



Legislative Assembly  
of Ontario

First Session, 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament

Assemblée législative  
de l'Ontario

Première session, 39<sup>e</sup> législature

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 4 November 2008**

**Mardi 4 novembre 2008**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

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*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a Baha'i prayer.

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM  
APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008 (NO. 2)

LOI DE 2008 SUR  
LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES  
ET L'AFFECTATION ANTICIPÉE  
DE CRÉDITS (NO 2)

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 29, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 114, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters, to amend the Ottawa Congress Centre Act and to enact the Ontario Capital Growth Corporation Act, 2008 / Projet de loi 114, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions, modifiant la Loi sur le Centre des congrès d'Ottawa et édictant la Loi de 2008 sur la Société ontarienne de financement de la croissance.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 3, 2008, I am now required to put the question.

On October 27, Mr. Bentley moved second reading of Bill 114, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters, to amend the Ottawa Congress Centre Act and to enact the Ontario Capital Growth Corporation Act, 2008. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded division being required, this vote is deferred to after question period this morning.

*Vote deferred.*

WORKPLACE SAFETY  
AND INSURANCE  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI  
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE  
ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE  
LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 3, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 119, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 119, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate? The member from Simcoe–Grey.

**Interjection:** Soon to be minister.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I could use the promotion but I'd rather be on this side of the House at this moment when we're debating Bill 119, because I'm sorry that I have to join in this debate this morning. It's an unnecessary bill. It's a bill that will require, basically, white-collar workers in small construction firms in Ontario for the first time ever to have to purchase or pay workplace health and safety—WCB we used to call it—insurance premiums. So the name of the bill is the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act, Bill 119. This bill, I say sarcastically, must be Mr. McGuinty's way of welcoming in Small Business Month, which is this month. It's a shame that the way he has chosen to do it is certainly not cause for celebration.

Of my 18 years here in this House representing the people of Simcoe–Grey, and prior to that Simcoe West—we get a lot of correspondence, but the most correspondence, and you've heard me say this many times, that I've had from constituents and concerned Ontarians was when the German shepherd was dragged behind a pickup truck a couple of years ago and again when a dog in Toronto was hurt when his ears were cut to make him look more vicious; I think it was last year or two years ago also. But this is number three, especially hearing from the small business community, in terms of the numbers of e-mails I have been receiving over the last two weeks. Now the letters are starting to come in. On the weekend we were in Port Hope listening to the folks at a town hall meeting. Many, many small business people were there and they wanted to know what this bill was about.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has done a good job of sending out a newsletter informing their membership of some 47,000 small businesses, I think; I'm not sure of the exact number. Clearly, those small business people are figuring out that for the first time ever they may have to pay premiums—or they will have to pay premiums—that on average will be up to \$11,000 for small businesses. For many of those small business people that \$11,000 will come out of the owner's salary or take-home pay because there's nowhere else to take the money from.

I'll read some e-mails here this morning, actual e-mails from my constituents that have asked me to bring their points to the government's attention in the hope that the government will listen. At the very least, they would like this bill to go to committee so that they will have more time to bring representation.

I just say to the government at the beginning, who wants this bill? Obviously, it's a tax grab at a time when, once again, Mr. McGuinty said he wouldn't raise taxes. It's the worst possible time in our economic history, of modern times in Ontario and Canada and North America, and indeed the world, to bring forward a tax grab like this.

Nobody wants it in the small business community. Absolutely no one that actually owns, or derives their income primarily from, a small business has said they want this. I mean, employees are already covered with the mandatory workers' compensation, or WSIB, premiums. Even if your company doesn't pay and then you get hurt on the job, the way the system works in Ontario is that you will receive insurance coverage anyway, and those benefits that you require to get you back on your feet or that you require to live.

Most small business operators, owners—corporate officers, as they are called—have had, just out of common sense, private insurance that gives them 24/7 coverage, 365 days a year, which is more coverage than they'll get when they pay the new WSIB premiums. And the private sector coverage is better coverage and less expensive.

So this totally is devoid of common sense and support. Again, I can't help but wonder why the government's doing it. I know the big unions and some of the big, big businesses like it, and I would hope that they're not just doing it for them, because it doesn't affect them; it affects the mom-and-pop shops, the electrical shop and the construction shop, where often it's a father and son or a family business.

The bill also imposes a requirement to obtain a clearance certificate. You pretty well always had to do that in the past. For those at home who don't know what that is, it's a proof that the companies you're dealing with, your subcontractors, have WSIB registration and they're complying with all their orders and paying their premiums. You have to get this certificate from your subcontractors before construction begins and you retain the certificate for three years in case of an audit.

**0910**

Now, one good thing about this bill, I guess—because they really would be subject to the wrath of Ontarians if

this bill were to apply to homeowners who retained contractors to do home renovation work, but so far they're exempt, but Big Brother is creeping in. I just moved seven houses, from one end of my subdivision in Wasaga Beach to the other end, and I've been trying to get electricians and carpenters and various people in. So far I don't have to pay their premiums, but you never know the way this government goes.

You're getting people where the most damage that's going to happen to them is paper cuts, because they are white-collar workers for the most part, the owners. As we see in a lot of the e-mails, site management is done by site managers and not often by the owners in these cases. You're requiring these people who already have insurance coverage to pay up to an \$11,000 tax.

There are also very, very severe penalties for anyone who doesn't pay their \$11,000-a-year tax to the government. They're dramatic new penalties that we hadn't seen before.

The government says that the reason they want the bill is to crack down on the underground economy. This will create a bigger underground economy. You're not going to pop your head up and pay anything or register for anything now that premiums have gone through the roof—unnecessary premiums. That just defies common sense. We've seen this happen before when governments got too tax-greedy; that's what created the underground economy in the first place. There's no way you're going to pop your head up under this new system. Your employees will be covered anyway. You'll let the big businesses, who think the bill is going to do them some good and take the pressure off them—it's going to put more pressure on them. Where I come from, people usually offer you cash as it is now to build your deck or renovate your house. It'll just get worse. Why pop your head up? You'll be subject to inspections and audits and all kinds of things, and you won't make a living anyway, so you might as well take your chances in the underground economy. That's exactly what will happen.

According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, as I said, the average tax hike on small and medium-sized businesses caused by this bill will be \$11,000 annually. They question why the government would do this, in this type of economy especially. The WSIB already has significant tools in the legislation to crack down on the underground economy in a legitimate way. If my party were in government, we'd encourage them, as we always did, to continue to do that the best they can. But bringing in a new tax will drive things in the opposite direction.

I'll just start to read some of the e-mails in the time I have left, just to emphasize how truly unpopular this bill is in my riding, and I suspect it's equally unpopular in Liberal members' ridings. In fact, in those Liberal-held ridings, constituents must be in complete bewilderment, because I'm sure you didn't talk about bringing in an \$11,000 tax during the all-candidates' meetings in the election last year. I'm sure people wouldn't have voted for you if they had known this was exactly what you

were going to do, especially after having two elections where Mr. McGuinty has clearly broken his promises and brought in new taxes after each election. Here's another one. This time it happens to be in one of the government agencies—which is the government; the government controls the WSIB, sets all the rules and appoints the board and chairman. This is the government.

From Simcoe–Grey, the first e-mail I have is from Rick Fess of Doner-Hosley Insurance, which is located on Victoria Street, the main street of Alliston. Rick writes:

“Hi, Jim. Please do whatever you can to stop the current WSIB legislation now in second reading from going any further. This is just a disguised tax grab for the WSIB to further hurt small businesses. Ask the Liberals if they don't think enough jobs have been lost in Ontario already without this legislation taking money directly out of the pockets of small businesses. Thank you.”

Maybe during the questions and comments part after my remarks, one of the Liberal members could answer Rick's question.

The next e-mail is from John McFarland, a master electrician at Nu-Tek Electric in Alliston, and I think he was president of our Rotary Club for quite some time.

“Hi Jim,

“I've been following the tactics for the Liberal government, especially Labour Minister Fonseca and how he has no regard for input in the matter of mandatory WSIB coverage from independent small business. All he can listen to is the large unions who fund their agendas.

“I urge you, Jim, to do all you can as opposition party and my MPP to stop the ramming of this bill down small businesses' throats. Send this bill to committee hearings to be fair.

“I have included a copy of CFIB's latest letter to its membership.

“Thank you for your consideration,

“John McFarland—Nu-Tek Electric, Alliston.”

I've got another e-mail here, this time from Collingwood. It's from Madeline Quinn; she sent this to all MPPs in the Ontario Legislature.

“To members of provincial Parliament:

“I would include 'honourable' but what you are doing has no honour in it.

“The WSIB mandatory coverage legislation is by far the most detrimental, least-thought-out, ill-conceived proposed bill aimed at independent operators and companies in construction. The additional cost (approximately \$11,000 each) to owners, officers and directors of a small business may very well be enough to drive a lot of businesses further underground and/or out of business. What part of this do the Liberals not get?

“The state of the economy, currently being very volatile and shaky has people cutting back and rethinking what they will spend and how many persons they can employ going forward. What we definitely don't need is more pressure and costs to small business which would also add to unemployment if this bill goes through. WSIB, if anything, needs to be better regulated and not a

self-governed monopoly. Perhaps you should spend more time checking the internal problems of WSIB and less time mandating small businesses with additional costs.

“I am a member of CFIB and thank God they are there to lobby on behalf of small business and not as is clearly the case of this proposed bill, by the Liberals that support big business and unions. This bill receiving first and second reading in two days smells really rotten. If you think no one is paying attention, think again.

“Madeline Quinn

“Assante Financial Management

“Branch manager

“Collingwood, Ontario.”

I was careful to ask all of these people in my response to their e-mails whether I could bring up their e-mails and overwhelmingly everybody said yes; nobody said no. They wanted their e-mails read into the record and they want the government to listen.

I have another e-mail, from Don McLaren of Phelpston. He sent this e-mail to my colleague from Simcoe North, Garfield Dunlop, and me.

“Honourable members, please review again this letter from Judith Andrew, VP Ontario, CFIB, to Peter Fonseca.

“We don't need additional dues and red tape from WSIB in any sector in Ontario.

“As owners we have carried personal coverage for years and need to continue doing so for 24-hour coverage.

“Thanks

“Don McLaren

“McLaren Equipment Ltd.

“Horseshoe Valley Road

“Barrie (Phelpston) Ontario.”

That's not all; I have more. This e-mail comes from a chartered accountant in Tottenham:

“Dear Mr. Wilson:

“I am writing to you as my MPP to ask you to address the matter of the WSIB mandatory coverage legislation that is presently being tabled by Honourable Peter Fonseca. The added financial burden of this legislation will make it increasingly difficult for small and medium-sized businesses to remain in business—especially in these (potentially) recessionary times.”

That's Marino Vereecke from Tottenham, chartered accountant.

I have another e-mail here, from the Beild House Country Inn and Spa—a beautiful spot—in Collingwood. It says:

“Hello Jim:

“I have been urged by the Ontario Accommodation Association to contact my MPP with regards to current legislation before the Legislature regarding the extension of WSIB payments on behalf of owners and directors in the construction industry.

“While, of course, this would not cover our business now, it would over time no doubt expand to tourism. As you know, the tourism industry is hurting badly in this province at the same time that government is reducing

funding in this area. This, in combination with the added costs that have been associated with the changes in government regulation with regards to fire codes, would be an additional burden our industry can ill-afford.

"I urge you to speak out loudly that this additional cost to business at this time is ill advised. I think we are overregulated as it is and do not wish to see more.

"Kindest regards,

"Bill Barclay

"Beild House Country Inn and Spa

"Collingwood, Ontario."

Just the last one for this morning, and I hope many more, if this bill goes to committee on the next reading. This particular e-mail is from Elmvale. It says:

"Dear Honourable Jim Wilson:

"As local business owners in your constituency, I would like to draw attention to the proposed reforms brought by the Ministry of Labour relating to workplace insurance. Our specific concern related to mandatory coverage through WSIB as small business owners. This directly affects our ability to continue to operate our businesses as it would require us to pay an estimated \$22,000 every year. We operate a successful new home construction business in your constituency, and we already are seeing a decline in business as a result of the economy. We already fully report and submit premiums for all of our employees to ensure that they are fully covered. We feel this proposed mandated legislation unfairly punishes those of us who operate our business completely aboveboard, reporting and remitting all of our payroll, income and sales taxes, where those who continue to evade their taxes in our industry still won't contribute their share under this legislation. This legislation doesn't consider that we already cover ourselves with private insurance, with much better coverage and lower premiums than WSIB is offering. We also don't believe we would benefit from any mandatory coverage under the current system as we most likely wouldn't qualify for payouts as employers. If this legislation truly was for the safety and insurance purposes, they should allow owners to show proof of private insurance. Please consider carefully these proposed changes that would require us to have mandatory WSIB coverage as owners.

"Thank you for your attention to this important matter;

"Kerry and Brent Langman

"Advantage Homes

"Elmvale, Ontario"

#### 0920

If this bill is going to hurt small business so much, as we see from the letters I've just read from small business operators, who on earth benefits from this legislation? Well, it's not small business. The only people to benefit are big business and big unions, as I've said. We all know who the big unions are in this province. They're the ones who make up the infamous Working Families Coalition.

For those who don't recall, the WFC, the Working Families Coalition, was formed in 2003 with the primary purpose of defeating the then-incumbent PC government.

It's an Ontario non-share capital corporation with a stated purpose of running a multimedia election advertising campaign, including television advertising, using the catchphrase in 2003, "Not this time, Ernie." Then, in 2007, the coalition grew to include 10 unions and once again attacked the PC Party, and this time the NDP, using an aggressive advertising campaign with the catchphrase, "You decide." This group's activities are an unprecedented third party intervention into Ontario politics.

Which unions make up the Working Families Coalition? In 2003, it comprised the Ontario building trades council, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Nurses' Association. In the lead-up to the 2007 election, it grew and included the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association; the Canadian Auto Workers; the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation; the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Local 128; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; Millwrights; the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 793; Painters District Council 46; the Ontario Pipe Trades Council; the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—about five different locals there, and joined again in late 2007 for the campaign—the International Union of Elevator Constructors; along with the International Association of Bridge, Structural Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers; the Ontario Pipe Trades Council; and there are about four more on the list.

The point being, these are the unions that will benefit from this. The people who will pay the \$11,000—and in one case, in my riding, as the e-mail said, \$22,000, because there are two business owners who will have to pay the new premiums—don't get additional coverage; they get worse coverage than they do under private insurance. They'll be paying two insurances. They're not even sure, under this legislation, whether, as employers, they'll ever be able to claim under the insurance. The only ones who seem to be benefiting are those who opposed the PCs and the NDP—the PCs in the 2003 election and the PCs and the NDP.

The Working Families Coalition—a nice, catchy title for a bunch of people who hate the PCs and the NDP, and who seem to be more often than not receiving legislation and regulations, especially the journeymen-to-apprentice ratio that I keep bringing up and my colleagues keep bringing up on this side of the House that needs to be changed in order to create jobs and apprentice positions for young people in this province. They're the ones, the Working Families Coalition, that benefit from the status quo. They raised \$5 million for the Liberals in 2007, and they are sure making sure that they're getting payback at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make a few remarks on the speech by the member from Simcoe-Grey. I have to say that, although I understand where the member comes from, I look at this situation, this bill, from an opposite perspective. From my perspective, this

bill is about bringing new opportunities for workers who are not currently covered by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board or the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act into the fold.

I'll have an opportunity to make more detailed remarks a little later on, but it is unacceptable that workers in the province of Ontario are in a situation where they are not covered by the no-fault insurance system, if you want to call it that, because, in fact, that's what it is. It takes away the workers' need to prove that the employer was responsible for an injury that was sustained on the job. What this bill simply does is to say that there is a group of workers who currently are not covered by that system, in fact a small group of workers who are not covered, when you consider that some 30% of workers in Ontario are not covered by WSIB. New Democrats believe that those workers have the right, like every other worker, to be covered by an insurance system that gives them the basic right to claim benefits and opportunities for rehabilitation and to have the opportunity to get back to work once they begin to recover from their injury. All of these pieces are what are currently denied to some 90,000 workers that this bill specifically covers. There are probably another 200,000 workers outside of these workers, or maybe more, that are still not covered by the WSIB, and we need to get at that.

We believe this is the right thing to do for these workers. In fact, we believe this is the right thing to do for all workers. I look forward to putting some more remarks on the record very shortly.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm really pleased to have the opportunity to enter into this debate, and specifically make some comments in relation to what the member for Simcoe-Grey has said, and also the member for Hamilton Centre.

I certainly concur with the member for Hamilton Centre that this is an important step forward. The health and safety of Ontario workers is our number one priority, and clearly with this bill we are taking steps to promote health and safety in the Ontario construction industry by proposing to extend coverage of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 to individuals working in construction in categories currently not covered. So this is an important step forward.

It also levels the playing field. It puts those employers who play by the rules at a competitive disadvantage if employers that are not insuring coverage are also bidding for work in their community. So it's the right time to act, to help protect legitimate construction employers from unfair competition from the underground economy. Of course, we know that the WSIB is in fact losing significant revenue through the underground economy.

We also have considerable time to ensure that we get the proposed amendments right in terms of the fact that this act will not come into effect until the year 2012. So there will be a three-year period to allow time for the

WSIB to discuss implementation with the important stakeholders.

The member for Simcoe-Grey has of course pointed out that home renovations are exempt, and we think that this is also a very balanced approach to this issue.

Therefore, I'm going to be supporting this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** This new WSIB policy is a terrible policy. This bill has to be killed before it kills small business.

Just to follow up on the comments from Jim Wilson, the member for Simcoe-Grey, and the comments by our critic, Bob Bailey, the member for Sarnia-Lambton: We know that Ontario is now a have-not province and we're in the middle of an economic crisis. We have no business bringing in a job-killing policy right now, when small business needs all the help it can get.

The member for Simcoe-Grey read into the record a number of e-mails. I've received e-mails as well. This is from some greenhouse operators down Jarvis way who've written to me: "[T]he Liberal government is yet again at its little games to bankrupt this province by trying to take more from the small business.

"You must on our behalf"—referring to me—"insist that this legislation concerning WSIB ... must be put through due process with the people of this province. It seems that this notorious Liberal government has no regard for the very people who keep this province moving at the moment."

I received an e-mail from a large manufacturer up Princeton and Burford way:

"This is a terribly flawed piece of legislation. Small business owners all over the country, but in Ontario in particular, are being hammered by all kinds of additional expense, and we absolutely cannot afford to be mandated another cost such as this.... There must be hearings held to bring some common sense to the process."

I received an e-mail from a chartered accountant who represents a number of people in the construction industry—and I'm talking about small construction. It would be a fellow, his brother-in-law, they would have a labourer perhaps, who are doing roofing and interior doors. Perhaps the WSIB would be better off to ensure the validity of his current claims and benefit payouts.

**0930**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and comment.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Simcoe-Grey has always paid very close attention to his constituents and to his riding and the area that he represents. I know in the recreation field and the quality-of-life homes that are being built there, he knows of the small business that will be threatened by this unnecessary tax on jobs.

In fact, if you want to look at the thrust of the bill, the sentiment of making sure that every employee is covered by some sort of insurance in the tragic event that they could have a workplace accident is something where

we're proud of our record on that file. But this is small independent operators who do much of the work—and many of them are skilled tradespeople and have coverage of their own—who now are going to be mandated. This mandate is going to override any other requirement, and the certificates that are necessary to have are clearly the Liberal solution to job creation, but in fact it's job destruction. Because the more red tape you introduce and the more tax burden you introduce for small people—and the member for Simcoe–Grey mentioned it—the more you drive much of the economy underground. That's exactly what we don't want.

