it is my extended family, without them

I would be using alone in laneways and alleyways. I don't know if I would be alive. I am scared if the OPS"—overdose prevention site—"closes what will happen to me and my friends? The staff" at the site "show us love, support and understanding. We are not judged or stigmatized in any way. Why would anyone want to take that away from us? I don't understand. The announcement made me cry. I don't want to lose any more friends." This site "is the only family I have and we're losing too many people to overdose." This site "saves lives every day. They saved two more people yesterday.

"Why doesn't this government want us to be safe? Don't we matter.... Please reconsider the announcement. You are killing us if" this site "closes.... We want" the site "to stay."

I want to read some other quotes from people who attended the community rally at Kensington. It was a diverse group of people. Over 200 people came.

This is a quote from local resident Robyn Armstrong, who attended the rally, and she said that the site is extremely important for her community. She said that "the site doesn't make her concerned for her son's safety." She said she is a parent and she "welcomes the site as important health care.

"Safe sites reduce public drug use and save the lives of vulnerable people." She gets it, and when people live in Kensington—the vast majority of people get it, because they know people are not going to go away if the site closes.

This is another quote. This comes from Joanne, who manages a bar in the area. She said she "has befriended some people who regularly visit the consumption site.... Sometimes, it's hard." It is hard. The consumption site is not an easy place to visit. "Some people can't even work here because you see people overdosing across the street. She says "the site should stay open as people using drugs won't leave the area even if it closes. 'They're still going to be here. They might as well have services, food and a place to shower.'" That is the reality of it. It's called harm reduction for a reason. It's hard to see this government making decisions that put politics ahead of saving people's lives. It is very hard.

**1520**

I want to talk a little about some other aspects of the bill in the time I have remaining, and the aspects of the bill that I would like to talk about is the decision by the government to move ahead with better regulating the VIN process. What we see with the issue of VINs with this new bill is that the government is going to create a new provincial offence of using a false vehicle identification number, and the fine associated with using a false VIN is up to \$100,000, imprisonment of up to six months and a possible suspension of a driver's licence. This is a good step in the right direction, and we want more steps taken in order to ensure the province is doing everything it can to clamp down on the market for stolen vehicles, and this is an issue in my riding. This is an issue in my riding.

Earlier this year, I attended and was a speaker at an event on safety at the Rosedale United Church in my

riding. The event was organized by numerous residents' associations—the North Rosedale, South Rosedale, Moore Park, Summerhill, Governors Bridge and Bennington Heights residents' associations—and the main topic of this town hall was the sharp rise in auto theft. I've reached out to the ministers responsible for this topic to raise the concerns that I heard at this event.

Residents spoke of having their homes broken into, of having their car keys stolen while they were sleeping in the home. Many residents spoke up again and again about how angry, betrayed, scared and worried they were for their safety, both inside and outside the home.

The police were there—it's Toronto police 53 division—to give a summary of the extent of the rise of auto theft, not just in this particular area but across Ontario, and the statistics are sobering. There has been a 524% increase in auto theft claims costs from 2018 to 2023. It is shocking. People have the right to feel safe. That's what I expect in Ontario; I think that's what everyone expects.

We also know that solving the issue of auto theft is going to require a coordinated effort from all three levels of government. Now, at that town hall—and also we're hearing the government on the other side do this as well—there was a lot of focus on what the federal government can do. I agree. The federal government should be doing more to ensure that stolen vehicles are not quickly and easily shipped out of our ports to other countries and sold.

But what I also think is important is for us to focus on what the provincial government can do to address the issue of auto theft, and what I see in this bill is a move to clamp down on the very real issue of a vehicle being stolen and then being re-registered through ServiceOntario, through the use of a false vehicle identification number, and there is some effort here to address that problem.

My request, and I think our party's request, is that you need to go further. Other provinces have moved forward with having a proactive response to investigating vehicle identification numbers to ensure that no vehicle that is stolen is permitted to be re-registered under the ServiceOntario process and get a new VIN. It shouldn't happen, and the measures that I'm seeing in this bill, what I'm hearing from stakeholders already, is that it doesn't go far enough. If we want to stop the resale of stolen vehicles in Ontario, you need to do more. The Conservatives need to do more.

The other piece that I believe the MPP for Toronto Centre raises regularly is that if we want to address the issue of auto theft, we need an appropriate policing response and we also need an appropriate legal response. What we're seeing in the court system today is astronomically long delays in people getting access to justice, and that is overwhelmingly because there are significant staffing shortages and judges in the provincial court system—overwhelmingly. And this doesn't just concern the issue of auto theft. It also concerns issues of people who are survivors of assault, of sexual assault. They're having their cases thrown out in court because the timeline for them to get a hearing and a trial is so long that the case is thrown out. That should not be happening in Ontario

today, and it does. That is a shame, and I urge this government to fix it.

We recently had a fall economic statement that was just announced, and what shocked me is that instead of bolstering support for our justice system, this government has made a decision to cut funding to the justice system, which will only make the issues that we are seeing in our legal system worse. That is the wrong direction to take.

I want to conclude by talking a little bit about what I've seen this government do over the last few months since we've returned to the Legislature. What I see is this government is engaging in politics of division.

We are seeing them blaming the Liberal carbon tax for the affordability crisis even though affordability is a measure that this government can address.

We're seeing this government blame bike lanes—three bike lanes approximately three feet wide—for the entire congestion crisis that we have across the GTHA. That doesn't even make sense. Toronto has been on record of having the worst commute times for decades, and yet somehow, mysteriously, there are these three bike lanes in downtown Toronto that are the reason why people are having congestion issues on the 401. No reasonable person believes that, yet you're doing that. You're saying, "Oh, it's bike lanes. They're the reason that we have a congestion crisis," instead of dealing with the issue at hand, which is investing in transit.

We see this government blaming the poor for living in encampments, which I find awful because there are reasons why people live in encampments. They're struggling, they're vulnerable, they're poor.

I would like to see this government move forward with vacancy control and real rent control so rent can be affordable again. I would like to see this government build affordable housing instead of turning their back on it. I would like to see this government increase social assistance rates so people can afford to live in our cities and towns. That is a very effective way to deal with the encampment crisis, but I don't see this government doing that. Instead, they're playing the game of blaming people for problems that this government has a responsibility to address.

