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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

SP-10

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(Hansard)**

SP-10

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Safe and Supportive
Classrooms Act, 2019

1st Session
42nd Parliament
Monday 4 March 2019

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2019 pour des écoles
sûres et axées
sur le soutien

1^{re} session
42^e législature
Lundi 4 mars 2019

Chair: Nina Tangri
Clerk: Eric Rennie

Présidente : Nina Tangri
Greffier : Eric Rennie

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CONTENTS

Monday 4 March 2019

Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, 2019, Bill 48, Ms. Thompson / Loi de 2019 pour
des écoles sûres et axées sur le soutien, projet de loi 48, Mme Thompson SP-207

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE**

Monday 4 March 2019

Lundi 4 mars 2019

The committee met at 0900 in room 151.

**SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
CLASSROOMS ACT, 2019
LOI DE 2019 POUR DES ÉCOLES SÛRES
ET AXÉES SUR LE SOUTIEN**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care / Projet de loi 48, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation et la garde d'enfants.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Good morning. Thank you so much, everybody. As you know, we are assembled here today for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care.

Ms. Jennifer Gold from legislative counsel is here to assist us with our work, should we have any questions for her.

A copy of the numbered amendments filed with the Clerk is on your desk. The amendments are numbered in the order in which the sections and schedules appear in the bill.

Are there any questions before we start? None, I guess.

As you will notice, Bill 48 is comprised of three sections and four schedules. In order to deal with the bill in an orderly fashion, I suggest that we postpone the first three sections in order to dispose of the schedules first. This allows the committee to consider the contents of the schedules before dealing with the sections on the commencement and short title of the bill. We would return to the three sections after completing consideration of the schedules.

I would need unanimous consent to stand down the three sections and deal with the schedules first. Do we have—thank you so much.

Before we begin schedule 1, I'll allow each party to make some brief comments on the bill as a whole. Afterwards, debate should be limited to the section or amendment under consideration.

Are there any comments at this time? Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm certainly happy to be here with all of my colleagues, talking about this very important piece of legislation. But I'll be honest off the top this morning in saying that what's on my mind is not only what's in the bill, but what's not.

We heard from many, many, many—in fact, most—witnesses who deputed here that changes to the Ontario Autism Program are going to have a significant impact on the public school system. Chair, I want to clarify: By saying “impact,” I'm not talking about negative impact. Kids with autism, adults with autism and adolescents with autism are special people inasmuch as any other Ontario citizen is special. But what we heard in testimony and what I have seen from lived experience is that, without adequate supports, we are asking our public school system to work miracles. While our teachers, educational assistants and education workers do work miracles every single day, I think the notion of another 8,000 kids coming into the public school system on April 1 without adequate supports sets us up for lamentable outcomes.

I'm looking forward, as we talk about the service animals provision, to talk about how, while that is a decent step, it's nowhere near enough. I think my friends in government at third reading of this bill really need to consider how we make sure this monumental change in how we work with people with autism—kids with autism, adolescents with autism—isn't going to put our public school system in crisis.

I'm thinking particularly of what the Ontario Autism Coalition told us last week. They don't want, and we don't want—and I'm making that assumption, that we don't want as legislators—a situation where anyone is harmed because our public school system isn't ready to meet the special needs of certain students, who have their challenges and their own gifts. I think, insofar as we think about making kids safe, that is a very, very worthy objective.

I'm going to leave it to my colleague the MPP from Davenport to talk about the other aspects of the bill with which she is more familiar than me. But, Chair, as the critic for people with disabilities, that's what's on my mind as I go through this with everyone this morning.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you, Mr. Harden. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I must say I was surprised, when I saw the amendments, Mr. Chair, to note that the only amendments that have been presented here to this bill are from the NDP members present. I'll tell you why I was shocked at that: because I thought that, in the very limited, unfortunately, time that the government allowed for deputations, presentations, from the public on this matter, on this legislation, there was not one that came forward

that didn't have some significant concerns or recommendations—some of them, I think, very positive and where it should have been easy for this government to acknowledge that all legislation comes forward and needs an opportunity for some fulsome discussion and debate and that the people who are most affected should have some input into that legislation.

I'm really surprised that the government hasn't acknowledged that we are working here together to create good policy, good legislation, good government. I was very disappointed by that.

I want to make one note here, in addition—and I completely agree with everything that my colleague has mentioned. This is called a safe and supportive schools act. We will differ on that, clearly. But there were so many aspects of this bill that I think do nothing to actually encourage safe and supportive classrooms. We know that it's happening within the context of changes to the Ontario Autism Program and hiring freezes. This is not a way to create safe and supportive classrooms.

0910

But there were other issues here; for example, the fact that Bill 48 was tabled before the council of the College of Teachers had even reviewed the internal Governance Review Report, which was reviewed on Friday. There really should be opportunity here to carefully consider their recommendations as well as the response of the various teacher federations and associations to those recommendations. It seems like the timing of this bill is really unfortunate. We should be able to have an opportunity here to consider those recommendations in light of—at this point, we're talking about just a few days later. Again, to see that there's not one change reflected by the government, to acknowledge the need for no amendments, is quite astonishing to me. So there's all that.

I think the other piece that has to be mentioned here is that we received numerous expert testimonies over the last week, deputations about some of the concerns around the math test provision here.

Again, we're happy to bring forward amendments today, but I just want to say for the record that I'm really surprised that the government hasn't made any attempts to put forward their own amendments to this legislation to make it better, to make it work. The alternative, as we heard quite loudly from a lot of experts in the field of education coming from the universities and the faculties who teach our teachers, was that if this isn't done well and carefully, then we could actually see teachers leave the profession, and we could see some really unfortunate impact.

I think all of these things have to be considered. I just wanted to lend my voice to express my concerns. What we have is an opportunity to pass good legislation, and we should all be looking at ways to make this legislation better.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Is there further debate? Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to start by thanking all the members of the committee, both on the government side

and those in the opposition, for their work listening to the deputations last week and for their questions, for their obvious care and concern for the best interests of Ontario students, ensuring that we have safe and supportive classrooms.

The Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, Bill 48, will show that our government is taking steps quickly to ensure that we're supporting our children in the classroom, including changes to the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, that will make sure that there is zero tolerance for sexual abuse. We are making changes in schedule 2 to the Education Act to ensure that there is a consistent policy surrounding service animals in school boards across Ontario. And in schedule 3, we're also looking to streamline governance and ensure accountability and transparency at the Ontario College of Teachers.

These steps that we're taking, as well as ensuring that there is a math test in place to ensure teachers are prepared and equipped to teach math in the classroom, are signs of our government's commitment to improving the education system here in the province of Ontario, to providing for the best future possible for our students and ensuring that all classrooms in Ontario are safe and supportive.

I want to thank the members of the committee for their work. I look forward to the clause-by-clause, and I look forward to seeing this moving forward in the next stage of the legislative process.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Since there is no further debate, I'll—yes?

Mr. Joel Harden: Chair, if it's appropriate I wouldn't mind—there was a constituent who wanted me to read out something with respect to our deliberations on this, if we're still at general comments and I have a minute.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): I would appreciate it if—this is the first time you've asked, so it's okay, but please be very brief. We need to respect the time of everyone.

Mr. Joel Harden: I respect that, and I appreciate the time, Chair.

This is what this one mother with two autistic children writes about the impacts on the public school system under the current autism regime:

“As children who are currently in service have their funding slashed on April 1, they are going to be forced into the school system. This is a problem that will affect not only the” autism spectrum “population but other special needs populations” that deviate from neuro-typical. “My son Jack, even when supported into an integrated classroom is a distraction to everyone in the room. I know this, teaching staff knows this, and soon his classmates will know this as well. Educational assistant (EA) support in classrooms is already incredibly hard to come by. What is to happen as children with severe diagnoses are forced into classrooms without appropriate support? This is a question that should be weighing heavily on the minds of everyone with school-aged children. Are school boards even aware of the storm of special-needs children that are headed their way in 40-some days?” This was written to me a bit ago. “Are parents aware that they need to inform their schools

that their children's daily schedules are about to change? Support in schools is already scarce. What will happen when the demand for support goes through the roof and there is no way to meet that need? Classroom disturbance isn't the only issue at play. EAs ensure safety. EAs manage children who elope classrooms, act out aggressively. EAs take care of children who are not toilet trained or require 1:1 support to eat their meals. What is to become of these classrooms where EAs are already stretched so thin?

"If Minister MacLeod's announcement is step 1 of a multi-step master plan including cross-ministerial involvement, then the public needs to be made aware of this."

Thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thanks, Mr. Harden.

Moving on to schedule 1, the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, we have schedule 1, sections 1 to 6. Can we bundle those? Is there consent? There are no amendments, no changes. Thank you. Is there any debate on section 1 to section 6?

Mr. Joel Harden: If I'm following along correctly, section 1 to section 6 is including service animals, section 2, correct? Or is that incorrect?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): That's actually schedule 2.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. So inclusive of that?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes.

Mr. Joel Harden: So I'm not thinking of a sub-schedule.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): That's right.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): So we're talking about schedule 1.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): As I understand it, there is a question about a motion concerning section 6.1. The proposed motion to add a section 6.1 would come after section 6. We would deal with that next, after dealing with sections 1 to 6.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): On schedule 1, sections 1 to 6, is there any debate? Shall the sections carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The sections are carried.

Schedule 1, new section 6.1: Is there any debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'd like to move the following motion. I move that section 6.1 be added to schedule 1 to the bill:

"6.1 The act is amended by adding the following section:

""Medical assessment

""35.2 The council of the college may order that a medical assessment of a member be performed in relation to any matter before the discipline committee or fitness to practise committee.""

This was a recommendation that came forward from the College of Early Childhood Educators. They need this change to the legislation to be able to meet the other

demands put forward through the legislation. That's why we're submitting this today.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The College of Early Childhood Educators at the Standing Committee on Social Policy requested that existing legislative authority come into force, so that the complaints committee of the college could require members of the college to undergo a physical or mental examination when there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the member is incapacitated. As this authority already exists in the legislation, this motion is not necessary.