If you look at the evidence in the economy today, many of their policies and strategies—and it's not just the health tax that we like to talk about often; it's the overburdensome regulation and the bureaucratic implementation of these things, a lack of consultation. And yet they like to claim that they consult with people. But clearly, I am on the side of the member for Simcoe–Grey, and the opposition's position is, let's make sure that the people that are required to pay, pay, but let's not start putting more tax—\$11,000 on small business is going to kill that business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I will return to the member for Simcoe–Grey, who has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I agree with what my colleague Mr. O'Toole has just said in terms of, why at this time? Why even worry small business at this time, and medium-sized business, if you are not going to enact it, as the member for Oak Ridges–Markham reminded us, until 2012? This is not the time to be adding additional stress to the people that make up over 80% of the jobs in the province of Ontario—the mom-and-pop shops on our Main Streets with less than 10 employees. That's who you are making pay here. Most of them already have insurance coverage.

My father ran a tavern along with his father, Bill Wilson, and a small grocery store and gas station in Loretto, Ontario, in the south end of my riding. Prior to that, my father owned Jack Wilson Appliances in Barrie, Newmarket and Alliston. He was the owner and he wouldn't qualify for a payout from WSIB, or WCB as it was called back then—even though you are now going to make him pay premiums—if he were still alive and in business. That's disgraceful.

First of all, he'd freak out. He always sort of wondered why I was in government anyway after he went through about his 10th provincial sales tax audit and they always owed him money; he used to hate that. But at the end of the day this overburdened, overregulated—why worry them at this time? If anything, make it optional. If it's such a good thing for them, as the nanny state people around me seem to believe, then make it optional. If the WCB insurance for owners for getting a paper cut is better than what they can get on the private market and gives them the 24/7 coverage they can get on the private market at lower premiums right now, 365-day-a-year coverage, not just when they're at work—if your insurance product is better, give them an option in this leg-

islation rather than mandating it. Obviously, it isn't better. It's Big Brother, it's nanny state, and so you have to make it mandatory and shove it down their throats.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Pursuant to standing order 47(c), there having been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 119, this debate stands adjourned.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to order 8(d) there is no further business this morning.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** As such, this House is in recess until 10:30 am.

*The House recessed from 0936 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to welcome Robert Wood to the House this morning. He is the chief financial officer for Trojan Technologies, a London-based company that is receiving the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Large Business Award tonight. Welcome, Mr. Wood.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to introduce, in the west gallery, grandparents raising grandkids: Bernadette Eaton, Sandra Schoenfeldt, Tina Bachand, Donna Bush and Betty Cornelius. These are just some of the many grandmothers who will be joining us later today.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know all members would like to join me in welcoming representatives of Skills Canada-Ontario to Queen's Park today, and the seven Ontario students who will represent Canada at the WorldSkills Competition to be held in Calgary. Students with us today are Scott Blair, Stacey Dubois, Andrew Marcolin, Jamie Feenstra, Jud Tofflemire, Brian Martin and Dan Van Holst. They're also joined by representatives of Skills Canada-Ontario, Gail Smyth, Linda Barton and Gary Cronkwright, and I wish to invite all members of the assembly to a special reception at Stop 33 at Sutton Place from 3 to 5 today, to wish our Ontario competitors the best of luck.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'd like to introduce Rosemary Frei. She's the aunt of our page Willem.

**Hon. Gerry Phillips:** I'd like to introduce the mother and the brother of a page from my area: Julie Shen, who's the mother, and her talented young brother Philip.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member from Simcoe–Grey and page Emily Heffernan, we'd like to welcome her mom, Carol, and her father, Craig; her friend Wendy Kellam, her friend Jack Kellam and friend Sasha Kellam. They are in the east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

As well, on behalf of the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and page Shaukat Khan, we would like to welcome teacher Priya Parekh, principal Dawn Addison and teacher Mrs. Eckle. The teachers and the principal are from Morning Star Middle School and will be in the public gallery today during question period. We welcome those guests as well.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is to the Minister of Finance, and it's regarding yesterday's historic announcement that for the first time in Ontario's history we are now recipients of financial support from other provinces, through equalization. In essence, in five short years, your government has taken the engine of Canada's economy to the back of the train; we're now the caboose.

Minister, do you and your colleagues accept any degree of responsibility for the embarrassing position this province is now in: asking Newfoundland for financial help?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The state of Ontario's economy has been challenged over a number of years. We have an equalization formula that basically recognizes those who have oil versus those who don't. Over a number of years we have constantly talked about the flaws in that formula. Those flaws have been pointed out by a number of analysts. We recognize the importance of investments in fairness and working together with other governments to ensure that what continues to be the engine of the Canadian economy, Ontario, continues to be strong. We will continue to make the investments that we have made to work through these challenging times, and we look forward to working with all levels of government to ensure that we do get through these challenging times in a stronger and better fashion than we went in.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Newfoundland's Premier said he doesn't mind helping out his poor cousins in Ontario. While we appreciate the sentiment, it's hard to swallow the concept of being Newfoundland's poor cousin. That's the place you've taken us to.

You've increased program spending by nearly 50%, you've consistently spent way beyond what you've budgeted, you have the highest tax burden on investment in Canada, your effective tax rate on capital is higher than the worldwide average, and on and on. Minister, why can you not recognize, let alone acknowledge, that your policies have contributed to putting our province in this embarrassing position?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** As the headquarters to most Canadian companies, as the largest exporter in the country, as the largest growing labour force in the country, as a whole range of other factors point out, equalization doesn't reflect, in our view, the totality of the great strengths of this province. I don't think any provinces, given the circumstances that the country and the world find themselves in, should be gloating over an equation that essentially reflects resources, oil and natural gas specifically—an equation that is, in our view, fundamentally flawed.

We will continue to make the investments; we will continue to invest in our strengths to ensure that Ontario

comes out of the current global challenges stronger and better than it went in.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The minister still has the blinders on. You and I, Speaker, know that Ontarians are a proud people. The largest province in Canada, we're used to being breadwinners in Confederation, always there to help others, not welfare recipients or whiners.

Minister, your government, during the past five years, has made deliberate choices that placed Ontario in this position, or certainly contributed to placing Ontario in this position.

Minister, instead of negotiating the amount of the welfare cheque, when will you accept responsibility and do what's necessary to put Ontario back on the road to prosperity?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I remind the Leader of the Opposition that we'll be paying ourselves. Ontario's net contribution to the federation is \$20 billion. We need a recognition on a range of issues, and hopefully the member opposite and our new 106 federal members will stand up for Ontario in terms of a fair health care transfer, equal per-capita funding, which the federal government has acknowledged is below the rest of the country. Hopefully, they will stand up and speak about the flaws in an equalization system that has yielded the kinds of results it has over the years.

There's no doubt that there are enormous challenges in the Ontario and Canadian economies. We will continue to build the vital public services that will see us through this. We will continue to invest in the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. We will continue to train our workforce to respond—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** That it's our money is surprising and disturbing. Ontarians have always been Canadians first.

Back to the Minister of Finance: What we saw yesterday from the finance minister was a disheartening sight for Ontarians—a complete lack of leadership and abject surrender. Leadership is not about admitting defeat and looking around for the consolation prize; leadership is about refusing to admit defeat, coming up with a plan to win the race and showing resolve to get there.

Minister, where is your plan to get Ontario back on top? Where is your plan to get Ontario back to its rightful place in Confederation?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We've laid out a plan that invests in infrastructure. We've laid out a plan that invests in skilled trades. We've laid out a plan that invests in innovation. And we've laid out a plan that continues to make Ontario's tax base more competitive.

There is much more to do. There is an industrial and manufacturing sector that is threatened throughout North

America. This government is responding. We will continue to respond to build on our initiatives to date. There are challenges in Ontario's economy and in the global economy, more importantly, that impact on Ontario. Our government has had a plan. That plan works. We'll adjust it as times adjust, and Ontarians will be better, stronger and prouder Canadians when we come through this, stronger than when we went in.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** The message seems to be, "Deny, deny, deny the reality." You can't win the race running in the wrong direction. That's the reality. Having the highest taxes in North America on investment is going in the wrong direction. Having the highest apprenticeship ratios in Canada is going in the wrong direction. Having a jobs plan that no one qualifies for is going in the wrong direction. Bringing in a new tax on small business during an economic slowdown is going in the wrong direction. Minister, when is your government going to admit that you've made some mistakes? Take some responsibility. Do things that you can do to get Ontario back in the race.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** First of all, to suggest that Ontario has the highest corporate taxes is fiction. It's just not accurate. Number two, we moved last March to raise the small business threshold to the highest level to allow more small businesses than anywhere else in Canada to qualify for the lower tax rate, and what did that member and his party do? They voted against it. This is a complicated and challenging world environment. Ontario is caught, as are other Canadian provinces, and that will become more evident, as time goes on, in a very difficult circumstance.

The plan we've laid out is the right one. We invested, last year, \$9.9 billion in infrastructure. That's employing people. That's getting liquidity into the hands of the corporations that employ those people and it builds our productivity.

These are challenging times. The plan we've laid out is the right plan. We'll continue to work on it. We'll need a federal partner to make that a complete plan.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Repeating that tired refrain is like the hare scratching his head, wondering how the tortoise crossed the finish line ahead of him. That's the reality in this situation. A winning plan means a job creation strategy that actually brings investments and jobs back to Ontario. You haven't done that. A winning plan means refusing to tax small construction companies when they can least afford it. These are just a few examples of the many things this government could be doing to put Ontario back on top. Why are you not doing it?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I'll remind the remember that in spite of the global economic challenges, Ontario has created more than 100,000 net new jobs this year. That

speaks to the real strength in our economy, which the member wants to talk down. It speaks to the diversified nature of our economy. It speaks to the new industries that are springing up in new sectors. It speaks to the investments we've made to keep existing industries competitive in spite of the enormous challenges in the world today. There is no doubt that there are challenges. The plan we've laid out involves more than \$3 billion in corporate tax cuts, every single dollar of which that member and his party voted against. Those were the specific cuts we were asked to do first.

There are huge challenges in the world economy. I expect that those challenges will become more difficult in the days and weeks ahead. We will continue to implement our plan and we will continue to address the new challenges—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Acting Premier. Last week, the Automotive Parts Manufacturers Association released an open letter stating that unless governments come up with \$1 billion in short-term loan financing, thousands of auto sector jobs will be lost in Ontario. Today we learned that October auto sales in the United States dropped by a further 35% year over year, putting more auto sector jobs at risk in Ontario. The McGuinty government had an opportunity to respond to this in its economic statement, but there was no response, simply a "You're on your own" attitude. My question is this: Why does the McGuinty government continue to refuse to provide short-term loan financing to Ontario's auto parts sector when you know that your refusal will put thousands of Ontario workers on the unemployment line?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Economic Development.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** the letter that the member refers to is to the federal government and the provincial government. Today, there was a letter from the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition to the Prime Minister.

There's no question that the industry is looking for government partnerships where it's appropriate. I think the member would agree with me that taxpayer dollars are not the bank of last resort, but rather, we establish a program that invests in innovation. We are doing that. We are doing that through the advanced manufacturing program, one that has been in existence for some time now. It has been successful, it has leveraged more investments in those companies and it's created more jobs. But to the member's point: We will continue to work very closely with all members of the industry, whom I meet with on a regular basis, to do everything that is appropriate for the government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, the McGuinty government continues to talk about same old, same old. The auto parts sector is not asking for an innovation strategy. They're very clear. What they require is short-term loan financing because people cannot get credit; the small manufacturers cannot get credit to carry on their operations. Instead, we get more of "You're on your own, you're on your own." This is the problem. This is going to kill more jobs.

The specific question again: Instead of talking about an innovation fund, instead of talking about something you announced three years ago, when is the McGuinty government going to provide some short-term loan financing? Or are you going to put in place a situation which results in the loss of thousands more jobs in the auto parts sector?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** A month ago, Howie was against it.

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** It's true. One day, the leader of the New Democrat Party and other members of his caucus are against the loan program, and then the next day—now—they are suggesting that there be an open loan program with no criteria. I don't agree. The member says that the industry, in fact, is not interested in innovation. You're wrong, sir. The industry is interested in innovation because there is certainly the knowledge that driving the capacity from innovation into the businesses' core business is the way in which businesses are going to get through this challenging time. The government is there to partner with them where the criteria is met and where it's in the public interest.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, the McGuinty government wants to talk about everything other than the issue, and the issue is short-term credit. The issue is short-term financing so that manufacturers can continue to stay in business. The open letter from the Canadian manufacturers and exporters' association underlines the same theme: The letter urges governments to guarantee loans and lines of credit so that otherwise credit-worthy businesses facing the prospect of a sharp economic downturn and a sharp downturn in demand can survive.

I ask again: When is the McGuinty government going to stop talking about what it announced four years ago, which hasn't succeeded, or what it announced three years ago, which hasn't succeeded? When are you going to come to grips with the point? There are lots of manufacturers who need short-term loan financing; otherwise, they're going to go out of business and we're going to lose thousands of jobs. When are you going to respond to that issue?

**Hon. Michael Bryant:** Again, the member is late in the game. The government has been responding to this issue. It has a repayable loan program for up to 30% of the total eligible costs of the project, to a maximum of \$10 million. These loans are interest-free for five years, provided the company meets agreed-upon job and investment targets. It is there and it has been there. It didn't

arrive today, when the member received a letter from the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition.

By the way, the letter is to the Prime Minister of Canada. The letter is not addressed to the Premier of Ontario or copied to the Premier of Ontario or to the Minister of Finance, and it is because the manufacturing industry understands well that this government has already been in the process of assisting and enabling innovation within the industry through its loan program and through the Next Generation of Jobs Fund. We will continue to do that and we look forward to seeing what the members—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1050

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Again: to the Acting Premier. I guess we have the answer from the McGuinty government. At a time when the auto parts sector needs short-term loan financing, the McGuinty government once again says, "You're on your own."

But I want to ask about some of the other things that have been happening. New Democrats proposed, some time ago, a Buy Ontario strategy, which would mean that subway cars, streetcars and buses that are used by municipalities in Ontario continue to be manufactured in Ontario. The McGuinty Liberals have said that you're not interested in a Buy Ontario strategy, at least not one that's effective. Now that a recession is truly here and thousands more manufacturing jobs are truly at risk, would you reconsider the issue of an effective Buy Ontario strategy, or are those manufacturing jobs on their own as well, according to the McGuinty government?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I would think that on the matter of the honourable member's encouragement of transportation projects, he might acknowledge that the first thing you need to do is support them in the first place. This is the honourable member who opposed the extension of the subway to York University and beyond, to York region, referring to York region's one million people as sparsely populated.

The Premier, on this point, has been very clear to say that as we move forward with the investments through the Ministry of Transportation, at least 82% of all those projects will enjoy domestic content. This is a strong recognition that as we invest in infrastructure, we invest in the opportunity in local communities to deliver these projects, and that certainly holds true for transportation-related projects.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Once again, the McGuinty government misses the boat. In the United States, if there is one penny of government money in a purchase of streetcars, subway cars, buses, then 50% of the manufacturing of those transit vehicles has to be done in the United States. It sustains jobs. But the McGuinty government doesn't get it.

The other issue is this: We have proposed, over and over again, a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit. Just last week, the Minister of Finance said it wouldn't be a bad idea. What I want to know is this: When are we going to see a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit in Ontario to help sustain jobs, or is that another good idea that the McGuinty government isn't going to implement?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The member is correct that that type of tax credit does have some benefit. I'll again remind the member what we decided to do. The reason we didn't do that in the last budget or in the last fall statement is the timing of the cash flow to the manufacturers—they still wouldn't have money, even if we did it in March. It's acknowledged through the Canada Revenue Agency and those—what we chose to do instead was eliminate retroactively the capital tax, which put money into the hands of manufacturers this past July. The choice we made by making that investment, which was more than \$300 million and yielded, by the way, more money than his idea would have, was to get money into the pockets of our manufacturers when they needed it.

While that idea has merit and was promoted by a number of people, we felt ours was the better plan under the circumstances.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** What the McGuinty government neglects to mention is that the people who got most of the money from the reduction in the capital tax are banks, insurance companies and oil companies—the very outfits that need it the least.

What the McGuinty government refuses to recognize is that provinces like Manitoba that saw the loss of manufacturing jobs coming implemented a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit five years ago so that companies and workers have been able to benefit from it over five years.

Once again, the McGuinty government continues to talk about what it did yesterday and misses the boat on what should have been done and still should be done. When are you going to provide the short-term loan financing so we don't lose more auto parts manufacturing jobs? When are you going to bring in a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit so, once again, we don't lose more manufacturing jobs? When are we going to see an effective Buy Ontario strategy so, once again, we don't—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, when one analyzes what the leader is proposing, it doesn't, first of all, acknowledge what we've already done. Number two, in terms of the manufacturers' credit, I explained to him—and I'll explain it again—that the vast majority of that money went directly to manufacturers at a time they needed the cash flow.

Sir, there are enormous challenges in the economy. We have been dealing with the automotive parts folks.

We need a federal partner on the automotive and automotive parts sector. One need look no further than Washington to see what is going on down south.

We will continue, as the Minister of Economic Development has said, to implement policies that are real, effective and help manufacturers today, not just talk about ideas that may or may not work. That has been the plan. It will continue to be the plan, and we will continue to work through these challenging times with all sectors in the Ontario economy.

## ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Minister of Finance: Ontario families are still shocked that for the first time in history Ontario is receiving equalization payments and that your failed tax-and-spend policies have put Ontario on the equivalent of the welfare rolls of Confederation. What's even more shocking is there seems to be no shock on that side of the floor. There seems to be no regret. There has been no call to arms by you or the Premier to say that we're going to grow ourselves out of a have-not province. There has been no statement that come hell or high water will you allow Ontario to stay a have-not province.

Minister, when will you and the Premier call together all of your ministers to say, what are we going to do to turn this around to grow our province and to make sure we're not an equalization province anymore?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** The seriousness of the challenges in the world economy today, particularly as they relate to the United States as our major trading partner, are enormously challenging. We have laid out a plan that we believe is the right plan. I don't agree with you that giving corporations tax cuts is going to cure this. In fact, Mr. Courchene, the Queen's economist, said today with respect to equalization, "The essential point is that if you have a sizable amount of energy royalties entering the equalization formula ... at a sufficiently high energy price, no formula is going to prevent Ontario from" achieving this.

These are enormously challenging times. They require full partnership with a federal government that has been absent—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** This is what is particularly shocking: that the minister just seems to pocket the equalization handouts, that we're now a have-not province, and then says, "We're going to stay the course." Minister, I don't think you appreciate this. For the first time in the history of this great country of Canada, our tremendously strong province is now receiving equalization payments from other provinces, handouts to the province of Ontario for the first time in history. Where's the regret? Where's the sorrow? Where is a plan to turn our province around? Where is the call to arms to say that we will not allow Ontario to remain a have-not province?

Minister, you increased taxes through the roof, you outspent in such a way it would make Bob Rae blush, and you've chased talented Ontarians out of this province. Where is a new plan? When are you going to turn things around? When will you pull Ontario out of have-not status?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** We will be paying ourselves equalization this year. I guess the more important issue is, when will the opposition come to terms with the reality in the world economy? When will the opposition put aside the histrionics and the yelling related to an equation that basically recognizes who has oil and who doesn't? When will the opposition recognize what their leaders and they said when they were in government with respect to equalization?

Sir, the challenges in our economy go well beyond equalization. The amount of money we're paying ourselves has nothing to do with all of the great strengths that still exist in this economy. What we need is help with the automotive sector. What we need is a federal government that's fully engaged. We have laid out a plan that will get Ontario—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. New question?

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The minister has repeatedly said there was no change to temporary care assistance eligibility rules until last week when she admitted that there was a redefinition, making "temporary" mean "short-term," which changes the eligibility rules by any interpretation. In a response to the minister's recent letters to the editor, one grandmother, Bernadette, wrote, "The temporary care system has never been short-term." This grandmother has been receiving TCA for 12 years. She's in the gallery, along with Betty, who has been receiving it for 11 years, and Sandra, who has been receiving it for 10 years.

Will this minister commit to these grandmothers that she will reverse her definition of "temporary" and reinstate TCA to all grandchildren now?

1100

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, let me take a moment to personally thank the grandmothers who are here, all of those in Ontario who are taking care of their grandchildren and also all of those adults who are taking care of their children.