When I go door to door, the issues that I hear about are issues that I would like this government to address and what we are advocating for, and those issues include ensuring that housing is affordable—that it is possible for an individual or family to buy a home; that it is possible for an individual to move into Toronto, get a job and afford the rent. That's not a lot to ask for. That's what people want.

When I go door to door, I hear people talk about their lack of access to family doctors. They want a family doctor or a nurse practitioner who can see them if they have a problem. That's what they want, but instead, we're seeing this government move ahead with privatization and not move forward with meaningful steps to ensure everyone in Ontario has a doctor.

When I go door to door, I hear people talk about how they want municipalities that work. They want potholes to

be filled; they want the transit to turn up on time; they want to pay a reasonable fare; they want the libraries to be open; they want daycares; and they want our parks to be free from garbage. In order for that to happen, the Conservatives need to properly fund services at the municipal level so that our cities and towns can work. That's what people want, but instead, what we're getting from this government is the game of diversion. I think that's a shame because people will die as a result of that and people will suffer. I think that you should take a different approach.

That's all I have to say today. What a terrible bill. Aspects of this—it's just an outright terrible bill. People in my riding will die when this consumption and treatment site closes, and I think that is a shame. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I listened respectfully to the member opposite, and our government is taking a balanced approach. I used to work under the child protection act, and this bill introduces measures to address the root cause of crime, including expanding justice centres and integrated treatment courts. I've spoken to parents who live near sites, and they're not lying when they talk about stepping over needles and being afraid to be near consumption sites with their children.

I'm just wondering what the opposition's comments are on a balanced approach that focuses on both crime prevention and rehabilitation when these programs are often proven effective and reduce reoffending and improve public safety.

1530

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you very much for that question. I think there's this assumption that if you move a consumption and treatment site, suddenly people who are using drugs are just going to magically disappear. That's, quite frankly, not true. What we have seen is that if a consumption and treatment site is moved, people continue to use; it's just more likely they're going to use in the street, they're going to use in the schoolyard, they're going to use in front of a business. Containing the problem actually results in increased safety.

If this government was serious about addressing the addiction issue and keeping people alive using a harm reduction approach, they would allow other consumption and treatment sites to be opened that are 200 metres or further away from schools and daycares, but this government is choosing not to do that. I think that is a shame.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** What an impassioned speech—informed, researched, evidence-based commentary on safe consumption sites. One of the shocking numbers that the member mentioned was the over 2,600 people who died of drug-related toxicity in Ontario last year. Just to give you some context: A Boeing 747 holds 366 passengers, so seven planes crashed in this province last year, and the government's response is to shut down, basically, the safety and health and well-being of those individuals. It's really quite something.

“Researchers have studied safe consumption sites for efficacy in three primary areas ... reducing individuals’ physical harms associated with drug use”—which she covered—“such as the spread of HIV and hepatitis C, infections, and overdose” and reducing social harms.

To my colleague: What do you really think is going on with this bill that has a poison pill, ironically, in removing safe consumption sites?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Waterloo. Yes, this bill does have a poison pill in it. There are measures in this bill that are absolutely supportable, but then there’s this terrible aspect of the bill where there is a move to close down consumption and treatment sites.

I would like this government to take a comprehensive approach to dealing with the issue of addiction, where we meet people where they’re at and keep them alive, and we provide comprehensive holistic services, from mental health care to support to affordable housing to addiction treatment. We can do both. It’s not one or the other.

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

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** I listened intently to my friend from University–Rosedale. We have consumption sites now and people are still overdosing outside of them. In fact, I was told that people come near the site but won’t go in, so they are on the streets sometimes—often—and needles are on the streets and drugs are on the streets and other things are on the streets.

How do you answer the family of Karolina Huebner-Makurat, 44, who was killed because these sites become a magnet for crime? Statistics have painted a grim picture. It’s out of control around consumption sites. Crime data shows 113% higher reports of assault, 76% higher reports of break-and-enter, 40% higher reports of shootings, 96% higher reports of robbery and 44% higher reports of homicide. People are being killed because these places are magnets for crime.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** This is a genuine question back to the member opposite: What do you think is going to happen when these consumption and treatment sites close? Where do you think people are going to go? In that situation where an individual was shot, the consumption and treatment site and the social service agency asked for additional support and additional funding to provide for security in the area, like many of the consumption and treatment sites have. Did the government provide it? No.

Where is this government’s plan to address some of the root-cause issues that lead people to use in the first place? Where is the increase in social assistance rates? Where is the plan to provide affordable housing and supportive housing that matches the need? Where is the commitment to provide serious mental health and addiction services that match the urgency of the problem? I don’t see it.

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

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I would like to thank my friend from University–Rosedale for a very informative and important speech. I just wish that the government had

been listening about what root causes are and how to address them.

My question, though: the member’s comments about thieves and criminals using ServiceOntario locations to register stolen vehicles, and the fact that there is no system in place in Ontario to verify VINs—this has made Ontario not only a hot spot for theft, but a hot spot to move stolen property.

Are the punishments that are set out in Bill 223 an effective deterrent to crime, and do punishments actually solve the root cause of the problem?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for that question. What we are hearing is that, in this bill, there is a move to crack down on the use of taking a stolen vehicle and getting it licensed again, giving it a VIN number through the ServiceOntario process.

The problem we see is that experts are telling us that it doesn’t go far enough, and that one measure that the Ontario government could do is to look at what other provinces are doing and to move ahead with a system in place that would investigate and verify VIN numbers in a more proactive fashion. My hope is that, when we go to the amendments process, there is a move to take this measure to crack down on VIN abuse one step further so we can stop the sale of stolen vehicles in Ontario.

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

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** I was listening intently to my colleague on the other side. She brought up the Kensington safe consumption site. I just want to say, let’s look at some of the things that we’ve seen through their Instagram account. We have a post that went on their Instagram account that says, “This is a beautiful chunk of fentanyl used today by one of our clients. We thank them for letting us snap a” quick “pic and share.” Or they’re crafty when they posted, “Making them pre-made crack pipes.”

Can you not see why a community would be concerned about consumption sites? What do you think about this kind of posting that seems to be creating an atmosphere where it’s okay?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you are very much for that. We did extensive outreach in the community to talk about the consumption and treatment site. We went to all the retail businesses in that area. We visited the local schools. We’ve gone door-to-door in the neighbourhood, and we work regularly with the Neighbourhood Group, which is the organization that runs that consumption and treatment site.