0920

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: My understanding is that the college was quite specific in wanting to see this added, to help members who might be incapacitated because of a mental illness or an addiction. Right now, if the complaints committee believes a member is incapacitated, their only motion is to send the matter to the discipline committee, which is punitive and could have a lasting impact on a licence and on a member. If this section is moved, the complaints committee could order and pay for a medical assessment for the member, and the medical assessment could be referred to the fitness to practise committee.

I appreciate what the member opposite is saying, but it's not my understanding. My understanding is that this was something that the college specifically requested.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Member Oosterhoff?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The College of Early Childhood Educators already does have existing provisions that allow for the ordering of members to undergo physical and mental examinations. In 2018, subsections 31(4.5) to 31(4.11) were added to the Early Childhood Educators Act to expand on the college's investigation procedures related to a member's capacity to practise the profession. These provisions simply need to be declared.

Ms. Marit Stiles: May we have a recorded vote on this matter, please?

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Moving on to schedule 1, section 7, to schedule 1, section 12: Is there any debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Can I move my motion now for schedule 2? Are we still at schedule 1?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): We're still on schedule 1.

Ms. Marit Stiles: All right.

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let's go—Monday morning.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Monday morning.

Schedule 1, sections 7 to 12: Any debate? If there's no further debate, shall these sections carry? Carried.

Yes, Mr. Harden?

Mr. Joel Harden: A point of clarification or information or order, Chair—I'm not sure which one it is. I'm looking at schedule 1 and it only has five parts, so I'm lost.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): There are 12 sections, if you look on page number 3.

Mr. Joel Harden: I see it. Okay, thank you, Chair.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): We are finished with the sections, so shall schedule 1 carry as a whole? Carried.

Moving over to schedule 2, section 1: Yes, member Harden?

Mr. Joel Harden: I have an amendment. It's on page 2 of the amendments package.

I move that section 1 of schedule 2 to the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 29.5 of subsection 8(1) of the Education Act and substituting the following:

“Service animals and supportive aids

“29.5 establish policies and guidelines, after consulting with experts in the sector, respecting service animals and other supportive aids in schools, and require boards to,

“(a) comply with the policies and guidelines, and

“(b) develop policies in accordance with those policies and guidelines;”

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Is there any debate? Member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The government has already intended to move forward in consulting with public education stakeholders before issuing any direction to school boards with regard to service animals. Our government has also expressed its clear commitment to consultation. Since coming to office, and specifically in the education file, it has moved forward with consultations, including the largest consultation in Ontario's history.

We feel that this motion is not necessary. As well, the motion proposes to include “supportive aids” in the proposed legislative amendment. This term is not used anywhere else in the Education Act or regulations. It's vague and would cause confusion in the education sector.

For this reason, I recommend voting against this motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: While I hear what my colleague is saying, what absolutely will be unproductive in our education system is making sure that we don't have our educators and public education infrastructure ready to help folks with special needs.

I very much appreciate what the government, particularly the member from Kitchener-Hespeler—am I getting the riding right?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Kitchener South-Hespeler.

Mr. Joel Harden: Kitchener South-Hespeler—has done in her career to advocate for this. But what's unclear to me is why we had folks depute here on this very subject, who have been leading and meeting with most of us in this Legislature, and tell us that they hadn't been consulted to date. We're past second reading of the bill; this bill is at committee. That's alarming to me.

I want to make sure that folks who have been advocates for service dogs, and folks who are actually preparing that resource—a very valuable resource for students and their families—are included in this process. I'm very surprised to hear, despite my colleague's comment about the government's intent to consult, that that hasn't happened to date, and this bill is moving to third reading.

I also think that what this amendment will do is allow my friends the opportunity to communicate in a systematic way to public school boards, to make sure that they do have supportive aids in schools, because that is precisely what is needed right now. This is what we heard from stakeholder after stakeholder.

So, while I take my friend from Niagara West's comments to heart about an intent to consult, words are wonderful but actions are better. I am shocked that we haven't adequately consulted service dog experts to date. We haven't adequately consulted folks who provide services to children and adolescents with autism. What this amendment will allow us to do is to be on record, at this very moment, about whether in fact we will make sure that we'll talk to the experts in the field and that we'll make sure that the supportive aids are in place.

Service animals, from talking to Deanna Allaine, who we had the pleasure to talk to last week, can cost between \$12,000 and \$20,000 per animal, given the amount of training and work that's put into it. What is the government's plan to make sure that most families can avail themselves of that critical resource? I haven't seen anything.

What this amendment will do is compel us, as a group of legislators, to consult the service dog community. It would also compel us to make sure that we reach out to people who work with those with autism, to make sure that we have supportive aids in our schools.

I'm going to caution my friends: In voting against this amendment, you're going to be voting against consultation, and you're going to be voting against the need to make sure that we have supportive aids in the classroom. I, for one, would not want to be on record doing that. I would hope my friends are listening.

To date in this committee, it has not been the experience for me that many amendments have ever been received, but if there is an amendment to be received, I struggle with why consultation and ensuring appropriate aids for kids and adolescents with autism wouldn't be a priority for this government.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'd just like to put on the record that the government does intend to consult with public education stakeholders before moving forward and instructing school boards with the particulars of this policy.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No? Shall the motion carry? All those in favour?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Shall schedule 2, section 1, carry? All those in favour? Carried.

0930

Shall schedule 2, section 2, carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? Carried.

Overall, shall schedule 2 be carried? All those in favour? All those opposed? Carried.

Moving to schedule 3, Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996: On schedule 3, section 1, is there any debate? No debate? Shall schedule 3, section 1, carry?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Sorry. Schedule 3, section 1?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes. Carried.

Shall schedule 3, section 2, carry?

Ms. Marit Stiles: We have a motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): A motion? Yes, Ms. Stiles.

For schedule 3, section 2, the NDP have filed notice to section 2 of schedule 3. Is there any debate on the section? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We gave notice that we will be voting against section 2 of schedule 3 to the bill. As I mentioned previously in our opening remarks, we heard from many who presented to this committee last week that these provisions are not necessarily consistent, or perhaps the better way to put it is, are a bit premature, given the fact that the Ontario College of Teachers has a governance review that has been under way for some time, and that the College of Teachers committee that is reviewing those recommendations did not consider them till February 28 and March 1. Now we are here just days later being asked to give this government significant powers to revise the makeup of the College of Teachers without anyone having really had any opportunity to consider—including the educators who will be most affected by this—what the implications will be.

We also have concerns ultimately that the Ontario College of Teachers will end up not being a self-regulating

body, that the majority of members could be appointed by the government instead of the elected membership.

I also want to make a note of the fact that doing away with the public interest committee seems in complete contrast with what this government has previously stated. In fact, the government actually specifically said that they wanted to introduce a public interest committee. So we have some very significant concerns about how these powers the government is giving themselves will put self-regulation of the profession at risk, which we don't believe would be good for anyone, particularly for students. Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Since there's no further debate—

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'd like a recorded vote, too.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 3: Is there any debate? Since there is no debate, does the section carry?

Ms. Stiles, you would like to debate? Section 3.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Section 3?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, I would like to debate that.

Again, as I just mentioned previously, last summer, the government actually, in one of their many announcements, talked about the importance of a public interest committee on the Ontario College of Teachers. It is really baffling why the government would want to do away with the public interest committee of the Ontario College of Teachers. They professed to care so much about what the public thinks and wants with regard to education and yet are taking away the public interest committee of the Ontario College of Teachers, which provides exactly that opportunity. So we don't understand why—I really would urge the government to reconsider repealing the public interest committee of the Ontario College of Teachers.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Since there's no further debate, does the section carry?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Considering the number of votes opposing, this section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 4: The NDP have filed notice to section 4 of schedule 3. Is there any debate on the section? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Again, we've filed notice that we will be opposing. We're recommending that everybody vote against this section of the bill. We heard here multiple times from many of the deputants, particularly effectively I think from those who came from faculties of education, the folks who teach our teachers, who expressed real and significant concerns about this approach and, in fact, advised that this could have a very detrimental impact, the opposite impact that I think the government wants, which is to actually improve math results and math teaching in this province. In fact, what they were arguing quite effectively, I thought, was that this could have the opposite effect. So we're very concerned about that. We think this matter deserves more discussion and debate and careful consideration.

We already, as the members opposite will know, have a difficulty in many school boards with recruiting teachers. It has become quite a crisis. While we all want to make sure that teachers are able to teach math in the best way possible to our students, this particular provision seems, perhaps, misguided.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Since there's no further debate, are members ready to vote?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Shall schedule 3, section 4, carry as a whole? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 5: The NDP have filed notice to section 5 of schedule 3. Is there any debate on this section? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Once again, I want to express what I think were the concerns reflected here by many of the deputants who came forward last week in those very rushed consultations, that there are concerns about the makeup of the Ontario College of Teachers. We have yet to really be able to consider what the recommendations by the government's review committee were. Educators themselves have not had an opportunity to really consider those.

This seems very premature, and it has been of concern to many—I've had many people contact myself and my office regarding concerns about whether or not the

government's intention throughout is to appoint their own government appointees, who may or may not have the expertise required. Again, this puts into doubt whether or not this government wants to maintain the Ontario College of Teachers as a self-regulating body. So we will be opposing this.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate.

Ms. Stiles, would you like to have a recorded vote?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote, please, yes.

0940

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 6: The NDP has filed notice on section 6 of schedule 3. Any further debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Just consistent with my previous comments, we believe that these amendments are very premature. We think that the government should be looking more carefully at what the recommendations are of the Ontario College of Teachers and consulting with education associations and unions. At the end of the day, this is supposed to be a self-regulating body. We have concerns about the extent to which this is really about the government exercising more political power over the Ontario College of Teachers' decisions, particularly around discipline.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate?

Since there's no further debate, are members ready to vote? Shall the section carry?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 7: motion 3. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: One of the issues that came up repeatedly—sorry, is there a problem, or am I okay?

Interjection.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Oh, I have to read it. Right.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Yes, you have to read the motion.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. I would like to move a motion as follows:

I move that section 7 of schedule 3 to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“7. Subsection 18(1) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

“Registration

“(1) The registrar shall issue a certificate of qualification and registration to a person who,

“(a) applies for the certificate in accordance with the regulations;

“(b) fulfills the requirements specified in the regulations for the issuance of the certificate; and

“(c) successfully completes any prescribed examinations relating to proficiency in mathematics that are required for the issuance of the certificate.

