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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 1 December 2021

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} décembre 2021

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING PEOPLE
AND BUSINESSES ACT, 2021
LOI DE 2021 VISANT
À SOUTENIR LA POPULATION
ET LES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2021, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Good morning. The government bill we are discussing today, Bill 13, or the Supporting People and Businesses Act, seems to be less about support and more about regulation and changes around the edges. While the people and businesses of this province can all agree that red tape and time-wasting bureaucratic run-arounds are frustrating, and in many cases defeating, there are common concerns that are being brought up in my office that we may be throwing the baby out with the bathwater as the government looks to modernize.

I'd like to start with going digital. While I can admit that I have become pretty handy with a smartphone, I can also freely admit that I'm not the first person to call when the computer won't boot up or if the online order didn't go through properly.

It is clear to everyone, especially since the start of the pandemic, that online is the future. It might be the direction we, as a society, are inevitably headed in, but we have to be careful about the speed and insistence of the process.

As members of provincial Parliament, it can easily be taken for granted that the computers, their Internet connections and all of the devices that run off of them are paid for with public dollars and are operated by staff who have great knowledge of how to use them. We forget that when something goes wrong with the system, there is a service desk worker who is ready to fix our problems. We know that if there is a question, it is normally Google we turn to or, failing that, a more tech-savvy person who is a little more up to date. We rarely, if ever, stop to think about the privilege we have when moving around our environment, as everything generally runs smoothly and tasks can be accomplished without too much effort.

So when government says that they are going to make life much more efficient for the people and businesses of Ontario, do they say this from a position of digital privilege or from the perspective of many of the constituents who do not have a computer, who do not have access to the Internet and those who, through no fault of their own, don't have the capacity to understand how to use a web browser online? There is also the ongoing issue of people who live in rural areas or in northern Ontario who, to this day, do not have equal access to broadband technology, let alone a reliable Internet connection.

Recently, a local business operator contacted my office looking for help. He is an honest, hard-working business person. He pays his taxes, has a few workers and helps people out in his community. He was informed by a ministry that he owed a fee associated with his business. While he was prepared and willing to pay this fee, he was stuck with how to actually proceed with the payment. The business owner does not and has never owned a computer or smartphone. He is in his mid-sixties and was a steelworker for much of his life. There was never much need for computers and high-tech communications technology when he was hauling steel products around the yard. He was informed by ministry staff that to pay the fee he needed an online account with them. He also required a credit card to pay the nearly \$2,000 fee. This was not a possibility and no referral to the local library was going to assist him.

While our office with the help of some ministry staff were able to assist this person with their payment, the solution was not what we had thought. The preferred option would have been for the business owner to send a certified cheque or money order to the ministry. We were informed that online was the only way he could pay. We were forced to comply with the new way or to hit the highway, so to speak.

This is going to be a problem. If digital solutions are going to be the way our people interact with their government, it has to improve. I am not opposed to digital options to renew a health card or to update your new address, but there still needs to be an option to fill out the form and deliver it in person to a brick-and-mortar location for processing or by email, if it's permitted.

As we move forward with digitizing everything, we're leaving behind many of our seniors, people with accessibility concerns and those who are unable to afford the technology to interact with their government. What tax breaks are available to a person on ODSP or Ontario Works when they are told to go online to submit information? Who is paying the Internet bill for the senior on a

fixed income who has been told to go online to renew their driver's licence?

There should not be a cost associated with interacting with your government, but we seem to be moving in that direction at an incredible speed. If we are going to support people and businesses, as is suggested in this act, then we need to educate, inform and subsidize people to have access to the digital world. Internet should be classified as an essential service and a subsidized one if our government plans to move all interaction into the digital realm.

We must also continue to remind ourselves that not everyone has the ability to surf the web like we do. We have to make sure that the options and supports are there or we will be leaving people behind in the Dark Ages of letters, phones and fax machines that may no longer connect to their leaders or service providers.

Speaking of leaving people behind, I need to take some time to talk about the support small businesses in my riding and around the province are still in desperate need of. Many are still hurting from the lockdowns and continued lack of customers, and many are still wondering if they can keep the lights on as the supports dwindle away. Hospitality, personal services and entertainment seem to be the areas that have really been struggling to catch up to the rest of the economy. The vaccine passport has been helpful in encouraging people to venture out more to their local restaurants, hair salons and live music venues, but it is clear that the world is not back to where it once was.

I was speaking with a local restaurant owner and he reported that during the lockdown period, when he could not have anyone in his restaurant and before patios were a thing, he had lost nearly \$1.5 million in revenue. He is doing his best to recuperate but it is hard to come back from such an overwhelming deficit. While much of his operational costs were reduced, and many of the government programs were helpful, they are still a drop in the bucket compared to what he lost.

This experience is also being noted by a local tattoo parlour that has not yet received a response to their application for grant programs, as the owner's mental health was too poor to ensure all of the relevant i's were dotted and t's were crossed. Ministry staff have been somewhat helpful in many of these types of cases but there are many people and businesses that have fallen through the cracks and are still suffering.

Some of these concerns go back to my first comments about digitization. While business owners are typically assumed to be more organized than the general public, it's wrong to assume that all of them were set up with scanners, printers and webcams when their pre-COVID business was conducted with cash in hand and paper receipts. There is little reason a tattoo parlour would need a commercial-grade printer and a scanner prior to the pandemic. And with much of the equipment hard to come by during the rush to work from home, it can be determined that much of the online application processes were out of reach of many.

What was needed and still is needed are more staff members willing and able to guide these small business

owners through this process with patience and understanding.

Then there are the major concerns being raised about the Ontario Business Registry and its many failings, with recent statements from concerned legal groups that the people have experienced "system shutdowns, technical glitches and substantive problems associated with the new OBR."

0910

I have never heard a complaint in my office about the business registration process in the past, but now I'm hearing about it on a weekly basis. The push to new and online services needs to keep in the mind the human element of business. Not all businesses have a team of lawyers, IT specialists and government relations communications strategists to deal with all of the changes that are confusing. We're also all at risk of being—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, I'm having trouble. That's a lot of distraction going on.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I would ask the other members to please respect who has the floor and try to keep the noise down or take it outside.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you.

The push to new and online services needs to keep in mind the human element of business. Not all businesses have a team of lawyers, IT specialists and the government relations communications strategists to deal with all the changes and confusion.

We hear all of this talk about being open for business, but it's starting to look like there are only certain types of businesses that are desired by our government: businesses with deep pockets that are willing to scratch a back or two; businesses that employ thousands, but manage to avoid taxes while collecting subsidies; and businesses that see collective agreements as barriers to profits and see paid sick days as a nuisance, despite being one of the best ways to prevent the further spread of illnesses in our province.

Small businesses are the ones that have always been the backbone of our economy. Small businesses have always been the avenue for those among us who still believe that hard work and following the rules is the way to succeed. Small businesses have always been the gateway to a decent and honest middle-class life. But it is small business that is bearing the brunt of our economic reality. That is why small businesses still need to be supported financially.

Despite the NDP's constant reminders that more direct financial support is needed, there has not been any talk about a potential third round of grants for businesses that are still struggling. There has been little talk about helping people with the transition from paper and pens to the glitchy and unforgiving government portals that are online.

Nothing has been said about the potential of information going online and its exposure to hackers or scammers. How does the average business owner tell the difference between a government of Ontario email and a scam artist looking for information that can be sold on the open

market at a hefty price? What guarantees are out there that the various ministries with whom companies interact will be willing to work with people on an individual level to ensure that the paperwork is filed on time and accurately?

In the past, a paper trail was simple to follow up on. A tracking number on a parcel or envelope could be used as confirmation that a form or item had been submitted at a certain time and date. If there is a dispute over whether a form was submitted on time or not, how are the government officials going to go back to see what the error might have been?

To do this right, the government is going to have to look beyond efficiencies and begin to look at how the business sector of our economy is going to function in the future. Life is becoming more and more complex every day, and people are becoming frustrated with the constant need for newer, better and faster.

Believe it or not, there are many in this province who do not want to live their lives on a cellphone or in front of a monitor. One of the most missed parts of life that we have lost over the pandemic has been face-to-face interaction. While the long line at ServiceOntario locations has always been the butt of a joke, it's still the efficient and helpful staff who work there who have been able to guide people through their paperwork and explain the reasons behind the many forms and ID checks. I'm sure that many of the helpful service staff can still operate from home, but the business of living or working in Ontario cannot be done entirely online unless there's real and significant support.

The more complicated we make our system, the less resilient it becomes. While we like to think that the lights will always come on when we hit the switch, sometimes they don't. We all remember the northeast blackout of 2003, and we also know that unheard of things can always come out somewhere to haunt us.

Let's make sure that when we make the claim that we're making things better, we are including everyone and taking all potential pitfalls, drawbacks and backup plans into consideration. If we are going to support business and people, we need to support all businesses and all people, no matter their level of technical savvy, no matter their type of business, their age or income, or how many lawyers and tech specialists they have at their disposal.

If a business cannot register in the province of Ontario, what faith is left in how our system operates? If a health card renewal cannot be completed online unless you are also fortunate and privileged enough to have a driver's licence, then what are the other options?

We have to be careful when people begin to feel like they live outside of our system. When they finally shrug their shoulders and say enough is enough, while the march of time is inevitable and the progress of technology is unstoppable, we need to remind ourselves of who is being left behind. In this case, it is the poor, the elderly and those who do not possess the capability to be a 21st-century citizen like their government expects them to be. This is not a pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps scenario. I'm sure that in time the people of Ontario will become

comfortable with the new digital age, but we cannot drag people into it if they do not have the ability to adapt quick enough.

People across the world are tired of the phrase, "We are living in unprecedented times." Every day, the news has something else to worry about or something new that has to be done to protect ourselves and others. People need to know that the carpet has not been pulled from beneath them and they will not be denied the ability to obtain OHIP coverage or a health card or register their new small business without being told to go online or call a new 1-800 number and wait on hold for an hour or more before being connected to a voice or a person.

Cutting red tape can be an effective tool to smooth out the many bumps of getting something accomplished, but it should not be about putting up barriers in front of those who are not able to keep up with the rest of their peers. Let's ensure that we all move forward together, and that people who need the support, whether it's financial or personal, need to receive it with patience, understanding and with no strings attached.