The Neighbourhood Group is one of the most well-established and well-liked social service agencies in the area. They provide daycare services. They provide employment counselling. They hire people. They provide a drop-in service. They run some supportive housing. I cannot speak to that specific Instagram post, but I would urge you to take another look at the Neighbourhood Group, because we have a lot of respect for what they do, and many people do.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** That’s all the time we have for questions. We’re going to move on to further debate.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I appreciate the opportunity to have a few minutes to talk about this very important debate on Bill 223—very important.

I had the minister in the riding last week during break week. I really appreciated Minister Kerzner's time. It's not the first time he's been in my riding, but we talked about very important issues around law and order. One of the big things we did last week on break week was, when the minister was in the riding, he announced a major investment: some \$21.8 million for the municipality of North Grenville to expand their waste water plant. Why is that important?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Yes, you can applaud, for sure. Yes, it's great.

Why is that important? It's important because, as part of our correctional expansion, we need to build capacity. I think we all agree on the government side of the House that, for too long, these facilities weren't invested in.

The Brockville Jail, the oldest operational jail in Ontario, first opened in 1842—182 years, the jail has operated in the city of Brockville. What is our government doing to that jail? On August 27, 2020, Premier Ford was in the riding; he announced that the Brockville Jail would expand from 54 beds, up 12, to 66. Not a big announcement, but an important announcement given that 182-year asset. As well, at the time—same date, August 27, 2020—the Premier announced a new Eastern Ontario Correctional Complex in the municipality of North Grenville.

**1540**

Why was Minister Kerzner's announcement so important in North Grenville? Because the plant is going to—basically, the waste water plant, 30 years old—triple the cost. So we are paying our fair share; we are paying over a third of the cost of the upgrade to this facility because of the Eastern Ontario Correctional Complex.

Why is that important for debate today? Because I made the promise to our community a couple of years ago during an election that I would make sure that the government paid their way in all those associated costs. If you're going to put a law-and-order agenda forward as a government, you're going to have to make these investments—you need to pay your way. I want to thank Minister Kerzner for coming to the riding, for recognizing that.

What has happened since then? Since the Premier made the announcement in 2020—in fact, because of our capacity, the fact that we need more capacity in our correctional complex—he has announced another 184 beds to Brockville. So it's no longer going to be the 54 beds plus 12; it's going to be now another 184 beds, up to 250—in fact, larger than the facility in North Grenville, the Eastern Ontario Correctional Complex there. As well as the St. Lawrence Valley treatment centre, 100 beds, which is now going to go to 125 beds—those extra 25 beds are for females which is very important because it's not just a correctional complex, it also provides those wraparound mental health services.

But, in fact, that facility—because my predecessor Bob Runciman announced the St. Lawrence Valley treatment

centre when he was the Solicitor General—was actually going to be a 200-bed facility. During the 2003 election, the then Liberal candidate Dalton McGuinty announced that if he became Premier, they were going to honour that expansion—they were going to expand it to 200 beds—which, immediately upon becoming the Premier, Dalton McGuinty cancelled that project.

We are now building capacity back in Brockville that was taken away by the left-wing agenda of Ontario. They are in favour of law and order on PAO Day when all the police are here, but then in the chamber, they revert back to their normal mantra.

So just to show that we had a plan to build that capacity in the 1990s, and the second that the Liberal-NDP agenda took over in 2003 for 15 years, that was one of literally the first cuts—regardless of what was said on the campaign trail—the decision was made to stop that, and we're now just building that old capacity back.

Thanks to Minister Kerzner for the announcement and thank you for providing the municipality the certainty that they need around that plant.

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** We're investing in justice.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** We are investing in justice; it's very important. That is part of this bill.

I'm going to talk about the HART hubs, the homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hubs. A lot of conversation about it here today from the opposition. I've got a community that can't wait. They applied. The one thing that this program did in August at AMO when Minister Jones announced it, all of my municipal officials—all on board with it. We had a situation where, just before the last election, I announced six treatment beds and six withdrawal management beds—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I know, it was great. I applaud it. I talked about it in the election. What happened was the agency gave the beds back. The member for Peterborough-Kawartha was actually very happy because those beds were transferred.

So now, finally, we have the mental health and addiction agency that covers both my riding and the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston's riding. We're now working together, we've got all the mayors, all the municipal officials, all the stakeholders—we are now working together, and now we've got this wonderful homelessness and addiction recovery treatment hub—the HART hub—application that covers not just the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Kingston's riding, but my riding as well.

It is part of what Minister Tibollo talks about over and over again, it's the hub-and-spoke model, it's the continuum of care, where you've got everybody working together to make sure that we get the outcomes we want.

Unlike some of the members across, who are dealing with an announcement that Minister Jones made at AMO, it was really appreciated by AMO, by local mayors. And it didn't matter whether you were a big-city mayor or whether you were a small township mayor. People appreciated the significant investment that our government

was making and the fact that it aligned so very well with Minister Tibollo's continuum of care. I had him in the riding for one of his famous round tables. The guy literally is the most travelled minister in the government. It's that old "I've been everywhere, man." He's been everywhere. He's been everywhere in this province.

The one thing that I want to give him credit for—he really unified all those people. I'm not going to speak for MPP Jordan, but we've had a lot of fractious discussions amongst mental health and addiction providers. There's been periodically a divergence of opinion on how to handle things. But now, because of Minister Jones and the ministry with these HART hubs, we now have everybody on the same page that this is the way to move forward.

I'm very, very pleased, Speaker, that we're having this conversation, because in ridings like mine, where we need to build capacity in our correction facilities, where we don't have those treatment beds and those withdrawal-management beds, we need to have that coordinated opportunity so that mayors and agencies who want to provide supportive housing—I'm going to pick on MPP Jordan, because we do share so many resources in Lanark and Leeds-Grenville, that it finally gets people on the same page. It finally has people working. We've got about over 100 on our by-name list in Leeds-Grenville, and I've got the mayors talking about building a supportive housing project that's 150 units. It would effectively wipe out the by-name list in the riding. It would be unbelievable if we were able to do that.

We now have mayors and agencies and non-profits, people like the John Howard Society, folks that come out of church basements. There's a great hub that is operating in the riding that provides overnight accommodation and other groups like Indwell.