“Funding re mathematics

“(1.0.1) Clause (1)(c) does not apply unless the funding subsidies available for teachers to assist them in obtaining additional qualifications in mathematics are at least at the same levels that they were in 2017.”

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any debate? Member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The proposed amendments that our government has brought forward in Bill 48 would allow for consistent measurement of teacher understanding of math content knowledge and increased teacher confidence in their ability to teach mathematics.

The Ontario College of Teachers does not provide professional development funding to teachers, and including this provision in the Ontario College of Teachers Act would be out of scope. But the government has committed to supporting teachers to become better prepared to teach the fundamentals of mathematics, and additional qualification courses continue to be available to teachers who wish to improve their knowledge and skill in training.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: To give a little background here, there is a program in place that allows for teachers currently to pursue additional qualifications. What the government did last year was to eliminate the funding to encourage and to support teachers who wanted to pursue those additional qualifications. We believe very strongly that that should be reinstated. We think that it's really counter to the purposes that the government has put forward of trying to improve mathematics results and to support teachers if we don't, in fact, provide the kind of support that they need to be able to pursue that additional qualifications education.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: On a moment of levity, I guess I would ask us all to consider how well we would do in this job without the work of the support staff at this committee, without the work that gets forwarded to us in our offices and from our research and caucus staff. I can tell you that,

for one, it would be a dramatically less desirable outcome for me personally. I think it's very efficacious for us to be asking teachers to do more with that, but without the requisite funding, Chair, I don't see how it's fair to measure and ask people. I see an absolute correlation to this particular matter with how we're going to be working with kids with autism in the classroom. It's absolutely unfair to be asking education workers to do more while we're taking away the critical funding they need to do their jobs well.

None of us would accept having our caucus research staff, having our office staff, having the wonderful staff who help us do our job well at this committee, Chair, removed from us. I think it's a contradiction for us to be asking education workers to do the same, and I invite my friends in government to support this amendment. It would be your first this morning. It would feel great to be supporting a progressive amendment to your bill.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: The Ontario College of Teachers, as I've said, does not provide professional development funding to teachers, and as such, including this provision in the Ontario College of Teachers Act would be out of the scope of this piece of legislation.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): There's no further debate, so shall the motion be carried?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Shall schedule 3, section 7, carry? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 8: The NDP has filed notice to section 8 of schedule 3. Is there any debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes. Again, Mr. Chair, it was really disappointing and really confusing, I think, as was remarked upon by many of the presenters last week who came here in the very limited consultations that were allowed around this legislation, that this government would actually repeal the public interest committee of the College of Teachers. It's very odd. I don't understand why, and the government has yet to actually explain their thinking here. In fact, it's counter to previous announcements. I'm not sure what the government had planned. I can only assume that it's actually a mistake and that maybe this is a great opportunity for the government to perhaps reverse their decision on this matter.

I just want to make sure I've got this right. Just give me one second.

Yes. I think it's really important that we continue as well to maintain the current composition and the structure of the College of Teachers, given that we have not yet seen the results and we have not had a chance to discuss the results of the government's review committee recommendations at this point, nor have any of the unions or associations.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: A recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, sections 9 and 10: Is there any debate? Since there's no debate, shall the sections be carried? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 11: The NDP have filed notice to section 11 of schedule 3. Any debate?

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Sections 9 and 10 were bundled together.

The NDP have filed notice to section 11 of schedule 3. Any debate? We are on schedule 11. Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I think this speaks to our overarching concern with this bill, that a very broad brush is being taken to legislation, and we would prefer a more sustained and particular approach. I think at the end of the day what we need to make sure is that this works for teachers in the public school system.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Since there is no further debate—

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

0950

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 12: The NDP has filed notice to section 12, schedule 3. Any debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes. Again, I'm really encouraging the members opposite to reconsider this change. To say that we're going to be substituting with this prescribed

number—we really don't know what we're voting on here, and we're giving the government pretty wide-reaching powers to change the College of Teachers council makeup, to weight the membership of the College of Teachers board to government-appointed members versus elected members. I think this really flies in the face of what the College of Teachers was originally designed to do, and will potentially put at risk, I think, a really important governance structure that oversees our educators.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): This section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 13 to section 17: Any further debate? There is no further debate. Shall schedule 3, sections 13 to 17, carry? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 18: The NDP has filed notice to section 18 of schedule 3. Any further debate? Member Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We filed a motion that we will be recommending voting against this section, for many of the reasons I've already outlined. Again, it's disappointing to see that the government members are not taking the opportunity here to try to reconsider the direction this legislation takes. This legislation does nothing, these amendments do nothing, to keep our classrooms safe or supportive. There's no direct connection there.

These changes are really premature. We should be having this conversation after we talk to the Ontario College of Teachers again, after we've seen the results of their council review that took place on Thursday and Friday last week. We should be going back to the teachers' associations, the teachers' federations, the teachers' unions, the education workers to find out if this is actually the direction they're in agreement with. Here we are again, making really premature decisions and giving the government, I have to say, really significant and, frankly, a little bit disturbing powers to put in place some model that could include a lot of political appointees.

We've seen this government's record thus far in putting forward political appointees to bodies and agencies. I sit on the government agencies committee, and I have to say, the number of failed Conservative candidates that have been appointed lately is eye-opening and concerning.

I think we have reason to be concerned about this, and I think the government would do well to ensure that we have more opportunities, so that the public can have

confidence that the decisions we're making here are not just based on purely political motivations.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate? Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I just was wondering: In the course of our deputations, we heard from the Ontario College of Teachers, and I heard from my friends in government who asked questions. I never heard evidence to suggest that the current disciplinary process was inappropriate, unfair, unwieldy, unable to make sure folks were held accountable in the teaching profession and the educational assistants and supports profession. Now is an appropriate time for us to hear, given that we're about to vote on this aspect of the legislation, from our friends in government about their rationale. What's the case for needing to overhaul the disciplinary process at the College of Teachers?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Thank you, member Harden. Any further debate? Since there is no further debate, shall this section be carried?

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): This section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 19: the NDP has filed a notice to section 19 of schedule 3. Any further debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Chair, I just want to follow up on the comments that my colleague here made. Throughout all of the presentations that we heard over the very limited few hours that the public was given to comment on this legislation, we heard nothing, no recommendation at all, that anyone wanted to see the public interest committee role of the College of Teachers done away with, scrapped, limited. In fact, I would say that this seems to be completely counter to what the government themselves have stated is their interest.

I think it's really concerning. I would love to hear the government's, the members opposite's, actual rationale because we have not heard that in debate, we have not heard that in any of the questions that came up or any of the deputations. I would love to hear the rationale for getting rid of the public interest committee and taking it out of these various sections of the legislation.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: No? There's no reasoning, no rationale?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: So I'll just remind my friends that legislation can happen by commission or by omission.

When we don't get answers to our questions—that's our job, to pose questions to you. When they aren't answered, all the public can ascertain from the televised nature of these hearings, from the recorded nature of these hearings, is that the government has no reason for revamping the public interest committee. So again, I'm going to invite my friend from Eglinton–Lawrence who is talking now or my friend from Niagara West who had spoken previously: What is the rationale for eliminating this committee? Not answering the question suggests to us that there isn't a good reason for it.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Since there is no further debate, is the section carried or—

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Recorded vote?

Mr. Joel Harden: Yes, recorded vote.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All those in favour?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Eric Rennie): Mr. Ke, Mr. Lecce, Mrs. Martin, Mr. Oosterhoff, Mr. Sabawy, Ms. Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): All those opposed?

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The committee come to order. If you want to say anything, please, it should be through the Chair.

Interjection.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Ms. Stiles, we are in the middle of a vote, so let's finish the vote first and you will have the opportunity to speak when we come to the next debate.

Just to be clear, let's restart the vote. Shall schedule 3, section 19, carry?

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

Schedule 3, section 20: NDP motion, subsection 20 of schedule 3, page 4. There is a motion. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Chair, if I may, I would like to move the following motion: I move that subsection 20(3) of schedule 3 to the bill be struck out.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any debate? I see member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you, Chair. The proposed governance amendments in Bill 48 make way for a smaller, more balanced council to more effectively serve

and protect the public interest in regulating the teaching profession.

The current 37-member council, created by the previous government, is inefficient and is experiencing conflicts of interest and processing delays.

1000

We do look forward to receiving the OCT's governance review recommendations, which will inform decisions about council and committee composition and their respective duties.

We recognize that further changes may be required once the OCT has deliberated on the recommendations in the governance review.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Let me explain again. I'm going to use this opportunity because I think that one of the members opposite mentioned—he wasn't saying it in the microphone, so it may not have been recorded, and I feel like it bears repeating. I just want to respond to that first, because that's relevant here. The public interest committee of the Ontario College of Teachers hasn't met in a long time. That is absolutely true; that's my understanding as well. Why you wouldn't, however, want to ensure that that committee, that mechanism that already exists, works better—the fact that this government isn't replacing it with anything is very concerning. I think it would concern a lot of members of the public to know that that's not going to continue.

Having said that, our concerns with regard to this subsection are similar to the ones we've mentioned previously: that this government is prematurely making changes to the council makeup. We've seen some indication of where the governance review of the Ontario College of Teachers was going to head. While it's not surprising that they are perhaps recommending a smaller council, the fact that we've had no opportunity to look at what those recommendations are, to discuss what the implications are, and that we're giving the government really wide-ranging powers to be able to change the makeup of the council—nowhere in here does it actually even say that it would be on the recommendations of the governance review that has been done by the Ontario College of Teachers. So we don't know what this means.

We've heard here repeatedly from people who came in the very limited consultation time that we were given—from the public—that they had concerns about what the implications of these changes might be to the regulation of their profession and the self-regulating nature of their profession.

This is very concerning and confusing as to why the government would be moving forward on this so quickly.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Since there's no further debate—

Ms. Marit Stiles: A recorded vote, please.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Mr. Harden, did you want to say something or move to the recorded vote?

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Schedule 3, section 20, subsection 20(10) of schedule 3, page 5, NDP motion: Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I always wait for your introduction first, Chair. I'll never speak first. Thank you.

This is an amendment we're moving, and it's on page 5 of the package.