What the member is saying is not true. The definition has not been changed. It was always "temporary care assistance," so it's temporary. This short-term program is designed to provide stability for families while child custody status is determined. These situations are different in different families. We left a lot of flexibility to the administrator of the program because—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** If a caregiver is related to a child, such as these grandparents in the gallery today, their only

means of financial assistance is \$231 a month through the temporary care assistance program. However, if these grandmothers were not related to the children, they would qualify as foster parents and receive \$900 per month.

Taking the minister's lead, her own caucus believes that there are other programs for which the grandparents are eligible. Other than welfare, for which they don't qualify, and the Ontario child benefit, which gives them a whopping \$50 a month, can the minister enlighten her own caucus and this House on what Ontario programs are available to these grandparents who are in the gallery today?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, this program is a temporary program, and the grandparents or any adults taking care of a child have other programs that are available to them, like the Ontario child benefit, for instance, and the national child tax benefit. So all these benefits are available to adults or grandparents who are taking care of their children.

What the member is talking about is the program under the CAS, and with the program under the CAS, there's no decision by the minister who will qualify. It's a decision from the court. It's offered to the grandparents also, but it's a decision from the court, not from the minister. This temporary care assistance is temporary.

#### AMATEUR SPORT

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. As a member from our nation's capital, it is of great concern to my constituents in Ottawa Centre when an athlete's career is impeded by lack of funding from governments. I'm referring to an Ottawa Citizen article from the summer about a badminton player by the name of Mike Beres, whose funding was terminated by the federal government. "He lost his federal funding of \$1,500 per month through Canada's athlete assistance program." According to the article, "coincidentally, 2007 was his best season in 13 years on the national team."

Minister, how is the McGuinty government supporting athletes like Mike Beres and the other individuals from my riding and across Ontario who need support from the community and all levels of government to achieve their full potential?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Today I am privileged to rise in this House, particularly on this historical day, a day on which the first person of colour, Barack Obama, is poised to become President of the United States of America.

I want to thank the member from Ottawa for his question. Our government recognizes the sacrifices that Ontario athletes make. High-performance athletes are role models that inspire all Ontarians to live healthy, active lives. I'm happy to say that the athlete mentioned received funding in the amount of \$7,200 through our government's Quest for Gold program. In 2006, when we launched the program, it was the first time that high-

performance athletes received direct financial support from the provincial government in 20 years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you, Minister. I'm glad to hear the individual from Ottawa did receive significant funding through the McGuinty government. I know this funding will play a very supportive role in Mike Beres' career and the careers of all recipients in the Quest for Gold program. But, Minister, again and again I hear from organizations in my riding about the lack of sport infrastructure in and across the province. I hear of stories about athletes training in other provinces because Ontario does not have the proper sport infrastructure.

I am also aware that Ontario is working hard to bring the Pan American Games to Ontario in 2015. Sadly, Ontario has not hosted a multi-sport international event since the Commonwealth Games in 1930 in Hamilton. That was 78 years ago.

Minister, what investments has the McGuinty government made in sport infrastructure and to what extent will the 2015 Pan Am Games assist in the building of sport infrastructure in Ontario?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I could not agree more with the member from Ottawa. Indeed, athletes do need outstanding facilities to train in. After many years of underfunding under the government opposite, we are making strides to establish training facilities.

Earlier this year, I made an important announcement about a partnership between our government and the University of Toronto. This \$2-million funding will provide high-performance athletes across the country with access to new, state-of-the-art facilities and sports medicine services at the University of Toronto's Varsity Centre. And, yes, we do know that we need more. That is why we have launched our bid for the 2015 Pan American Games. If we are successful in our quest for the games, we will have an increased opportunity for more sport infrastructure in this province. The games will leave a long-lasting legacy of sport—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister. New question.

## MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, to the Minister of Finance. The McGuinty government has presided over the decline of Ontario's manufacturing sector for a number of years now to the point where it's in crisis. While the government can't control global events, the government can control its fiscal policies.

In February of this year, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce wrote to the minister with a warning and a very specific request. On behalf of 57,000 businesses from all sectors of the economy, the chamber asked the McGuinty government to implement a made-in-Ontario policy that would require the use of domestic-based suppliers for public expenditures on infrastructure projects.

Quebec implemented a policy that adopted a 60% Canadian-content threshold for provincially funded

transit projects. This government responded with a 25% content.

I would like to ask the minister this: Would the minister explain why Ontario manufacturers don't deserve the same—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Minister?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to thank the honourable member, and I agree that—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Renfrew.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** —there are opportunities for us to look at the profile of government expenditures and to seek the best opportunities to influence, that they have the strongest impact in the economy of Ontario. In fact, in a meeting yesterday with Hydro One I had this very same conversation.

On the matter of transportation, which the member raised specifically, I do think it's important to note that when you combine all the costs for transportation, including engineering, site preparation and the acquisition of rail cars or one form of car or another, you're looking at more than 80% Ontario domestic content in those transportation projects. I think that's a very high standard, and we should seek across the breadth of other investments—look for opportunities to improve on that even further.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Len Crispino, the president and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, could not have said it more clearly, and I quote from his letter to the minister: "Hundreds of millions of dollars that should be creating jobs and economic benefits for domestic manufacturers and suppliers are instead exiting Canada (and Ontario) to create jobs and economic benefits in foreign countries." That is not because of global economic factors, it's because of the policy of this government. It has failed to do what other jurisdictions have done.

Quebec, as I said earlier, adopted a 60% Canadian content. All G7 nations plus China, where the Premier is today, have implemented policies that set mandatory domestic content. The United States imposes strict regulations for all local content.

I would ask the minister this: Why is the McGuinty government not willing to use its regulatory authority to level the playing field for Ontario's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** With frankness, the honourable member loses some sight of the fact that the province of Ontario is one of the most export-oriented jurisdictions in the world.

**1110**

He said "a level playing field" at the conclusion of his question, but it actually sounded more like, "Let's look for policies that tilt the playing field in a particular area." There are opportunities to do that. We should pursue those.

As I mentioned earlier to the honourable member, I gave a specific example where I've had that conversation of late. But we should keep in mind that an extraordinary amount of employment in the province of Ontario is for people in some of these very same sectors that are manufacturing products here in Ontario that are being distributed to other jurisdictions. We should seek to ensure that we move forward in a way that recognizes that we also depend upon ongoing access to foreign markets.

### SCHOOL CLOSURES

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Minister of Education.

Last month, at Metcalfe Central Public School, near Strathroy, 90% of parents kept their children home for one day to protest the closing of their school. Adelaide Metcalfe Mayor John Milligan says, "The ... committee was a process we went through that didn't mean a whole lot. It was supposed to be a community consultation but the results were determined beforehand and that never changed despite the recommendations that were made."

Closing and selling schools to sustain this government's broken funding formula is short-sighted. When will this minister and this government start respecting the wishes of parents and stop closing schools until the promised review of the funding formula in 2010?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the member opposite realizes, because he is very well informed on education issues, that in this province there are 90,000 fewer students in our system now than there were in 2003. I know he knows that fact.

I know he also knows that school boards at the local level need to be able to make decisions that are in the best interests of their whole boards. They need to look at the whole student body. They need to be able to deliver programs according to the students' needs, and that sometimes does mean they have to go through a process, and schools do close.

We have put guidelines in place. School boards are in the process, and have always been in the process, of consulting with their communities since we have been in office to make the determinations that are in the best interests of program delivery for their students.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** If the minister isn't going to listen to parents on the accommodation and review committees, there is no point in having them.

Parents at Norwich District High School, école Madeleine-de-Roybon in Kingston, parents from Brantwood, Linbrook, Chisholm and New Central schools in Oakville know that accommodation review committees are a sham. School boards are doing the government's dirty work, selling schools to make up for inadequate funding.

You can't blame declining enrolment for your lack of foresight. Why won't the minister declare a moratorium on school closures until her own working group on declining enrolment has issued a report?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I look forward to the recommendations of the declining enrolment work group.

We have done a number of things since we've been in office to protect school boards against having to close schools. So we've put into the funding formula a school foundation grant that moved a billion dollars out of the per pupil amount into a school foundation amount that guarantees a principal and a secretary for every school.

The reality is that we did freeze school closures, put a moratorium on school closures, for two years. Boards said to us, "We need to get on with the business of rationalizing our systems." Because of declining enrolment, they needed to be able to deliver programs, so we've put the guidelines in place.

I know the member opposite understands that it would be irresponsible of us to tie the hands of local school boards. The consultations that happen do influence the decisions of boards, and it's also true that when a school has to close or schools are consolidated—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. Minister, you have been clear that as part of the IPSP, the government is planning to keep the nuclear capacity in Ontario at approximately 14,000 megawatts. This capacity includes the two new units that are in planning to be built at Darlington, in Durham region.

You'll know that citizens in my riding and neighbouring communities are supportive of a new nuclear facility at Darlington. The existing facility has provided many Ontarians with highly skilled and good-paying jobs. The new nuclear units that are in planning to be built will also help provide more jobs in the community, a welcome move after some troubling news that we have received lately. Can you tell me whether you are still planning to announce the winning bidder by March 2009?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I do want to thank the honourable member and note the support of the good people in Durham region with respect to being good, strong, willing hosts for nuclear power.

No. At present, we anticipate that at March 31, 2009, we'll be reviewing the proposals that have come in from the various proponents and moving towards announcement of a preferred vendor later in the spring. We're giving the proponents a short extension beyond December 31, recognizing the volatility of the times and also that we have asked them for some additional information.

This large project is complex, it's very important to Ontario's long-term economic interests, and we're offering just a little bit more time because we've asked for additional information—recognizing the circumstances—and driving forward to achieve a result that is the very best result for all of the ratepayers in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Minister, you are correct. This certainly is a very complex and important infrastructure project for Ontario, and I understand the need to get it right, especially given the continued volatility in the global markets. I'm sure my constituents will be pleased to hear that you're still as determined as ever to make sure this plan is a success.

Bruce Power has also made an announcement about going forward with an environmental assessment, with plans to build a new facility at Nanticoke. What does this mean for your plans to keep nuclear at or around the same level that it is today, and what does it mean for the future of the coal facility at Nanticoke?

**Hon. George Smitherman:** Firstly, we must recognize that Bruce Power is an inordinately powerful, important and good, strong player in the Ontario energy sector. We note, of course, that they've taken an interest in trying to expand the horizons of nuclear opportunities to other parts of the province.

Our plans remain very, very firm: 14,000 megawatts of installed nuclear, representing just about half of all the power that we use in the province in any given year. Nanticoke is not part of those plans, but a company can take on these initiatives on their own resolve.

With respect to the coal plant at Nanticoke, we're not going to be using coal in the province of Ontario beyond 2014, but I've been working very closely with Ontario Power Generation to encourage all prospects and working, as well, with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Natural Resources to see what opportunities there are for biomass, for waste agricultural or forestry products that might allow some of the investment in these existing coal-fired plants to be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, Bill 119, your bill that would impose punishing new taxes on small business—in fact \$11,000 estimates by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business—was introduced one week ago today. This morning, the deputy government House leader effectively shut down debate on second reading of this bill, even though more opposition members wanted to speak to it. Why are you afraid of a debate on this bill, Minister? Why will you not allow a full debate on this bill?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** The McGuinty government is making historic investments in infrastructure, investments in our schools, in hospitals, in roads, in making sure that we have strongly built communities.

Now, who does that work? Our hard-working construction workers, and we want to make sure that their health and safety are taken into account, that we protect them. Now, that member may feel that he doesn't want those protections in place, that we shouldn't have benefits for those construction workers. We feel differently. We feel that the construction industry is a high-risk

industry. Many people do get injured every year in construction. We want to make sure that if they do get injured, they're protected, they have benefits—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will withdraw the comment.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Seeing as the minister doesn't want to hear any more opposition to second reading, I assume he is going to severely limit the ability of small business owners to voice their opposition to this bill at the committee stage.

Minister, what are your specific plans for the coming time allocation motion? Will you allow this bill to go to committee, travel the province to hear from the people who will be affected by this bill, or will you continue to silence the Ontarians who are afraid of this punishing new tax on small business?

1120

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** Our number one priority is the health and safety of Ontario workers and our construction workers. A principle that we also live by is fairness, and what this proposed legislation will do is to even the playing field. I want to tell the member again, from his neck of the woods, Sarnia, here is what Doug Chalmers had to say: "Congratulations. Absolutely brilliant. This will make Ontario a safer workplace and improve the quality of life for all of us." We're working with all businesses. Doug Chalmers gets it. I hope that the member would understand the importance of this legislation.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The latest information we have shows that only 12% of housing units built through the affordable housing program rent for \$500 a month or less. That means that affordable housing isn't actually affordable for those living on minimum wage, Ontario Works or ODSP.

Can the minister tell this House exactly how many of his so-called affordable housing units rent for \$500 a month or less?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** I am particularly pleased with the work that we've done in implementing the affordable housing program agreement that we signed with the previous federal government: 6,301 units have been built; 2,063 are under construction; 3,650 are awaiting planning approval at the municipal level; and 8,737 are with local service managers in the preplanning stage. We've also got enormous take-up on the ROOF program, rental opportunities for Ontario families, which provides \$1,200 in rent supplements. To date, with other rent supplement programs, over 35,000 residents of Ontario are receiving rent supplements thanks to the McGuinty government.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I didn't actually hear an answer to the question. The question was, how many of those units rent for \$500 or less? The minister is quick to list off numbers, but the question is whether low-income Ontarians can actually afford his so-called affordable housing. Most of the units under the affordable housing program cost more—way more—than \$700 per month. That's over half of a minimum-wage earner's income. It's more than somebody on OW actually makes in a month.

Rather than just spouting off numbers from his briefing book, why won't the minister admit that his affordable housing program isn't actually affordable?

**Hon. Jim Watson:** Once again, the NDP are on the wrong side of this issue. Let's look at one of the most important aspects of renting in this province, and that is the annual rental increase allowed by the province of Ontario. When the New Democrats were in power, their average increase under their last three years was 4.82%. Under the McGuinty government, it is 2.05%. Secondly, when we brought forward a very progressive, balanced residential tenancies agreement, who voted against it? Who turned their backs on tenants? The New Democrats did. Finally, the rent bank has helped 15,500 individuals so far. When we brought the rent bank program forward, who voted against the rent bank helping some of the most vulnerable people in our community? The New Democrats. Shame on you—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, of late, there have been some members of this Legislature suggesting ministry inspectors are being overzealous in their inspections and enforcement of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Our government has been accused of bringing forward an undue regulatory burden through our inspections of these workplaces. Every day, about 715 workers are injured in this province; that's one every two minutes. In 2007, 100 workers lost their lives in our province. Minister, can you tell us about the real cost to businesses when a worker is injured or dies?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I want to thank the member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan for his interest and advocacy for the hard-working people of his riding. There is no greater priority for our government than the health and safety of our Ontario workers. Yes, members from across the floor spoke yesterday about the cost to business of the Ministry of Labour inspectors performing their jobs to ensure the health and safety of our workers. We support those inspectors. Unfortunately, across the aisle, that previous government cut inspectors. We don't believe that's the way to go.

Let me turn this around. When we talk about the cost to businesses who don't pay attention to the health and safety of their workers, for every lost-time injury, on average, the incident costs a business \$98,000. That's bottom line. We want to make sure that we can stop that human suffering of those—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the minister for that information and commend the ministry for the work they are doing to ensure that Ontario workers are safe at work.

There are many other business advantages as well. Organizations that can recruit and retain the best people have a competitive advantage. Research shows a link between satisfied employees and satisfied customers. The healthy workplace can also create shareholder value as investors scrutinize how organizations fulfill their responsibility to society. Bluntly put, a good health and safety record leads to a good business record.

Minister, can you please tell us what the ministry is doing to build a strong health and safety culture throughout Ontario's workplaces?

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** The member is quite right. It makes good business sense to invest in health and safety. This past June, we launched our new strategic plan for health and safety in the workplace. It's called Safe at Work Ontario. It's a broader approach to safety inspections that affords our inspectors flexibility, and they can strategically go in and target businesses where there is high risk, where their history of compliance to health and safety regulations has not been a good one.

But we've also taken a proactive approach. We want to work with those businesses to make them healthier and safer places. That's why over the last four years, we hired an additional 200 health and safety inspectors to go out there into the field, work with businesses, make sure that we have a strong and prosperous Ontario and make sure that all those businesses—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Treasure Island Daycare Centre has operated out of the OPP general headquarters since the building was opened to support the 1,200 employees who were relocated to Orillia. Today it serves over 120 clients, with another 100 families on a waiting list. Recently they were notified that they would have to vacate the premises by January 31 due to a provincial security review. The day care is having a very difficult time finding affordable space in a completely unrealistic time frame. If forced to close, there will be a child care crisis in the city of Orillia area, making it difficult for families to go to work.

As minister for the lead ministry occupying the general headquarters, having provided the original capital funding for the day care service, what resources do you intend to provide to assist with the forced relocation?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I am aware that the ORC will not be renewing the lease for this child care centre. Obviously there are security issues, and I can't comment

on that, but in the supplementary I may refer it to my colleague.

We have been in continuous contact with the child care centre and the county of Simcoe. We are working with them to develop a relocation plan for these kids. We absolutely value children having a place to go, a safe place to go, but the safety of the children is paramount for us. We will, I can assure you, continue to work with the child care centre and with the county of Simcoe every way we possibly can.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Well, I've talked to the administrator and it's not working very quickly. I can tell you that right now.

Minister, are you aware of the Management Board Secretariat's directive 1-12, mandating the development of child care services by ministries and agencies of the Ontario government? It was under this directive that the child care centre was built to support employment in the Ontario public service sector at the OPP general headquarters. Due to this directive's standing today, do you not agree that your ministry has a moral and legal obligation to provide the funding and realistic time frames for the Treasure Island Daycare to relocate? Is this not just another example of this government making it harder for people to go to work by removing access to day care?

1130

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure Renewal.

**Hon. George Smitherman:** I just do want to say very sincerely to the honourable member that the threat assessment was not something that we brought up; it was the experts that are in the building. You know these folks well and you respect them very much. I think the question goes a little bit down a path that isn't fully appropriate.

The Ontario Realty Corp., which I have some responsibility for, has offered to be of assistance to the daycare. To the best of my knowledge, they've said no, that they weren't interested in that. Instead, they've used a real estate agent. But I'm very happy to work with the honourable member and to circle back and try and make sure that the necessary skills and resources are brought to the fore so that the daycare can continue to be an important presence in the community of Orillia, albeit in a setting that experts don't deem to be a security threat.

#### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Minister, after years of paying modest property taxes in a much larger building, the Sisters of St. Joseph of London have been hit with a property tax assessment on a much smaller and energy-efficient building that could result in a tax bill as high as \$400,000 a year. The move triggered a reassessment based on existing law that says that places of public worship are exempt from property tax, but where a religious order prays and lives a life of religious devotion is not.

Minister, I can't believe that that was the intent of the law, and it simply makes no sense.

Will this government change the law so that properties where religious orders practise their religious life are treated the same for property tax purposes as they were in the past?

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I had the benefit of being educated by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Sisters of the Holy Names, and I appreciate your raising the issue with me. I haven't had a chance to consider it. You've raised a number of good points in the past. I undertake to look into it and hopefully work with you to address the situation.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** We bring these to the attention of the Minister of Finance. This is the second time I have done so. It seems to me that there are a number of problems within the bill itself, and I welcome the fact that you will be looking at this, because I do believe that it is wrong, what is happening here, where a religious order moves into a new building, tries to make it energy-efficient and then gets whacked with a huge potential tax increase.

I wonder if the minister would commit himself to doing a thorough review of the legislation related to impact, because this is two that I have now brought forward. There might be potentially others, and I think we need to have a good, solid look at all of them.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Again, I applaud the member for his good work on other files and I look forward to working on this. I'm reminded by Minister Matthews that we had a chance to meet with the Sisters of St. Joseph in London last week at our pre-budget consultation. They offered us wonderful insight on the poverty agenda. We didn't talk about this specific issue, but again, the member raises a very good point. I appreciate that and I look forward to talking to him more about this. Hopefully all of us in the Legislature can work together to help these wonderful members of the order right across Ontario.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. As part of our five-point plan for the economy, I certainly support the role that the Ministry of Research and Innovation is playing in fostering Ontario's most creative thinkers.