I'm looking at the Minister of Sport. I toured a facility in his riding, or in Hamilton: top-notch organization that wants to work and be a partner with the government, that wants to make sure that they take those housing dollars and leverage them with the mental health dollars.

Again, I want to give credit to Minister Jones and Minister Tibollo for being able to do that work, provide that opportunity. I know in my community we can't wait—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I apologize to the government House leader. However, pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Speaker, please adjourn the debate.  
*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to adjourn. No? To see the clock? Hang on a second.

Orders of the day. I apologize.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Madam Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Now the government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Agreed? Agreed.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Speaker, I move that, in the opinion of this House, November should be proclaimed as Community Safety Month in Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 100, you have 12 minutes for your presentation.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** I'm grateful for the opportunity to rise in this Legislature today to present my motion that, in the opinion of this House, November should be proclaimed as Community Safety Month in Ontario. This motion addresses a critical issue affecting Ontarians across the province: the increasing prevalence of crime and the urgent need to enhance community safety and crime prevention efforts.

Crime is no longer just a distant headline. For many, it has become a harsh and personal reality. From break-ins and car thefts to violent home invasions, these incidents disrupt the lives of our family, friends and neighbours. They rob us of peace of mind and undermine the sense of security we deserve. It is deeply concerning that many Ontarians now feel unsafe in their own homes, places meant to provide comfort and sanctuary. Parents worry for their children. Seniors, who deserve to enjoy their retirement years in peace, feel vulnerable.

**1550**

This is not the Ontario we strive to build. This is why I have tabled this motion to establish November as Community Safety Month.

Before discussing the broader impact of this motion, I want to acknowledge the leadership of the Honourable Michael Kerzner, our Solicitor General, and his dedicated team. Their work on the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024, demonstrates their unwavering commitment to addressing public safety concerns.

This important legislation enacts two acts and amends various others to strengthen public safety and the justice system, helping to address the pressing issues facing our communities. I am proud to announce that, echoing to my motion, the schedule of this act enacts the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month Act, 2024, proclaiming the month of November each year as Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month.

Speaker, this initiative stems from a clear recognition: Safety is a shared responsibility. Our goal is to bring together residents, law enforcement and local organizations to promote crime prevention strategies that reduce crime rates, increase public awareness and foster a stronger sense of vigilance and community engagement. It



builds on the success of Ontario's police services, which already observe Crime Prevention Week each November.

Led by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, Crime Prevention Week has long raised awareness about the importance of police and community partnerships. By extending this effort to an entire month, we create more opportunities to showcase successful initiatives and empower citizens to take proactive roles in protecting their communities.

Crime prevention isn't just about law enforcement. It is about empowering citizens to be proactive in protecting their homes and neighbourhoods. During the month of November, we would highlight efforts of those already working tirelessly in this space, share valuable resources with the public and educate residents on practical steps they can take to enhance safety in their everyday lives. By formally dedicating this month to community safety and crime prevention, we send a very strong message: We all have a role to play in keeping our communities safe.

This initiative also aligns with the broader goals of building trust and co-operation between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Community safety is not just about responding to crime but about preventing it before it happens. It is about encouraging strategies like community policing, which fosters trust and accountability through partnerships between law enforcement and residents. Regular engagement and presence by police in communities can divert crime, provide reassurance and build stronger bonds of trust.

But the responsibility for safety extends beyond law enforcement. It involves empowering citizens with knowledge, tools and resources to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Community Safety Month would focus on three key areas. The first one is raising awareness. This initiative would shine a spotlight on ongoing crime prevention efforts and educate the public about emerging challenges, such as cybercrime, scams and identity theft. By fostering greater awareness, we can encourage individuals to stay informed about threats in their neighbourhood and online, enabling them to take proactive measures to protect themselves and their loved ones.

The second key area is education and resources. Knowledge is a powerful tool in crime prevention. The month would focus on equipping residents with the skills and resources they need to protect their homes and neighbourhoods, providing access to tools, technologies and training programs that empower communities.

The third key area is collaboration. Crime prevention is most effective when communities come together to share ideas, resources and responsibilities. Partnerships between residents, law enforcement, local organizations and all levels of government are essential for fostering trust and ensuring that safety initiatives reflect the unique needs of each community.

Through initiatives like neighbourhood watch programs, community policing efforts and safety task forces, we can create a network of vigilance and co-operation, where citizens and authorities work side by side. We not

only reduce crime but also build stronger, more connected communities where everyone feels valued and protected.

Speaker, our government has already been taking decisive actions to enhance community safety. We have invested in law enforcement and added more boots on the ground by:

- removing barriers to entry at the Ontario Police College, including waiving the \$17,000 tuition fee for basic constable training;

- eliminating the post-secondary education requirement for aspiring officers;

- ensuring that individuals with real-world experiences can serve their communities; and

- launching police recruitment round tables to address recruitment shortfalls and enhance front-line policing.

These measures have already shown results. In 2023, we celebrated the largest graduation class in the history of the Ontario Police College, a result of our commitment to putting more boots on the ground.

However, the challenges we face cannot be tackled solely by provincial government. Weak federal bail policies continue to undermine our efforts to keep Ontarians safe. Earlier this week, Ontarians were shocked by an incident that highlights the failure of the current bail system. Just before 2 a.m. on Monday, a speeding stolen luxury SUV collided with a TTC bus in a devastating crash. Four passengers and the bus driver sustained injuries, including a female passenger who was ejected from the bus due to the force of the impact.

I want to take a moment to send our thoughts to the injured passengers and the TTC driver. We are grateful that everyone is expected to recover.

The aftermath of this crash revealed a terrible reality: Two of the four individuals in the stolen vehicle were out on bail, including one charged with a violent robbery. Despite their prior offences, these individuals were released into the community under the federal government's bail system. It is a stark reminder that the weak federal bail policies put communities at risk, allowing individuals with a history of violence to reoffend while out on bail.

Our government continues to call on the federal government to urgently amend the Criminal Code by introducing concrete changes that will tighten bail legislation to protect public safety and keep repeat and violent offenders off the street. We have seen a demonstrated failure of Canada's bail system, resulting in harm to the people of Ontario and those who keep our province safe. We will not stand by while our federal government refuses to hear that the system that they broke is not working.

Another critical aspect of crime prevention is investing in our youth. Early intervention is key to breaking the cycle of crime and offering young people pathways to success. Through the great work of the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, we launched programs like the Ontario Youth Mentorship Program and Stop Now and Plan, offering at-risk youth positive pathways to success, breaking the cycle of crime before it begins.