Speaker, I, for one, in my riding, daily have people coming in for whom we have to fill out the forms for various reasons. They may have a language barrier. They may have some mental issues so that they can't handle it. Every day, I get it. And there's no way that this government can expect people in those situations—and some can't write. Believe it. I couldn't believe it: The illiteracy rate in this province is very high. I couldn't believe it. It's like 12%, in an educated province. What do these people do? Not only are they not able to write or read, they can't even operate a computer. It's no good to them. Has the government got a contingency plan to deal with these people?

Yesterday, one member stood up and said, "Oh, well, you know, my office handles everything. They can just come in there." That's not how it works; trust me. A lot of them don't have computers, and sometimes the offices are closed on weekends. They're open usually from 9 in the morning until 4:30, with an hour for lunch—usually, our offices are. People have lives. They go about their lives. They have jobs. They work shift work. They do all that. They may be held up a week or two before they can get to the office to be able to even do it. So that's a poor argument, to say the least.

I know for a fact that—I've got stacks of files in my office from people who have issues, who have been dealing with the government under normal conditions in the way they used to be able to do it: paper, pen, sign their name. But the computer world? It's great. I'm for moving ahead, technology. We have to compete. We have to be worldwide competitive. I understand that, but you also have to remember there's a good chunk of our population that's not ready to convert that quickly, and to have the time to run down to their MPP's office every time they want something signed or put through a computer—because there are lots of things going on in the world that don't even really have anything to do with our offices, but we help people if we can. My office even does tax returns for people who can't even do their tax returns.

So I don't know if the governments take this under consideration when they're deciding to move ahead quickly. Yes, we have to compete. Yes, we have to be able to have our businesses compete worldly and throughout North America, but we also are losing a lot of people who probably would want to contribute, would want to compete, but they can't, because they don't have the technology or the wherewithal or the ability to use the new technology. So yes, move ahead, but move ahead cautiously, and don't leave those people behind, because our offices and this building will be inundated with people if we don't handle this properly. So I'm hoping that the government is going to have a really strong contingency plan to deal with these types of situations, because they are going to crop up very quickly as we move ahead in the digital world.

0920

In closing, I never heard, for a lot of these things in the presentation or in the bill, how they were going to deal with it. They had all these great ideas of what they're going to do, and that's fine, but I didn't see anything where they're going to help the hundreds of thousands of people in this province who will have difficulty with this process, until they get to a point where through help, through training—even their relatives can help them to get through this phase.

What the member forgets is that we have an aging population. By the year 2025, 40% of our population will be seniors—40%. Are they going to be able to live in this Ontario the way they want to, feel free and not have to worry about filing stuff or getting stuff in on time because they can't use a computer? I hope not, because that's a scary situation.

I hope this government takes into consideration all the people out there who don't have the privilege or the ability to have the equipment in the offices in this building, which most people don't even have a clue about or have a chance for, or can't afford that situation. They need help. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and responses?

Mr. Will Bouma: I have to say, I so much appreciate engaging with my friend from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I think that's the reason why I appreciate my friendship with him so much: because he has a way of expressing the real needs of the people of Ontario in a way that can bring us all together. You have my pledge in my small role here in the back corner to work with you, to make sure that we take care of people that way, and thank you for bringing that forward.

I wanted to ask him, in the spirit of that: We have such a housing crisis in the province of Ontario and, as I'm sure the member knows, we're moving to give councils the ability to delegate more responsibilities to staff—qualified staff—so that we can get more good projects moving forward faster in the province of Ontario. I was wondering if the member could provide the same wisdom that he has given on these other issues that he has spoken about today to that topic of how we can move forward on building

housing faster and delegating those responsibilities, instead of meeting after meeting.

Mr. Paul Miller: I thank the member from Brantford–Brant. That's a good question. Certainly in the housing situation, as we know, we're short affordable housing all over the province and we have to move in that direction. I think that the way to do that is to work hand in hand with the developers and the builders, and try to come to an agreement through the government and the funds that are put out by the government, to work equitably to get these projects going and under way. It benefits the economy, it benefits the trades and crafts, and it benefits a lot of labour work.

It's very important to move ahead, and I'm glad to see that you're very concerned about that housing situation, because I'm sure in Brant they have situations similar to Hamilton, too; we're very close neighbours. So yes, I hope we can move in that direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and responses?

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: Good morning. I appreciated the comments from my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I very much appreciated your emphasis on equitable access, because I think the stretch goal is that by 2025, we hope that everyone will have access to the Internet. But I think you really nailed it when it was—those are issues in Thunder Bay: affordability, persons with disabilities, literacy. Those are all issues that we need to ensure that this government has a handle on and that we help people navigate the system.

My question to you is: I believe that we need to create navigator positions if we're going to digitalize, because there are many people who will fall through the cracks. What do you think of that idea?

Mr. Paul Miller: I like that question from my colleague. It's a really strong question. Obviously, we certainly have to navigate. We certainly have to set up networking for people who are facing these challenges.

What I find, and what I have found over the years, is that here in Toronto we kind of live in a bubble; we have the ability to have the technology support from our staff and the people in this building. It makes life easier for us as MPPs, but I also know that once we step out, it's not the reality for a good portion of the population. And so when we make decisions in this House, we also have to put our shoes on the other person's foot so that they understand about why we made the decision and how we can help them get to the point where we would like to see them. Until that happens, we're going to have a bit of a pushback, I think.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Markham–Thornhill.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for your presentation. Mr. Speaker, the infrastructure deficit is a huge problem in Ontario. I was a municipal councillor, and we were sitting around and talking for years and years about how we could fix the infrastructure deficit, not only in small municipalities but in major, larger municipalities as well.

I strongly believe we should find every avenue possible to speed up the approval process, which would allow us to tackle this shortage. This would allow for more affordable housing to be built in many cities in the province. Does the member opposite support the proposed changes to the Planning Act that would give councils the ability to handle some of the approval process and speed up the building of this much-needed infrastructure?

Mr. Paul Miller: I thank the member for his question. I had the fortunate experience to have sat on city council for many years. We dealt with engineering, planning, and parks and recreation, so I'm very familiar with the Planning Act and I'm very familiar with the OMB. I know that we have to work with them to get things accomplished, projects and that. But also, when we are doing the planning, we have to take into consideration the green space, we have to take into consideration all the other impacts environmentally that it will have on the areas where we're going to build the housing. That has to be an important thing.

With all due respect, I think the present government and the last government were very weak in the environmental area, as far as fines and going after polluters and that. We let them off far too long. It certainly causes problems and cuts down the choices for housing, where we can put them, because of these situations. I think you have to work in hand with the municipalities as well in the Planning Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

Mr. Guy Bourgoïn: I thank my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. I like your speeches, because you bring the reality that I think all offices have dealt with, what you talked about this morning. But you also mentioned how small businesses are struggling. I believe that in all ridings they are, and yet we on this side of the House have been calling for a third wave of funding.

We heard recently that they gave \$1 billion on Highway 407; that money could have been used to bring in a third wave of funding. I'd like to hear your thoughts on this.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm not going to stand in the way of progress. I'm sure we certainly need transportation in some way or form, no matter how it is, because we have to move goods and things through the province. But if the roadway that is being put in is equal beside the other roadway that's already there that we don't own, I have a concern about that, moving east and west. They have made huge profits on the 407, which a former government gave away, as far as I'm concerned. Billions in money that could have gone towards other projects—homelessness, building affordable housing, and all the other things.

The argument this week about giving a couple of billion dollars back to manufacturers on the backs of injured workers—\$2 billion. You have to look at the priorities and get them straight. Some of that money that's being given back has to be put towards the things we need.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Niagara West.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his commentary. One of

the things, I think, that the member always speaks about quite eloquently when he refers to government regulations is the need to ensure that there's a balance for not just cutting regulations that are going to protect the health and safety of Ontarians. What we've very intentionally done as a government is reduce the unnecessary duplication or replication of government regulations that don't serve to protect the health and safety of Ontarians, while also maintaining those which do.

Perhaps the member opposite could speak a little bit about the importance of maintaining some regulations, good regulations, which protect the health and safety of workers and families and job creators in the province, but then also the need for balancing that with not having duplicative or unnecessary burdens.

0930

Mr. Paul Miller: The member has a good point. I've always been one to complain about duplication, and regulations certainly play their role. But the member should know that, over the years, I've witnessed that regulations can be changed by a cabinet decision without any discussion, but if it's a bill or a law, it can't be changed without discussion in here. So some of the regulations that are changed could be questionable as to who it's helping or who it's suited for.

Regulations, yes, are needed, but you can't cherry-pick what kind of regulations you're going to do for development, or at the expense of the environment or other organizations in the province; you have to bring everybody under the umbrella when you do that. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened for many, many decades in this place.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): We have time for a very short question.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you to my colleague from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. This bill is entitled Supporting People and Businesses Act, and it's my opinion that there's very little in this bill that actually helps people, and this bill is coming in the context of a government budget that's cutting money from education, cutting money from our public schools and giving forgiveness of a billion dollars to the 407.

Should there be something more concrete in a bill that says it's supporting people in this bill?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): A very short answer from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I agree with you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Further debate?

Mr. Will Bouma: Speaker, it's so good to be here this morning. I really appreciate the back and forth today, and I'm sure that's because of your strong will here in the House.

I wanted to start, actually, by thanking everyone who works behind the scenes so that we can actually make these things happen. I'm sure the members who are speaking this morning—we're all dependent on our staff to make sure that we have something to say here in the House. We all have that, so I wanted to just take a moment this morning before saying anything else to thank all of the

people who make this possible. To Milan, thank you for this here today and for working with me on making this come forward.

I'm so pleased to be able to rise and speak about this next version of our red tape reduction bill here in the House today. It has been such a pleasure, especially, to hear the supportive comments on the concept of getting rid of duplication, making things easier, with reminders to not leave people behind in the province of Ontario.

I also want to acknowledge that this is the first proposed legislation that has been raised by my friend and colleague the Honourable Nina Tangri, the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction, since she has assumed that role, and I'm very pleased to be able to play a small role in that.