Incredible innovations are being developed in rural Ontario. For example, VanEngelen Dairy Farms and Hog Tied Farms of Thedford in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex installed Ontario's first on-farm 250-kilowatt windmill to supply power for the dairy and hog operation as well as to supply the grid in our community.

Often my constituents hear announcements being made in urban Ontario. While no one can deny the research strength and economic challenges in urban areas, we certainly know that as our economy slows, rural Ontario has faced similar problems. So I would ask the minister: Is the ministry making sure that rural innovations are given the same opportunity as those in urban areas—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my friend and neighbour, the member, for the question. The world is struggling with the concept of how we become sustainable, and I can assure the member that the solutions to that will come, indeed, from rural Ontario.

I would highlight for the members the investment that we just made recently in your riding, at the University of Western Ontario at their experimental farm just north of London, in the Institute for Chemicals and Fuels for Alternative Resources, an institute called ICFAR—an investment of some \$7.5 million, doing two things, but particularly in your riding at a very large dairy operation, Stanton Farms where we've invested, of the \$7.5 million, some \$2.5 million in advanced research in regard to the use of anaerobic digestion, which is a source of renewable power. It allows us to have fertilizer that is pathogen-free, and that and the other investments that we're making—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### VISITORS

**Hon. John Milloy:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wanted to let members know that the Ontario competitors in the World Skills Competition I introduced earlier have arrived, and I know they will want to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. We do welcome the guests, and we're very proud of the guests, but I'd remind the minister that that was not a point of order. If there are issues regarding introductions of guests, take it up with the House leaders, please.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Order.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

##### BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008 (NO. 2)

##### LOI DE 2008 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES ET L'AFFECTATION ANTICIPÉE DE CRÉDITS (NO 2)

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 114. Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Bentley moved second reading of Bill 114. All those in favour please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia  
Albanese, Laura  
Arthurs, Wayne

Duguid, Brad  
Duncan, Dwight  
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Oraziotti, David  
Pendergast, Leeanna  
Phillips, Gery

Balkissoon, Bas  
Bartolucci, Rick  
Bentley, Christopher  
Best, Margaret  
Bradley, James J.  
Brotten, Laurel C.  
Brown, Michael A.  
Bryant, Michael  
Cansfield, Donna H.  
Caplan, David  
Carroll, Aileen  
Craitor, Kim  
Crozier, Bruce  
Delaney, Bob  
Dickson, Joe  
Dombrowsky, Leona

Fonseca, Peter  
Gerretsen, John  
Gravelle, Michael  
Hoy, Pat  
Jaczek, Helena  
Kwintar, Monte  
Leal, Jeff  
Levac, Dave  
Mangat, Amrit  
Matthews, Deborah  
Mauro, Bill  
McMeekin, Ted  
Meilleur, Madeleine  
Milloy, John  
Mitchell, Carol  
Naqvi, Yasir

Pupatello, Sandra  
Qaadri, Shafiq  
Ramal, Khalil  
Ramsay, David  
Rinaldi, Lou  
Sandals, Liz  
Sergio, Mario  
Smith, Monique  
Sousa, Charles  
Takhar, Harinder S.  
Van Bommel, Maria  
Watson, Jim  
Wilkinson, John  
Wynne, Kathleen O.  
Zimmer, David

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** All those opposed?

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted  
Bailey, Robert  
Barrett, Toby  
Chudleigh, Ted  
DiNovo, Cheri  
Dunlop, Garfield  
Elliott, Christine  
Gélinas, France  
Hampton, Howard  
Hardeman, Ernie

Hillier, Randy  
Horwath, Andrea  
Hudak, Tim  
Jones, Sylvia  
Klees, Frank  
Kormos, Peter  
MacLeod, Lisa  
Marchese, Rosario  
Martiniuk, Gerry  
Miller, Norm

Miller, Paul  
Munro, Julia  
O'Toole, John  
Prue, Michael  
Runciman, Robert W.  
Savoline, Joyce  
Scott, Laurie  
Sterling, Norman W.  
Wilson, Jim  
Yakabuski, John

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 56; the nays are 30.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 3, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: This morning in the debate, there was some discussion about the timing of the debate stopping on Bill 119. There are a lot of members of the opposition still wishing to speak to that. I would like to ask for unanimous consent to continue debate on Bill 119.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** That was not a point of order. The member seeks unanimous consent to continue debate. I heard a no.

There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** I want to welcome the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers to Queen's Park today. With us in the gallery we have Edwina McGroddy, executive director of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers Centre of Engineering Excellence, and Gina van den Burg, manager of public policy and recruitment.

I also want to remind all members of this Legislature to drop by the legislative dining room this evening to

meet and mingle with the engineers and listen to my wise, sage remarks.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** It's my pleasure to draw members' attention to the west members' gallery and the west public gallery. We have grandparents from several locations all over Ontario here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery, as part of the Remembrance Day tribute later this afternoon, friends and family of Charley Fox: Sue Beckett, his daughter; Cheryl Fox, his daughter-in-law; Todd Fox; Ryan Beckett; Andrew Wallace; Fred Banwell; David Nudds; Gerry Nudds; Americ Sordi; Alan Meredith; Chuck Hill; Don Harris; and Ted Barris. Welcome all to Queen's Park today.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### SPORTS HALL OF FAME

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's an honour to rise today and recognize outstanding citizens of the riding of Durham who have joined their local Sports Hall of Fame, marking their contribution to our community.

Joining the wall of fame in Scugog township were Bill Davidson, champion motorcycle sidecar racer; John McClelland, honoured for coverage of local sports for many years in community newspapers; David Porter, Olympian and ice dance champion, with his partner, Barbara Berezowski; Jim Zoet, Olympic team member and college basketball star; and the 1965 Port Perry Squirts, all-Ontario softball champions.

Joining the Clarington Sports Hall of Fame are Garry Bachman, who 86 years old and recently won five gold medals at the 2007 world masters track and field championships; Jack Brough, a 91-year-old who is a six-time winner of the Ontario men's double badminton championship with his partner, the late Al Osborne; Lori Glazier, the Olympic snowboarder; Sommer West, a member of the Canadian Olympic women's softball team at the 2000 Olympics and also a star hockey player—I believe she played in the Olympics as well; and also members of Splash aquatics facility, who are outstanding contributors to staying fit in Ontario.

### EVENTS IN MARKHAM

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I recently attended an event at the Markham Museum, hosted by the Markham Lions Club, to celebrate its receipt of an award from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in the amount of \$71,700. A researcher and a videographer will be hired to create a permanent exhibit, promoting volunteerism and showcasing the Markham Lions Club's 65-year history and myriad achievements.

The Markham Lions Club has been central to our community. Club activities include canvassing for the Salvation Army, performing vision screening at schools,

transporting donated eyes from hospitals to the University of Toronto eye bank, fundraising for other associations, and volunteering at charity barbecues and the Markham Fair. The club also provides volunteer work opportunities for high school students, runs programs at Markham schools and participates in the annual Markham Santa Claus parade.

One aspect of our Lions Club that makes me particularly proud is that the immediate past president, Grace Nedland, is the first woman to serve in that capacity.

The exhibit will be located at the Markham Museum in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. Last year, it welcomed 50,000 visitors.

I want to thank the government of Ontario and the Ontario Trillium Foundation for recognizing the efforts of the Markham Lions Club and the Markham Museum.

### SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I rise again today in recognition of College Week and Skilled Trades Awareness Week.

As a follow-up to my statement yesterday, I first want to thank Patricia Lang, the president of Confederation College, who was obviously the only president listening yesterday, because she sent me an e-mail to thank me for my remarks. So thank you, Pat.

Colleges across Ontario have planned several activities throughout this week and next to bring recognition to the opportunities available in the skilled trades. This week, high school students will be touring colleges to learn about career opportunities in the skilled trades. With the retirement of baby boomers and the shortage of skilled-trade workers, it's critical that students and parents be aware of these opportunities.

Today, Colleges Ontario, Skills Canada–Ontario, Connect and OCAS will be hosting a reception at Sutton Place; it started about five minutes ago, at 3 o'clock. It was to be, members may note, in the committee rooms here, 228 etc., but it's been moved to the 33rd floor of Sutton Place. The reception is between 3 and 5. All are welcome, including your staffs. We certainly encourage you all to come and to congratulate the skilled competition competitors. These are seven students who have demonstrated outstanding skills during their time at college, and they will be congratulated during the reception.

I also want to let the good people of Simcoe–Grey know that Georgian College is having its open house on November 15 in Barrie. Parents and students can come and meet the faculty and thank the president at the president's tea at 11 a.m.

### FUNDRAISING

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Across our ridings all over Ontario, it's the time of year when groups are out there trying to fundraise much-needed dollars in order to keep their organizations afloat. We have them in our communities: the francophone club, the Polish club, the Italian

club, hockey, sports leagues and others who are working hard in order to have the money they need in order to keep a roof over their heads and provide the services that they do within the community.

But we all know that it's getting tougher and tougher for them to raise money, not only because there's less money out there, but because some of the rules that have been established both by this Legislature and the gaming commission have really restricted their ability to raise the kinds of monies they have to.

I'll give you an example. The police association in our community has a fundraiser—they've been doing it for at least 30 years—a lobster day, when people can come and buy lobster for a ticket of \$100. All of that money goes back to charitable organizations in our community. After all, these are the cops who are running it, so it's got to be pretty legit. But they can't get a licence. Why? This government has said, "You can't do it because you're not allowed to play cards at these particular events."

I would just say that people have been doing these types of activities for years. The government is hoarding millions and millions of dollars on a daily basis by way of their casinos and other gaming activities, but they certainly don't want to allow local community organizations to do charitable events that would let them do that. I say that this is something that needs to be changed, and I think this government should be shamed into doing it, because they're restricting those clubs.

#### IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to acknowledge the McGuinty government's many initiatives to recognize foreign credentials and retain skilled workers.

This government recognizes that we must promote and retain the talents and skills of newcomers who arrive in Ontario every day. We also recognize that in the global economy, when our newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds, and have forged partnerships and initiated bold investments to provide newcomers with the tools they need to succeed.

Some of the highlights include:

- signing the first-ever Canada-Ontario immigration agreement with the federal government. This agreement will quadruple federal spending on language training and settlement services over five years;

- the passage of Bill 124, the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, that breaks down barriers and helps newcomers find work sooner and in their own field of expertise;

- investing \$50 million annually in occupation-specific language training: English as a second language, French as a second language, and citizenship and language training; and

- investing \$85 million in 145 bridge training programs that will help more than 2,300 newcomers learn the language of their field, land jobs and excel in their workplace.

These investments show the McGuinty government's commitment to reducing barriers to credit—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

1510

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's sad to hear of Canada's new world order, where Ontario is now a have-not province while Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC and even Newfoundland now carry the province and offer Premier McGuinty a hand up. Here in Ontario, we're now one of Canada's welfare cases.

Dalton McGuinty has announced a made-in-Ontario deficit of half a billion dollars, and he previously hit us with the largest tax hike in the province of Ontario. This government spent like drunken sailors in the good times and failed to save for a rainy day. They didn't bat an eyelash when the federal government reduced equalization payments nationwide by \$2 billion. Your lack of planning and inaction have cost us \$1 billion.

How could you be blindsided? We saw the train wreck approaching. We warned you.

As media reports indicate, Canada is now divided into three classes: provinces that make things happen, those that watch what happens, and those that sit back and wonder what the hell just happened. Ontario fits into the latter.

This Premier now has the dubious distinction of being the first Premier to steer Ontario into have-not status. When will you accept responsibility? Will you not show any regret, any remorse, for this have-not status?

Leadership is all about having a plan. What is your government's plan to get our economy off its knees?

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I rise in the House today on a positive note to speak to the latest initiative in the McGuinty government's ongoing commitment to improving driver safety across Ontario.

Our government has made significant progress in improving road safety through things like repairing aging infrastructure, enacting tough street racing legislation, and establishing aerial enforcement of 400-series highways.

Our government also recognizes, however, that a leading cause of collisions is distracted driving, so I'm pleased with this government's bill that bans the use of electronic devices while driving. We will now join the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. We recognize that inattentive drivers are something we need to do something about, and attentive drivers are the first step in reducing traffic accidents and fatalities.

Our legislation also recognizes the multitude of electronic devices that are currently on the market and will extend the ban to include all electronic devices. That includes BlackBerrys, PDAs, and hand-held GPSs. This

makes this legislation truly groundbreaking. These devices can be utilized once the driver is parked, pulled to the side of the road, or by passengers in the vehicle.

This legislation is yet another example of the bold moves taken by the McGuinty government to increase driver safety on our roads. We'll continue to work hard so that people arrive home safely to their loved ones every time they leave their house in their automobile.

### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** The safe schools strategy has been in my portfolio for over 20 years, both as a high school teacher and as a high school administrator in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga and in the greater Waterloo region.

I'm proud to say that this government understands that a safe learning environment is essential to academic success. Students have a right to feel safe and to be safe in their schools. This government has invested \$135 million through our safe schools strategy to ensure that there are serious consequences for violence while focusing on preventing violent acts before they occur. Some highlights of this strategy include: amending the Education Act to include bullying as an infraction for which there are consequences; putting more adults in schools by hiring 170 psychologists, social workers, youth workers and attendance counsellors to work with at-risk students; and training front-line staff, by providing bullying-prevention training to 25,000 teachers and almost 7,500 principals and vice-principals to ensure an effective response.

I continue to work as a member of the safe schools action team, along with my colleague Liz Sandals, who chairs the team, to continue to bring forward recommendations to keep our schools safe and secure.

The government is dedicated to providing a safe learning environment for all Ontario students. We will continue to work with teachers and school board staff to prevent violence and increase safety.

### CITY OF OTTAWA

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It's with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to share with my colleagues and all Ontarians how the McGuinty government is partnering with the city of Ottawa to build a stronger national capital region. The nation's capital has benefited from a strong relationship with the McGuinty government that stands in stark contrast to the confrontation and down-loading of the previous government.

I hear on a weekly basis from my constituents in Ottawa Centre about how important it is to work in partnership to address the lingering effects of the early 1990s. Since the residents of Ottawa Centre entrusted me as their representative, we have worked diligently to bring to Ottawa much-needed financial investments. This year alone, Ottawa has benefited from \$8.2 million to repair social housing units; \$14.6 million for roads and

bridges; \$20 million from the municipal infrastructure investment initiative for the central archives and the Ottawa library technical services facility; and \$77.3 million from the Investing in Ontario Act for municipal infrastructure projects.

Yesterday we heard from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who pointed out that as a result of the consensus report released last Friday, the people of Ottawa, by the time the plan is fully implemented, will save \$122 million per year. With these investments and the \$200 million that are still on the table for Ottawa's transit plan, our government will continue to partner with Ottawa to improve public services in the years to come.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I beg leave to present a report on the review of the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Qaadri presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** No, Speaker. I'll move adjournment of the debate, but will send it to you by way of page Shaukat, my nephew.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Mr. Qaadri moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2008 LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES ÉVALUATIONS ENVIRONNEMENTALES

Mr. Balkissoon moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to amend the Environmental Assessment Act / Projet de loi 123, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les évaluations environnementales.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member for a short statement.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** The bill provides that certain municipal proponents may only apply for an approval of

an environmental assessment if the environmental assessment relates only to lands wholly situated within the territory of the municipal proponent. Joint applications by more than one municipal proponent are permitted where the environmental assessment relates to lands within the boundaries of the joint applicants.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I rise in the House today to remind all honourable members that this week is Crime Prevention Week in Ontario. This week, we celebrate the partnership between law enforcement and the people of Ontario in helping to keep our communities and neighbourhoods safe. The theme of this week's event is Invest in Your Future: Prevent Crime. While the emphasis this year is on youth crime prevention, I hope the message will resonate with all Ontarians.

The McGuinty government continues to play an active role in preventing crime and keeping Ontario's neighbourhoods safe. We continue to put more police officers on the street, including the single largest increase in OPP officer strength in well over a decade. Our government permanently funds 2,000 police officers under our Safer Communities—1,000 Officers partnership and the community policing partnership program, so that municipal and First Nations police services can strengthen their front line, secure that these officers are permanently funded.

Last month, we announced an agreement with the federal government to administer a \$156-million fund that will put up to 329 additional OPP, municipal and First Nations police officers on the streets. The money is welcome, but this funding falls considerably short of the federal government's original commitment of at least 1,000 new police officers. Also, these funds are not permanent and will expire in only five years.

1520

For over a year, I and the McGuinty government have been urging the federal Minister of Public Safety to address this important matter, and we will continue to do so with the new federal minister, Peter Van Loan.

In addition to partnering with our communities to add police officers, our government is also investing in our community-based initiatives. Since 2003, we have invested more than \$2.1 million in local community-based crime prevention programs through our safer and vital communities grant fund. This year, we doubled provincial funding for the successful Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere, or RIDE, program to \$2.4 million in 2008-09.

No one group holds a monopoly on crime prevention—not the government, not law enforcement, not the courts or probation and parole officers. We are all partners in crime prevention, and this is what Crime

Prevention Week is all about. Ontario businesses, school boards, community groups, police, and probation and parole officers are working together to protect our neighbours, prevent at-risk Ontarians from becoming first-time offenders, and stop first-time offenders from becoming repeat offenders.

This week, I encourage all honourable members to take part in Crime Prevention Week activities and to send a clear message that in Ontario we stand united in our fight against crime.

### ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm honoured to rise in the House today to mark the launch of national Adoption Awareness Month. At the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, we are working to help—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. We very much welcome guests coming to the chamber. We encourage you to watch and listen to the proceedings. But, unfortunately, the rules that I preside over do not allow you to participate in proceedings.

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** It was laughter. That's a reflex action.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I thank the honourable member from Welland for his armchair-Speaker advice, but I will not take his advice, and I remind everyone of the rules of the House. Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** At the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, we're working to help every child in Ontario succeed. We all know that the love of a family in a home is the foundation of that success.

I want to take a moment to thank the thousands of generous men and women, brothers and sisters who have opened their hearts and their homes through adoption to children who needed a family. They are our neighbours, our child's teacher, the people we run into at the supermarket on any ordinary day. But make no mistake: There's nothing ordinary about the place they hold in the heart of their adopted and chosen child, or the difference they make in that child's life.

We must also take time this month to remember the hundreds of children in Ontario who are still waiting for an adoptive family of their own. These are children who are currently in the care of Ontario's children's aid societies. Some of them are older kids or siblings who want to stay together in an adoptive family, and some are children with special needs.

We're guided by the principle that children don't suddenly stop needing the love and guidance of their family when they leave care. That's why—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd just remind the guests—and I'm speaking specifically now to the guests who are joining us in the west gallery—that hand motions and head motions are the same as participating in here. I know it may be challenging at times, but I do just ask that you listen and not express your views either visually or with your hands.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you, Speaker.

As I was saying, we are guided by the principle that children don't suddenly stop needing the love and guidance of their family when they leave care. That's why finding permanent homes for children in care is so important, not just for their today but for their tomorrow, for our tomorrow. These kids have so much to offer the right family, and the benefits and blessings are not the child's alone; they are absolutely that for the family too.

I've had the honour of meeting numerous families who have adopted children with special needs. Let me tell you that the love these adoptive families have for these precious children would inspire any of us in this House.

In 2006, our government made changes to the Child and Family Services Act to help more of these children settle into permanent homes more quickly. We brought in more openness so that a child can be adopted without severing ties to their birth family. We brought in reforms to make it easier for relatives to provide permanent homes for children.