**1600**

Community Safety Month will amplify this effort by bringing together municipalities, organizations and individuals who collaborate on shared goals. It's also an opportunity to address emerging safety issues such as cyber security and mental health. This motion is more than about preventing crime; it's about creating a province where everyone feels secure, supported and connected.

The designation of this November as Community Safety Month also allows us to recognize the tireless efforts of those who work every day to protect us: police officers, emergency responders, health care workers, community leaders and safety organizations. Again, this is not just about responding to crime but preventing it. The motion is a step forward in our collective journey towards a safer, more secure Ontario for all.

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

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** It is always an honour and a privilege to be able to rise in this House as the official opposition's critic for the Solicitor General as well as representing all residents of St. Catharines in my riding, and to be able to stand before you as we address an issue that touches every Ontarian, regardless of where they live, where they work or raise their families: the importance of community safety.

Safety is always the most important factor that families consider when choosing where to live, where they start their families, where they're going to raise their children and live their lives day to day. It is not a political issue; it's a moral one, one that we can all understand and appreciate regardless of our political stripes.

Safety is the foundation upon which strong communities are built. It is the peace of mind parents feel when their children walk to school. It is the assurance that our seniors have when they take a walk around their neighbourhoods. It is the confidence of business owners opening up their doors each and every day, knowing that the money, time and effort they put in will be appreciated and, more importantly, respected. However, community safety is not something we can take for granted. It requires deliberate action, collaboration and awareness.

As we consider proclaiming November as Community Safety Month, it is vital to acknowledge the challenges Ontarians face. Our communities are diverse and so are the safety concerns and considerations in each community, and each community is definitely different. When we hear "community safety," we often automatically associate it with crime rates. And while crime levels are an important indicator of safety, they are far from the only factor. Safety is also about creating environments where people feel protected, people feel valued and supported, physically, mentally and emotionally.

In some communities, road safety is top of their list, especially as we see an alarming increase in pedestrian and cyclist injuries. Ontario is a province that should be forward-thinking in its transportation policies, yet recent decisions to rip out bike lanes demonstrate a backwards approach. Such moves not only jeopardize the safety but also disregard the importance of sustainable urban planning.

In other areas, the focus might be addressing crime or strengthening relationships between law enforcement and residents. Trust is a cornerstone of safety, and we know that this trust has been eroded in many parts of our province. This is why initiatives like increased funding for community policing, better training for officers and culturally sensitive approaches to law enforcement are essential.

And then, there's the crisis of domestic and intimate partner violence. I read about women being murdered on a weekly basis as the result of IPV, intimate partner violence. Despite these tragedies, this province has yet to declare IPV an epidemic, a move that unlocks critical funding and resources to address this issue head-on. How can we claim to prioritize community safety when half of our population—dominantly women—still live in fear?

Community safety must also include mental health. The Ontario NDP has long advocated universal publicly funded mental health care. We know that untreated mental health issues are often at the root of safety concerns, whether it's someone in crisis posing a danger to themselves or others, or someone unable to access support they need to stay housed, employed or engaged in their community.

As we consider Community Safety Month, let us also consider the impact of systemic barriers to mental health services. The official opposition's proposal to include mental health care under OHIP would be transformative, ensuring that no one is left behind simply because they cannot afford the treatment.

Vulnerable populations are often the ones most in need of safety measures. Indigenous communities, for instance, continue to face inadequate emergency services and housing that fails to meet basic safety standards. Those experiencing homelessness are disproportionately exposed to danger. Without access to stable housing, safety becomes a daily struggle. Community Safety Month could serve as a platform to address these inequities, shining a light on the need for affordable housing and wraparound supports.

Speaker, I want to return to the issue of intimate partner violence, because it is urgent and continues to take lives. Declaring IPV an epidemic would send a very, very powerful message that we are serious about protecting women and children from harm. It would unlock resources to funding emergency shelters, provide legal supports for survivors and educate communities about prevention. I urge my colleagues to take a stand. Community Safety Month would be an ideal time to launch initiatives aimed at tackling intimate partner violence, showing Ontarians—all Ontarians—that this House is committed to all of their safety.

Proclaiming November as Community Safety Month is not just symbolism. It's about taking action. It's about creating a framework for awareness, collaboration and change. During this month, there need to be well-thought-out measures in place to address safety issues—action like hosting community events and workshops to educate people about road safety, crime prevention and mental

health resources, or consulting stakeholders such as law enforcement, health care providers, schools and non-profit organizations to develop comprehensive safety strategies.

Earlier today, I met with Ontario undergrad student alliances—six of them. And one of their four main priorities was to eliminate on-campus violence and hate crimes with the province's assistance. We can do that, Madam Speaker.

Students do not feel safe. They do not feel safe. They do not feel supported. And in an environment like a university or a college campus, where young students are advocating or discussing sensitive topics, it matters more than ever, especially to everyone in this House.

Speaker, community safety is not a luxury. We know that. It is a necessity. It is the foundation of our lives, our families. It's the foundation of our communities. Declaring November as Community Safety Month is definitely the first step, and this government needs to show Ontarians that issues like intimate partner violence and gender-based violence—or safety of our cyclists, for example—are real priorities for them, for Ontarians.

This House, all of us here, let's not wait for another tragedy to strike our communities to finally act. Let's act. Let's take this step together. Let's, across party lines, take this step to build a safer, stronger Ontario. Let's show Ontarians that we care.

1610

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

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm pleased to join today's debate and speak in support of MPP Pang's motion.

Our most fundamental responsibility as elected representatives is to uphold the safety of our communities. Communities like the town of Whitby are absolutely everything, and the safety of those communities is something that we can't take for granted.

Community safety is a top priority for this government. There has never been a government that has cared more about our public safety than our government under the leadership of Premier Ford. MPP Pang's motion highlights the government's ongoing commitment to enhance community safety in Ontario by continuing to help ensure that police services and the communities they serve have the resources they need to respond to major incidents and urgent situations.

The pathway, though, to community safety and well-being takes hard work and, yes, ongoing collaboration with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Police Association of Ontario, local police services like the Durham Regional Police Service, neighbourhood watches and local businesses in chambers of commerce and business improvement areas.