I move that section 20 of schedule 3 to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“(10) Section 42 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

“Consultation re examinations for proficiency in mathematics

“(7) Prior to making a regulation under clause (1)(c.0.0.1) respecting examinations that relate to proficiency in mathematics, the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall consult with experts respecting the development and implementation of the examination, and shall incorporate their advice in the regulation.”

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Member Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: We are moving forward with this step in this piece of legislation and in anticipation of Bill 48 passing. The Ministry of Education has met with stakeholders to gather information regarding the development and implementation of the math content knowledge test.

This government has committed, and demonstrated our commitment, to working with stakeholders through the number of consultations we've launched since being elected. We'll continue to work with stakeholders when developing education policy and programs.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Member Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you for that. I want to read a segment from the submission that was given to us by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, from Cathy Abraham, their president. Their statement here reads: “We want our teachers to be comfortable and confident when teaching math. OPSBA supports ongoing professional learning, and developing applicable relevant resources to support teachers in implementing a range of effective instructional strategies.

“The regulations are to determine the form, content and test exemptions. We would ask that this involve stakeholder participation. Our members had several questions about this new teacher requirement including:

“Should the government consider waiting to implement this requirement while it continues to analyze the data and

feedback from the recent public education consultation that asked about math?

“No other subject currently has a proficiency test. Will this requirement lead to other similar tests?”

“Will this apply to teachers in both elementary and secondary panels and therefore require different tests?”

Chair, these are pertinent questions that I don’t see answered, to date, by my friends in government, despite their efforts to reach out. This amendment that we’re moving this morning would require them to do so, would require them to make sure that not only the Ontario Public School Boards’ Association but other expert testimonies that we heard would be consulted prior to the implementation of this test.

I’m wondering what the government’s response is as to why requiring consultation would be a bad move.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Further to my colleague’s comments, which I think were excellent, I do want to also point out that in addition to some of the school board associations and the education associations, we also heard last week during those very limited public consultations from folks at—again, the experts, really, the experts, the teachers who teach the teachers: the faculty of education at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, a really impressive presentation; a really impressive presentation from Dr. Mary Reid, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; a really impressive presentation by Dr. Michael Owen, professor and dean of the faculty of education at Brock University. And I just want to point out that when we asked them, “Have you been consulted?” none of them said they’d been consulted. In fact, I think it was Dr. Owen who was the first one to say there was apparently a conference call with some people from faculties of education. But really quite astonishing to me that there was no—

Mrs. Robin Martin: It sounds like a consultation.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, if that’s the consultation—the member opposite said that sounds like a consultation. At the end of the day, a conference call before you pass legislation like this is not really adequate consultation.

We have seen under the previous administration, previous government, a lot of mistakes made. We have an opportunity to get this right. I cannot understand why the government—I really would urge them to consider supporting this motion because, really, don’t we all want to get this right? If this is going to be based on a couple of conference calls, I think there are going to be some mistakes made, and they are going to be hard to undo. They’re going to be hard to undo if we don’t get this right, if we don’t give this the proper attention it deserves.

We heard some significant concerns raised by those members of the various faculties of education about how wrong this could go, about what the implications could be if this test is not carried out properly, concerns actually about whether or not a test at the end of a program is really the right route at all. Again, I find it confusing why the government would go forward moving—let’s not forget, this legislation has not changed since October when it was

first introduced. And they’ve had months and months and months to consult with those faculties of education and nothing has happened. Why you would not support this opportunity and send a message to, frankly, the families, the parents, the students and the educators in this province that you want to do better, that we can do better, that we can work together—why they wouldn’t want to do that, I don’t understand.

I really would urge them to support this motion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I’m detecting a theme this morning, and it concerns me. When we ask our friends in government to require consultation in key aspects of this legislation, the answer we’ve heard is no. We heard it earlier with respect to service animals and key supports for children and adolescents with autism. We’re hearing it again with math tests.

So I’m going to ask my friends directly: Would you feel it appropriate if you were moving a landmark piece of legislation to be consulted via conference call on development to that actually becoming law? Would you consider it to be appropriate?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate? Are members ready to vote for the motion? Is the motion carried? All those in favour—

1010

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote, please.

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Shall schedule 3, section 20, be carried? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 21: a motion from the NDP?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, Mr. Chair. We are moving that subsection 21(1) of schedule 3 to the bill be struck out.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate?

Ms. Marit Stiles: This motion is consistent with our previous motions, where I previously expressed concerns about the very premature and perhaps ill-advised attempt by this government to rejig the Ontario College of Teachers’ council makeup prior to recommendations of the Ontario College of Teachers’ own governance review being considered by the educators themselves of the threat to the self-governing nature of the Ontario College of Teachers—concerns that were raised here about the potential political motivations and potential for political appointees to outnumber educators themselves.

Given our significant concerns that we’ve raised here repeatedly today, we’re just asking that the government consider once again maybe taking a step back and giving

us all an opportunity to really consider carefully what the impact would be of these changes to the teaching profession.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Further debate? Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: One of the things I've appreciated about this government to date is their interest to want to consult front-line workers. I've heard it also from people—the Premier himself has visited in my riding when he has been through in places like Nepean—never in downtown Ottawa; please let him know he's welcome.

There is an interest in this government, at least in what they say, to listen to the interests of front-line workers, and I think that's terrific, but what concerns me is when we don't set in place a systematic commitment. Chair, I'm sure you've had this experience too coming up in political life. I can commit to all kinds of things rhetorically, but unless I put it in my schedule and I say I'm going to do it, it doesn't happen.

I'm really concerned that we're putting in place a structure that will be very efficient for the purposes of decision-making for the government, but it won't necessarily require us to do that heavy-lifting work of consulting those front-line workers, who, I very much agree with my friends in government, are the folks we should be listening to in understanding how the public education system should evolve.

There's a real dissonance. If you delve into social psychology, Chair, and you understand cognitive dissonance—there's a real cognitive dissonance here between what this legislation purports to accomplish and what it does. That's why my colleague is moving this amendment—hoping that our colleagues in government will take one of our amendments this morning to consider how this will actually impact the teaching profession and those working in the classroom, will make sure that our public school system works.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): There's no further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: There's one other—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Ms. Stiles, yes.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think this also has to be considered in relation to the fact that we are probably going to see—and the government has indicated already—pretty significant changes in our classrooms. If we're going to have larger classrooms, if we're going to remove class caps, if we're going to see the number of students with special needs increasing in our classrooms and their supports limited by the cancellation of things like the Ontario Autism Program, then it's really all the more important that we take a moment to send a signal too to our front-line workers, to the educators, that we value their opinion, we value their contribution and we understand that it may be—and as they've said to us—better advised to pause and carefully consider what the impact of these changes could be to them. I think it would be a really important message that the government would be sending.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): Any further debate? No further debate—

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Harden, Stiles.

Nays

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The motion is accordingly lost.

Shall schedule 3, section 21, carry?

Mr. Joel Harden: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Ke, Lecce, Martin, Oosterhoff, Sabawy, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Harden, Stiles.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Deepak Anand): The section is accordingly carried.

It's 10:15 a.m. and it is time for a recess. The committee will reconvene at 2 p.m.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1400.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Good afternoon, everyone. We are assembled here today for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 48, An Act to amend various Acts in relation to education and child care.

Jennifer Gold from legislative counsel is here to assist us with our work should we have any questions for her.

Before we begin, are there any questions before we resume consideration? Seeing none, we are now on section 22 of schedule 3 to the bill. If the committee agrees, we can actually bundle schedule 3, sections 22 to 25 in one. Are we all in agreeance?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Chair, can you please say that again?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We can actually bundle schedule 3, sections 22 to 25. We can bundle them together in one vote, if we're all in agreeance.

Mr. Joel Harden: I propose that we actually consider them separately.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, I think we should consider them separately.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Consider them separately? Okay. So I'll begin with schedule 3, section 22. Shall schedule 3, section 22, carry? All of those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 23: Shall schedule 3, section 23, carry? All of those in favour? Opposed? Carried.

Schedule 3, section 24: Shall schedule 3, section 24, carry? All of those in favour—sorry.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Is there opportunity for debate on this?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Yes, there is.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): On section 24?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Schedule 3, section 24: I recognize Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Earlier this morning, we talked and we put forward some amendments to the legislation. One of the areas we were focused on was this question of whether or not we should be doing away with the public interest committee of the College of Teachers. I want to register, again, our dissatisfaction that the government would choose to do away with any committee that brings the public interest forward to a body like the Ontario College of Teachers. It's in direct contradiction with what the government themselves have said they intended to do. In fact, last summer there was an announcement that there would be a public interest committee.

The public interest committee already exists. Now it's being done away with. We know that the public interest committee has not been meeting very regularly, and that's a concern for all of us. But to just simply do away with it and not replace it with anything seems to be a step in very much the wrong direction for this government and for education and for the College of Teachers.

I would want to just urge the members opposite to vote against revoking an Ontario regulation regarding the public interest committee members. I think that the people of Ontario will remember that you've done away with the public interest committee of the College of Teachers and the public voice.

I wanted to just remind the members that that's what we're looking at here and, again, urge them to strongly consider voting against that or providing, perhaps, an opportunity for us to take another look at that.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Would anyone else like to speak to that? Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Echoing what my colleague has said, I just want to afford the opportunity for any of my colleagues in government to answer this question that we posed this morning. We didn't get an answer this morning. What is the case for eliminating the committee? I know when microphones weren't on, we heard some echo from members of the fact that the committee hasn't met—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Which I understand is true.

Mr. Joel Harden: —which is fair. Okay. In my understanding from our colleagues in government that the reason this committee is being eliminated is because it hasn't met—or is the matter that it hasn't been efficacious in its work, the terms of reference of the committee are unacceptable? Simply taking a committee away from a really important subject, it would seem to me, doesn't appear to be appropriate. I would welcome an opportunity to hear from colleagues in government about why this decision is being made.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Anyone else?
Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We do have time for debate. Mr. Oosterhoff?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I wouldn't say so much debate as I wanted to make sure that I inform the committee, of course, as it should be known, that the governance under the review that is being undertaken, as well as the changes that are being made to the Ontario College of Teachers governance structure, will seek to create a more responsive Ontario College of Teachers governance structure, that is more responsive to public feedback and hears from the public. Some of the concerns that have been expressed about that—that body addressed as well.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Would anyone else like to speak to that? Response? Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'll allow my colleague to speak as well, with the permission of the Chair.