For the second year in a row now, our government has tackled the COVID-19 pandemic head-on, and residents and business in my home riding of Brantford–Brant and, indeed, across all of Ontario continue to contend with the effects and yet unknown challenges, but we are strong, we are resilient, and we are united in this.

Ontario has been moving forward in a way that protects the safety and health of people while supporting the economy on which we depend to feed our families and to keep them warm. I am particularly pleased to be part of a government that has a dedicated team in place for reducing red tape and removing odious regulations that have been piled on by successive governments in the past.

That's not to cut down previous governments; what I've learned in my short time here is that, very often, new things come forward with the best of intentions, but a lot of the old things don't automatically disappear. These things just naturally seem to pile up and build on each other. Consider it like with the weather we've been having; like a snowball, you start rolling and, before long, it gets difficult to move. These regulations contributed to the loss, though, of over 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs during the last provincial government, jobs that New York, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana profited from.

The origin of the word "red tape" in the Western world is generally believed to include the practice of binding important documents in red ribbon. In many cases, it was difficult for people to obtain these documents for various reasons, including filing for pension benefits, and therefore the term "red tape" has been a common part of our vernacular to describe overly complex and needlessly cumbersome government policies and procedures.

That being said, Speaker, outdated and duplicative requirements are burdens that no business or individual needs, especially in today's busy lifestyles. It's not just a waste of time but a waste of real dollars that could be spent elsewhere, strengthening and protecting our economy. Constituents in Brantford and Brant have described to me the outdated paper processes of starting a small business and completing paper forms only to have to prove the same requirements have already been fulfilled several times over.

This bill does more than eliminate needless regulatory compliance requirements. It also makes huge strides in

modernizing Ontario's regulatory system. If passed, this bill would introduce changes that will expedite, streamline and digitize how businesses and individuals interact with the province of Ontario.

Speaker, let me give you a few examples of how this bill, if passed, will streamline and simplify a seemingly easy endeavour for businesses but that is anything but easy. In Ontario, for a licensed restaurant, bar or hospitality business to create or even extend outdoor patio spaces, it's a patchwork of bylaw, regulation, rules and process. In one municipality, business owners are required to apply for a road occupancy permit and enter into an encroachment agreement, where applicable, which is subject to the approval of the public works commission. The criteria include location, design standards, structural standards, visual standards and several additional criteria. Then, application requirements that include drawings complete the on-street patio licence and enter into a licence agreement with the municipality.

The approvals process includes submitting five copies of the required plans and drawings; submit to the planning department and revise the application in response to staff comments, if necessary; clear conditions set, if any, and install the on-street patio; then contact the municipality for inspection and then obtain the final approval from the said planning department.

Speaker, I'm sure you know in your own community, these things can take months. How do you take advantage of that during a pandemic, when you're just trying to keep your business going? This bill, if passed, says yes to restaurants and other licensed establishments and will create a groundwork that will allow for the creation and extension of outdoor patio spaces.

I remember talking about something similar when I was on council and we wanted to make businesses on our main streets in the county of Brant more accessible. You can get these little ramps that will go in. I remember saying to staff, "We have to make this easy." So, with a simple one-page form, a business can put in their insurance so that we have the liability coverage, proof of insurance, what they're doing and where they're doing it, and sign it off; and, boom, stamp, it's approved and you can put it in. I remember it taking months, and then back to council and back, which is why I'm so excited to see some of this delegation happening. These don't need to be planning committee approvals and then weeks later going to the council, and then if something happens, it gets delayed by a month. We need to be able to do these things more responsively, and I'm pleased to see that we're making some of those changes.

Another part of this bill, if passed, will be simplifying the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. Our government is simplifying Ontario's skilled trades and apprenticeship system to make it easier for apprentices, tradespeople and employers. Speaker, in my entire time on county council, private practice as an optometrist and as a member of provincial Parliament, I have yet to meet a tradesperson or business owner who has said "Well, I love the Ontario College of Trades. They really helped me achieve my goals." I never heard that.

A new crown agency called Skilled Trades Ontario will replace the Ontario College of Trades. It will release a new online portal that will allow tradespeople and apprentices to access services in one place, in one window, including registration, the issuance and renewal of certificates and trade equivalency assessments, with many services being offered online and self-paced.

0940

This bill also speaks perfectly to our government's foreign credentials strategy that was announced recently.

For some context, Speaker, here are some facts: Nearly one in three journeypersons are aged 55 or older, while the average age of a new apprentice is 30. In construction alone, the province needs 100,000 more skilled workers over the next decade. The current system is difficult to navigate because of the maze between the Ontario College of Trades and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

In early 2020, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development received approval to move forward with a skilled trades strategy which is focused on breaking the stigma and attracting more young people to the skilled trades, simplifying the system, and encouraging employer participation in apprenticeships.

On May 6, 2021, the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, my friend and colleague the Honourable Monte McNaughton, introduced new legislation entitled the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, which would incorporate the Skilled Trades Panel recommendations and our government's prior commitments.

In September 2020, Minister McNaughton committed to keeping whole trades, not breaking them into skill sets and restricted activities. This received broad support across stakeholders.

Phase 1, September to December 2020: The panel provided recommendations on a new service delivery model to replace the Ontario College of Trades, the functions which should be retained and delivered by the ministry or delivered through another entity, and the functions which could be eliminated. The panel put out an open call for ideas. They received 67 written submissions and held 24 meetings with stakeholders. The panel's phase 1 report was made publicly available on May 6.

Phase 2, April through October 2021: The panel provided recommendations on matters respecting the classification of trades and training of tradespeople, including the criteria and process for trade prescription and de-prescription, the criteria and process for trade classification and reclassification, and the initiatives that complement the training of tradespeople—continuing education, health and safety, accessibility.

Skilled Trades Ontario, as Ontario's training authority, would be the agency that would promote the skilled trades as a career of choice, develop industry-informed training standards, and deliver client-facing services in one window. This would also include apprentice registration; development and maintenance of apprenticeship training and curriculum standards; development, maintenance and administration of examination and exams; as well as the

issuance of certificates and licences. Administration of hearings relating to registration, certification and licensing decisions would also be included if passed, Speaker. The assessment of non-apprenticeship stream applicants trade and equivalency assessments would be part of this.

Skilled Trades Ontario would maintain the public register and maintain the digital portal. The responsibility of the ministry would include system oversight and regulatory decisions. This would include agency oversight; legislation and regulatory governance; compliance and enforcement, including the ability to establish an advisory committee; promotion and oversight for labour mobility for Canadian and international tradespeople; program design and administration of skilled trades and apprenticeship funding programs and supports.

The minister would continue to approve and fund in-class training providers, prescribe trades for the purposes of apprenticeship training, and classify trades as compulsory and therefore mandatory training and certification. The ministry would continue to make regulatory decisions like ratios and exemptions.

If the proposed legislation is passed, implementation would begin immediately and would include consultation and development of proposed regulations, which happened in summer to fall of 2021.

Skilled Trades Ontario leadership recruitment was to be initiated over the summer so that board and CEO appointments could be made by December 2021. Existing college service delivery would be transitioned to Skilled Trades Ontario in December 2021. Integration of additional agency functions, such as registration and exams, would take place over three years.

Further, to make the process more streamlined, if passed, all prescribed trades would be legally defined as trades. Trades could further be classified as compulsory or not. Regulation based on full scopes of practice would be restored to support system stability and provide for increased interprovincial alignment and labour mobility, i.e., Red Seal.

An apprenticeship program would be required to correspond to a trade's scope of practice, which may include on-the-job training standards, in-class curriculum standards, examinations and other requirements. Prohibitions would include requirements that individuals may not engage in the practice of a compulsory trade and persons may not employ them to do so unless the individual is a registered apprentice, holds a certificate of qualification or a provisional certificate of qualification, or is exempted by regulation. Current exemptions include those enabling the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program to legally operate.

Further improvements would include the public register maintained by the agency and would focus on individuals authorized to practise in compulsory trades and would indicate Red Seal endorsements where applicable.

Trade equivalency assessments would be well-supported by the agency. Timely and accurate verification of non-Ontario prior learning and job experience would be a priority area for the agency, including harmonizing Red Seal more efficiently and training protocols for exemption of tests.

Digital service delivery improvements initiated by the ministry would be continued by the agency. It is anticipated that the agency would be well positioned to be responsive to and ensure continued alignment with industry needs. The digital system would improve the registration process, accessing information about financial supports, scheduling of in-school training, digital logbooks, exam booking and certification. Sponsors also want more access to their apprentices' progress.

If the proposed legislation is passed, implementation would begin immediately and would include consultation and development of proposed regulations in the summer and fall of 2021. Skilled Trades Ontario leadership recruitment would be initiated over the summer so that the board and CEO appointments could be made by December 2021. Existing college service delivery would be transitioned to Skilled Trades Ontario in December. Integration of additional agency functions, such as registration exams, would take place over three years.

Speaker, we are continuing to reduce red tape and streamline the process that will support Ontario's hard-working families and the economy as a whole. That being said, people who come to Ontario with foreign experience and qualifications often face multiple barriers to employment, particularly in regulated professions. These barriers include multiple costly language assessments, as immigrants have to complete multiple tests for the purposes of immigration and professional licensing.

Other barriers also include lengthy credential recognition processes. Licensing time in some regulated professions takes up to 18 months or more, while workers wait in limbo, wasting valuable time when they could be contributing more to our economy and providing for their families.

Often cited as the most odious and burdensome barrier are the requirements for Canadian work experience. These requirements mean that in many cases, someone who has been practising their profession for years in another jurisdiction cannot do so in Ontario, simply because they have not worked in Ontario. If passed, we are addressing the issues that my constituents face in obtaining a job that matches their level of qualification.

Because of this, many immigrants are not able to fully apply their skills and contribute to the economy. I know first-hand that many employers in my home riding of Brantford-Brant are literally desperate to hire workers from all skill levels, and these changes will certainly help in this regard.

Also, this bill, if passed, will bring a brighter future for Ontario's youth. First, we'll be providing better access to skilled trades, as I previously elaborated on. Then, we'll be providing Second Career streamlining. The Second Career program helps unemployed workers who are older to gain the skills they need for good jobs that are in high demand. This program will fill jobs that are critical to Ontario's economic strength and growth. Thirdly, we will provide more options for advanced learning, i.e., an applied masters degree.