As a government, we're investing in our women and men in uniform, with more tools and equipment and more officers on the ground so we can stop crime and build safer, stronger communities across the province. Providing law enforcement with the tools they require enables members to do more, keep communities safe and respond effectively to the complexities of modern crime. Together,

we're preventing crimes, protecting people and ensuring the safety and well-being of Ontario communities.

There's no modern-day precedent for the seriousness to which our government, led by Premier Ford, has taken public safety. And do you know what, Speaker? We're only getting started.

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

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I truly appreciate the opportunity to rise today and speak to the motion put forth by my colleague, the member from Markham–Unionville. This motion to proclaim November as Community Safety Month in Ontario provides an opportunity to increase public awareness of community policing and crime prevention strategies as well as the role that they play in keeping our communities safe.

It's important to recognize that public safety is a collaborative project. It involves the hard work and partnership of government, law enforcement and community groups and organizations, among other actors. Community policing focuses heavily on proactive crime prevention and community-based resolution of unsafe and unsettling local activity.

I want to thank my policing partners who have been there for us, including York Regional Police. Thornhill and the GTA have been through some very challenging times over the course of the last year post-October 7, and the YRP have worked in an effort to assist a community that feels targeted and marginalized. The YRP has, when necessary, inserted temporary command posts within key areas of our community, including the Promenade mall. Helping us feel safe is a good thing.

But many of our safety partners include people who are also volunteers—people who are not a part of policing organization, but they're part of not-for-profit organizations that patrol our neighbourhoods, sometimes late at night, and sometimes just for the sole purpose of our safety. This includes the not-for-profit, community-based organization Shomrim Toronto.

Shomrim's mission is to protect and serve the Jewish community of the greater Toronto area, including those located in Thornhill, but their services go far beyond the Jewish community, and they serve us in a holistic way, watching over all of our community regardless of a person's background. I want to spotlight their important work in assisting local emergency services through a proactive community watch, providing direct incident response, safety patrols, awareness training, and also for their admirable community engagement.

Born out of a rise of anti-Semitism and violence, Shomrim counters hate by promoting comfort, resilience and trust. Their commitment to improving public safety helps to foster a sense of security and is just one example of a community-based initiative that has become a vital resource towards enhancing public safety and security in Thornhill and the GTA.

I want to give a huge shout-out to the members: Avi Grinberg, Kyle Klein, Jack Keslassy, Aryeh Ehrentreu,

Baruch Singer, Avi Ciglen, Moe David, Menachem Silver, Stuart Sugar and Simmy Zieleniec.

Organizations like Shomrim work in partnership with our police and law enforcement, and they are dedicated to ensuring safer communities. I'm proud that the Ontario government has implemented a variety of measures and initiatives aimed at prioritizing and enhancing public safety. These initiatives include offering grants for police services to apply for in collaboration with community partners to address local priority issues, such as hate crimes, and this accompanies an investment of more than \$1.7 million under the Safer and Vital Communities Grant cycle, which focuses on preventing hate-motivated crimes through community collaboration.

These government initiatives also include calling for federal bail reform, including amendments to the Criminal Code, that would tighten bail legislation and cracking down on auto theft and careless driving by creating a new provincial offence for fraudulent vehicle registrations. This aims to keep communities safer. And a previous \$4-million investment in the victim support grant which enables police services in collaboration with community-based organizations or Indigenous communities to create new or develop existing community initiatives regarding domestic violence.

These are just a few of the prudent measures that have been implemented towards achieving safer communities, acknowledging the significant role of community partnership and policing services in the collective pursuit of public safety. Increasing public awareness of these initiatives is such a positive and worthwhile endeavour, and I want to thank the House and I want to thank the member for allowing me to stand up and speak to this very important motion to highlight some of the significant community organizations in the riding of Thornhill and our policing partners that are doing so much for us every day. We so appreciate their efforts, and I can never give them enough accolades for creating an environment where we feel safe and we're with our trusted partners. Thank you so much.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I want to thank the member from Markham–Unionville for bringing forward this private member's bill to proclaim November as Community Safety Month, but I did want to use this opportunity, please, if you can get the government to pay attention to what's actually happening in the justice system because community safety is connected to a fair and efficient justice system.

As you all know when I brought forward Lydia's Law, which was based on the Auditor General's recommendations from 2019, to create some transparency and accountability in the justice system and to hold the Attorney General accountable so that we find out how many cases are actually being dispensed or thrown out of court because they've timed out—this happened to 1,326 sexual assault cases in 2022; it happened to 1,119 sexual assault cases in 2023. The count, thus far in the province of Ontario, is over 565 sexual assault cases.

The police are here today. We had a great meeting with the Waterloo Regional Police Service, and I know London also had great meetings. Police do the good work in our community. They do the investigation, they gather the evidence and produce it to the crown, and then at the end of 18 months, two years, those criminals walk. Think of the waste of money, think of the waste of time and also think of the fact that we're not interrupting cycles of crime in our communities.

Just recently—I think it was last week—the former member Randy Hillier, who used to sit in this Legislature, who was charged with assaulting a police officer—his case timed out.

I appreciate the efforts of the member from Markham–Unionville to declare November Community Safety Month and for us to be focused on what actually a safe community is, but at the end of the day, if the court system is releasing criminals back into our communities, our communities are less safe. I hope that we can all agree on this, Madam Speaker, and I hope that the member, in his true commitment to Community Safety Month, will go back to the Attorney General and pull out Lydia's Law from the justice committee where it has been languishing, when the House leader at the time said he would expedite it.

**1620**

So let's stay focused on community safety, but let's also not take our eyes off the justice system, which unfortunately in the province of Ontario is very, very broken.

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

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** I rise today to speak in support of my colleague MPP Billy Pang's motion to proclaim November as Community Safety Month in Ontario. This motion is a critical initiative that addresses the growing safety concerns in communities across our province, including my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. By proclaiming November as Community Safety Month, we will bring much needed public attention to the vital issues of community safety, policing and crime prevention strategies.

Community safety is fundamental to the well-being and prosperity of any society. When families, seniors and businesses feel safe, they thrive. Proclaiming November as Community Safety Month will create an annual opportunity to focus on educating the public about crime prevention, increasing collaboration between law enforcement and community organizations, and encouraging residents to actively participate in making their neighbourhoods safe.

The rise in crime across Ontario is alarming. Scarborough–Agincourt is no stranger to the safety concerns that are increasingly prevalent across Ontario. Auto theft has surged in my community, as it has across the province. These crimes not only cause financial losses, but also leave families feeling violated and unsafe.