On average, more than 800 children are adopted through Ontario's children's aid societies every year. Think about that for a moment. That's more than two children every day who find a permanent, loving home. There are two kids in Ontario who, today, are starting a new life, who now have a permanent bedroom of their own and a permanent place at the kitchen table. Our changes are working. Fewer kids are coming into care, and more are finding loving, permanent homes.

At the same time, just as there are children waiting for families, we know there are families waiting for children. Roughly one in 10 Ontarians is riding the emotional rollercoaster of infertility. In July 2008, I was pleased to announce an expert panel on infertility and adoption to help find solutions for people who are trying to start or expand a family. Led by Dr. David Johnston, this panel of experts will report back next year on ways to facilitate timely adoption so that more children who cannot remain with their birth parents can become part of families more quickly.

We're pleased to work with partners like the Adoption Council of Ontario, whose executive director, Pat Convery, said, "The adoption community will welcome recommendations that will help to address barriers to timely placement of children in families who are able to care for them."

In conclusion, as Ontarians, when we think of our larger collective family, we must include the children who are in the care of our children's aid societies. During national Adoption Awareness Month, I'm asking all Ontarians to take a moment to think about whether they can find room in their hearts for a child who, today, has no home to call his or her own.

#### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Hon. Peter Fonseca:** I'm pleased to address the Legislature about tomorrow's Take Our Kids to Work Day. Thousands of grade 9 students across Ontario and across

Canada will learn what it means to go to work. Let's make sure that they also learn what it means to be safe at work.

It's up to us as employers, parents, teachers and legislators to teach our youth about health and safety on the job. In my ministry, health and safety in the workplace is one of the first things we talk about when we host students for Take Our Kids to Work Day. I encourage all employers to do the same. Students visiting workplaces tomorrow, and indeed all young workers, should receive a comprehensive health and safety orientation when they first enter the workplace.

We have to encourage our young workers to ask questions when they start a new job. There is no such thing as a stupid question when it comes to workplace safety. Our young people need to know that it's their right to say no to unsafe work.

Young worker health and safety is a priority for this government. We're keeping our young workers safe in a number of ways. We're teaching our youth about health and safety in the workplace before they get a job. We've made it mandatory in the curriculum for all grades. Teachers now use the Ministry of Labour's Live Safe! Work Smart! resources to help students approach work with a safety-first attitude.

We have a website, WorkSmart Ontario, that makes information on occupational health and safety and employment standards more accessible to youth and their parents. Our ministry website also has a portal designed especially for young workers. This tells them about health and safety, as well as their employment rights. The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has Web resources for young workers, as well. Every year, they run a video contest for high school students on workplace health and safety.

But just knowledge about health and safety is not enough. Our young workers must also be kept safe while actually on the job. Ministry of Labour inspectors pay special attention to the way companies manage new and young workers. The types of orientation, training and supervision given to new and young workers are all taken into account when an inspector visits a workplace.

As well, this past June, we had an inspection blitz to focus employers' attention on the responsibilities to keep young workers safe. The blitz was part of our Safe at Work Ontario health and safety strategy. We've also provided young worker health and safety information kits to all MPPs in the province so they can provide them to their constituents. I'm sure all members have found these kits useful.

#### 1530

Over the last two years, our young worker tip sheets were distributed by the Ministry of Education to over one million students in grades 7 to 12, and our efforts are paying off. I'm proud to tell you that Ontario leads the country in improving workplace safety for young people. Lost-time injuries for young workers are decreasing, but that is not enough. There is more to be done.

Too many young and new workers are still injured on the job every year because of preventable accidents. No parent should ever have to wonder if their child will return home from work. No employer should have to summon a worker's loved ones to the hospital. And no young worker should ever be endangered in a job, period.

All on-the-job accidents are preventable, with the right training and safety precautions. It's up to all of us to create a generation of young workers that places a priority on safety. Take Our Kids to Work Day is a good time to start that. I encourage all Ontario employers to ensure that workplace health and safety is the top priority, tomorrow and every working day. One thing all of us can agree on: Our young workers—our sons, our daughters—have a right to return home safely from work every day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Responses?

#### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and respond on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to the statement by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on Crime Prevention Week.

I would like to, first of all, congratulate all of our police services in the province of Ontario who are ultimately responsible for policing and crime. I congratulate particularly Ron Middel from the Police Association of Ontario, the new executive director, and Larry Molyneaux, the new president; as well, Karl Walsh of the Ontario Provincial Police Association, who's under the jurisdiction of Mr. Julian Fantino, the commissioner of the OPP; and in Toronto here, where we have a more serious crime problem, I'd like to congratulate Dave Wilson of the Toronto Police Association and, of course, Chief Bill Blair. These people all contribute and do their very best to look at the serious issues around crime in Ontario—and I know that most people do stand united in trying to remove crime. It scares me when I look at the TV almost every evening and see some serious occurrences that have happened somewhere in Ontario.

I would like to briefly respond to some of the comments made by the minister, though, on the additional police officers. There's no question there are another 1,000 police officers required in Ontario. I know the OPP want 500 of those officers. The municipal police services want 500 of those officers as well. I know the minister went ahead and signed on the dotted line with the federal government and accepted the \$156 million. Now they're standing here, and in every speech I've heard him say so far, he's complaining about the program. Why did they sign on the dotted line? The reality is, they accepted the terms and conditions of the agreement. So, as we move forward, we've got a lot of work to do.

I'll be happy to also work with the new community safety minister, Peter Van Loan. I look forward to working with him and, again, I want to thank all those responsible for trying to keep safety and peace on the streets of our province.

#### ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'm pleased to be able to offer comments on behalf of the official opposition. However, I must begin by saying that I find it incredibly ironic that this minister, who's got an entire month in which to announce Adoption Awareness Month, would choose today, when we are dealing with an item by the third party on the very issue about which she has chosen to talk—adoption awareness, in looking at the NDP's opposition day motion.

Obviously, the question of adoption is extremely important, and to those individuals who have ever been a part of an adoption process—adoptees, the birth mothers and parents—the importance of this cannot be underestimated. For women who find themselves unable to raise a child, they can go ahead in the knowledge that there are responsible and loving people who wish to be able to have the privilege and the joy of being a parent. So certainly, it is something that we would all want to recognize as an important part of our process.

I was interested by the minister's comments today in the question of fewer children coming into care, because it seems to me that there are very serious issues that remain unaddressed: the question of the legal limbo of a crown ward status; timely adoption; and frankly, the issue around children—that one child is too many to die in care.

So while we look at adoption as a very positive process, we must be vigilant on the other side of that same coin.

#### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure for me to rise today on behalf of the official opposition to respond to the Minister of Labour's statement on take your child to work day. I would like to encourage the men and women who run small business in Ontario to make sure they take advantage of take your child to work day this year, because if the minister's bill passes, some of them may not have that opportunity next year.

On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to encourage all Ontarians to participate in this program. Our young people benefit from seeing the workplace in action, giving students the opportunity to experience what the workplace is like. It gives them a chance to start thinking, at an early age, what they may want to do when they are done school.

Tomorrow, I will look forward to seeing many young people around Queen's Park. When you see them, I would encourage all members of the House to take the opportunity to welcome them to the Legislature and make them feel welcome.

#### TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Minister of Labour: Take Our Kids to Work Day? Tell that to the 800 workers at

John Deere in Welland; they don't have jobs anymore. They're not going to be taking their kids to work, any day. Say that to the 430 workers from DDM Plastics in Tillsonburg. Say that to the 300 jobs that were taken away from workers, and the workers who worked at those jobs, at GDX in Welland; 320 workers at PPG; 500 workers at Volvo in Goderich.

AbitibiBowater in Thorold—480 jobs gone for the whole month of November. They're not taking their kids to work on November 5. Progressive Moulded Products—2,000 jobs. Those workers aren't taking their kids to work. Magna's Formet Industries factory in St. Thomas—400 jobs. Those workers aren't taking their kids to work either.

You want to talk about making workplaces safer for young people? Then you let young people who work in the agricultural industry—some of the most dangerous workplaces in this province—join unions and organize and collectively bargain with their employers, because collective bargaining means safer workplaces.

You want young people to feel safer in their workplaces? You extend card-based certification to every worker in this province, so that those young workers can organize unions and collectively bargain safer workplaces.

#### CRIME PREVENTION WEEK

**Mr. Peter Kormos:** To the Solicitor General, the Minister of Community Safety: To make a statement today in the context of what's been happening in this city, in this province, over the course of the last year, two, three years about Crime Prevention Week, we've got hard-working cops, women and men out there, doing very dangerous work—understaffed, under-resourced—collecting evidence, arresting criminals, and then your bail courts send them right out the door, some of the most dangerous criminals in this province, so that they end up slaughtering and murdering innocent citizens.

Your Attorney General's crown attorneys are plea bargaining away some of the most serious charges because of the sausage factory culture in our courtrooms, and those same attorneys are striking sweetheart deals around sentences. You talk about being tough on crime. Heck, John Snobelen can import a handgun, stash it in the house and get a conditional discharge, not even a criminal record, and you wouldn't appeal that sentence.

You're not tough on crime; you're soft on crime. You're a disappointment to the innocent people of this province and the cops who work so hard.

#### ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** New Democrats, of course, do see adoption as an important part of the welfare framework that supports Ontario's children. We know very well that adoptive parents do really good work in this province, and often take care of children at very, very difficult times. We also know that it was a New Demo-

crat that started making some real, positive change in terms of the adoption system in the province of Ontario, our friend and former colleague Marilyn Churley.

But when the minister gets up, on a day like today, with our opposition motion on the order paper as it is, and says, "We're working to help every child in Ontario succeed"—she can say that in this House, when she knows darn well that there are grandparents here who are trying to do exactly that and this government is pulling the rug out from under their feet? Shame on them. It's no wonder they burst out in laughter. It's surprising they didn't burst out in tears to see such a callous government as the one that sits across from us today.

**1540**

We all know, of course, as the minister says, that the love of a family in a home is the foundation of that success. Well, what about the foundation that these grandmothers provide to their grandkids every single day in this province? What about those families?

We're going to hear a lot more about this this afternoon. And I have to say this to the ministers, both of them, across the way: We have a situation in this province where there are loving grandparents who are parenting their children's children, and they are doing that in very difficult times. They are not doing that on a lot of money. This minister previously talked about children, sometimes in special circumstances, with special needs. Every single one of these grandchildren who are being cared for by their grandparents are children who have special needs. They have the need of the love of their grandparents. They have the need of the stability of a good home.

It's shameful that this government, instead of making sure that these grandparents are provided with the resources that they need to ensure that they can provide a decent quality of life for these children, instead of helping these grandparents to make sure that those kids get the stability that they need, get the income that they need to have a good quality of life, what do they do? They tell the grandparents, "No, we don't think that you're good enough anymore to get extra help. We don't think that it's appropriate for us to be providing you with a little bit of extra help." What's the solution? One of the grandparents told me just a few moments ago that she was horrified to know that her 15-year-old granddaughter heard the minister say, "Well, they could always go to welfare or they have other solutions"—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

#### REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I believe we have unanimous consent to make comments with respect to Remembrance Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Agreed? Agreed. Minister of Government Services.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** As a citizen of one of the greatest countries in the world, and one privileged to serve our community as a member of provincial Parlia-

ment, I am both proud and honoured to have the opportunity this afternoon to make this statement on behalf of the government of Ontario.

November is the month we pay respect to the men and women who so bravely risked their lives in defence of freedom, and November 11 is a day we formally honour these brave men and women. We call it Remembrance Day for a good reason: We remember what they did for us and we remember to tie together those wars of yesterday with our freedoms today and our children's dreams for peace tomorrow.

For remembrance to be lasting, it must be intergenerational. That's why we need to make sure school children continue to learn about the significance of Remembrance Day and develop an appreciation for living in the greatest country in the world. Through classroom visits from veterans in the Memory Project to stories passed down through generations, those memories of brave Canadian soldiers last a lifetime and they continue to inspire us all. After all, they traded their tomorrows for our todays.

They are the more than 1.5 million Canadians who served in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean War, and they are the more than 100,000 who gave their lives in those conflicts. These brave men and women chose to cross an ocean to fight injustice, and the peace we enjoy today is their legacy. There are fewer and fewer of these veterans still alive today, but through all of us they live on in our memory.

Only recently, we lost another of our war heroes. Charley Fox was a D-Day veteran and double winner of the Distinguished Flying Cross. The Spitfire pilot from London, Ontario, gained fame during World War II for injuring German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. But perhaps he did his best work after he came home, dedicating his life to educating our youth about Canada's military past, for Charley Fox always made it clear that we should never forget how fortunate we are to live in Canada; we should never forget those who brought tyranny to its knees; and we must never forget that the reason they fought and died was so that your children and mine could live in peace.

I want to welcome the family of Charley Fox to the Legislature. We are truly honoured that you are here today. Thank you so much for coming.

Through his family, I also want to thank Charley Fox and indeed all of those brave soldiers for the freedom that we are able to experience today; a freedom that I know came with a very high price. The pain and hardship endured by those who served in times of war are something that many of us today can never truly imagine or appreciate. There are still Canadians today going overseas to fight injustice in Afghanistan, of course, and in other hot spots where our world-renowned peacekeepers are needed.

As someone who spent some time with the peacekeepers in Cyprus, I can tell you first-hand that those Canadians overseas today are just as proud and brave as their fathers, mothers and grandparents who went before them. Like those before them, those who fought to defend freedom at home and extend it abroad left behind

their friends and family, hopeful that they would be able to return home but knowing that duty to country comes first. They will experience the horrors of war first-hand. Some will be seriously wounded, and some, terribly, will pay the ultimate price.

My late father was one of those lucky ones who went to war and survived. He and all others who came home immediately went to work in reshaping this great nation—a country where freedom from that time forward would walk hand in hand with good health and personal prosperity. I'm sure many members in this House today also had relatives who went to war. Perhaps some of them never made it back. It's difficult to imagine the experiences they endured, but we can strive to remember and honour their bravery and selflessness. Remembrance Day, November 11, and Veterans' Week, commemorated each year from November 5 to November 11, provide an opportunity to remember those Canadians who so valiantly served this country.

Next week, members of this House will be in their hometowns as part of constituency week. We will stand with veterans and young children at a Remembrance Day ceremony or a commemorative event in our community. At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, as has been the custom since the end of the First World War, Ontarians across this country will bow their heads in silent remembrance of those who fought for our freedom and those who made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf.

Speaker, I'm pleased to inform you and this House that the Ontario government has asked its employees to support the Royal Canadian Legion's two-minute wave of silence, which will sweep all across Canada, beginning at 11 a.m. local time. At that time, we hope that everyone will join us to pause and remember the sacrifices of others.

In honour of the many men and women who fought with so much distinction, a 30-metre-long granite memorial wall on the south lawn of this Legislature stands as a wonderful tribute to veterans past and present. I invite all members of this assembly and the public to spend a few minutes at this wall over the next week or so. I want to thank my predecessor, the Minister of Government Services, Gerry Phillips, for ensuring that this monument will leave a lasting impression for Canadians everywhere. The wall is a fitting tribute to the heroism, dedication and loyalty of those who served in our armed forces. As politicians, we serve the people, perhaps not in the way our fighting fathers and mothers did, but still, we serve the public to the best of our abilities. People don't always agree with us, and they often let us know that they're not pleased. That's a good thing. Even in this Legislature, we disagree on politics and policies, and we argue our points, quite strongly on some occasions. That, too, is a good thing. It's good because in this country, we are free to disagree, we are free to have opinions, and we're free to express those opinions.

**1550**

This freedom is thanks in no small part to the veterans of great and terrible wars. Let us celebrate our shared

humanity by continually striving to live together in harmony and peace. As we continue our efforts to afford everyone the human rights and dignity we enjoy, let us make a sacred promise to cherish our privileges and respect how they were earned. Lest we forget, let us pledge together we will always remember.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I'm humbled and proud to deliver remarks on Remembrance Day and the late Charley Fox on behalf of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. I'd also like to welcome my friends and Charley's friends in the gallery today, as well as Charley's family.

Last year on this same week, in this esteemed House, I was fortunate to host someone who I would later learn was one of the major actors in World War II, who would shape the days after D-Day and the German response to our allied forces. He would change the course of history. He was a hero. He had finished the war with 222 operational missions and the Distinguished Flying Cross and bar. He was the Canadian pilot who stopped German field marshal Erwin Rommel in his tracks. And he was an Ontarian.

Charley Fox was all that we could have hoped for in a homegrown hero. He was brave, and he was humble. He wanted to share all that he had ever learned with each of us.

One year ago, I was blessed to have Charley Fox join me and my family as I was sworn into the 39th provincial Parliament in Ontario. It was an occasion that I will always remember. On that day, in this chamber in this House, the Indo-Canadian community was celebrating Diwali at Queen's Park. Charley joined me at that celebration. He was wearing his medals, his poppy and his pride in Canada and all that our country had become since the days when he and so many other people fought for our freedom. They fought for our right to assemble, and they fought for the very diversity that we prize in this country.

And on that day, in this Legislature, meeting Charley was like meeting someone from my favourite book. As a student of Canadian heritage, culture, and most of all identity, to me Charley was a living example of what it was like to be a Canadian. Charley was modest, he was proud, he was passionate, and he was a patriotic Canadian.

He spent his years after the war asking two questions: "Why did I survive the war? And how can I ensure that the enduring legacy of our veterans, those men and women who sacrificed for our country, lives on?" Thus began his lifelong mission to remind all of us of the importance of Remembrance Day, November 11.

Charley worked hard for Torch Bearers so he could inform schools, the military and other community organizations, like many of the historical societies in our communities, of the stories of our Canadian veterans. Charley Fox wanted to give veterans a voice, and there were few things more important to him than that.

But I do know he was proud of his family. His presence was so sought after that I am informed that even

you, our esteemed Speaker of this Legislature, were to have attended an event with him this weekend.

It is only fitting, of course, that today's tribute to Charley Fox fall alongside the very mark of respect for remembrance that he worked all these years to preserve, and that this mark of respect would take place in this chamber that stands strong in peace and defiant in the face of the tyranny that Charley Fox and the men and women of our Canadian Armed Forces faced who have served our country so valiantly in all of our wars and conflicts that they fought against. Charley's story will continue, of course. His family is here today and they will finish the book, *Why Not Me?*, and they will complete a project in Charley's memory that all members in this Legislature are invited to take part in.

But in this chamber, it is up to us. It is our obligation to remind people of their noble efforts that preserve and protect our just society. We debate issues of the day in this chamber in absolute freedom. It should always be remembered that this absolute freedom came with a price. To this day it continues to come at a price, as my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke will tell you, when he has to see so many young women and men come back from Afghanistan. So when we see our soldiers and our veterans with their medals—some of whom are old, but increasingly they are younger—we must remember to thank them for their service that has kept and continues to keep Canada the true north, strong and free.

On November 11, fallen soldiers and now-deceased veterans like Charley will not be forgotten. We will be reminded that their sacrifice made way for our liberties, we will be reminded that the honour with which they served shaped our democracy, and we will remember that those values that we hold so dear, which include those fundamental freedoms of democracy and liberty, are a direct result of their selflessness and their patriotism.

My dear friends, both in this chamber and watching us in their homes throughout Ontario, please take the time this week to honour our veterans and our soldiers. I urge Ontarians across this great province to remember our heroes, like Charley Fox, like my own grandfather, and so many of you who I know in this chamber had people serving, whether it was in Canada or for other nations, whom you are so proud of. I want you to thank them because they put their freedom and their own security above themselves. They did this for us.

I want to conclude with these few verses of poetry, which were put to music by Terry Kelly. He's a folk singer from the Maritimes:

They fought and some died for their homeland  
They fought and some died now it's our land  
Look at his little child, there's no fear in her eyes  
Could he not show respect for other dads who have died?

Take two minutes, would you mind?

It's a pittance of time

For the boys and the girls who went over

In peace may they rest, may we never forget why they died...

Read the letters and poems of the heroes at home  
They have casualties, battles, and fears of their own  
There's a price to be paid if you go, if you stay  
Freedom is fought for and won in numerous ways....