I appreciate the response from the member opposite, but I'm still not hearing exactly how the public interest committee works against the public interest, what it was doing incorrectly, why we wouldn't want to have a committee that specifically reflects the public interest.

We also have raised concerns throughout these discussions over the last week that the government is providing an opportunity to fill the College of Teachers potentially with their own appointments, which we have seen in the past. Certainly, recently, the government seems to be appointing mostly very partisan, failed Conservative candidates onto various boards. Politicizing a body like this cannot be healthy.

I guess the question is: Who defines what is the public voice? If the public voice is defined by the government in terms of their appointments only, then that risks creating a very partisan body, rather than actually ensuring that we have people on that committee who have the interests of families, educators and the public education system at heart.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: I think it's really important to remember that when we heard a lot of these speakers who came in for the deputations speak, they talked about the interest of this. If we're trying to—and this is what the government claims—eliminate red tape, it's really important that we allow for people to be able to come. This committee serves that. It is for the people to be able to have their say.

We're not really addressing what's wrong with the committee, if there is anything. Instead, we're eliminating the body of it. To me, that seems fundamentally wrong. You do not eliminate government if it doesn't serve; you fix it. We do that with anything. We fix the problem. I have yet to hear what the problem is, but we're eliminating the body. To me, that's fundamentally wrong.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Would anyone else like to speak to that? Would anyone like to respond?

Therefore, I'm going to call the question. Shall schedule 3, section 24, carry? Those in favour, please raise your hands.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Those opposed?
Interjections.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We can still have a recorded vote.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Forget it. Just keep going.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): In order to have a recorded vote, please notify me prior to the question being called.

Based on the committee, that vote has carried.

Shall schedule 3, section 25, carry? All of those—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Harden?

Mr. Joel Harden: If I understand this section correctly, the schedule will come into force on the day that the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act receives royal assent. My understanding is that it could be as early as the second or third week of this month.

What troubles me about that: After we left this morning, I went back to my office to get messages, and believe it or not, Chair, there are people tuning into this right now, watching us right now. I had eight messages from people watching what we had said, asking me to ensure that I remind our friends in government that we won't be ready by April 1 for the impact of ensuring a safe and supportive classroom for children with autism—the special and important children with autism—and making sure that they can thrive, making sure our educators, our educational assistants, our staff in the public education system, can thrive.

1410

I just want to mention a couple of things that I heard for our edification. I think it's important as we pass this particular clause, because the clause to me indicates a certain timeline by which this will become law and I'm being led to believe I think persuasively that we're not ready.

I want to remind folks of what Laura Kirby-McIntosh from the Ontario Autism Coalition told this committee last week. This is how she ended. I'm not reading the full—just in case you think I'm inundating you with her entire testimony, this was the cusp of her comments that I think are quite powerful that have been causing me to lose sleep, and that's the truth.

She said, "I want to tell you what has been keeping me up at night since the OAP announcement. Everything in my head, everything in my experience and everything in my heart both as a mother and as a teacher tells me that the following things are true.

"Somewhere in Ontario this spring, a child with autism will experience sensory overload. Their brain will tell them to run as fast as they can in any direction they can."

That child could be—"aggressive or violent. I would remind members of this committee, therefore, that service dogs are no substitute for trained, experienced and compassionate education workers or for the delivery of meaningful" autism supports "in classrooms.

"Secondly, I want to talk about unsafe and unsupportive classrooms. Unfortunately"—excuse me, I misspoke, Chair. That sentence should have read—I'm going to begin again where it says, "Somewhere in Ontario this spring, a child with autism will experience sensory

overload. Their brain will tell them to run as fast as they can in any direction they can. That child will run out of their classroom, out of the school and out into a busy street, or into the woods, or down into a river.

"Somewhere in Ontario this spring, a child will be seriously injured after being improperly restrained by staff who have not received the necessary training on how to do it. The physical and emotional trauma to the child will last a lifetime.

"Somewhere in Ontario this spring, an education worker will be seriously injured at work, not because they lack compassion for students with exceptionalities, but because they don't have the necessary resources to support them. That worker will be out of the classroom for weeks or months and will wonder why the system didn't do more to protect them.

"And somewhere in Ontario this spring, students without disabilities will be traumatized as they watch this unfold. They won't understand what they're seeing, nor will they understand the systemic issues at play that will cause these events to take place. They will come home from school and they will ask their parents questions that do not have good answers.

"But make no mistake: These events will take place because the ... government—for reasons I cannot begin to fathom—has chosen to manufacture a wait-list crisis and then implement a solution that makes" services "inaccessible to thousands of children in Ontario who need it. These are choices that will make classrooms across the province much less safe and supportive for all who spend time in them. As a teacher, as a mother and as an advocate, I say this: You will be held responsible for your choices."

Angie Turner from Ottawa writes:

"My husband and I have waited 2.5 years to receive funding. Before we had treatment, we lived and breathed work. We're both IT professionals, with twin boys, five years old, and a daughter, six years old.

"As consultants, we took every possible contract to afford them some treatment. Recommended treatment for our sons' moderate-to-severe is \$90,000 per year, not including speech or occupational therapy. Now we will only qualify for the minimum yearly amount because they're approaching their sixth birthday. I'm sure, like everyone else out there in our situation, the supplemental finances required to support this are completely unattainable."

Laura Kefalas writes: "It started with a hearing test and 18 months later we got our diagnosis. I can't remember how long we waited to start services. I believe it was almost right away, because back then you were wait-listed at the time of your first inquiry. We aged out of the program before we got to IBI.

"We had our first services at the Ottawa children's treatment centre. We loved them. We got a spot in an ASD classroom. Our son thrived, so we decided not to put him in IBI, because we didn't want him to lose his place in the specialized class. We had no ABA for three years, then we finally got the call a year ago. He started ABA, two hours a week, but that was okay. We would increase as necessary.

“For the last year, we have been working on sitting at the table with an un-preferred food item in front of him. We’ve made it to five minutes. We’ve also worked on hygiene, because wiping is necessary and still not quite thorough. We have worked on safety as my son has no sense of safety. We have worked on not running. That one is huge. I had to tether my son—who, by the way, is seven years old—outside for years because he was a wild runner. He climbs everything and he is fast. We worked on going to sleep in his own bed and not getting into mine. Now, we will lose those two hours a week in three months, imminently, before we could increase his time. Now we are stuck, not sure what to do or where to go. I am worried about my son’s future, and that is a tough pill to swallow.”

Pamela Walsh writes, “I have two sons with autism. One was on the wait-list since January 2017 and was approaching the top to soon finally receive”—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Point of order.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I’m just wondering how many letters you plan on reading in.

Mr. Joel Harden: There’s Pamela’s, there’s Stephanie’s, there’s Stephen’s and then there’s Kerry Monaghan’s.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Chair, I just want to see how it applies to this particular section of the legislation that the member is supposed to be addressing.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We are talking about the commencement, schedule 3, section 25, which is specifically to the Ontario College of Teachers Act. If you would like more clarity, we can ask counsel to come back to this. We need to be specific to this schedule.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Chair. I think I am. What I’m speaking to, through the lived experience of residents in Ottawa, which certainly matters to me, is how unprepared the teaching profession currently is, which the Ontario College of Teachers regulates, at least at the moment. They have an interest in making sure our public school system is ready. This particular clause, in my reading of the clause—and you can correct me if I’m mistaken—is talking about when the schedule will come into force and when it will receive royal assent. I’m being led to believe by constituents, to whom I’m accountable, that we’re not ready.

I feel like these local stories are important. I don’t know that we made enough time to hear them, to be very honest, and I think it will help us, it will edify us to understand grassroots voices about how this legislation will impact people’s lives, the lives of families, the lives of children. That’s why I’m reading them.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I’m going to defer to counsel to confirm.

Ms. Jennifer Gold: The commencement provision, subsection (1), has the schedule come into force, and then subsection (2) is the exceptions that would come into force on proclamation. I think that has all of the amendments that have to deal with the prescribed sexual acts and the misconduct. That would come into force on royal assent. Anything that has to do with—if we look at the sections in

subsection (2), they’re the ones that pertain to the membership of the committee. Those would come into force on proclamation.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I’m going to allow Mr. Oosterhoff to—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Respectfully, I would suggest perhaps if the member can create copies of these letters, I know I’d be very interested in reading them and seeing what particular concerns your constituents are raising. I know you also were referencing what Laura Kirby, I believe—

Interjection: McIntosh.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:—Kirby-McIntosh brought up in committee as well, and I’d be happy to see that. I just don’t think this is the appropriate time, given the commencement date that is being discussed. I think that connection is weak at best. But I’d be happy to see the letters.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: We have sections 25(1) and (2), yes, with regard to commencement, but I think these are very relevant concerns related to whether or not we believe that this legislation should get to this point.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That’s not the section we’re—

Ms. Marit Stiles: No?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I’d like to remind members that there will be an opportunity to debate the next schedule. These letters may not be particularly relevant to this part, so actually, I’m going to call the question. Are we ready to vote?

Ms. Marit Stiles: With respect, Madam Chair, these are letters that specifically relate to safety and support in our classrooms, which is what we are debating here today.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): But this schedule actually pertains to the commencement of the act and the proclamation, and when it comes into force, which is not relevant to what you’re reading the letters to. But you will have an opportunity, when we come to the next part, on the Teaching Profession Act, to debate again.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We will be returning to section 1 of the bill, where you will have extensive opportunity to speak to this.

I’m going to call the question: All of those in favour of schedule 3, section 25? Shall the motion carry? All those opposed? Carried.

Shall schedule 3, as a whole, carry? All those opposed? Carried.

We’ll be moving to schedule 4, the Teaching Profession Act. We can deal with schedule 4, sections 1 and 2, collectively. I’m going to ask the members if we’re willing to go and have a vote collectively. All those in favour? Opposed? You’re opposed?