In addition to this, we are considering increasing college degree caps. This would give students more opportunities to access high-quality education and ensure they graduate with skills, expertise and credentials that meet labour market demands. The fourth point: If passed, we will propose increasing tuition transparency, which will be a great boon to all of our students.

Fifth, and something that is near and dear to me as an active volunteer firefighter in the County of Brant Fire Department, will be, if passed, making it easier to volunteer in general. We are proposing to eliminate the processing fees related to criminal records checks for individuals applying for volunteer positions.

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Mr. Speaker, volunteerism is such an integral part of our communities all across Ontario. For example, the volunteers of our four cadet corps in the Brantford-Brant area air, sea, army and navy league keep hundreds of youth off the streets, away from shopping mall parking lots and out of trouble while learning basic skills such as respect, hard work, drill and giving back to the community. And I know first-hand several cadets that have aged out of the program and credit the cadet program for encouraging them to stay in school, out of trouble—and kept them occupied for six to eight hours a week. None of this would be possible without the dedication of volunteer officers.

To any cadet, cadet parent or cadet officer watching this, I want you to know that our government is here to support you and promote the work that you are doing with our youth, and it's so much appreciated. I remember seeing the top two cadets from all four corps here in the Legislature before COVID, and it was with so much pride, wearing their uniforms and having the opportunity to be appreciated here.

Mr. Speaker, I suddenly have more speech than I have time left, and so in the closing seconds, I just wanted to thank everyone here for the opportunity to talk about red tape and red tape reduction. Everyone here is on the same page. We need to take care of our people, but we need to make their lives less burdensome so that they can enjoy everything that our incredible province has to offer for themselves, for their work careers and for their families.

That's why I'm so pleased that these bills keep coming forward, and I look forward to seeing this passed in the House with unanimous support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): It is now time for questions and responses.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from Brant for his presentation. He spent a good portion of it on trades, and that's kind of right down my alley. I have a couple of trades. I was an industrial mechanic/welder/fitter in heavy industry for 32 years.

I'm well aware of the College of Trades and when it first initially started, there were some difficulties because of the fees they were charging to certain elements of our society that didn't—some of the trades made a lot more money than other ones they were calling trades, whether it was a hairdresser, and they weren't making the kind of money an electrician did, and they were charging them the

same amounts for their yearly fees. That caused a lot of aggravation in our offices because people felt that you have one mechanic in a garage and he's paying the same.

So would the member be including some fee structure that's going to be fair to all the other classifications in his presentation?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the question. My third son is in grade 12. He actually has enough credits that he can do his co-op this coming winter, and he wants to be an electrician.

I believe those are very valid questions and I think that is still being developed at this point. The key question that I had when we eliminated the College of Trades, that I heard from owners of businesses was, "Okay, that's great. We all universally disliked the College of Trades. What will be replacing it and how will it be done?" And based on the work that I've been seeing and how this is going to streamline things and make one-window accessibility for people interested in the trades, I have every confidence that our fee structure for the trades, in order to be self-sustaining, will also be in line with the rest of the work that our government is doing. Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you to the member for Brantford–Brant for an excellent presentation. He covered a lot of ground, talking about outdoor patios and changes there, Skilled Trades Ontario, foreign credentials, volunteers. But I want to ask him about the justice system.

COVID has required government to make many adjustments to how we provide services across many sectors. It has also shown us some major issues in legislation and regulation that were outdated and in need of modernization. And I do feel that our Attorney General has done a great job. He has been making major improvements through our government's mandate with several bills and initiatives.

One of those initiatives, amending the Barristers Act, is included in this bill. Can the member talk about the changes the government is making to the Barristers Act and elaborate on why we have to keep Ontario's justice system up to date, please?

Mr. Will Bouma: Just to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, thank you for the question and thank you for your wisdom and insights in being here, teaching us new kids on the block how to get through this. But I have to agree: The Attorney General has done an excellent job of modernizing Ontario's justice system.

Through Bill 13, our government is proposing to repeal a section of the Barristers Act to remove an outdated courtroom procedure that prioritizes cases of senior lawyers and does not recognize licensed paralegals. That's difficult to understand, that in the 21st century we would still be doing that, but this is just another great example of how simple changes can make a big difference. And some of them do have to be legislative; they're not just all regulatory that could be made inside of a ministry. To see these types of changes and a whole philosophy across government in order to bring these good changes about is so pleasing to see.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: I thank member from Brantford–Brant for his presentation. I, too, appreciated the comments about the trades, something that I worked in, in establishing apprenticeships.

There are certain things that I would like a comment from the member on. One is that we stripped the funding for trades out of our high schools. Some of us are of an age where we saw that transition, and many people believe that that was a more direct employer relationship that was created very young and was a mistake from governments past.

The other is the underfunding of colleges, because employers are telling me and colleges are telling me that they can't have those specialized trades programs because they don't have the money to fund them. And in this day and age, it's important. I would like to hear the comments from the member on those two things.

Mr. Will Bouma: I really appreciate that question from the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan because it's so absolutely true. We need 100,000 of the trades to come into the province of Ontario over the next decade. I'm right there with you.

To see those things get stripped out of—and I remember having tours of our high schools and seeing the 60-, 70-year-old equipment that they're still using to train some of their students, and the lack of interest. I believe that we need a cross-government approach in order to encourage that, and I am so pleased that at least in my riding, I've been able to put together the schools and industry and the colleges in order to bring that full, wraparound service, not just to make the trades attractive to our students—because quite frankly, it should not be a job of last resort. The trades are so good. We need all kids interested in the trades and we need to start that from kindergarten all the way through grade 12 to get them in there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Whitby.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Many of us in the Legislature have journeyed here through serving on municipal councils and we understand that there's a long-standing challenge with the planning and development processes within municipalities, whether it's upper tier or lower tier. This legislation—you'll know from your own presentation yesterday, Speaker—makes significant changes, and those changes are designed to address the significant deficit that we inherited related to affordable housing and infrastructure.

Could the member for Brantford–Brant speak to the effect of those legislative changes and the impacts on allowing us to build more much-needed infrastructure?

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you to the member from Whitby. I really, really appreciate that question, because you're right: A lot of us have spent years on our local councils.

I don't know, maybe I'm just dreaming, but as I speak to my municipal councils, as I speak to my mayors, I think

we all realize the intense necessity of an incredible working relationship between the province and our municipalities to serve our people well. And I think the changes that we're making in this bill in order for municipal councils to delegate some of the authority to make decisions to qualified staff inside so that these things can just be done in-house, because the cycles of meetings—I'm sure the members across the way that have spent time too, just the endless cycles of meetings. And you're dealing with something with three months—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Response.
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Mr. Will Bouma: What does that add to the time frame to getting our people into attainable housing in their communities? These simple changes, again, across government make a big difference.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This government has—every time they bring a bill forward, there's a poison pill in there. This bill is no exception. Often the poison pill is an attack on the environment. We saw them bury in a bill the schedule 6 to gut the conservation authorities. We saw them bury in a broadband bill a thing that would give the minister extreme powers with MZOs, making illegal MZOs legal. Now again we see in this bill that's purporting to help people something that is again another attack on the environment.

You're giving more broad powers to a minister who is undermining our environmental protections in this province. You're exempting yourself from environmental assessments. The Bradford Bypass, your six-lane highway through the Holland Marsh, is exempted from an environmental assessment. Really, what does this government have against the environment?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the question from the member from Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, but respectfully, I have to disagree. I think we've crafted this bill in a way that it can receive support from everyone. This is not a poison pill whatsoever.

We are proposing a minor amendment to the Environmental Assessment Act to clarify the authority to make changes to the types of projects covered by a class EA. The proposed amendment will not have any effect on existing class EAs until the minister uses his authority. Any proposal to move a project type from an individual comprehensive EA to a class EA would require additional public consultation.

I understand the opposition needs to find a way of voting against this legislation, but it's simply not the case. Because I've seen that take too much time—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Guy Bourgoin: It's always an honour to rise in this House to represent the people of Mushkegowuk—James Bay and to speak on the Supporting People and Businesses Act. Avec un titre de même, on est un peu resté sur notre faim, ça va sans dire, quand ça vient aux besoins des commettants ou des Ontariens.

Speaker, this bill is the seventh of the government's red tape reduction package, with 25 schedules and just 30 accompanying regulation changes. The people of Ontario deserve better than this bill. Les Ontariens méritent beaucoup mieux que ce que ce projet de loi dit, surtout avec un titre où on dit supporter le monde et les entreprises.

The government states that this bill will protect and offer support for business and people. Speaker, we all know COVID-19 has been hard. Families and business were hit hard. This bill does nothing to help people get through the pandemic, and it does not do anything to help everyday people recover.

Malgré le fait que ce gouvernement dit avoir supporté les familles et les entreprises, je ne vois pas le même résultat qu'eux, monsieur le Président. Le gouvernement est fier de dire qu'ils ont fourni 3 milliards de dollars en prêts pour supporter les entreprises. Mais, comme vous le savez, un prêt reste un prêt. Un prêt aide peut-être dans le moment même, mais n'aide certainement pas dans le long terme.

Plusieurs petites entreprises dans mon comté n'ont pas fait demande pour votre prêt puisqu'elles ne voulaient pas être obligées d'ajouter à leur longue liste de factures et de paiements.

Speaker, let's talk about other programs that this government claims help small businesses: the small business grant. They claim their program is working. I say this is not reality—well, maybe the reality in their buddy program, but certainly not for those who are not.

When you look at the bigger picture and what small businesses have been put through during the pandemic, offering programs that don't deliver on their objectives is not very useful. If this small business grant was so successful, why is the program delivery so flawed, and why have so many businesses had to close their doors?

Dites-moi pourquoi une petite entreprise de mon comté qui a appliqué pour la subvention en mars 2020 attend toujours pour une réponse à sa demande. Pourquoi, mais pourquoi, est-ce qu'elle attend encore? Ceci ne fait pas de sens et n'est certainement pas une façon de montrer du support aux petites entreprises.