It takes courage to fight in your own war  
It takes courage to fight someone else's war  
Our peacekeepers tell of their own living hell  
They bring hope to foreign lands that the hatemongers can't kill....

In Peace may they rest, lest we forget why they died.  
Take a pittance of time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to our veterans.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** On behalf of the New Democrats, I want to welcome Sue Beckett, the daughter of Charley Fox; Ryan Beckett, grandson; Todd Fox, grandson, and Cheryl Fox, daughter-in-law, and all of the friends and family of Charley Fox here today.

I always find Remembrance Day to be a day of irony, because Canadians pride ourselves on living in one of the most peaceful countries in the world. We pride ourselves, we promote ourselves in the world as being one of the most peaceful places on this planet. Yet the irony is that this peaceful country has had much of its history written by volunteers on battlefields elsewhere in the world.

#### 1600

I think we must all recognize and remind ourselves that whether it be the second war or the first war or the Korean War, these people were virtually all volunteers. No one said to people in the Korean War, "You must go." No one said in the second war, "You must go." Even in the first war, the conscription crisis came too late in the war to really make a difference. The people who have written the history in Vimy Ridge or Ypres or Cambrai or Passchendaele—now the subject of a movie by the Canadian actor and producer Paul Gross—or Dieppe or Ortona or the Liri Valley or Monte Cassino or the Battle of Britain or the Battle of the Atlantic or Normandy or Falaise or the Battle for Holland or the Rhineland, all of these people were volunteers.

They were an incredible generation, and we are witnessing now—and I say this very much to the Fox family—the passing of a very great generation, perhaps the greatest generation that Canada has ever known, a generation that, as I say, volunteered to leave Canada and go to far-off places. Some are buried in Hong Kong. Some are buried in Tokyo. Some are buried in Africa, Malaysia, Singapore, India, South and Central America and throughout Europe, by the thousands.

One of the most touching things I've ever done was to go to the Canadian War Cemetery in Normandy, walk down a line of 10 graves and see that every one of those young men was 18 years old when he died. I look around this room, and most of us are privileged enough to have lived three times as long as those young men.

But it was not just the sacrifice that was made there. This was a generation—not only did they win the war, but more incredibly, they have won the peace, the peace

that every one of us in this room has had the privilege to enjoy. Not only did they win the peace, but these were the very people who had the foresight to put in place the international institutions that have done so much to create and preserve the peace, not just in Canada but the world over. The person who drafted the very articles for the United Nations, who went to the United Nations conference, was a Canadian, a member of that generation.

They have contributed in other ways as well. It took me a while when I was a kid growing up, but when I got to be about 11 or 12 years old and my dad took me to my first Remembrance Day ceremony, I realized that my first hockey coach had been a veteran. From a First Nations community in northwestern Ontario, he had volunteered like all the others. He'd fought in Normandy, he'd fought in Falaise, he fought through Belgium, through Holland.

He's still alive; he's one of those who are still fortunate enough to still be alive. When I talk to him, he tells me about all his friends who were buried in Normandy, who were buried at Dieppe, who were buried in Holland and Belgium, and yes, even in Germany. He's a wonderful man, a quiet man. You'd never, ever know if you talked to him that this was someone who displayed that courage over and over again. As a hockey coach, he would come up to you and tap you on the shoulder and never holler at you. He'd say, "I didn't think that was the best play you made today." He's patient, loving, kind, giving, and that's how so many of those people have lived their lives since they've come home.

It was later on when I was a kid growing up, I realized that just about every coach and every referee I had in minor hockey had been a veteran. I remember asking one of them, when I finished high school and came home from playing hockey in the United States, "How could this be?" He said, "Look, most of us never got to experience that. Most of our youth was lived during the Depression and our teenagehood was lived in the army or the air force or the navy. We never got to experience those things, and we wanted to make sure that our kids and our grandkids were not going to miss out on those things that so many of us didn't have." That was the kind of unselfishness.

Next Tuesday, we will honour not only those who made the supreme sacrifice, but as my colleague in the Conservative caucus has pointed out, we will also honour what I believe to be the greatest generation of Canadians, who continue to make an incredible contribution to the quality of life that we enjoy. We owe them so much. We can never repay the debt. We can never hope to accomplish what so many of them have accomplished, both in life and in death.

Let's make sure this is a special Remembrance Day, because many of this greatest generation may not be around for the next Remembrance Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd ask all the members and all of our guests to please rise as we observe two minutes of silence in memory of Charley Fox and out of respect for Remembrance Day.

*The House observed two minutes' silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you.

## PETITIONS

### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents of Wellington–Halton Hills have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

“Whereas whatever one-time money has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province.”

I support this petition and affix my signature.

1610

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly signed by many people who picked it up in the offices of their doctors. It reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I am pleased to sign and to certainly support this petition and to ask page Laura to carry it for me.

### EMERGENCY DISPATCH SERVICES

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with 911 emergency communication services in Parry Sound–Muskoka. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is considering relocating emergency ambulance and fire dispatch services currently provided by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service to the city of Barrie; and

“Whereas up to 40% of all calls received are from cellphones from people unfamiliar with the area; and

“Whereas Muskoka–Parry Sound residents have grave concerns about the effect on emergency response times if dispatch services are provided by dispatchers who are not familiar with the area; and

“Whereas 16 Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care-funded jobs, held by qualified communication officers from local communities, may be lost as a result of the relocation of dispatch services to the city of Barrie,

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario put the safety, health and economic concerns of the people of Muskoka–Parry Sound ahead of government efficiency interests and ensure that emergency dispatch services continue to be provided locally by Muskoka Ambulance Communications Service.”

I support this petition.

### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Paul Miller:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has launched a blatant attack on our province’s grandparents raising their at-risk grandchildren by cutting off access to the temporary care assistance program;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Legislature call on the minister to overturn her July 2008 directive outlining the temporary care assistance program and grant all grandparents raising their at-risk grandchildren access to the much-needed financial support.”

I agree with this and hereby affix my name to it.

### CHILD CUSTODY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I am pleased to read this petition in again. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 33.

“Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreason-

ably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and” their “grandparents; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child; and

“Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant’s willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each parent and grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly ... to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their parents and grandparents.”

I’m pleased to sign my signature in support of this petition.

#### TUITION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I have another petition from the Canadian Federation of Students, this time from the graduate student society in Windsor. To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have increased by 195% since 1990 and are the third-highest in all of the provinces in Canada; and

“Whereas average student debt in Ontario has skyrocketed by 250% in the last 15 years to over \$25,000 for four years of study; and

“Whereas international students pay three to four times more for the same education, and domestic students in professional programs such as law or medicine pay as much tuition as \$20,000 per year; and

“Whereas 70% of new jobs require post-secondary education, and fees reduce the opportunity for many low- and middle-income families while magnifying barriers for aboriginal, rural, racialized and other marginalized students; and

“Whereas Ontario currently provides the lowest per capita funding for post-secondary education in Canada, while many countries fully fund higher education and charge little or no fees for college and university; and

“Whereas public opinion polls show that nearly three quarters of Ontarians think the government’s Reaching Higher framework for tuition fee increases of 20% to 36% over four years is unfair;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to immediately drop tuition fees to 2004 levels and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce a new framework that:

“(1) Reduces tuition and ancillary fees annually for students.

“(2) Converts a portion of every student loan into a grant.

“(3) Increases per student funding above the national average.”

I agree with this petition, and I’ve signed it.

#### WORKPLACE HARASSMENT

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I have a petition that was gathered by Kathy Le from Toronto.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas workplace harassment (physical/psychological) and violence are linked to the mental and physical ill-health and safety of workers in Ontario; and

“Whereas harassment and violence need to be defined as violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act so that it is dealt with as quickly and earnestly by employers as other health and safety issues; and

“Whereas employers will have a legal avenue and/or a legal obligation to deal with workplace harassment and violence in all its forms, including psychological harassment; and

“Whereas harassment poisons the workplace, taking many forms—verbal/physical abuse, sabotage, intimidation, bullying, sexism and racism, and should not be tolerated; and

“Whereas harassment in any form harms a targets physical and mental health, esteem and productivity, and contributes to trauma and stress on the job; and

“Whereas Bill 29 would make it the law to protect workers from workplace harassment by giving workers the right to refuse work after harassment has occurred, requiring the investigation of allegations of workplace-related harassment and oblige employers to take steps to prevent further occurrences of workplace-related harassment;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to treat workplace harassment and violence as a serious health and safety issue by passing MPP Andrea Horwath’s Bill 29, which would bring workplace harassment and violence under the scope of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.”

I agree with this petition, sign it, and send it to the table by way of page Helen.

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board reversed the 2006 announcement closing the maternity and pediatric services at the Ajax-Pickering hospital due to an overwhelming public outcry; and

“Whereas the Rouge Valley Health board of directors has recently approved closing the 20-bed mental health unit at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas there remains further concern by residents for future maternity/pediatric closings ... even with the Ontario Ministry of Health’s largest-ever expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas there is a natural boundary, the Rouge Valley, that clearly separates the two distinct areas of Scarborough and Durham region;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Central East Local Health Integration Network (CE-LHIN) and the Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) board of directors review the Rouge Valley Health System makeup and group Scarborough Centenary hospital with the three other Scarborough hospitals; and

“Further, that we position Ajax-Pickering hospital within Lakeridge Health, thus combining all of our hospitals in Durham region under one Durham region administration.”

I affix my signature to this and shall pass it to Chloe.

1620

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I have petitions from all across the province of Ontario on this issue. Today, I have one signed by the people from the township of Admaston and Bromley in my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the skyrocketing price of gasoline is causing hardship to families across Ontario; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government charges a gasoline tax of 14.7 cents per litre to drivers in all parts of Ontario; and

“Whereas gasoline tax revenues now go exclusively to big cities with transit systems, while roads and bridges crumble in other communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas residents of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke have been shut out of provincial gasoline tax revenues to which they have contributed; and

“Whereas whatever one-time money has flowed to municipalities from the McGuinty Liberal government has been neither stable nor predictable and has been insufficient to meet our infrastructure needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to redistribute provincial gasoline tax revenues fairly to all communities across the province.”

I affix my signature to this and send it down with Willem.

#### PROTECTION FOR MINERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have a petition from the people of Deep River, Mattawa and Ottawa.

“Whereas the current legislation contained in the Ontario health and safety act and regulations for mines and mining plants does not adequately protect the lives of miners, we request revisions to the act;

“Lyle Everett Defoe and the scoop tram he was operating fell 150 feet down an open stope (July 23, 2007). Lyle was 25 years and 15 days old when he was killed at Xstrata Kidd Creek mine site, Timmins.”

The mining regulation states that, “A shaft, raise or other opening in an underground mine shall be securely fenced, covered or otherwise guarded.... The stope where Lyle was killed was protected by a length of orange plastic snow fence and a rope with a warning sign. These barriers would not have been visible if the bucket of the scoop tram was raised. Lyle’s body was recovered from behind the scoop tram.”

They ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to modify the act as follows:

“Concrete berms must be mandatory to protect all open stopes and raises;

“All miners and contractors working underground must have working communication devices and personal locators;

“All equipment involved in injuries and fatalities must be recovered and examined unless such recovery would endanger the lives of others; and

“The entire act must be reviewed and amended to better protect underground workers.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send to it table with page Kevin.

#### LOGGING ROUTE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to do with logging through the village of Restoule, and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Nipissing forest management plan proposes to use Hawthorne Drive in Restoule, which features a single-lane bridge and narrow and steep sections; and

“Whereas area residents have grave concerns about community safety, traffic speed, truck noise and general wear and tear of Hawthorne Drive and the bridge in the village of Restoule; and

“Whereas the proposed route travels past the Restoule Canadian Legion and two churches; and

“Whereas alternative routes are possible via Odorizzi Road and Block 09-056;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario put the safety and concerns of the people of Restoule ahead of logging interests and ensure an alternate route is selected for the Nipissing forest management plan.”

I support this petition.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I got in in the nick of time. I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas understaffing in Ontario’s nursing homes is a serious problem resulting in inadequate care for residents and unsafe conditions for staff;

“Whereas after the Harris government removed the regulations providing minimum care levels in 1995, hours of care dropped below the previous 2.25 hour/day minimum;

“Whereas the recent improvements in hours of care are not adequate, vary widely and are not held to accountable standards;

“Whereas there is currently nothing in legislation to protect residents and staff from renewed cuts to care levels by future governments; and

“Whereas care needs have measurably increased with aging and the movement of people with more complex health needs from hospitals into long-term-care homes;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Immediately enact and fund an average care standard of 3.5 hours per resident per day in the regulations under the new Long-Term Care Homes Act.”

This is from people in the Monteith area, and I affix my signature.

#### NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I call orders of the day, I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 38, the member from Timmins–James Bay has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question last Thursday to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines regarding the Xstrata strike. This matter will be debated at 6 p.m. today.

#### OPPOSITION DAY

##### CHILD CARE

##### GARDE D'ENFANTS

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** This is the NDP opposition day motion:

Whereas adult caregivers such as grandparents and other custodians do their best to provide stability for children placed in their care due to often unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances; and

Whereas the duration of custody often extends for an indeterminate length of time and previous regulations recognized the realities of these custodial relationships; and

Whereas most seniors—meaning grandparents—are ineligible for Ontario Works assistance on the basis of their eligibility for seniors' income assistance programs that have no provisions to address the custodial responsibilities of these individuals; and

Whereas grandparents are ineligible for foster parents supports and the Ministry of Community and Social Services' temporary care assistance provision was the only program available to these custodial grandparents

before the McGuinty government eliminated this assistance by changing the provisions in July 2008;

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls on the McGuinty government to undo its punitive revisions to the Ministry of Community and Social Services' temporary care assistance directive and support Ontario's grandparents and other temporary caregivers as they seek to work in the best interests of some of Ontario's most vulnerable children. Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Hampton, the leader of the New Democratic Party and member for Kenora–Rainy River, has moved opposition day motion number 4. I recognize the member to lead off.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to address what is a very serious concern for a number of children and a number of grandchildren across this province.

The McGuinty government has talked a lot about its commitment to give all children a fair chance in Ontario. It talks a lot about how it is the first government to set targets for poverty reduction. It talks a lot about its new Ontario child benefit. But here's the reality: In its first mandate, when the economy was growing, child and family poverty were also growing in Ontario. Ontario has become the child poverty capital of Canada. One in eight children in Ontario are now growing up in poverty.

The best the McGuinty government seems to be able to deliver is a lot of talk, and actions that are inconsistent with its talk. For example, it talks a lot, as I say, about its child benefit, but in the process, it cuts off the back-to-school clothing allowance for those kids and it cuts off the winter clothing allowance for those kids. It talks a lot about ending the clawback of the national child benefit, but then implements clawbacks and cuts to basic social assistance rates so families are no further ahead. It talks a lot about raising the minimum wage, but keeps the minimum wage below the poverty line. It makes grand announcements on affordable housing, but then when you come along six months or a year later, you find the announcements never happened and that only half of the number of units of affordable housing were in fact built.

Then there was the announcement this summer—or should I say, the secretive announcement—whereby the Ministry of Community and Social Services issued a directive to cut off financial support from grandparents who act as the primary caregivers for their grandchildren. Yes, we're talking about the temporary care assistance program. That is the subject of our motion.

We are calling on the McGuinty government to stop the double-talk and to reinstate the eligibility of grandparents and other temporary caregivers for this badly needed and modest financial support that the grandparents receive when they're looking after their grandchildren. We're calling on the McGuinty government to stop saying that child poverty is important but then doing things which, in fact, can result in child poverty. Stop announcing programs like the low-income dental program and then putting them on the shelf for months and

months. Start showing some urgency about really taking on poverty. The best place to start is with the changes to the temporary care assistance program that need to be reversed.

**1630**

In July, the Ministry of Community and Social Services issued a directive which had the effect of toughening the rules of the temporary care assistance program and making it nearly impossible for grandparents raising their own grandchildren to access this much-needed financial support. The directive that was issued in July removed any reference to grandparents and emphasized that any support should be temporary, meaning short-term. The former rule stated that no time limits are set on the availability of temporary care assistance and that temporary care assistance may be needed for years. The new rules of the McGuinty government issued in July have eliminated these references and instead emphasize that assistance is for a short period. Program administrators are now instructed to evaluate the length of the child's stay and ensure that the child's stay is in fact temporary, meaning short-term.

How does a grandparent say to a child, "Well, I can only look after you short-term; then you're on your own"? How does a grandparent do that? Who in their right mind would force a loving grandparent to do that? But that's the effect. Grandparents can't look after their grandchild who is in need of care for a few months and then say, "Oh, well, I guess you have to go elsewhere." But that's the effect of what the McGuinty government is trying to do. Why would a government put in place a directive that would exclude caregivers such as grandparents, whose care and support is badly needed by these children who can no longer be cared for by their parents?

To put it in contrast, foster parents who provide ongoing care to children continue to receive \$900 a month per child from the Ontario government. Yet grandparents who step in to provide ongoing care to children who need care don't receive \$900. In fact, the McGuinty government wants to take away the modest \$200 a month that they previously received. Why on earth would a government that says it cares about looking after children want to put grandchildren being raised by their grandparents into the untenable situation of having no income because they are living in a family situation?

As mentioned by my colleague for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek yesterday, a grandparent who came forward to him is a 74-year-old grandmother who has been raising her grandchild, but she, the grandmother, has recently been diagnosed with cancer. Last Friday, she was told by officials acting on the behest of the McGuinty government that she is being cut off from temporary care assistance. However, she was told that she could return her grandchild to the biological mother.

Well, here's the situation. The biological mother is in a mental health facility, and the biological father is an alcoholic—someone who has a hard time looking after himself, never mind looking after his child. This is the untenable situation that the McGuinty government is now

putting some of the most vulnerable grandchildren in this province in. With the additional cost of her health care, both physically and financially, this grandmother can now no longer afford to keep her house. Her grandchild has lived with her for 10 years, and now both face a very bleak future as a result of this punitive directive from the McGuinty government. The minuscule \$231 a month that she received was the difference between their being able to continue to live in the house and now likely losing it.

I think government members should read this new directive, because this new directive goes over the top. What it says is that if a grandparent shows a "settled intent" to treat their grandchild as their child or shows a settled intent to create a permanency of care or permanency of conditions for the child, then the grandparent should lose the temporary care assistance. There's an indicia, a list of points. "Settled intent" can be shown by the length of a child's stay. So if you're a grandparent and you look after your child for a couple of years, you've shown a settled intent and you lose the benefit.

If, as a grandparent, you make arrangements to physically accommodate your grandchild—imagine this: A loving grandparent says, "You're going to live with me now. There's no one else to look after you, so we're going to set up a bedroom for you." That's a showing of settled intent to physically accommodate the child; you lose the benefit. If there are custody orders, you can lose the benefit. If there's an involvement by the grandparent in medical, educational and recreational activities for the child, you can lose the benefit. Imagine: A loving grandparent wants to make sure that this grandchild receives appropriate medical help, receives appropriate educational assistance and maybe even gets to play soccer or maybe even gets to go to swimming lessons. These are reasons, according to the McGuinty government, to take away the temporary care assistance—involvement in decisions with respect to the child's health and well-being.

*Interruption.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize for interrupting the leader of the New Democratic Party, but I must say to our visitors who are here today: We welcome you here and we appreciate your presence, but it is inappropriate for you to engage in any verbal outbursts, as much as you may agree with one of the speakers who's participating in the debate.

I return to the leader of the New Democratic Party.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Actually, Speaker, I thank you for the intervention because it is my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek who has taken the time, the care and the effort to raise these issues.

I simply want to say this: I urge all members of the McGuinty government to look at this directive because I think it's indefensible. I don't think you can, at the one hand, on the one side of your mouth, claim as a government that you care about child poverty and that you want to help children, and then cut off grandparents who are merely trying to provide loving care and assistance to their grandchildren who cannot get care otherwise—cut them off from \$231 a month.

Look at them and ask yourself, is this the direction, as a government, that you think you ought to go in? I don't think this directive can be defended. I think it is punitive; I think it is harsh; I think it is punishing to some of the most vulnerable children in this province and deserves and needs to be reversed immediately.