Ms. Marit Stiles: No, I’m in favour.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We can deal with them together? Okay. Shall schedule 4 carry? Opposed? Seeing none, carried.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Madam Chair, is it possible to have a short recess so we can discuss matters with our colleague—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I will seek agreement from all of the members of the committee. Are we all in favour of a five-minute recess? All those in favour of a recess, please raise your hand. All those opposed? No, we will continue.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Madam Chair, I'm going to ask again if we can have a 10-minute recess this time. I think that the members opposite are not really being very fair here, if I may. We have another whole day set aside to review this legislation at committee. We want a few minutes to have a conversation with our colleague who, for significant reasons, was not able to be here this morning. I think that it's really not the most collegial attitude to take, to not allow us to have a brief break here.

So I'm just going to put it to them again. Given how much time has been allocated—we're well within that time that has been allocated—we should be able to have a short recess.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): It has to be the will of the committee as a whole.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles, I will put the question again. Is the committee accepting of having a 10-minute recess? All of those in favour of a 10-minute recess? I need to hear agreement from all sides. I just want to make sure everyone's in agreement. We'll have a 10-minute break—

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Five.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): A five-minute break? I'll actually give you to 2:30.

The committee recessed from 1423 to 1430.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We shall reconvene. We're going to move on to Bill 48, section 1. Shall section 1 carry? All of those in favour—just a moment.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): So we'll move forward. Bill 48, section 1.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Chair, can we speak to that?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Stiles?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just want to raise this again—this is the contents of the act's sections that we're voting on now. One of the concerns that was raised by others here during the public discussion or presentations here, the very limited ones—there were pieces of this that I think a lot of people wouldn't disagree with. There was, I think, really no disagreement with schedule 4, for example, and on tightening up the definitions of sexual abuse, sexual nature and that.

But to then include things like the changes to the college of teachers, like this mathematics test, like even the companion animals, the service animals component—those are all very disparate issues. Each and every one separately deserves, really, their own piece of legislation, their own opportunity for careful consideration and debate and deliberation and input from stakeholders and the public.

I want to just throw this out there one more time to the members opposite, to really consider whether or not this kind of omnibus legislation is what we need to do the good

work that our constituents expect us to do, representing and bring forth good legislation and good policy that's going to work and actually keep our communities and our schools safe and supportive.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Would anybody from the government side like to respond? Any further debate? So I'm going to call the question.

Shall section 1 carry? All those in favour? Anyone opposed? Carried. Thank you.

We'll move to section 2, "Commencement." Any further debate? We'll call the question. Shall section 2 carry? All of those in favour, please raise your hands. Those opposed? Carried. Thank you very much.

We'll move to section 3, "Short title." Shall section 3 carry? Is there any further debate on section 3?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I believe we have some comments on our side, in debate.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: I think it's really important for us to point out that the name we have, the short title, which is the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act—I just want to point out to the government side here how deceptive, if I may use that word, it is to say that. This bill, when passed—and obviously, you have the power to pass it. It's a shame that we have all of these sections in here that don't relate to each other, and we're taking away authority from independent bodies that regulate themselves, and we're giving the power to the government to control. Yet what we're looking at is calling it "safe and supportive classrooms." I don't see that we're making our children safe and supported by this bill. I think it's deceptive. It's untrue; it's not right. Calling it "safe and supportive" doesn't make it safe.

We're going to have children in the classroom without enough resources. We're going to have teachers who are not well trained.

Going back to the debates: We had people come in here who talked about how un-researched this bill was when it came to the math test that we're putting in place. We had deputations from experts who have been doing research for many, many years on this subject, who talked about the timing of tests for our math teachers, if we were to go through with the math test, and the idea of cancelling programs that help teachers to be trained. So it's really important, because we're not providing our educators with the resources and the tools they need, and yet we're calling it "supportive classrooms."

When it comes to safety, my colleague here had these letters. I think it's really important for us to go through those, because it really talks to the core of what it means to have your children safe in a classroom. We're not going to have our kids safe when kids with autism, kids with special needs, kids on IEP plans, who are already struggling because we don't have enough resources—we're calling it a "safe classrooms" act without giving them the actual safety tools necessary.

We're going to have kids running around, with one EA who has 30 kids and is not able to give the attention necessary. We're going to have kids with special needs and not have the resources to take care of them.

We're not making them safe. We're actually putting the students, the kids, at risk, but we're also putting our teachers at risk.

From what we heard, we're actually discouraging people from becoming teachers, in certain ways. Some people are good at doing tests, for example, but some people are not so good at doing tests, and yet they could be amazing educators. Just because you can't do a good test doesn't mean you're not a good educator. There might be people who are amazing math teachers but not math test-takers—and that's what's going to end up from this bill.

I'm speaking from emotions, because I think that's what it comes down to when you call it an emotional title like "safe and supportive classrooms." But it's deceptive; it's not true. That's not going to be established from this bill.

I just wanted to get that out here. I know my colleagues pointed that out as well. It's just not what it is in words. Just calling it doesn't make it.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Respectfully, Chair, I couldn't disagree more. I think the actions that our government is taking in this legislation show a real commitment early in our mandate to addressing areas in education where we can do more to support students and families in education, and we're committed to doing so.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any further debate? Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a question, Chair. Just so I understand our process for this afternoon, we're going through, at the moment, schedule 3?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Section 3—

Mr. Joel Harden: Section 3. Excuse me.

1440

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Which is the short title.

Mr. Joel Harden: The short title. Okay. Then, yes, I do have some.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Go ahead, Mr. Harden.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you. I just wanted, again, in the interests of edifying our conversations about how we may be creating a safe and supportive classroom, to continue with voicing on behalf—because I believe it is my job to voice the concerns of constituents who have taken the time to share those thoughts with me, in some cases in the break between when we were meeting this morning and now.

So I believe I was at Pamela Walsh. Pamela writes:

"I have two sons with autism. One was on the wait-list since January 2017 and was approaching the top to soon finally receive quality hours of therapy within the window of opportunity; the other, further back on the list, still having quite a wait ahead.

"We first noticed red flags with my oldest, A.J., at 18 months old. It took from then until almost age three, January 2017, to be diagnosed. In January 2017, at age two, we joined our OAP wait-list. Until today, we are still

on the list. However, we are in the 300s, almost ready to actually get ABA.

"For my younger son, J.P., we started to notice symptoms around 16 months. After all the steps for diagnosis, he was added to the wait-list in June 2018. J.P. tested positive for a mutated gene that is associated with autism and epilepsy. He has also taken three seizures.

"With the old program, we would have had as much therapy as required until they were 18—I estimate at around 20 hours per week, at first anyway. With the new OAP, my boys may never reach their full potential.

"Lastly, I have a daughter, Jennifer, who is currently 11 months old. Families that have one child born with ASD have a 50% chance of having another. Girls typically present with autism differently than boys, causing them to be diagnosed much later than age six. If she falls in the spectrum as she gets older, she will have even less of a chance of getting quality therapy as her funding access will be much lower by then.

"I cannot stress enough that academically they excel among their neuro-typical peers. They struggle with social anxiety and behavioural difficulties. Given proper evidence-based therapy could mean they could become doctors, scientists, possibly cure cancer. People with ASD have high intelligence. They are our future. They are worth more than what this new program, the OAP, is offering."

Stephanie Bennett writes:

"My son has been on the wait-list for 26 months now. We have been paying out of pocket for ABA with hopes of our turn coming up on the wait-list. In December we were still sitting at 243 with hopes of getting a place dwindling as the new OAP was not moving very quickly through the list. That being said, I'd rather be sitting on that list waiting than still getting barely enough money over a lifetime to cover two years of therapy."

Stephen Bisang writes:

"Our family waited for nearly two years on the wait-list while paying out of pocket for therapy. We had our son diagnosed privately also. It has since been nearly two years of funding under the OAP and our son has learned many skills and continued to improve. Our current budget is up in April, meaning our funding will stop. Paying privately put us in debt and we sold our first home to repay that debt. We simply cannot do that again to keep him in 25 hours of therapy per week in fear that he will regress and lose the skills he's gained.

"We know that the school system is already struggling to provide him with adequate support for three afternoons per week as he attends senior kindergarten. We will now be forced to send him to school full-time as we will get less than \$5,000 per year for support."

Kerry Monaghan writes:

"Bear with me as I share my thoughts on this current situation with the Ontario Autism Program. My apologies, this is going to be a long one.

"I have a lot riding on this situation.

"I have two beautiful children. Jack will be six at the end of May. Charlotte is three and a half. Both have autism diagnoses. Autism is my life—in ways that I like it to be,

and ways that I'd rather it not. On February 6, 2019, MPP Amy Fee stepped to a podium and told our community that whenever she recalls the day her son Kenner was diagnosed, still she cries. Moments later, Minister MacLeod took the spotlight. When I recall the days my two children were diagnosed, I do not cry. The same cannot be said for the day MPP Fee told her tearful story, and then Minister MacLeod, in the span of 30 minutes, proposed to destroy my children's chances of living happy, meaningful lives as productive members of society. This is the day I cry about. And this is why I have decided to sit at my computer, exhausted and blurry eyed, in hopes of relaying the importance of our story, and that of so many others.

"I am used to writing angry letters. Tapping out desperate phone calls. I am both inspired and encouraged by your willingness to listen, and to learn. Let me help you.

"My husband Patrick and I have spent \$200K on private therapy for our two children in less than 1,000 days." The government's "reform to the Ontario Autism Program will not only devastate us, it will cripple us. We have been drowning in debt and confusion and sleepless nights for nearly three years. We have fought our battle against the Ontario government. We have been laughed out of banks. We have accepted the generous charity of family. We have struggled with the ugly side of autism for years. We are tired. We are mentally exhausted. We are emotionally drained. And after a short 10 months of partial reprieve, where my son received funding through the OAP, we have been pushed down again, been kicked and spit on, and are being forced to fight with everything we have, when we have next to nothing left to give.