In fact, I want to continue to point out how your claim of helping people and small businesses is inaccurate. Our office received numerous calls from small businesses concerned about their application status for the small business grant. We asked your ministry if it was possible for applications for this program to still be under review. The response: "Absolutely. We are still going through applications." How is this helping small businesses? How are they supposed to survive when the funding is not coming through? Well, the answer: Some of them can't, and some did not. We hear the members of government talk about their success and how they support and help businesses. But oddly enough, you don't hear them talking about the ones that didn't make it, the ones that fell through the cracks, the ones who couldn't apply.

Durant cette pandémie, non seulement les entreprises en ont arraché, mais parlons des organismes à but non

lucrative, des organismes communautaires : étiez-vous là pour les aider? Oui, il y avait des possibilités de programmes, mais comme vous l'avez bien dit vous-mêmes, certains qualifièrent et d'autres non. En plus, ces organismes n'avaient pas d'autres sources de revenus.

Les entreprises sont le cœur des communautés, mais plusieurs n'ont pas été capables de survivre et ont dû fermer. Malheureusement, les programmes n'étaient pas là pour les aider. Elles méritent un gouvernement à l'écoute de leurs besoins, un gouvernement qui ne prend pas un an à compléter des demandes de programme qui pourraient assurer leur survie.

Based on the number of complaints my constituency office has received regarding small business grants, this government is not making it easy for businesses.

Pourquoi est-ce que ce gouvernement n'offre pas une troisième vague de financement pour ces petites entreprises qui souffrent encore, ce qui pourrait potentiellement assurer leur survie? Je suis certain que plusieurs entreprises pourraient en bénéficier, non seulement dans mon comté, mais les comtés de tout le monde qui est assis dans cette Chambre.

Parlons des entreprises dans mon comté : je suis certain qu'une troisième vague de financement serait bénéfique pour les entreprises qui ont souffert énormément des fermetures liées à la COVID-19. Des entreprises comme les salons de coiffure, les spas : ces entreprises essaient encore de se remettre sur pied étant donné qu'elles ont été fermées le plus longtemps. Ça, c'est sans mentionner aussi les « outfitters », les camps qui amènent les touristes. Ils ont souffert; ils souffrent encore.

Dans mon comté, j'ai une propriétaire de salon de coiffure qui a fait demande pour le programme de subvention pour les petites entreprises. Elle a attendu des mois sans nouvelles de sa demande. Nous avons essayé de communiquer avec le ministère sans succès. Ça semble être l'histoire qui se répète : pas de réponse de ce gouvernement.

J'aimerais aussi me pencher sur les enjeux des restaurants et des petits motels. Ce gouvernement n'arrête pas de dire que les personnes, les entreprises ont su s'adapter durant les temps difficiles. « S'adapter », c'est un grand mot. Je sais que pour bien des restaurants dans mon comté, ils ont dû fermer leurs portes parce que faire du « takeout » n'est pas assez rentable. Il faut réaliser, monsieur le Président, que dans les petites communautés, la population n'est pas grande comme une ville de Toronto, Mississauga, et la liste s'ajoute. Leur dire de s'ajuster n'est pas la façon de faire les choses.

1010

La survie des petits motels : personne ne pensait à eux. Dans mon comté, il y a plusieurs motels, des non-affiliés. Si on dit que les grosses chaînes de motels en ont arraché, imaginez-vous les petites. Celles-ci criaient au loup pour survivre.

It seems to me that this government is just thinking about reducing red tape with this bill and not thinking about supporting businesses and people. If you want to “improve efficiencies,” you need to understand underlying issues. Looking at the surface of this issue and reducing

red tape doesn't give you solutions, and it does not solve issues.

Let's talk about improving efficiencies, which your government is proposing to do in this bill when it comes to schedule 1. It is a known fact for everyone that the number of matters on the list in criminal court has drastically increased during COVID. The government talks about improving efficiencies. How can they talk efficiencies when new protocols are being put in place that add to the workload of the crown and their offices? Let me explain: For example, the new bail protocol is now in place. The result of this new bail protocol is even more work for the crown. Let's be clear: There's more work but no additional funding resources for putting it in place. Crowns are being asked to do more and more with less and less. We're asking them to make the impossible possible. Improving a few efficiencies does not answer to the larger problem of the crisis in our court system due to insufficient staff who are asked to do more.

What about bail? It is one of the most important parts of the entire legal system. We need a good bail system to allow our detainees to get bail in a timely manner. But also, we need more funding. We need more duty counsel, but duty counsel needs more resources to ensure a good bail system. We need more crowns to be able to cover additional bail courts. Without proper funding, without looking at the underlying issues and needs of our system, we won't get better efficiencies, but we will keep seeing delayed justice for both the accused and the victims of crime.

The north needs more resources. We need more staffing. Also, let's talk about coastal communities. Do you think by amending schedule 1, our coastal communities will see better results? I don't think so. In my riding, the coastal courts have not yet resumed. Can you imagine how long it's going to take to get those moving again? Of course, it's complicated. COVID-19 complicated things even more. How will counsel travel to those communities? As we know, each community has their own restrictions. Furthermore, transportation to get there—we're talking staff, transportation staff, counsel. All of them will for sure have their own COVID protocols to follow. How do we address this?

Looking at the current state of our court system and the insufficient staff and resources, I would assume we are not going to get back on track. This is our court system. It's—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I apologize to the member of Muskegowuk—James Bay, but there will be time for the rest of his speech later on.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BEYOND THE STREETS WELLAND

Mr. Jeff Burch: It's an honour to rise today to speak about a great initiative that volunteers created and led in

my riding of Niagara Centre. It's called Beyond the Streets Welland.

The volunteers at Beyond the Streets have a mission statement: "Nobody gets left behind." Together, they serve at-risk low-income seniors and the homeless population of Welland.

I met Deanna, Cindy and Jade of Beyond the Streets at the pilot of the new breakfast program at Holy Trinity church, where Beyond the Streets has undertaken the important work of finding those experiencing homelessness in our community and connecting them to the new program. Every Thursday night, Beyond the Streets provides a free, hot meal at the Welland Farmers' Market. They also hand out fresh produce, donated by Small Scale Farms.

But there's a reason behind the name. These volunteers undertake important outreach work in hopes of connecting those in need to other services. These passionate volunteers teach us that homelessness is more pervasive and complex than people realize. They tell me that many of the people they serve are experiencing invisible homelessness, where an individual only occasionally has a place to stay. Unfortunately, this leads to situations where the person is so desperate to have a roof over their head that they stay in extremely dangerous situations. Those at risk of homelessness are often neighbours who have to choose between groceries and paying the increasingly unaffordable cost of rent.

Beyond the Streets runs on volunteer time and donations alone. Anyone who would like to volunteer or donate can contact them on Facebook or through their email at beyondthestreetswelland@outlook.com.

I hope this House will join me in thanking the team from Beyond the Streets for their vital work with the homeless, and the invisible homeless, in our community.

LITTLE CANADA

Mr. Stephen Crawford: It's great to rise in the Legislature today to bring attention to Little Canada, which is an experience unlike any other. We are truly fortunate to live in the best country of the world, and Little Canada provides the opportunity to connect and see every part of this vast nation. You can visit towns, cities and special landmarks and journey through the spectacular landscape on a miniature scale.

This special attraction offers a chance to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for our great country. Located at Yonge-Dundas Square in Toronto, I had the honour of touring this attraction, and it is truly impressive. Over 200,000 hours of work have been put into constructing and building this facility to date, and the work continues. So far, over 5,000 trees cover the landscape and 300 autonomous cars move around Little Canada.

In Little Canada, you can see locations such as Little Toronto with a 14-foot CN Tower, Little Niagara with its majestic Horseshoe Falls, and our nation's capital, Little Ottawa, with a replica of Parliament Hill, and much more.

The president and founder, Jean-Louis Brenninkmeijer, is an Oakville resident. Of course, downtown Oakville is

also in the miniature replica. Our charming downtown offers different cuisines, stores and waterfront parks. Whether you stop for food at one of our great restaurants, such as Seasons, Piano Piano, Pasquale's or Justino's Wood Oven Pizza, or visit one of the many great storefronts in our downtown, there's something for everyone.

I encourage everybody to visit Little Canada to see our whole country in miniature, and also, of course, my home riding and beautiful downtown Oakville.

BLASTOMYCOSIS OUTBREAK

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I am always honoured to rise in this House to speak on behalf of my constituents, and even more so when it's to bring attention to a very important issue happening in my riding. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring our attention to the community of Constance Lake First Nation, which declared a state of emergency last Monday because of a suspected outbreak of a lung infection known as blastomycosis.

We have been working closely with the community, the public health unit and local partners to ensure their needs are met and supports they require are in place. The community is working hard to identify the source, but unfortunately, they have yet to identify it.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the community, friends and families affected by the outbreak. We will continue to support them as they go through this state of emergency.

With that being said, I understand that the government has reached out to the community and are working with them. I am encouraging the government to continue to be there for the community, to maintain the support and make sure that the resources are in place as required.

We must ensure the community gets through this crisis safely, and gets the answers they need. Our prayers and thoughts are with the community.

1020

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: This pandemic reminds us of the fundamental human values that we should embody as a community. We should respect one another, love one another, and more than anything else, uplift one another.

As we continue in our fight against COVID-19, these values and Ontario's spirit and resilience are shown through the work of the organizations of Markham-Thornhill. In my riding, many organizations have stepped up to support their community members during this challenging time. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to recognize some of these organizations: Famed Star group; Carefirst; the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services; the Markham Federation of Filipino Canadians; the Buddhist Association of Canada Cham Shan Temple; the Vedic Cultural Centre; Sanatan Mandir Cultural Centre; Across U-hub; the Taiwan Merchants Association of Toronto; the Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham; Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association;

Chabad Lubavitch of Markham; and Milliken Gospel Church.

Mr. Speaker, now that we are in a new phase of the pandemic, these organizations and many others continue to provide programs and services to help the community. They are committed to meeting the diverse needs of the people of Markham–Thornhill. Thank you to these individuals and organizations for your compassion, hard work and valuable contributions to our community.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Everyone understands how important paid sick days are to keeping folks healthy—everyone except this government, that is.