The revolving door of justice is a significant problem. Repeat offenders are often back on our streets due to inadequate bail conditions. While I commend the provincial government's initiatives to bolster bail compliance

teams, we urgently need further reforms and co-operation from the federal government to address this issue comprehensively.

One of the most pressing issues in Scarborough–Agincourt is the situation surrounding the Delta Hotel Shelter and the homeless encampment. For over three years, residents of Village Green Square and the Kennedy–Sheppard neighbourhood have faced an ongoing decline in safety and quality of life. Incidents of drug dealing, public intoxication, vandalism and even witnessed sexual acts in public spaces have created a climate of fear. Parents are fearful for their children. Even the parking garage near my office has become a hot spot for safety concerns. Furthermore, my next-door neighbour in my office building has been broken into and robbed.

The challenges in my riding go far beyond the issues surrounding the Delta Hotel. Vandalism incidents, such as those targeting the Toronto Swatow Baptist Church, underscore the broader safety concerns affecting our communities. Seniors' residences at Tam O'Shanter Towers, Shepherd Lodge and Shepherd Village have reported frequent harassment by homeless individuals, which has left many feeling unsafe in their own neighbourhoods.

Scarborough–Agincourt's small businesses and shops are grappling with theft, robberies, vandalism and use of violence. These incidents further strain an already fragile local economy. A stronger police presence, better responsiveness and visible community engagement are urgently needed to restore confidence and ensure the safety of all our residents and businesses.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the courageous men and women of the Toronto police 42 Division for their vigilance, quick response and action to protect the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt. Their commitment inspires hope and security in our local neighbourhoods.

Initiatives such as the senior residents of Tam O'Shanter Towers re-establishing their community group also demonstrate how local efforts can foster safety and unity. The advocacy of Agincourt Village Community Association is another community initiative worth admiring. They are trailblazers in safeguarding our neighbourhoods, residents and businesses.

I firmly believe in the power of communities coming together to create meaningful changes. I will encourage everyone in this House to support the motion.

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

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity to present my proposed motion that will significantly enhance public safety and community well-being across our province. I would like to express

gratitude to my colleagues from Whitby, Thornhill and Scarborough–Agincourt for their strong support of this motion. I would also like to acknowledge the inputs from the NDP members who shared their perspectives during the discussion of my motion.

I also want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General, and his team for introducing the Safer Streets, Stronger Communities Act, 2024, earlier this week. This important legislation underscores our collective commitment to addressing public safety and highlights the crucial role that community safety initiatives play in keeping our province safe.

Our goal is simple yet profound: to bring together residents, law enforcement and local organizations to promote crime prevention strategies that reduce crime, raise public awareness and foster a culture of vigilance and community engagement. By officially dedicating November to community safety, we are sending a clear message to all Ontarians. We all have a role in keeping our communities safe. It's not just about reacting to crime, it's about preventing it, creating stronger neighbourhoods and building a province that is resilient in the face of any challenge.

This initiative supports community policing, strengthens partnerships between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and encourages all Ontarians to take part in safeguarding their homes, their neighbourhoods and their future. With your support, we can create a culture of safety that endures long beyond the month of November, one where communities are equipped and empowered to face the challenges ahead. I encourage each of you to consider the benefit of this motion, not just in reducing crime but also strengthening the social fabric of neighbourhoods.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to support this motion. Let us champion a month dedicated to empowering communities, educating the public and solidifying our commitment to a safe and secure Ontario. I hope that together we can move this—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The time provided for private members' public business has now expired.

Mr. Pang has moved private member's notice of motion number 136. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, the House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning, November 21, 2024.