"My son Jack has enjoyed 10 solid months of full-time therapy, and he has thrived. We still struggle, day to day. Jack has severe autism. He is verbal, but barely so. He is only just learning how to use words to ask for a drink of juice or a movie. He requires full support with eating, dressing and all personal care. He is not toilet trained. He engages in near constant stereotypy (stimming) slapping his hands furiously against hard, smooth surfaces as though he were digging a tunnel in imaginary dirt beneath him. He melts down when he is denied what he wants. He will protest in the street and drop to the ground, grinding his bare skin into the asphalt. He fights us when he is misunderstood, striking our faces, biting at our hands, forearms, shoulders and scalps. I can no longer physically manage him. He often requires 2:1 support in public. He has many people who love him, but he has no real friends. He does not engage with others. He rarely engages with me. He recoils at my touch, and refuses my attempts to hug him. At night, I will lie next to him as he sleeps and hold him; this is the only opportunity I have to be near my son.

"However, in the past 10 months Jack has started to learn to use the toilet at his therapy centre. He can label pictures, and count. He can copy actions and match similar picture cards. He can sort, and recognize the relationship between a toothbrush and toothpaste, or a shovel and pail. He can sit at an activity for upwards to 15 minutes with support. He is trying new foods, and eating them at the table. He can use a spoon to eat yogurt. He is using

functional communication training to learn to tolerate being told 'no.' He is learning to use visual prompts to access vocabulary he knows, but cannot otherwise retrieve. I can ask him to sit on the floor and put pants on, and he will. He can pull socks on, as well as his hat and boots. He is learning to tolerate being near his younger sister in sibling group therapy. Jack is thriving in his intensive therapy of 25 hours per week. My husband and I will forever feel guilty that we could only 'afford' to fund 15 hours per week for the first two years of Jack's diagnosis. We rely on this therapy. We rely on the parent training sessions that come with it. We are learning to parent in ways that would never come naturally—and we are so thankful to have the guidance to help us build a relationship with our son, to teach him, and keep him safe.

"On June 27, 2019, this will be taken away.

"Our daughter, Charlotte, lives on the opposite end of the spectrum from her brother, Jack. She is social and dramatic and a natural chatterbox. Had we not been primed by her older brother, she may have had us fooled for years, missing signs of autism that aren't quite as obvious as they are in Jack. Charlotte was diagnosed at 22 months. She immediately started ABA therapy privately, in addition to speech and occupational therapy. She also participated in the Quickstart early intervention program. Because of the profound kindness of our dear aunt who remortgaged her home for us, we were able to fund 15 hours per week of ABA therapy for Charlotte. Since then, she has thrived. Her speech is developing at an amazing rate, she plays pretend with her dolls, sings songs, plays games, is learning to eat with cutlery, and can recognize when her mother is sad; these days, her mother is sad a lot. She has developed at such an alarmingly quick rate, that we have next to no doubt that she will transition well into the school system ... with support. Charlotte still cannot communicate exactly what she needs. She has a very sensitive temper, and melts down when denied what she wants. She has no sense of danger, and severe attention-seeking behaviour. She will bite, hit and scratch when angry, and if no one is available, she will bite herself. Charlotte has made amazing gains, but continues to require intensive support to ensure that she stays on this amazing path of development.

1450

"We are an 'in-service' family, and a 'wait-list' family. We represent opposite ends of the spectrum, and the inequity of service that" the government "is proposing exists under my own roof. One child is desperate for consistent, intensive, full-time support, and will receive next to nothing. The other may not require the delivery of therapy quite so intensely, but will receive more. Neither will receive what they require for their respective diagnoses. Both will be cut short. Both will be penalized because of their age, and their parents' income. This is setting an incredibly worrisome and dangerous precedent in Ontario, and in Canada, for that matter.

"Autism is a severe neurological condition, whether your diagnosis is labelled as mild or severe. These labels represent how the world experiences autism, not how the

person affected experiences it. It is time that Ontario, and Canada begin to recognize autism spectrum disorder for what it is, and begin treating it with appropriate funding and necessary intervention.

“There are a great many things wrong with ... the Ontario Autism Program but here are some of the major areas of concern:

“(1) Hijacking the terms ‘fair’ and ‘equitable.’

“Prior to the announcement,” the government “held round-table discussions around the province. I was fortunate enough to attend one in Ottawa. Parents pleaded for some kind of action: It had been over a year since the Ontario autism community had heard anything at all from the sitting government concerning the program which is at a complete standstill. Aside from a ... promise of a \$100-million injection into the program, we had heard nothing from the” Conservative “government.... At those round tables, parents pleaded for several things: Having heard rumours about a system similar to that in British Columbia, we implored” Minister MacLeod “not to consider: (1) age-based funding, (2) flat-rate funding, or (3) anything that ignored the serious issue of capacity across the province. Most of all, we begged for equitable service; a model based on individual need, not a cookie-cutter amount that ignored the specific needs of each child.

“On February 6, 2019, Minister Lisa MacLeod delivered upon us everything we begged her not to, had the gall to call it ‘equitable’ and the audacity to say that she was proud of what she had done, adding insult to injury.

“(2) Ignoring the science.

“I’ve maintained that it isn’t the amount of money that the government is offering our community that is so insulting, it’s the manner in which it is being delivered. Offering parents an arbitrary cookie-cutter amount of funding ignorantly refuses to acknowledge that every child with autism has a different set of needs, and will therefore require different types and intensities of therapies. This in itself feels like the government is turning their backs on us, and our special-needs children, stating, ‘You get what you get.’ The very fact that the ... government discontinued the ongoing collaboration the previous government had with ONTABA”—the service providers for autism services—“is alarming. Rather than consulting the experts in the field, this government has chosen to allow politicians sitting at Queen’s Park to decide what is necessary to treat a child with autism. I would be willing to bet that few of cabinet and caucus members even know what ABA therapy is, let alone what it costs, and why it’s used. We would never stand for it if an MPP was permitted to decide how much insulin a diabetic should receive, or if a person with depression or anxiety were permitted to use SSRIs or anti-anxiety medication. It just isn’t right, and it goes against all best-practice, evidence-based, scientific research and clinical recommendations. This should not be happening in Canada. This is unacceptable, and needs to be revisited, reconsidered and reversed immediately.

“(3) Arbitrary factors such as age and income.

“If it wasn’t enough that MPPs are now responsible for determining the intensity of intervention for children with

complex neurological conditions, this government is planning to toss in factors such as age and income to further” cut “the amount of funding a child is entitled to.

“Shortly after the announcement, I received information directly from MPP Amy Fee’s office concerning the wait-list and childhood budgets. Firstly the wait-list, which the minister says will be addressed within 18 months, will be triaged. Younger children will be pushed through first ... followed next by those who have been on the wait-list longest. Therefore, they will not be respecting the amount of time families have already spent ‘languishing on the wait-list.’ They will be triaging according to their own set of criteria. Secondly, and more importantly, the government will be imposing a sliding scale for income-based funding. Families who have a family income of less than \$55K will receive the full \$20K or \$5K ration each year, depending on their child’s age. Those who have a combined income of more than \$250K will not be eligible for funding at all, regardless of how many children with ASD they are expected to support.... But furthermore, families who fall between these two arbitrary amounts will be subject to a sliding scale.

“On February 6, the minister wasn’t kidding when she told the province that children could receive up to \$140K to last their entire youth. We thought she simply meant that it would be subject to age restrictions. If the information received from MPP Fee’s office is correct, these ‘childhood budgets’ could be whittled down even further, literally leaving families in crisis and with no means to support their children adequately, regardless of income. For some perspective, my son Jack’s therapy costs upwards to \$80K per year. In May, he will turn six. Considering our family’s combined income of approximately \$160K, Jack may receive a yearly ration of three to four weeks’ worth of therapy. The thought of it makes me sick to my stomach. We are already in debt. We have already funded years’ worth of autism therapy—for two children, no less. What will become of us in a few short months?

“(4) Clearing the wait-list.

“Just like the ‘\$140K’ per child promise, ‘clearing the wait-list’ may initially sound like a good idea. It isn’t. Not only is Minister MacLeod promising to do this at the expense of effective, adequate therapy, she is failing to acknowledge the severe lack of capacity this province has for children on the autism spectrum. In Ottawa, there are currently seven private learning centres that offer ABA therapy to children on the autism spectrum. Several of them have two locations. However, most have wait-lists. Some have wait-lists that are closed because they are so long, others have lists over a year long. It is a fallacy to think that simply because you have the means to pay, that ABA therapy is accessible to you.” Minister MacLeod’s “‘clear-the-wait-list’ promise simply means ‘redistribute the province’s wait-list into smaller lists scattered across the private sector.’ Furthermore, the future of the regional providers, such as” the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario “ErinoakKids etc., are uncertain. In Ottawa, CHEO accounts for 60% of the capacity for autism therapy. It also costs approximately three times as much to

run their program. Now that the regionals have been taken out of play, and that the new OAP model is solely a direct-funding model, can we anticipate a decrease in capacity or a privatization where these programs won't be able to compete with prices in the existing private sector? Handing funding to 23,000-plus children to use in the private sector is unreasonable, and shows extremely poor planning and foresight. These families will have nowhere to spend these funds. Consider also rural and northern Ontario regions "where private services do not exist. Or that board-certified behaviour analysts who are ethically bound to provide best practices to our children may be ethically compromised when a family approaches them with government funding that won't come close to being able to cover a decent behaviour program. Can a BCBA ethically accept this funding to treat a child over a period of maybe three months, when intensity and longevity of ongoing therapy is required to see results? What will this do to the reputation of the effectiveness of ABA? Parents and families will not see results. Minister MacLeod is leaning hard on" the clear-the-wait-list argument, "but it is a disaster waiting to happen. Furthermore, does she have the foresight to extrapolate how many children will receive new diagnoses while she is clearing the current wait-list? Will a two-year-old child who receives a diagnosis on April 1, 2019, be given priority?"—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I'm going to ask you to wrap up. You have one more minute, please.

Mr. Joel Harden:—"over my daughter who has already waited 19 months for service? There are far too many questions left unanswered for this incredibly complex plan that goes live in less than six weeks."

I'll just go to the end of her remarks, Chair.