The Ontario NDP has shown leadership since the start of the pandemic and has constantly been championing paid sick days in Ontario. We are listening to people who are desperate.

This Premier and government have voted consistently against paid sick days and workers, choosing 27 times to stand against workers and their health. Most recently, they voted against Bill 8, the Stay Home If You Are Sick Act, introduced by the MPP for London West and opposition members.

Our office is hearing from workers, parents, teachers and health care workers across the region about the continued need for paid sick days, because they are choosing between taking care of their health and keeping a roof over their head; because they're choosing between staying home with sick children and putting food on the table; because they're seeing COVID-19 and other seasonal illnesses spread through their classrooms; and because they are working non-stop taking care of patients who might not have been there in the first place if they had had paid sick days.

My constituent Lyle Hargrove writes:

“Far too many people have died preventable deaths during the pandemic for us to learn nothing.

“I’m asking as your constituent that you keep up the fight to legislate 10 days of job-protected, employer-paid, permanent sick days for all workers regardless of employment status.

“Protecting the lives of workers shouldn’t require a second thought. This government has a duty to protect its citizens.”

Speaker, this pandemic is not yet over. Instead of sitting back and waiting for things to get worse again, this government needs to listen to workers, parents, teachers, nurses and their own science table and implement 10 permanent paid sick days now.

CUMBERLAND HERITAGE VILLAGE MUSEUM

Mr. Stephen Blais: It’s an honour to rise today to highlight a gem in east Ottawa, the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum. The Cumberland Heritage Village Museum is a living museum that provides an immersive

and educational experience by showcasing life throughout the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression in the 1930s, with dozens of true-to-the-era buildings.

During the Christmas season, this live museum is turned into the Vintage Village of Lights. The Vintage Village of Lights always offers a unique experience that encourages you to play in the past and make memories for the future. The village is lit up tastefully with over 30,000 lights, and there are festivities for the entire family to enjoy.

Families can enjoy the vignettes highlighting traditions of days gone by, see the portable printing press in action, and travel back in time, with a festive soundtrack from the interwar years. Children can have the chance to meet Santa Claus, decorate a gingerbread house, partake in tree-lighting ceremonies, and much, much more. It provides a wholesome evening out on the town for the entire family.

Safety has always been the number one priority, so last year, staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to transform the village into a drive-through experience.

I’m very happy to say that this year, with the help of Ottawa Public Health and local community leaders, the Vintage Village of Lights is back in full swing, with proof-of-vaccination in place. It starts this weekend.

It’s a wonderful tradition in east Ottawa, and I’m so proud that I had a small role to play in getting it started about a decade ago. I encourage everyone to go check it out and partake in this important Christmas tradition.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Today I rise to speak about some of the most important people in our communities: the volunteers. December 5 is International Volunteer Day. This day was established to shine a light on the impact of volunteers’ effort and promote volunteers’ work.

In the past 18 months, with the pandemic, we have seen so many people step up in our communities to help their next-door neighbours, share letters of gratitude and so much more. I’m truly humbled to have met so many dedicated volunteers in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park, whether through the Spread Kindness campaign, where volunteers help to deliver groceries to seniors who need them; or my volunteers who helped out with shoreline cleanup at Port Union Waterfront Park and the Great Lakes Waterfront Trail near Beechgrove; or the volunteers who have helped me from day one; or those who participated in summer and fall volunteer programs.

I’m so proud to have met so many talented and committed young volunteers and young community leaders in Scarborough–Rouge Park. You all continue to inspire me and motivate me every single day. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all your efforts.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

Mr. Joel Harden: It wasn’t that long ago that we were all wearing orange T-shirts in Canada and remembering

the horrors of our colonial past and present. But sadly, the unrelenting push for new fossil fuel development has made us forget that. The Wet'suwet'en people have become a target on their own territory, a pristine area in the north of British Columbia.

As our friends in British Columbia deal with the real-time impacts of climate change—massive floods and horrendous fires—somehow millions of dollars can be found to send the RCMP into Wet'suwet'en lands with snipers and police dogs, and today, 30 people have been arrested, including land defenders and journalists.

My friend Premier John Horgan has said, “Free prior and informed consent is what everyone would expect of their neighbour and what we expect from those who want to do business in BC.” I agree, Speaker, but consent is meaningless if “no” is answered with the barrel of a gun. As the member for Kiiwetinoong has said, the law is very clear: Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs are the title holders of their land. They have a right to refuse development on their lands despite agreements signed by other parties.

Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs and grassroots people are actually giving Canada an opportunity right now. We can right now reinforce our unequivocal support for Indigenous rights and title. We can truly meet the challenge of the climate emergency by declaring an end to any massive expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure—and that is what we are talking about, sadly, with this project in BC. So, Speaker, through you I call upon my friends in the British Columbian government and the federal government to respect the Wet'suwet'en people and do better.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Mr. Norman Miller: I rise today to remind everyone that “Local Is the New Black.” I have to admit that when my staff first suggested that slogan, I asked them what they were talking about. Of course, it means that local is the new fashion, the new trend. As we do our Christmas shopping, I hope this is a trend we will all follow, whether buying gifts, food or a treat for ourselves.

I encourage residents of Parry Sound–Muskoka to support the many businesses that make and sell local products. I can't list them all, but one example is Middle River Farm in McKellar, where Katy and Cameron Ward carry not only their own locally grown products, but they also carry other local food products and gifts.

I also want to recognize our local chambers of commerce and BIAs that are promoting local shopping. For example, last weekend the Downtown Huntsville BIA hosted Santa and other special guests at its inaugural Muskoka Market: Huntsville Holiday Edition. This event brought families back to the main street businesses after a long summer of construction.

And it isn't just about local products; for those people who are hard to buy for, consider a local experience. This could be dinner at a local restaurant or tickets to a local attraction, or taking advantage of the staycation tax credit and treating someone to a weekend retreat at a resort here in Ontario.

Check your list and check it twice. I'm sure we can all find local gifts that will put a smile on the faces of our loved ones this Christmas. Give a gift to your community. Shop local.

ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2021 annual report of the Auditor General.

1030

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am very pleased to inform the House that page Elinor Carter from the riding of Parkdale–High Park is today's page captain, and we have with us today at Queen's Park her mother, Dr. Erin Carter, and her grandmother, Brenda Carter. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. We're delighted to have you here.

QUESTION PERIOD

SMALL BUSINESS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My first question this morning goes to the Premier. Today's Auditor General report shows what we already know: The Premier was not ready to support Ontario through the pandemic. When it comes to business supports, the government failed to plan and had to scramble as a result. The AG's report says that small businesses that needed support didn't get it, and many others got support that shouldn't have, or that didn't need it.

The AG goes on to raise serious conflict-of-interest concerns as well: “The chief executive officer of a company that was awarded a \$2.5-million contract was a member of the ministers' COVID-19 vaccine task force.”

Can the Premier explain how his buddy, a CEO on the minister's own vaccine task force, got \$2.5 million in contracts when struggling small businesses were turned away?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Just the opposite, actually: The small business support grants—which, I remind the Leader of the Opposition she voted against not once but twice—actually were instrumental in helping many small and medium job creators across this province get through the pandemic. We know that there is still a lot more work to do for them, but the small business grant, on top of the other supports that were put in place with respect to property taxes, with respect to education taxes and with respect to hydro relief, were all part of helping our small and medium job creators get through the pandemic.

We know that there is still, obviously, a lot more work to do, and that is something that we continue to be focused

on. Obviously, the Minister of Finance has brought forward an economic statement with the goal of continuing the economic growth that the province of Ontario is seeing as we come out of the pandemic. But again, I remind the Leader of the Opposition she voted against these supports for our small businesses not once, but twice. As I say, we have a lot of work still to do on it.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'll remind the government House leader that the Auditor General's report is not about spin; it's about the facts. She looked at the Facedrive contract. The company that was in crisis and virtually dysfunctional, reporting millions of dollars in losses while the CEO literally walked out the door just two months ago, in September, got \$2.5 million for contact-tracing beepers. The contract was extended, but no one—still, right now—knows whether Ontario even got the trackers that we bought. The auditor says the government “assessed the project as ‘low risk’ with minimal follow-up questions.”

The Premier and the minister did a promo video. They actually even did a promo video for this company. How could the Premier's buddies at Facedrive get millions in contracts when small businesses were abandoned and turned away by this government?

Hon. Paul Calandra: If anybody abandoned small and medium job creators in the province of Ontario, it was the Leader of the Opposition and her party. We were faced with a global health pandemic, which turned into an economic crisis, obviously, and when we were rushing to get supports out the door for our small and medium job creators, the NDP were very busy voting against those supports. We worked very quickly to ensure that our businesses had these supports.

And it wasn't just monetary support. We understood that we had to work with our federal partners and we did that, Mr. Speaker. In many instances the federal government was able to step forward and ensure that there were financial supports for job creators and for our essential workers while we focused on other areas, including health care. That's what we did, and we will continue to do that because we understand that you cannot have a proper economic recovery in the province of Ontario unless you support the very people who are creating those jobs: our small and medium job creators.

If you look at what the finance minister has brought forward, if you look at the work that we've done since before the pandemic—since being elected—the result was thousands of jobs being created, opportunity across the province. That's good news for the people of the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Auditor General also says that the committee advising the Premier on the business grants left no paper trail—nada, zilch, no official minutes whatsoever. That's very curious, Speaker. The report says “no official minutes were taken at meetings.” Forty meetings took place and not a single note or minute was

kept. Many small businesses, as I've already identified and as we all know, asked for support, needed support, and got nothing. Yet, “Over \$210 million was paid to roughly 14,500 ineligible recipients.” Many got more cash than they even said that they needed and no effort whatsoever has been made to get that money back.

How could the Premier shovel out millions in grants to companies without any paper trail of how those decisions were made while abandoning thousands of small businesses in their absolute time of need?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition now realizes that supporting small and medium job creators in the province of Ontario is a good thing, because she will remember that she not only voted against reductions in cost for these small businesses, small business tax reductions, but she also voted against the very same supports that she now says were so essential. We knew they were essential. That's why we brought a program very quickly to support those small businesses.