*The House adjourned at 1628.*









**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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| Member and Party /<br>Député(e) et parti         | Constituency /<br>Circonscription  | Other responsibilities /<br>Autres responsabilités   |
|--|--|--|
| Allsopp, Tyler (PC)                              | Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte   |  |
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| Andrew, Jill (NDP)                               | Toronto—St. Paul's   |  |
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| <b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>                      | Ajax   | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée<br>législative          |
| Begum, Doly (NDP)                                | Scarborough Southwest /<br>Scarborough-Sud-Ouest   | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition<br>officielle   |
| Bell, Jessica (NDP)                              | University—Rosedale  |  |
| <b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>    | Pickering—Uxbridge   | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances  |
| Blais, Stephen (LIB)                             | Orléans  |  |
| Bouma, Will (PC)                                 | Brantford—Brant  |  |
| Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)                             | Mushkegowuk—James Bay /<br>Mushkegowuk—Baie James  |  |
| Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)                          | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest   |  |
| Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)                           | Haldimand—Norfolk  |  |
| Bresee, Ric (PC)                                 | Hastings—Lennox and Addington  |  |
| Burch, Jeff (NDP)                                | Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre  |  |
| Byers, Rick (PC)                                 | Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound  |  |
| <b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>         | Markham—Stouffville  | Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires<br>municipales et du Logement  |
| <b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b> | Scarborough North / Scarborough-<br>Nord   | Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux<br>aînés et de l'Accessibilité  |
| <b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>              | Willowdale   | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming / Ministre du Tourisme, de<br>la Culture et des Jeux   |
| Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)                            | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre  |  |
| Clark, Steve (PC)                                | Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands<br>and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—<br>Grenville—Thousand Islands et<br>Rideau Lakes | Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement   |
| Coe, Lorne (PC)                                  | Whitby   |  |
| <b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>                    | Ottawa—Vanier  | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée<br>législative          |
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| Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)                              | Mississauga—Lakeshore  |  |
| Dixon, Jess (PC)                                 | Kitchener South—Hespeler /<br>Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler   |  |
| Dowie, Andrew (PC)                               | Windsor—Tecumseh   |  |
| <b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>           | Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte   | Attorney General / Procureur général   |
| <b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>           | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord   | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation  |
| <b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>         | Nipissing  | Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres  |
|  |  | Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade /<br>Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et<br>du Commerce |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP)                            | Waterloo   |  |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b>    | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>              | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)</b>                | Elgin—Middlesex—London                                 | Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et de l'Agroentreprise                            |
| <b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>                | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord                       | Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario  |
|   |  | Premier / Premier ministre  |
|   |  | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales   |
| <b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>          | York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston                    | Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme   |
| Fraser, John (LIB)                                  | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud                              |   |
| French, Jennifer K. (NDP)                           | Oshawa   |   |
| Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)                         | Newmarket—Aurora                                       |   |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP)                                  | Niagara Falls  |   |
| Gélinas, France (NDP)                               | Nickel Belt  |   |
| Ghamari, Goldie (IND)                               | Carleton   |   |
| Glover, Chris (NDP)                                 | Spadina—Fort York                                      |   |
| Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)                                 | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest                           |   |
| Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)                          | Brampton East / Brampton-Est                           |   |
| Hamid, Zee (PC)                                     | Milton   |   |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC)                                | Oxford   |   |
| Harden, Joel (NDP)                                  | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre                          |   |
| <b>Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (PC)</b>              | Kitchener—Conestoga                                    | Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives  |
| Hazell, Andrea (LIB)                                | Scarborough—Guildwood                                  |   |
| Hogarth, Christine (PC)                             | Etobicoke—Lakeshore                                    |   |
| <b>Holland, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin (PC)</b>            | Thunder Bay—Atikokan                                   | Associate Minister of Forestry and Forest Products / Ministre associé des Forêts et des Produits forestiers                                     |
| Hsu, Ted (LIB)                                      | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles        |   |
| Jama, Sarah (IND)                                   | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre                      |   |
| <b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>             | Dufferin—Caledon                                       | Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé   |
|   |  | Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre   |
| <b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Trevor (PC)</b>             | Chatham-Kent—Leamington                                | Associate Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response / Ministre associé de la Protection civile et de l'Intervention en cas d'urgence      |
| Jordan, John (PC)                                   | Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston                              |   |
| Kanapathi, Logan (PC)                               | Markham—Thornhill                                      |   |
| <b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>                       | Parkdale—High Park                                     | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative                  |
| Ke, Vincent (IND)                                   | Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord                     |   |
| Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)                            | London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord               | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle  |
| <b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>       | York Centre / York-Centre                              | Solicitor General / Solliciteur général   |
| <b>Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon. Andrea (PC)</b>           | Barrie—Innisfil  | Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs                   |
| <b>Kusendova-Bashta, Hon. / L'hon. Natalia (PC)</b> | Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre                | Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée   |
| Leardi, Anthony (PC)                                | Essex  | Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement   |
| <b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>            | King—Vaughan   | Minister of Energy and Electrification / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Électrification  |
| <b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>             | Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek | Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport   |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC)                                  | Nepean   |   |
| Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)                                  | Kiiwetinoong   | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle  |
| Mantha, Michael (IND)                               | Algoma—Manitoulin                                      |   |
| Martin, Robin (PC)                                  | Eglinton—Lawrence                                      |   |
| <b>McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)</b>         | Durham   | Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises et de l'Approvisionnement |
| McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)                              | Kanata—Carleton  |   |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b>   | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                           | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>McGregor, Hon. / L'hon. Graham (PC)</b>         | Brampton North / Brampton-Nord                                      | Associate Minister of Auto Theft and Bail Reform / Ministre associé de la Lutte contre le vol d'automobiles et de la Réforme relative aux mises en liberté sous caution  |
| McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)                       | Beaches—East York   |  |
| <b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>       | York—Simcoe   | President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor<br>Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones  |
| <b>Oosterhoff, Hon. / L'hon. Sam (PC)</b>          | Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest  | Associate Minister of Energy-Intensive Industries / Ministre associé des Industries à forte consommation d'énergie   |
| Pang, Billy (PC)                                   | Markham—Unionville  |  |
| <b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>           | Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill                                     | Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires  |
| Pasma, Chandra (NDP)                               | Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean                            |  |
| <b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>           | Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud | Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences<br>Deputy Government Whip / Whip adjointe du gouvernement                            |
| Pierre, Natalie (PC)                               | Burlington  |  |
| Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)                           | Lambton—Kent—Middlesex  |  |
| <b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>            | Timmins   | Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines   |
| <b>Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)</b>             | Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry                                     | Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités   |
| Rae, Matthew (PC)                                  | Perth—Wellington  |  |
| Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)                               | Humber River—Black Creek  |  |
| Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)                              | Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville            |  |
| <b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>           | Kenora—Rainy River  | Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations<br>Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord |
| Riddell, Brian (PC)                                | Cambridge   |  |
| Romano, Ross (PC)                                  | Sault Ste. Marie  |  |
| Sabawy, Sheref (PC)                                | Mississauga—Erin Mills  |  |
| Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)                               | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest                                      |  |
| <b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b> | Brampton South / Brampton-Sud                                       | Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports   |
| Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)                            | Glengarry—Prescott—Russell  |  |
| Sattler, Peggy (NDP)                               | London West / London-Ouest  |  |
| Saunderson, Brian (PC)                             | Simcoe—Grey   |  |
| Schreiner, Mike (GRN)                              | Guelph  |  |
| Scott, Laurie (PC)                                 | Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock                                     |  |
| Shamji, Adil (LIB)                                 | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est                                    |  |
| Shaw, Sandy (NDP)                                  | Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas      |  |
| <b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>                          | Flamborough—Glanbrook   | Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente<br>Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative  |
| Smith, Dave (PC)                                   | Peterborough—Kawartha   |  |
| Smith, David (PC)                                  | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre                             |  |
| <b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>           | Parry Sound—Muskoka   | Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles  |
| Smith, Laura (PC)                                  | Thornhill   |  |
| Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)                   | St. Catharines  |  |
| Stiles, Marit (NDP)                                | Davenport   | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle<br>Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario   |
| <b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>             | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre                                 | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure  |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP)                                | Toronto—Danforth  |  |
| <b>Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)</b>             | Mississauga—Streetsville  | Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée des Petites Entreprises   |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP)                              | Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain                               |  |
| <b>Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)</b>      | Scarborough—Rouge Park  | Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement   |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b> | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                  | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>      | Huron—Bruce  | Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales   |
| <b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>    | Vaughan—Woodbridge   | Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances         |
| Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)                 | Oakville North—Burlington /<br>Oakville-Nord—Burlington    |   |
| Vanthof, John (NDP)                              | Timiskaming—Cochrane                                       | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle   |
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| West, Jamie (NDP)                                | Sudbury  |   |
| <b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b> | Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre                          | Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity /<br>Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes |
| Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)                          | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre                            |   |
| Yakabuski, John (PC)                             | Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke                                 |   |