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

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm here today to address the issue of temporary care assistance, an issue that has received quite a bit of attention lately. To those of you unfamiliar with this initiative, temporary care assistance is a program available through Ontario Works that provides financial support to non-parental caregivers who are temporarily caring for a child that they don't have the legal obligation to support.

It is a program that is particularly relevant when parents are not able to take care of their child for a temporary period. Reasons can be as wide as the parents being hospitalized or being subject to domestic violence or drug addictions. It is an important program, and our government has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to helping families and children in need.

**1640**

I would like to start by thanking these temporary caregivers who look after extended family members. These temporary caregivers can be related to the child, sometimes they can just be friends or neighbours, and some of these temporary caregivers happen to be grandparents. Our government understands and appreciates the significant contributions that they make and the support they give to children who need a home. They take in children, giving them a stable life and a better chance of a successful future. These temporary caregivers are a vital part of a child's life and can make all the difference in the world, and we recognize their hard work.

Now there has been quite a bit of talk about people losing their temporary care assistance. I have read in the media that the rules have changed, that the government all of a sudden is refusing money to families who need it most. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have been steadfast in our support for families in need, and I want to make it clear: We have not changed the rules governing eligibility for the temporary care assistance program. To do so, legislative changes would have been required. We have simply clarified the guidelines to better support Ontario Works administrators in making decisions about the child's eligibility. This clarification was part of a larger exercise to update all Ontario Works policy guidelines. This was not an isolated effort focused on temporary care assistance.

First, I would like to highlight the fact that TCA is not income-tested on the caregiver. This means that a caregiver making \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 or \$70,000 could still receive TCA. I would like to also point out there has been no significant variation in the temporary care assistance caseload since the guidelines were updated.

Some members of the third party take this issue very personally, but they should check their facts before mak-

ing accusations. I would be curious to learn where the member of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek got his numbers when he makes the allegation that my ministry has cut off hundreds of people following the update of the guidelines. Had he checked with us, he would have learned that the TCA caseload has remained relatively constant over the last six months.

I would also like to address the concerns of the member from Hamilton Centre, who stood up in the House last week. She asked me three things: first, that grandchildren being raised by grandparents be eligible for TCA; second, that there be no time limit to be eligible for TCA; and third, that the duration of care should not constitute grounds to deny TCA to those children in need.

Let me answer yet again the member of Hamilton Centre: Nothing has changed. Point one, done. If children taken care of by their grandparents are eligible for TCA, they will receive TCA no matter what the grandparents' income is. Point two, done. The updated guidelines still make it clear that there is no set time limit for temporary care assistance and that eligibility determinations are made on a case-by-case basis, based on individual circumstances. Point three, done. It's the child's overall circumstances that determine eligibility. Some TCA beneficiaries are on this program for years, and they will not become ineligible for that single reason.

Administrators have always been required to assess whether the relationship is temporary or permanent. This is, in fact, supported under legislation that was adopted by previous governments. As I have said, any change to policy would require a change to legislation. You would know if the legislation had been amended; this is not the case.

I can also assure you that we are continuing to increase our investment in temporary care assistance. Since taking office, we have increased temporary care assistance benefits by 7%. These benefits are going to increase by another 2% next month. Have I mentioned that the opposition parties voted against these increases? We have invested almost \$13 million in this program this year, an increase of 14% from last year. Have I mentioned that under the Tories, the TCA budget was reduced from \$14.5 million to \$8.9 million? Under the Liberal leadership, our ongoing support for this program will go a long way in helping the nearly 5,700 children in Ontario who benefit from temporary care assistance.

Temporary care assistance is just one way that we are helping families and temporary caregivers in need. We have other supports available for them. We have committed more than \$2 billion to the Ontario child benefit to help our province's most vulnerable children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This initiative will reach 1.3 million Ontario children and more than 600,000 low-income families and temporary caregivers, making a positive difference in their lives. It also provides a simple income-tested financial benefit to low- and moderate-income families with children under 18, regardless of whether or not they receive social assistance.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the minister to take her seat, and I would ask the member for Timmins–James Bay to refrain from heckling the minister. I return to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Low-income families and temporary caregivers in need may also be able to access other financial supports for their children, such as the Canada child tax benefit and the national child benefit supplement. All of these federal benefits are exempt as income from social assistance, including temporary care assistance.

Let me explain with an example: A grandmother caring for two grandchildren who qualifies for the maximum benefit amount of temporary care assistance will receive nearly \$420 per month. If she qualifies for the other government benefits I just outlined, she could receive more than \$1,000 per month. As you can see, there are several programs available to help Ontario's families, temporary caregivers and children. At the end of the day, our government will never turn our back on low-income, hard-working families.

I know first-hand what it is to welcome a child who has nowhere to go. When I was a child at home, my parents opened their hearts and their door to two young boys. One of them, his mother had passed away. His dad had eight children and couldn't cope with them, so we took one child home, Benoit. I will always remember. To this day, he still visits us. He was like a brother to us. My mother never asked a question, never asked if she would be compensated for that. She welcomed that young boy at home.

Another time we had Francis, who was in an orphanage and had no place to go for Christmas. We took him home for Christmas and all of the holidays after. It was so rewarding for us, and to this day, he continues to visit us. I could go on. I come from a family where they open their door and their hearts.

But for those who need support, this Ontario government has the temporary care assistance. Other provinces don't have this program; Quebec, for instance.

Thank you for allowing me to speak. At the end of the day, our government, again, will never turn their back on low-income hard-working families, especially when these families are helping to provide better outcomes for children.

1650

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to speak on this important resolution. I must thank and acknowledge the work of the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Without his feedback and without him speaking to the grandparents primarily of Hamilton, we would not have been made aware of this issue, so I thank him for that work on behalf of his constituents.

Minister, you continue to use the word "clarify"—"I have clarified the rules." The reality is, your clarification

has led to people who previously were receiving temporary care assistance no longer getting the money. You call it a clarification; I say you've changed the rules.

I'd like to quote from some of the newspaper headlines on this issue, because, as I say, we've been dealing with it a number of days at question period:

"Province Ramps Up Financial Pressure on Grandparents Raising Grandkids," and that's from the Community Press in Belleville. "Grandparent Ruling Wrong," Hamilton Spectator. "Spite Behind Cuts for Grandparents with Temporary Custody of Kids," Canadian Press. "Cuts to Temporary Child Care Funding 'Disgusting,'" Toronto Star. "NDP Blames Spite for Funding Cuts to Grandparents," CTV News. "Ontario Program Cutbacks a 'Blatant Attack' on the Elderly," Toronto Star.

And this from the Toronto Sun: "Harris was More Generous to Elders." That's a direct quote from Susan Eng, the vice-president of CARP. She goes on to say, "There's no way to make sense of this. They're losing their minds. They have no idea what they're doing here."

Temporary care assistance, in the words of Gail, a grandparent raising a child: If it were not for grandparents or other family members, these children would end up being just another statistic, placed into a system that is so overwhelmed, they would eventually fall through the cracks, become a writeoff or separated from their siblings.

"We take the initiative and the responsibility to ensure a safe and loving environment complete with family bonds. We assume the encumbrance without ever looking back because we love them, we want to ensure their right to a full and well-balanced life.

"We experience our own challenges when parenting again. Social isolation, financial strain or even health issues. Being placed in a parenting role again always brings changes to employment, living arrangements, social networks, lifestyle adjustments ... to name a few."

Ontario Works provided temporary financial help to these caregivers, but Minister Meilleur's statement or clarification in July removed that ability. It is beyond comprehension to me how you could justify from a social standpoint, from a fiscal standpoint, from a personal standpoint, how \$200 a month is going to assist your ministry in—what? Making ends meet? And yet in fact all you're doing is pushing those pressures on to other ministries, other care agencies across the province at, quite frankly, a much higher rate.

If those children are given up by the grandparents to once again go into the system, foster parenting, if you find a foster family who is available and willing to take on the child, it is going to cost you much more per month than the \$200 that you were providing for temporary care assistance.

More importantly, let's look at the relationship that happens when that child is in a kin family. They are going to thrive, they are going to do better in a kin situation than any other government-controlled situation, whether it be fostering or group homes.

While I will acknowledge that the changes to temporary care assistance so far have been hitting certain

pockets of Ontario, most notably, of course, Hamilton, as well as Ottawa, obviously those who continue to care for their grandchildren across Ontario are concerned. They are concerned that once this directive has been signed off and approved across Ontario, once, quite frankly, you get away with it in Hamilton and Ottawa, it is going to sweep Ontario, and every grandparent who is looking after their grandchildren will be removed from temporary care assistance.

I spoke briefly about foster care as another alternative. In my community, there were two new foster families found in the last year. In another community to the south, there were four foster families, in total, found in one year. Clearly, there are not enough foster families available in Ontario to cover the hundreds of children who would need fostering if you removed temporary care assistance from all over Ontario.

I talked briefly about how grandparents provide a stable and nurturing environment for their grandchildren. I can't believe that there's anyone in this House who would believe that the alternative of putting children into institutional care would be an improvement if the grandparents are available and willing to assist.

I want people to remember: We are not talking about thousands of dollars per month. It is \$200 a month—\$231, to be precise—for temporary care assistance. You're balancing that against a policy, quite frankly, that is incomprehensible. I would love to hear the minister talk about why she chose to clarify the directive. What possibly could be the background, the reasoning, behind that clarification? It couldn't be fiscal. It couldn't be because it's better for the child. I would have loved for the minister to have spent her time speaking in the House today to explain to the parents and to the opposition why that directive had to change on Canada Day. Happy Canada Day for the grandparents who were removed from temporary care assistance.

I could go on, but I think the point has been made that you need to look at the child; you need to look at everything as a whole. You've bounced the children from one ministry to the other. You haven't solved a problem; in fact, you've made it worse. I would love to hear your justification for why you needed to do it.

On that point, I will let the debate continue.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank my colleague the member from Dufferin-Caledon for those kind words.

I'll start off by just going through a chronological order of the events that have transpired in the last few weeks in this House. The minister said, on June 9, "This temporary care assistance is short-term. It says so; it's temporary care assistance." Then, on October 20, she said, "Our government supports the grandparents through this temporary care assistance when the grandparents and children are in need in the short term." Does this sound familiar? It should. These are the comments made by the Minister of Community and Social Services in response to my questions about her changes to temporary care

assistance eligibility. Note the new emphasis by the minister on the term "short term."

"There is no time limit to the program," Madame Meilleur said on November 3. True, but in the new directives it states that although there are no time limits set, cases must be temporary. The old directive stated that there are no time limits, mentioning nothing about them being short-term. In fact, recipients have had this funding for years, and the policy agreed with that.

We must remember that these situations are still temporary because the parents of these grandchildren can always go to court and reverse any custody order, regaining custody of their children. The custodial relationship between the grandchildren and grandparents is always temporary.

On October 16, the minister said that if grandparents are in financial difficulty, these grandparents are like anyone else in Ontario who is in financial difficulty; they are entitled to Ontario Works: welfare. I'd like the minister to look in this gallery and say that directly to Erlene Weaver, who is raising her three grandchildren. Erlene, who is co-chair of ROCK, Raising Our Children's Kids, was one of those grandparents who met with the minister last June, pleading for the same eligibility treatment for grandparents in Hamilton and Ottawa as in the rest of this province.

**1700**

Erlene would tell the minister that she does not qualify for welfare. She and her husband have a pension income and own a house, which is now mortgaged for her grandchildren. Erlene even applied for ODSP for one grandchild, but he was not disabled enough and got \$29 a month without any benefits.

On October 22: "If grandparents have, for example, two of their grandchildren, they can receive up to \$1,000 a month." Well, that's interesting. I'd like to ask the minister to bring to this Legislature real cases of grandparents raising two grandchildren who have qualified for \$1,000 a month under any provincial program. Perhaps the minister would be willing to send these to me in writing, with the application forms, so that I can get the information to these grandparents so they can reapply. Is this one of those phantom "large range of programs" that the minister alludes to but for which no one qualifies?

On November 3, the minister said: "This government is supporting grandparents by providing temporary care assistance and a host of other programs in the long term."

Madame Meilleur's letter to the editor, October 31: "While temporary care assistance is a short-term program, if a grandparent assumes permanent custody, they may qualify for longer-term support such as the Ontario child benefit."

On November 4, the minister said: "There are other programs that are available to them, like the Ontario child benefit, for instance, and the national child tax credit."

I'd like to ask the minister to tell this Legislature how anyone can think that the Ontario child benefit program, which gives \$50 a month, is support for raising a grand-

child without any other program funding. Perhaps this minister would like to try it herself.

This morning, I asked the minister what other programs in Ontario are offered to grandparents raising grandchildren. Guess what? Her only answer was the Ontario child benefit program. She did mention the national child tax credit, but neglected to mention that it gets clawed back.

According to the minister's new op-ed in today's Hamilton Spectator, even as late as today, she said, "Our government offers a large range of programs to support our most vulnerable children." But this morning, she could only name one Ontario program.

Perhaps the minister would like to suggest to other grandparents the same solution that her staff offered to Betty Cornelius: to send her grandchildren back to their parents. But Betty couldn't decide whether it would be the drug addict or the prostitute.

On October 16, the minister said: "So there was no directive change. There was no rule change."

On October 20: "Let me say that the rules were not changed."

In the Toronto Sun, on October 29: "It's not a change to the rules but a change to the definition of the rules that has cut off hundreds of recipients from temporary care assistance benefits," said Meilleur.

Again in the Sun, on October 29: "Outside the Legislature, the minister acknowledged the ministry had issued a new policy in July that changed who can qualify for the monthly benefits.... The specification of what 'temporary' means has changed. The rule has not changed."

"It is important to note that eligibility rules for TCA have not changed. As part of the ministry's update of all Ontario Works policy directives, the guidelines for TCA have been updated to better support local Ontario Works offices in making decisions regarding eligibility"—the ministry's standard e-mail response, from November 3.

"The definition has not been changed"—the Legislature, on November 4.

So going from October 16, when the minister said there was no rule change, to October 29, when she finally admitted that the specification had changed, we find a path of weaving and bobbing and avoidance of the real issues.

The real issue is that this minister made an enormous mistake by deciding to be punitive to grandparents raising their grandchildren, making their lives as miserable as possible.

She also decided to try to blame her actions on everyone else but herself, including me, for sticking up for my grandparents. Unbelievable. I'm sticking up for my constituents, and this minister calls me a name. Unbelievable.

It's time that the minister took responsibility for this fiasco and fixed her redefinition that cut off these grandchildren from temporary care assistance. Let's be very clear: Temporary care assistance is available to the grandchildren based on the grandchild's income. One

would then think that this money would be for recreation, education and health programs.

"The member of the third party is a very strong supporter and defender of these grandparents," the minister said on September 24. Then she said, "After this member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek blew the whistle on the grandparents, now he's out here telling us that he ... wants to put a time limit on the program." The minister said that on November 3. Unbelievable.

This statement of the minister is one of her most callous. She knows very well that in response to the request from grandparents in my community, my staff arranged a meeting with this very minister. At that meeting, grandparents, members from ROCK, asked the minister to fix the problem of varying interpretations of her directive. In Hamilton and Ottawa, the directive was read so that they were not eligible for TCA. Throughout the rest of the province—and my staff has checked with many municipalities—the directive was read so that it would include our grandchildren.

In a meeting with the minister in April, Sandra Schoenfeldt, Grand-Parenting Again Canada, Niagara, reports that the minister said, "The assistance is there because of the children's inability to earn monies to support themselves for as long as they need it." Well, what happened, Minister, between April and June? Why did you make this change?

Then she said, "This member would like to have the program income-tested." She said that on October 23. "We have this program for these grandparents, but he continues to argue that it should be income-tested. He doesn't use the word, but all the examples that he's giving me"—on October 29. Totally false. Totally untrue. Speculative.

For this completely erroneous statement, I expect a written apology from the minister to these ROCK grandparents, who came in good faith to meet with her in June. The minister is the only one to even think about income or means testing. She's trying a diversion from her attack on these grandchildren by falsely accusing the motive of these grandparents who met with her in June. It's not me who's under attack but grandchildren being raised by their grandparents.

The presence of these grandparents in this Legislature today, some from as far away as three hours north of Ottawa—Erlene, Betty, Sandra, Diane, Bernadette—all of whom are members of organizations fighting for the rights of their grandchildren, is proof to everyone here of the seriousness of this action by Minister Meilleur. They all know the truth, and they all want this minister to fix the mess she has created.

Finally, I must say, I personally have been through the ringer on this with this minister. She continues to send out ads to the papers misleading the people of this province—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** What am I withdrawing, Mr. Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** But that's what's happening, and I'll tell you right now, you can twist it, you can turn it, you can turn it upside down, Minister, but we're not going to let up. These grandparents aren't going to let up until you reverse this callous, disgusting decision that you've made on behalf of the McGuinty government. You should hang your head in shame.

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

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I am pleased to join the debate today to discuss temporary care assistance, an issue which has been circulated widely in the media for the last couple of weeks, and also to debate the motion brought by the third party about the caregivers, such as grandparent and other custodians, doing their best to provide stability for children placed in their care due to often unforeseen and unfortunate circumstances.

1710

It's important to talk about this issue and to outline the importance of this issue. Before I start, I want to thank all the grandparents and all the caregivers who have come to this place today to be with us, to listen to this debate. Everyone, I believe, who has listened to us this afternoon listened to the honourable member the Minister of Community and Social Services outlining the intent and the goals and the decisions and regulations in the province of Ontario. She outlined this very clearly: The rule has never been changed. Despite what the opposition says, the rule never changed. I believe that when a minister of the crown stands up in her place and says, "The rule has not changed," it has not changed, because she is talking about it from a responsible position. And it's important to outline—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask, again, the member for Hamilton East to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw the word "misleading."

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You have to withdraw.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I return to the member for London—Fanshawe.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I understand the emotion about this issue.

I know the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek brought this issue to our attention many different times and he asked the minister many different times about the position of the government, our ministry, in this regard. Every single time, I believe she said clearly to him and to all the people across the province that the rule has not changed. We said it and she said it. I believe strongly that when a minister of the crown stands up in her place and says the rule has not been changed, it has not been changed.

We're talking about temporary care—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I believe that when the honourable member from Hamilton spoke I listened to him. I respected his position, and I hope he listens to us and to our position on this matter.

I care a lot about the people who work very hard to care for their loved ones, whether they're grandparents, friends or family members, who have made a huge decision to look after a child.

We have said it many different times: The support does not go to the grandparents or the adult; it goes to the child, and if the child is eligible, then they get the support. The rule has not been changed. We repeat it again in this place.

I know the opposition and the third party have been talking on many different occasions and, sadly, have dragged in people from many places to come to this place to use them as a political token to their advantage. It's a shame to bring people who have been working hard and giving their best to support—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask all members of this House to observe the standards of decorum that we would all hope to observe. I return to the member for London—Fanshawe.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** As I mentioned, those honourable people are doing what they're doing because they love what they do, because they want to work very hard, they want to provide care and support and stability for those children who for some reason lost the support from their biological parents.

It's important to talk about this issue and not to bring it to the political arena, and it's important not to bring families from across the province to this very place and use them as a political token to advance a certain party.

I believe strongly that our obligation and duty as a government, as a ministry, is to support all the children across the province of Ontario, to support the people who are giving care to those children and, as I mentioned and as the minister mentioned, we can work to continue the support.

As you know, I listened to the member opposite many different times, and we went to the ministry and we spoke to the people who are in charge of that portfolio. What they said to us is that the rule has not changed and is not going to be changed. I know the program has been implemented since 1998, and all the people have been eligible since 1998 until now and till today and will be tomorrow—it will be the same, no changes.

As you know, most of the administrators in the municipalities across the province of Ontario have some flexibility to determine who is eligible and who is not eligible. I know that the social worker or the person who's looking after a certain family sometimes makes a mistake in trying to do their best to assess and make that person eligible. That's why our offices across the province are open to all the families, all the caregivers. If they have some kind of confusion or if they have some kind of problem, our offices will be open for them, to work with

them with local administrations in order to clarify those issues and help them if they need support or for some reason they are not eligible to get any support for their loved ones or for the people they care for.