And when I look at main streets across this province, Mr. Speaker, I know, as all members will, we were very frightened of what this pandemic would do to our main streets and how it would affect our small businesses. The grants that we brought forward quickly—yes, absolutely quickly—in addition to the supports through energy relief, in addition to education tax relief, in addition to supports to ensure that essential workers had paid sick days—that's what kept our small businesses going, and we're very proud of that. Were some mistakes made? Obviously, Mr. Speaker. But that's what happens when you're trying to get supports out as quickly as possible and you have an opposition voting against it.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier.

The Auditor General's report also shows very clearly that wait times for surgeries are getting worse and were getting worse even before the pandemic hit. It was bad enough under the Liberals but, of course, it has become much, much worse under the Conservatives because this government, really, I don't think supports public health care.

But, nonetheless, I quote the auditor's report: “Substantial wait times have not been addressed and have worsened in 2020-21.” For gallbladder surgery, for example, the wait time has increased by 57%—57%—under the watch of this Premier. The doctor and nurse shortage is making things even worse.

So my question is, why is this Premier leaving patients waiting in agony for the surgeries that they need while chasing nurses and other health care professionals out of Ontario with his low-wage policy?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, you will recall that in the election of 2018, we made health care a priority. We made health care a priority by suggesting that we had to

do something about hallway health care, and part of that was the immediate transition that we started to do with respect to Ontario health teams, creating a blanket of care for people.

In addition to that, it was about rebuilding and building out our long-term-care system, thousands of additional beds for long-term care because, too often, people who needed a different level of care were being put in or left in our hospitals. That was completely unacceptable. We're starting to rebuild hospitals across the province.

Now, one doesn't just build a hospital overnight, Mr. Speaker. Later on today, another amazing announcement of another new hospital, on top of the hard work that was done by our member for Niagara—an expansion there, a brand new hospital for the people of Brampton, expansions in communities and hospitals all across this province.

Now, the member is right. We are going to have to do something about health and human resources. That's why we're hiring 27,000 PSWs, hiring 2,000 nurses. There's more work left to be done, but we're getting it done.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, cutting public health units from 35 down to 14 is the disaster that this government brought to Ontario just as the pandemic was hitting.

Look, in the year prior to the pandemic—the year prior to the pandemic—one third of hospital operating rooms remained underused, says the Auditor General: “Available health care system capacity is not being fully used to help clear surgery backlogs.” That's the facts, because this Premier, as I said, simply doesn't support public health care. He doesn't support making sure that patients have enough doctors and nurses to run operating rooms. It's shameful.

1040

How can the Premier let operating rooms sit idle and not hire more nurses and doctors in appropriate timelines—and pay them properly, frankly—to get Ontario patients the surgeries that they need, that they so desperately have been waiting for, for far, far too long?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It is worth noting that the Leader of the Opposition and her party have voted against every single investment that we've made in health care in this province.

We knew right from the beginning, in 2018, that we were going to be faced with a crisis in many sectors, including health care. The Premier campaigned on ending hallway health care. What we found almost immediately upon assuming office was that we had to rebuild and build out our long-term-care system, because too many people were being housed in hospitals who needed different levels of care.

We were left with an ICU capacity where 800 people in ICU brought this province to its knees. We inherited a public hospital testing system that could only do 5,000 tests a day when COVID-19 hit us, Mr. Speaker—5,000 tests a day; that has been ramped up to 100,000 tests a day. Incredible buildouts of new hospitals in Brampton, expansions in Mississauga, expansions in Niagara—these are all things that will help us on this.

And it's not just about the billions that are going into health care and to ensuring our surgeries get caught up; it's about a blanket of care through the Ontario health teams as well.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There's no doubt that the Premier campaigned on health care and then got elected and immediately started cutting health care, Speaker. That's what really went on.

The Auditor General also found that there has been no oversight whatsoever of patients being billed by private health care clinics for publicly funded surgeries: “Patients complained about being charged after receiving a publicly funded cataract surgery because they were misinformed of their right to receive standard surgery, free of charge through OHIP, without any add-ons.” The auditor said that patients are being gouged with services they didn't need by private surgical companies.

Public health care shouldn't be treated like an opportunity for private companies to upsell vulnerable patients. That is disgusting and should not be happening in our province.

So why is the Premier okay with his buddies running private clinics and gouging Ontario patients when they're trying to access basic health care needs like cataract surgeries?

Hon. Paul Calandra: It was a Progressive Conservative government that brought public health care to the people of the province of Ontario. It has been a Progressive Conservative government that has put additional resources into health care. When other levels of government and when other parties were cutting health care, we came into office and started increasing health care. When we came into office in 1995 on the heels of a failed NDP government that cut thousands and thousands of beds across our health care system, that laid off nurses, that cut to the tune of billions of dollars, it was a Conservative government that started reinvesting in health care, despite the fact that it was a Liberal federal government that attacked health care unilaterally in the mid-1990s. And it is a Progressive Conservative government, under this Premier, that is making historic investments in health care.

Is there more work yet to be done? Yes. The best way to get that work accomplished is if the Leader of the Opposition would join us and for once vote in favour of the health care investments that we're—

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

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Sara Singh: My question is to the Premier.

Ontario families know all too well that years of health care underfunding from the Liberals and cuts from the Conservatives have left our hospitals on life support.

A new report from the Auditor General shows that when it comes to care for heart and stroke patients, things have gone from bad to worse. The Auditor General's

investigation found that under the Ford government, wait-lists are growing, expert practice and recommendations aren't being followed, and worst of all, hospitals aren't even able to provide quick-enough treatment for heart attacks. Speaker, the rapid treatment of a heart problem or stroke can literally mean the difference between life and death for someone waiting. This shouldn't be happening in the province of Ontario.

When is the Premier going to stop making empty promises and start making the investments in health care we need to finally get the problems in this province under control?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, I certainly am not going to deny that during a global health pandemic there have been some challenges in some areas of the health care system. That is why we recognized that very quickly and ensured that we put billions of dollars into the health care system to renew it; hundreds of millions of dollars to ensure that we could catch up on many of the surgeries. I agree with the member opposite: It's not just about the money. People who are waiting for surgeries don't care about how much money the government has put into systems to catch up. They just want to get that service done.

What the Auditor General's report clearly highlights is that 15 years of Liberal government left our health care system reeling, despite the fact that they had a federal Conservative government that was transferring 6% a year and escalated 6% a year. They never spent that money on health care, Mr. Speaker. We are getting the job done. There is more work to be done, especially in those instances, but we are making the investments and we will get the job done for them.

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

Ms. Sara Singh: For families in Brampton, the Auditor General's report confirms the problems they have been seeing for years. The hallway health care and wait times that skyrocketed under the Liberals have only got worse, and Conservative cuts in Bill 124 mean that overworked health care professionals like our nurses are leaving the sector and hospitals that were already understaffed have only gotten busier. That's why the Premier's decision to not build a brand new hospital and emergency room in Brampton is so shocking, and the Auditor General's report proves it.

The Premier's failure to invest in health care in our community and across the province is putting lives at risk. When is the Premier going to stop playing political games and start building the hospitals and health care centres that people in this province deserve?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, let's be very clear. It is the two members of this caucus from Brampton who worked day in and day out from the day they were elected to ensure that Brampton got a new hospital. Let's also be very clear that the members from Brampton on the NDP side of the House voted against that investment. They

voted against that investment. But our two members from Brampton didn't just stop at—

Interjections.

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

Please restart the clock. Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, Mr. Speaker, it was the NDP members from Brampton who stood in their place when an investment, an historic investment, was being made in Brampton, not just for a hospital but for new long-term-care beds. They voted against it. A new medical school: They voted against it. Transit and transportation: They voted against it. Thank God there are two members of the Progressive Conservative caucus from Brampton who will stand up for Brampton. You saw that for 15 years the Liberals didn't, and now the NDP are abandoning Brampton as well.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Norman Miller: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry. Since coming into office in 2018, our government has invested heavily in northern Ontario. There is quite a contrast between our approach and the previous government's inaction and indifference on northern development, an approach that was supported by the NDP.

The latest example of our investments in the north came last week with the launch of the Northern Ontario Resource Development Support Fund. Could the minister please share some of the details regarding this fund and why it is needed now?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The parliamentary assistant and member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'm happy to rise in the House today to answer the question from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. The member is correct in saying that our government's approach to economic development is vastly different than what the Liberals and the NDP have suggested, and as we consistently demonstrate, our approach is working. The NORDS fund is the latest outcome from that positive, collaborative, forward-looking perspective. NORDS will run for five years, making \$15 million available annually to 144 municipalities across northern Ontario to support their infrastructure needs. The fund is stackable with already existing program funding, and bankable, meaning municipalities can leverage this fund to plan for future infrastructure projects.

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NORDS does not replace an existing investment stream. It's an additional one. And it will make a noticeable, significant, positive impact throughout the region.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Norman Miller: Thank you very much to the member for that answer.

It is clear the NORDS program would be a much welcome initiative across northern Ontario's municipalities. I know the municipalities in Parry Sound district have collectively been allocated more than \$2 million,

which I know will be put to good use to build infrastructure and create economic development.

Back to the parliamentary assistant: Can the PA explain how the ministry arrived at a budget of \$15 million per year for five years, and why our approach with the NORDS program is different from the one taken by the previous Liberal government?

Mr. Dave Smith: We've continuously listened to the municipalities to understand their critical needs. The focus on collaboration and partnership is a cornerstone of our resource revenue-sharing framework and was central to the development of NORDS. We developed it with direct input from the municipalities.

But don't just take my word for it. Listen to what Wendy Landry, president of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association had to say about this new program: "The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association is overjoyed by Minister Rickford's announcement.... This investment will have a significant positive impact on communities in northern Ontario.... I am so pleased that the Ontario government has taken action to help municipalities fund infrastructure projects across northern Ontario. We thank you for your continuous efforts and making this funding available to municipalities to better their communities."

Mr. Speaker, our government ensured municipalities have the final decision on exactly how this new funding is spent. With this approach, we've created an equitable, needs-based program in which municipalities maintain their decision-making autonomy to improve their community infrastructure.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. Since the surprise decision by the last government to toll Highways 412 and the 418 that run through Durham region, community members from across the region have recognized the unfairness and problems with tolling of these regional highways, which should connect folks, workers and families and keep people and goods moving. Instead, they sit empty and underutilized.