"This evening, my son needed to be wrestled into his bed after we force-fed him a dose of melatonin to help him sleep. He kicked at our throats and clawed at our faces. He latched onto my hair in fistfuls and screamed in fury. Leaping from his bed, he grabbed a tornado lamp he got for Christmas from Mastermind Toys—one of his most favourite things—and hurled it down the stairs. It smashed. Tomorrow I know he'll melt down screaming when he cannot find it and I don't have a replacement. My mother, who is staying with us to help this week, is cleaning it up behind me as I type this now. Once I finish, I will email Jack's behaviour analyst and ask what more we can do to ensure smoother bedtime routines. We've already dismantled his bed, dropped the mattresses to the floor, removed all his toys, and his nightlights. Stripped the room of any sign that a small five-year-old boy sleeps there. I'm listening to Jack scream as my husband is trying to put him down. This is our reality. And we rely on the support of therapists to get through each day. Jack is only getting bigger and stronger. What will happen the day that I can no longer manage him? Our life is full of 'minute-by-minute' scenarios. We are not a normal family, and we hide away our struggles and swallow the fact that we may never enjoy things like family vacations or even a trip to the park where we don't worry about someone running out into traffic. There are bite marks in all my furniture. We

spend our days cleaning chewed-up paper out of my son's teeth and wiping feces off the walls. I'm accustomed to my living room being covered in chewed-up food"—I only have a few more sentences, Chair—"and urine. Not every day is terrible. Some days we enjoy a smile and celebrate small victories like Jack picking up a toy he knocked over, or eating his Happy Meal at the table. On really good days he may look at me and smile. Or let me hold his hand for just a moment. I try to enjoy each small gift we receive in order to block out the thoughts of who will take care of our kids once" we've passed away. I type this with shaking hands, not knowing what we're going to do as our only lifeline is ripped away in a few short months.... This cannot be real. The government cannot turn their backs on desperate families like ours, can they?...

1500

"Thank you. You are free to use any of the above in any way you see fit to help the cause.

"Kerry Monaghan

"350 Langrell Crescent

"(Nepean) Ottawa."

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Thank you very much, Mr. Harden. Now I'm going to ask if there is any response or any remarks from the government. We've completed 20 minutes; you had 20 minutes to speak to this. I'm going to move and call the question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Is there a limitation—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): You can speak to this in the next section when we move to that. We've had 20 minutes from the opposition on this, so—

Ms. Marit Stiles: Is that what we're limited to—

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We are speaking to the short title specifically right now. We can move on, and then you will have an opportunity to speak on the next part, if you wish.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I would want to speak to the short title.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I can give you an opportunity to speak now, but we have listened intently and we're not going to be accepting more letters at this point.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): We're not going to be accepting more letters to be spoken to—

Ms. Marit Stiles: No, no more letters—

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): But if you're going to speak to something else—

Ms. Marit Stiles: I just want to make a few points.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Please keep it specific to the short title.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I am. I just want to follow up on something that my colleague Ms. Begum mentioned earlier in regard to the short title of the act being the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. I agree with her: I think that this title is actually quite deceptive in terms of what is included here in this act.

I want to just go back to some of the presentations that we received here last week, in the very limited time that the public had to participate. This is from the submission by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario. I think this speaks very much to this issue of whether or not you can actually call this legislation that could be called the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. They say:

"Ontario's educators, educational assistants and professional support personnel are experiencing considerable challenges related to classroom violence." Madam Chair, there is nothing in this bill that addresses that issue of classroom violence. "There is a significant lack of support and resources to ensure that the needs of all students are being met, especially the needs of children with mental health issues, learning exceptionalities and behavioural challenges. Although Bill 48 is titled the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, it fails to address any of the concerns related to classroom violence. ETFO believes this is a missed opportunity to improve the safety of students and educators by ensuring that classrooms in Ontario have the funding needed to truly provide safe and supportive learning conditions." So, speaking directly to the title of safe and supportive classrooms.

I also want to refer to the submission and presentation by Laura Kirby-McIntosh, who is the president of the Ontario Autism Coalition. My colleague Mr. Harden raised a few of the quotes from her as well, but I wanted to, again, go back specifically to this issue of whether or not we can call this the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act. She's talking at one point in her presentation about the very vague language in this act with regard to service animals. And I know this is a piece that the government has signalled again and again and again is very, very important to them—and I concur. But again, to the point of, does this legislation adequately address the needs and is it really going far enough, in this case, she says, "To be blunt, this act is far less than the autism community had been hoping for."

And then, specifically, she has a section in her presentation which speaks to this issue of whether or not this is about safety and whether or not the provisions included here will bring about safe and supportive classrooms. She says, "As much as I wholeheartedly support the admission of autism service dogs into Ontario classrooms, I must add one thing before I move on: Service dogs are not trained to intervene during an autistic meltdown. They cannot respond to a child who has become aggressive or violent. I would remind members of this committee, therefore, that service dogs are no substitute for trained, experienced and compassionate education workers or for the delivery of meaningful ABA in classrooms."

Then specifically in a section that says "Unsafe and unsupportive classrooms for children with autism," she goes on to say this: "Unfortunately, this bill," which this government, I will remind you, wants to call the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, "shies away from addressing many of the issues that make Ontario's classrooms less than safe and less supportive. To be specific, the Ontario Autism Coalition is deeply concerned that this bill ignores

several crucial issues that affect the safety of all students with disabilities, not just those with autism.

"The bill says nothing about the overuse of suspensions, exclusions and expulsions against students with exceptionalities.

"The bill ignores the excessive use of physical restraint, segregation and isolation rooms in schools and the devastating impact these measures have on the mental health of children with disabilities." I've certainly received many letters—which I'm not going to be reading right now—with regard to some of those same issues.

"It is silent on the broken funding formula that funds exceptional students not according to their needs, but on an outdated hypothetical statistical model." On this issue, she says, "I would urge members of the committee to consult the excellent report by economist Hugh Mackenzie called *Shortchanging Ontario Students*, prepared for the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario." I've actually read that report. It's excellent. I highly recommend it to the government members here and to everyone.

Going on again to the point of whether or not this bill should be called the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, "Bill 48 says nothing about the urgent need to hire more education assistants to help students with disabilities, and it is silent on the lack of adequate training provided to those EAs to help them deal with the students they are asked to support.

"More specifically, the bill does nothing to strengthen PPM 140 or to bring in more rigorous training and supervision to support the use of applied behavioural analysis in classrooms.

"The bill contains no provisions to provide direct classroom support to exceptional students from behaviour, speech, physical or occupational therapists.

"The bill says nothing about the impact of class size on the safety of all students and education workers.

"The bill fails to address the need for special education training for all school staff who work with students with special needs, as recommended by the *We Have Something to Say* report produced by the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth," which I remind you the government has chosen to close.

I'm not going to read through all of this; don't worry. I'm sure they'll be relieved to hear this. But I did want to also mention one of her final points, because if we're going to say it's the Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act, what should that include? What would it take to make this a Safe and Supportive Classrooms Act? She says, "as you listen to our dream list, I want you to ... ask yourself whether we are anywhere close to making these dreams a reality.... If students with autism were thriving in Ontario schools, we would know because"—and then she gives a really great list:

"—They would experience a seamless transition from the Ontario Autism Program to the education system;

"—They would be treated with respect, compassion and understanding by a multidisciplinary team of collaborative professionals who work with them;

“—They would have opportunities to learn and socialize with their peers;

“—They would not experience frequent restraint, isolation, injury, suspension, expulsion (exclusion) or arrest because of ... outbursts at school. Instead, their needs would be met by knowledgeable, trained and experienced staff;

“—Fewer students, teachers, EAs and other school staff would be injured at work, and when they were, they would report their injuries without fear of reprisal;

“—Parents would not be asked to voluntarily withdraw their children because schools lacked the resources to properly support them;

“—Teachers and EAs would feel confident that they had the resources and training they needed to support their ASD students;

“—More ASD students would be graduating from full credit-bearing programs.”

Those words—and there were others, of course, in the few presentations we heard—really speak to what it is we all want to achieve here. This bill has a few good things in it, absolutely. But at the end of the day, is it really doing what we need it to do to create safe and supportive classrooms? I think it’s pretty clear it’s not. So I want to reiterate again and ask the government to consider whether or not this really is the right title for this bill.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any further debate? Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I think it’s so important that we think about the impact that this has on students in our schools. Of course, those are ones that we are all here to work on behalf of. I just wanted to quickly read off, for the record—because we didn’t have a chance to hear a verbal presentation from this organization, the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association.

“We recognized that, if passed, this bill would provide a plethora of benefits for education in the province....

“We agree with the stances that the provincial government has taken in this bill and fully support its mission of fostering safe and supportive classrooms in Ontario.”

I just wanted to make sure that was on the record. The students—the ones we are working for at the end of the day, the ones whose lives we’re working to improve, and the classrooms that they will be in—fully support this legislation, as we heard from the Ontario Student Trustees’ Association.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Any further debate? Ms. Begum.

Ms. Doly Begum: Can I ask if this is the whole of the statement, or was that a portion taken from the actual statement?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: You should have all received this, I believe.

Ms. Doly Begum: I mean, what you just read.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That was a portion.

Ms. Doly Begum: A portion, okay. Because from my knowledge—through the Chair—when I have spoken with the student trustees, they do have concerns about the lack of training that’s included in there, the lack of resources that are provided to classrooms. Obviously, what my colleagues and myself have pointed out in terms of the idea of increasing safety in classrooms, student trustees have pointed out how they’re concerned about that. I just wanted to add that to the record.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): I just want to note that that was one of the submissions to the committee, so it was handed out to everybody.

I’m going to call the question. Are we all ready for the question? All of those in favour of section 3, short title, please raise your hands.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Recorded vote.

Ayes

Anand, Babikian, Kramp, Martin, Oosterhoff, Triantafilopoulos.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Carried.

I’m going to move forward. Shall the title of the bill carry? All of those in favour, please raise your hands.

Interjection: Didn’t we just do that?

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): No, that was the short title. This is the title of the actual bill. Would you like a recorded vote?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes.

Ayes

Anand, Babikian, Begum, Kramp, Martin, Oosterhoff, Stiles, Triantafilopoulos.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Carried.

Shall Bill 48 carry? Recorded vote.

Ayes

Anand, Babikian, Begum, Kramp, Martin, Oosterhoff, Stiles, Triantafilopoulos.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Recorded vote.

Ayes

Anand, Babikian, Begum, Kramp, Martin, Oosterhoff, Stiles, Triantafilopoulos.

The Chair (Mrs. Nina Tangri): Carried.

With there being no further business, we stand adjourned. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1514.

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