It's important to continue to talk about this issue because this is an issue we care a lot about. That's why our government, since we got elected in 2003, has paid a lot of attention to those issues. Also, I recognize my colleague the member from Niagara Falls, Mr. Craiton, who brought to this place many different initiatives, especially about grandparents' right to support their grandchildren. He worked very hard over his time in order to support grandparents in the province of Ontario. Also, I remember that Minister Mary Anne Chambers worked very hard to establish kinship relations and laws in the province of Ontario to allow grandparents to take care of their grandchildren. I also want to recognize the minister, Madeleine Meilleur, who has been working very hard since she became the Minister of Community and Social Services to make sure everyone in the province of Ontario is looked after. I know the members opposite sometimes try to twist the information or send it a different way—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would have to caution the member for London—Fanshawe in terms of his use of parliamentary language.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I withdraw if I said anything wrong, Mr. Speaker. It's very important, when we talk about this important issue, not to involve the families, not to involve the mothers and fathers, not to involve those people. Let's deal with it in a professional manner. Let's work together, all of us in this House, to find a solution to fit and to protect those children. It's important—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I ask the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek to please come to order, and return to the member for London—Fanshawe to conclude his remarks.

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** It's important to work with the families and work with caregivers across the province of Ontario and continue to give them the support they need in order to continue to care for the children who are in their custody for temporary reasons.

We cannot continue our job and we cannot continue our mission without clarifying the positions, the rules and regulations in the province of Ontario. As the minister mentioned, no rules are being changed; it's just that the rules are being clarified. Whenever we can, we work together with grandparents and caregivers across the province of Ontario to make sure those children in their custody will be supported.

Mr. Speaker, I know many people from our caucus want to speak on this issue, and thank you for allowing me to say this. I would vote on this motion, but I'll tell you why. The language being used in this motion is not correct. That's why I'm not voting for it, because this motion is not about the rules being changed. The rules are not being changed; the rules remain the same, with no changes. That's why I'm not voting for the motion.

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

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** I'm pleased to rise today in support of the motion put forward by the NDP caucus. The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek was absolutely right to challenge the Minister of Community and Social Services on her revisions to the rules regarding grandparents across this province who are making the best of a very difficult situation. They find themselves in a situation of temporary care assistance of their grandchildren. Unfortunately, there's no definition of what "temporary" really is. The initiative may have been well meaning, but it was not well thought out. The impact was not tested.

These grandparents were looking forward to their golden years. They worked hard. They raised their own children, paid their taxes, and now, because of love, a sense of family, a sense of nurturing and a sense of responsibility, they suddenly find themselves as primary caregivers.

It is estimated that it costs about \$300,000 to raise a child to adulthood. Many of these grandparents are on fixed incomes, and here they are in their advanced years having to take on part-time jobs to make ends meet just to make sure that their grandchildren have the best that they can give them. Telling these folks who have contributed their entire lives to building our communities, investing in our province and paying their taxes that they will not receive any support for providing a stable, safe home for their grandchildren, who would otherwise be in the system, is reprehensible.

**1720**

Over the past few years, I have seen an increase in advertisements and campaigns to encourage more foster parents, as there is a significant shortfall in our province for foster parents. If these dedicated, loving grandparents had not stepped in, these children would be in foster care, or a group home on a waiting list for foster care. In essence, these guardians are saving the province a significant sum of money in administrative cost and, more importantly, in future systemic issues. I simply don't understand the regressive thinking of this McGuinty government. These grandparents are providing a sense of stability, a sense of continuity and love at a time when these children feel abandoned and left behind. As a grandmother myself, I know how instinctive it is to reach out and help your grandchild. That's what family does.

I worked with Madame Meilleur in my previous life as a municipal representative and I admire the way in which she does her work. The minister did stand in her place and praise these grandparents for their contribution. But in my experience with the minister in her previous role as Minister of Culture, I'm finding it very bewildering that she is agreeing to changes that are cutting off a few dollars from grandparents—a few dollars that make a difference between having the necessities in life or perhaps the opportunity to be participating in a hockey team or take piano lessons or maybe be in a soccer club.

The loophole we are working with here is the issue of sole guardianship or custody. Many of the parents have not relinquished their rights or they simply can't be found to get them to sign that piece of paper. In some cases, the

grandparents don't want to force their own children to relinquish their rights. They may be holding out hope that their children will get themselves sorted out and become the parents that these vulnerable children deserve. It may be a long shot, but perhaps hope is all they have left. Why should we take that away from them?

Is the Minister of Community and Social Services really advocating for parents to sign over their rights to their children so that the grandparents can get the supports that they need to raise these kids? Have these kids and grandparents become a technicality?

My NDP colleague went to the minister in the spirit of co-operation back in June to share his concerns and the concerns of the grandparents in his municipality and across Ontario. This is what the taxpayers of our province expect. They expect us to park our politics at the door and do what's good for the broader public. After the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek left the minister's office, you would think the loophole would be corrected. But no, what the minister and her staff did was to immediately throw the ball into the municipal court, thereby giving licence to municipalities to cut off grandparents, who should be included in the existing legislation but were on the cusp, due to a technicality. Perhaps she thought that no one would hold her accountable for refusing to support these grandparents. Whatever the reason, it just isn't good enough.

The minister rewrote the rules, giving all municipalities that open door to deny grandparents financial support. Adding insult to injury, the minister suggested affected grandparents could apply for OW. OW is welfare. Go on welfare to look after your grandchildren? Is this the advice coming from the McGuinty government? These are proud, taxpaying citizens who have chosen to accept this additional responsibility, which in their whole life they never dreamed they would have: to look after their children in a time of need. They're not looking for assistance to help them pay for a trip to Florida. They need to buy clothes, they need to increase their food budget, they need to buy school supplies, and hopefully maybe pay for a swimming lesson or a piano lesson. They are asking for our support to give these kids a decent quality of life, something that would be considered a normal quality of life. Kids who have no one but their grandparents in their corner need our help right now to make a real difference in their lives. It must be noted that by asking grandparents to assume welfare status, this puts the kids on welfare too, and I thought we were working so hard to get them off welfare.

The McGuinty government continually misses that human aspect of the work we do here because, after initiating a plan, they don't think through how it will look when it actually hits the ground and affects the person that that well-meaning plan was put in place for.

I'm sure all of us got into politics to do the best we could for the people we represent, to really make a difference in our communities and our province. The minister could, if she wanted to and if she evaluated that impact I'm talking about, that impacts these people

directly once that initiative is signed off, change the lives of thousands of children with just the flash of a pen in a cabinet meeting on a Wednesday afternoon. It really is that easy. One order in council is all it takes; five minutes on a Wednesday afternoon. But unfortunately, the chosen path has been the easy way out, a way that passes the buck to the municipalities, and that way we can lay blame on somebody else. I say, "Shame."

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Il me fait plaisir d'ajouter mon appui à mon collègue le député de Hamilton Est–Stoney Creek. Il a rencontré la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires en juin cette année avec des grands-parents qui avaient de la difficulté : ils se faisaient couper leur prime d'assistance pour s'occuper de leurs petits-enfants. La ministre et son personnel étaient bien déçus de ce qui leur arrivait et elle a promis de s'en mêler. Eh bien, la ministre s'en est mêlée : elle a émis des clarifications qui font en sorte que maintenant personne n'est éligible pour avoir la prime, peu importe la situation. Ils sont tous traités de la même façon : personne n'en a reçu.

Aujourd'hui, l'assemblée est pleine de grands-parents, des grands-parents pour qui la prime a été coupée. La ministre essaie de nous faire croire qu'il n'y a pas eu de changement. Mais s'il n'y a pas eu de changement, comment est-ce qu'elle explique que les galeries sont pleines de grands-parents qui recevaient la prime avant et qui ne la reçoivent plus maintenant? Quelque chose a changé. Elle doit l'avouer et elle ne le fait pas.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I really am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this debate. I had the privilege of acting as Minister of Community and Social Services for the first couple of years, when the McGuinty government first became government, and this particular issue is important because it is part of a very large conversation that our government has had with the public of Ontario around support for people who need help.

I want to start, like every member of this House has, by saying that, yes, I'm glad that grandparents are in this House. I'm glad grandparents made the trip to be here to listen to debate about things that matter to children. It's the thing that we've been doing since 2003. It's a little bit unfair to impugn motive across party lines, because over the years many of us haven't been here that long. But in the time that I've been here, we've sat in various seats in this House, and what I do know about every member who gets elected here is that everybody has the view to do the best that they can, and it is unfair to say that some people care more than other people care, because that's not the case.

Can I start with that, please? I sat in opposition right about where this member is sitting. That's where I started in 1995, and over here, in this seat right here, was Mike Harris and then Ernie Eves. What they did in 1995 was cut social assistance generally, including all the programs

that we're talking about today. So you have to understand the irony: that I stand in the House today to defend the Minister of Community and Social Services after the kind of work we've been building in community and social services since we became a government. Many of the parents and grandparents that I met over the years as the minister, when we started initiating increases to social services for the first time in 13 years—these grandparents know what our history is.

What I appreciate is that you're here today because you're still fighting the fight for kids and for your grandchildren, and that's important. What I want to talk about today is a little bit of the irony, because the same members who stand in the House that asked you to come and be part of this political debate are the same—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It would probably be helpful if you made your remarks through the Chair, as per the rules of the House.

I return to the minister.

1730

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm okay with this because I too have been in opposition and have felt the need to resort to heckling when you lose facts in a debate, because there are facts here that need to be told, and I want the Hansard to reflect the facts: The opposition members who are in the House today were the government when a fundamental principle was at work, when these same members—members of the Conservative Party, the NDP and Liberals—since the 1970s, since the beginnings of social services to help people in need, started with one fundamental principle that was the same in the 1970s as it is today, and that is that families help families. It doesn't matter what party has ever been in government, that has been the underlying principle.

I just need a moment. As I said earlier, I've been there, I get where you're coming from, but you have to understand that since the 1970s what has driven social policy across every single party that has been in government in this House is that families support families. If we lose that principle, we lose everything in society. If we can't have an expectation that parents take care of their children, and when that falls down, that their family will step up to the plate because our society needs them to—that's what's fundamental behind every single party that has been the government in this House since the 1970s. We have to start there. Every single party has been the government with that same principle that is still a fact today.

We move forward and say, "Well, there was a political party here when I was elected that cut all programs and social assistance," and the grandparents who were taking care of grandchildren have suffered the fate of that, and yet these Conservative members today are standing up, reporting all of a sudden that they care more, but they were the same ones who made the cuts to the same programs. Please don't come in today as if, "I have clean hands here," because you've got to be consistent in your principles. You cut the programs when you were the government.

When we came into this office in 2003 and we raised the levels across the board, these are two political parties

that voted against every single increase. How do you stand in the House today and say, "I care more. I care more than you care"? We raised the levels of support across the board and two political parties voted against us repeatedly, and that is just a fact. Those are the facts on record in Hansard. How do you stand up and say you care for kids, when we created 22,000 extra child care spaces that you voted against? How do you stand in the House and vote against measures with direct, significant impact on kids, and you vote against them, but today, because it's a political opportunity, you're going to impugn motive on the same government that made these increases to every single social service program that the government has had on offer since 2003? That's the reality.

I want to speak for a moment about temporary care assistance specifically, because we know this is a program of temporary care assistance. Much has been said about the fact of, "Where's the rest of the support?" Let's take an example of a grandparent who did not expect, when they got to a pension age, that all of a sudden they were going to remain with the care of their grandchildren. What opportunities are there for these people to get support from the government? What are they? I have to tell you that these same people, if they're now on OAS, if they're on old age security, are entitled to get the Ontario child benefit.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Fifty bucks a month.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** That is a new program which is growing every year. I have to tell the opposition member, you cannot have opposed the Ontario child benefit program when it is direct assistance—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to please come to order. Once again, I would ask the member for Timmins–James Bay to please come to order.

I return to the minister to conclude her remarks.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** The point is that if there are grandparents who are on old age security, there are other supports here. Yes, they are income tested. There are other supports. They have been listed and they are going to have to be believed, because this is a party that has supported—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I am pleased to be able to join in today's debate and certainly will be supporting the motion that we have before us.

But I want to take the members and observers here back to the passage of Bill 210, the Child and Family Services Statute Law Amendment Act. I have a reason for doing that, and that is simply the fact that throughout the bill, it was very clear what the government's objectives were in terms of broadening the definition of a "place of safety." This was to allow children to be placed with family. It was referred to as "kinship care." It was very clear that the intent was based on the research and, frankly, the intuition and the natural connections that

other family members have. Several of the speakers today have talked about the problems that grandparents find their own children in, and then they want to be able to rescue those grandchildren from certain circumstances.

I think it's important that we see today's issue in the context of that bill that was passed. And in response to the Minister of International Trade and Investment, I would just want to underline that we supported that bill. We want to make it clear that we did because we understood the kinds of important legislative objectives that were going to be in this bill.

It seems strange that, at this particular point in time, having had that bill before us and having supported it, we're looking at today's reality—and today's reality is certainly something quite different. I know that I, as well as other members of this House, have looked at the shortfall on things like the child benefit program, which this government introduced when it became clear that the families were going to lose the back-to-school and winter clothing allowance for children and instead were going to have about three months of \$50—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the Minister of International Trade and Investment to please come to order.

I return to the member for York–Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** So we see indications, then, over the last few months of obviously a change of heart, if you like, of the way in which this government began with the whole notion of kinship care and the support for that, which, as other members have said, was something that—in this particular instance, the monies for grandparents have in fact been around for 10 years.

But the kinds of issues that we see emerging in the last few months are, frankly, attacks on the principles that this government placed before us in the legislation, when we look at the question of things like the winter clothing allowance. I found it very interesting in the minister's comments earlier today when she talked about the temporary program creating stability. I thought there was a bit of an internal contradiction between referring to something that was temporary and providing stability.

The other thing that others have mentioned, and that I think is really important to stress, is the fact that by creating a situation where individuals find themselves no longer eligible, you not only eliminate that kind of stability, regardless of how the minister defines it, but you also look at the fact that if people are forced through this to look at their children going into foster care, this of course is at least three times more expensive than the current program that has been under threat. But I think what we're looking at here is the fact that today it is very clear that there are some very serious challenges, and obviously the technicalities that the minister has raised, frankly, do not answer the question for those people who have taken on the responsibility and found themselves ineligible.

1740

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** This is quite an extraordinary debate. First, I want to thank my colleagues Mr. Miller and Howard Hampton for their presentations.

I want to say that the performance from the Minister of Community and Social Services was an extraordinary performance today, essentially saying there was no problem. When I look in the galleries here, when I look at these people who have come with their grandchildren, with the families they're responsible for, I don't believe that everything is taken care of, I don't believe that everything is fine. There is clear evidence in this hall today that your government has abandoned these grandparents and these children.

I listened to the minister of economic development, Sandra Pupatello—

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** It's international trade.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** International trade and travel. I listened to the minister go after the Conservative Party, the opposition. She seems to forget that right now she's in government and she has the power to act. You can spend all your speaking time attacking that government or you can take action now. You, Minister, prefer to do nothing and yak and yak about the opposition. The simple reality, Minister and members of that government, is that your approach—

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** You were the government and you made cuts to those programs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'd ask the minister again to observe the rules of the House and refrain from heckling the member.

I return to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Thank you, Speaker.

Your approach is wrong morally, it's wrong in human terms, it's wrong in policy terms. Morally, these grandparents and these children should not be abandoned. It's wrong in policy terms because if you want to make sure that children are taken care of, if you want to make sure that families are kept together, then give them the very modest assistance that was available until an under-the-counter cut came along and took the money out of those households.

Your government cannot defend that policy to parents across this province. You go to any meeting of parents, talk to them, they'll tell you they don't want you to behave like that. Rescind your policy.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It really is unfortunate that we have to even debate this motion before the Legislature today, and it's unfortunate that we have to even consider why this government would pull the rug out from under the very people who provide the kind of guidance and support for younger generations that's so important in our society, and I'm obviously speaking of Ontario's grandparents. This government has provided a back-handed slap that has taken essential funding from those who give of themselves to look after their beloved grandchildren.

The member from Dufferin–Caledon reminded me, and we all know this situation, that today's US presi-

dential candidate Barack Obama was raised for a number of years by his grandmother. We can all think of people in our home ridings. I think of a couple who became very good friends with my daughter and what they had to put forward, what they had to sacrifice to look after two young girls, their grandchildren. It pretty well eliminates any thought of retirement. You essentially go back to work and you pretty well, I think in the one case, work until the end of your days to support your grandchildren.

Specifically, as we've heard, we're talking about those grandparents who go above and beyond, stepping up to the plate when their grandchildren, through no fault of their own, are placed in unfortunate circumstances or, at best, unforeseen circumstances. It's clear that the grandparents deserve our support, and I'm not talking about merely supportive words. There's little doubt, as they enter their senior years, they're tasked with covering child rearing costs from already tight retirement budgets. Grandparents in this situation in our society do need a hand up; they need a hand up from this government to ensure that not only their needs but the needs of their grandchildren are being met as well. It's so concerning when we hear that Mr. McGuinty and the Minister of Community and Social Services have ensured that the only program available to them—again it's a Ministry of Community and Social Services program—the Ontario Works program, that's known as the temporary care assistance provision, has been taken away from them, pulling something like \$200 a month from their pockets.

In the debate this afternoon, we're speaking probably on behalf of thousands and thousands of grandchildren who have received this kind of upbringing. I want to remind the government members opposite that many children are with their grandparents in the first place because their parents have had to deal with perhaps health problems, psychiatric problems, problems with the use or overuse of addictive substances. Many grandparents themselves are perhaps working poor on fixed incomes. They need help. They need help to pay for the costs of raising a child: medication, school activity expenses, sports equipment, oftentimes clothing.

It's very clear that we all realize in this House that we have government for a reason: to step up in those particular circumstances where it is very much required. Yet this government has taken away that small stipend that would aid in meeting some of the costs to ensure that grandchildren are raised amongst kin in a more stable environment.

I have pointed out that most of the grandparents who have answered the call to help keep their families from falling apart, if you will, have moved past their gainful employment days, and they're often knee-deep in retirement budgets. Some have had to remortgage their homes, cash out their RSPs, to cover the cost of raising children. They really didn't anticipate having to shoulder these kinds of costs.

The least that government could do is extend a helping hand to ensure that these laudable grandparents, people who have my admiration, the admiration of certainly

many people in my community, just to ensure that these kinds of families don't fall through the cracks. I think it's very important for everyone here to just remember that the people who do this job are revered in their community, they're embraced by their community, and this government could do no less.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time that we have available for this debate. Mr. Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

#### Ayes

Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Savoline, Joyce
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Scott, Laurie
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura	Fonseca, Peter	Pendergast, Leeanna
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margaret	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Kular, Kuldip	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Carroll, Aileen	Mangat, Amrit	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Naqvi, Yasir	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Oraziotti, David	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 22; the nays are 52.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negated.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm obliged to inform the House that the member for Timmins-James Bay has withdrawn his request for an adjournment debate scheduled for today.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Broten, Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development / Ministre du Développement économique
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
		Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
		Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
		Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
		Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
<b>Horwath, Andrea (NDP)</b>	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldeep (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (IND)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre
		Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
		Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Kim Craitor  
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop  
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat  
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Sophia Ageloni, Ted Arnott  
Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett  
Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue  
Charles Sousa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Oraziotti  
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell  
Linda Jeffrey, Kuldip Kular  
Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro  
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti  
Joyce Savoline  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Michael A. Brown, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
France Gélinas, Randy Hillier  
Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott  
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal  
Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi  
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette  
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman  
Andrea Horwath, Phil McNeely  
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon  
Cheri DiNovo, Helena Jaczek  
Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri  
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott  
Peter Shurman  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections**

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara  
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara  
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch



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