Once upon an election, the now government PC members promised to make it a priority to remove the tolls. They even voted for my private member's bill to go to committee and then refused to act on it.

So, clearly there is no political will, unless you live in the minister's riding. The controversial Highways 413 and the Bradford Bypass have unexpectedly, and all of a sudden, been made toll-free, interestingly, after a lot of uncomfortable community pushback. How did the government make these tolling decisions and how are they making the decision about the tolls in Durham?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member opposite for the question. Affordability for Ontarians has been a priority for our PC government since day one. When the pandemic hit in March of 2020, Mr. Speaker,

our government took action to freeze tolls on Highways 407 east, 412 and 418 to deliver more relief to drivers during the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, we have been working hard to ensure that drivers get the relief necessary throughout the pandemic. As we have been looking at building new infrastructure, we've been concerned about that as well.

What we did was we looked backward, Mr. Speaker, and we looked at what happened when Steven Del Duca, as Minister of Transportation, signed a contract to toll the people of Durham. Our government determined that we cannot do that going forward. Our government will never sign a contract like that because we believe in affordability and making life better for drivers across Ontario.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again, to the Premier: No one in Durham region is happy about this PC government's flip-flop on tolling. From a letter the Premier and MPPs just received from John Henry, the chair of Durham region, signed by all of the region's mayors:

"Highways 412 and 418 in Durham region are the only tolled north-south highways in Ontario.

"We have been consistent, and vocal, in our advocacy for fair and equitable application of tolls across the GTHA.... All Ontarians, including Durham region residents, contribute to the construction and maintenance of these highways. However, it's only in Durham that residents pay to use the connecting links to the 407.

"We need provincial leadership and immediate action to remove tolls on the 412 and 418 to create equity and support economic recovery across the GTHA."

How would the minister like to justify her Durham-only tolling policy to the regional chair, and to the mayors of Ajax, Brock, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Scugog, Uxbridge and Whitby, all of their residents, and all of the businesses and folks across the Durham region?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, but she should have directed it to the leader of the Liberal Party, who was Minister of Transportation and signed the contract to impose tolls on the drivers of Durham region.

That's why we have frozen tolls. We suspended the collection of interest on unpaid toll fees for Highways 407 east, 412 and 418. We froze those increases because we know that we need to make life more affordable for Ontarians.

We will not sign a contract, as the leader of the Liberal Party did. We know that those contracts are bad for Ontarians. They make life more unaffordable. We will not do that going forward.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

M^{me} Lucille Collard: My question to the Premier: This morning, the government added to its long list of policy reversals by announcing their plan to install electric vehicle charging stations on all ONroute locations.

Let me remind this House that one of the first things this government did when it came to office in 2018 was to

rip up the charging stations that had already been installed. In fact, the former government had committed to investing \$20 million to build 500 charging stations across the province. Only 350 were built before this government stopped their development. Three and a half years later and less than six months before the election, this government is only now recognizing the importance of investing in EV infrastructure?

Mr. Speaker, my question is: Will the Premier explain why this government ripped up EV charging stations in 2018 only to partially replace them three and a half years later?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Energy.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. The simple answer to her question is, because the equipment that the Liberals installed was substandard. It wasn't working, Mr. Speaker. Moreover, because it was substandard, nobody was using it.

It was at GO stations across the province. Metrolinx made the decision—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, stop the clock.

Hon. Paul Calandra: It's kind of like the LRT in Ottawa.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader will come to order. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will come to order. The member for Ottawa South will come to order.

We'll restart the clock. The Minister of Energy had the floor.

Hon. Todd Smith: I was very excited about this morning's announcement that we're actually going to put in world-class technology thanks to our partnership with Ivy Charging Network, which is a combination of OPG and Hydro One working together with ONroutes across the province on the 400- and 401-series of highways and Canadian Tire to install these fast-charging EV stations that people are actually going to want to use, not the junk that the Liberals signed up to put in places where nobody wanted to use it. This is going to be a program that the people of Ontario want and that's going to encourage people to buy electric vehicles, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

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

Let's start the clock again and begin. Ottawa–Vanier, supplementary?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: That was certainly not the answer I was expecting. I have to dwell on that.

Mr. Speaker, electric vehicle sales plummeted after this government cancelled the rebate put in place by the previous government. In fact, sales declined by 55% in the year following its cancellation. EV sales in Ontario lag behind those of BC and Quebec. Both provinces have EV rebates in place and are leading in total sales across the country.

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Ontario was on par until this government cancelled the EV rebate. That's why our party is committed to bringing

in an \$8,000 rebate for purchases of EVs and charging stations, making them more affordable for families to go green.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, similar to today's announcement on charging stations, should Ontarians anticipate this government reversing course on EV rebates only to bring them back closer to the election?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for this follow-up question. The one thing that actually is going to encourage more individuals to purchase electric vehicles in the province is convenience, which today's announcement with Ivy Charging Network and the ONroutes does: It allows individuals to pull off the highway along the busiest highways in the province and charge at fast-charging stations so they only have to be there for 10 or 15 minutes.

But the other thing that I think people need to keep in mind is that, under this previous Liberal government—the policies that they brought in place under the McGuinty–Wynne–Fraser–Del Duca Liberals were to drive the price of electricity through the roof. And if there's anything that's going to discourage people from adopting electric vehicles, it's continuing to drive up the electricity prices to the highest in North America. We've taken measures through the Ontario Electricity Rebate and many other programs—

Interjections

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Ottawa South will come to order. The member for York Centre will come to order.

I'll remind the House that we refer to each other by our riding names or by our ministerial titles, as applicable.

Restart the clock. The Minister of Energy will conclude his answer.

Hon. Todd Smith: Because of the steps we've made to lower the cost of electricity and to make driving more convenient, in the last year, we've seen an increase of 210% in the number of people buying electric vehicles in Ontario. We're on the right track; they drove this car off the road over 15 years.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: My question today is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Minister, in 2019, I invited you to the Pan Am centre in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge Park for a mental health and addictions round table with members of the community so we could learn more about the mental health and addiction challenges faced by my constituents. It was very clear that for too long, individuals and families in my riding could not access culturally appropriate and safe supports to meet their unique needs.

What is our government doing to address the issues around accessing culturally appropriate mental health and addictions care?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for that excellent question.

I'm proud to stand in this House today to share that last week, our government announced a brand new investment of \$2.9 million in annual funding to expand and enhance the Substance Abuse Program for African Canadian and Caribbean Youth. This culturally sensitive program has been shown to improve health outcomes for Black youth while reducing stigma and barriers to care. The program also serves francophones, those in the LGBTQ2 community and youth impacted by significant trauma, including community violence.

Our government will continue to make investments that are culturally appropriate to provide individuals who have mental health and addictions issues with the care they need. It is a top priority of our government as we build a continuum of care over the lifespan, ensuring that we have a stepped care model and ensuring culturally sensitive services to all the people in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Speaker, I thank the minister for his response. For too long, we have known about the gaps in services and long wait times for mental health and addiction care but especially for culturally appropriate mental health care across the province.

I was pleased to join the minister in Scarborough last week as our government announced this important investment at the TAIBU Community Health Centre. I know my constituents will be pleased to know that their government is there to support them. It is very clear that our government is committed to protecting mental health for all Ontarians and reducing wait-lists and wait times for services. But also, we know that there is more to be done.

Mr. Speaker, through you: Minister, could you please explain how we are addressing the lack of access to culturally appropriate care, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you again for that question. It was truly historical to be in Scarborough to make that announcement, and I am incredibly proud of this investment in the new SAPACCY program. For years, the parties opposite said no to expanding this program, even while demand for this program kept increasing each and every year. Last fall, our government said yes and funded the expansion of SAPACCY programs to four new satellite sites in Etobicoke, North York, Peel region and Scarborough. While the \$2.9 million we announced last week not only started and expanded this program, we're enhancing the program as well, and we're proud to expand it through the creation of new locations in Hamilton, Windsor and Ottawa.

Through the Roadmap to Wellness, we will continue to make the necessary investments in culturally appropriate services so they are always accessible and publicly available when and where the people of this province need it the most. This fulfills and continues to fulfill our \$3.8-billion investment in providing the Roadmap to Wellness and a foundation to building a system of care for individuals throughout the province of Ontario that is culturally sensitive.

CHILD CARE GARDE D'ENFANTS

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. We've heard over and over again that this government would invest in daycare. From what I'm hearing in my riding, it's quite the contrary. In fact, I have a mother in my riding, Vanessa Lacroix, who cannot secure a place for her son in daycare. Because of this, she might not be able to get back to work.

Speaker, when will this government quit making promises they can't keep and start securing affordable child care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We appreciate that child care is too expensive for families in your riding and across Ontario. That, unfortunately, is the legacy of the former Liberal government that we are all contending with today. But we are resolved as a government to fix it. It's why, in the first budget, the Premier announced a plan to reduce costs and increase affordability through the introduction of the Ontario Child Care Tax Credit. It's also why we've invested \$1 billion over five years to build 30,000 spaces.

There is much more work to do when it comes to child care and making it more affordable and more accessible, particularly in the more remote and northern parts of our province. That's why we've dedicated the funding—\$2 billion every single year—to deliver it. It's why we're at the table with the federal government, urging them to increase their investment, well beyond the 2.5% they currently contribute, to get a fair deal that brings costs down for families right across Ontario.

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

M. Guy Bourgouin: J'apprécie la réponse du ministre, mais vos excuses n'aident pas la situation.

Je reviens sur le point que le gouvernement devrait arrêter de se traîner les pieds, et se pencher sur ses obligations. Il devrait s'assurer qu'une entente avec le gouvernement fédéral soit signée immédiatement, parce que, entretemps, ce sont les familles—les femmes plus particulièrement—qui souffrent et qui sont les plus affectées de son inaction.

Monsieur le Président, quand est-ce que ce gouvernement va signer cette entente et arrêter de stresser les familles ontariennes?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We absolutely are working with the federal government. We've met with them multiple times and presented our case, which I think is clear: We want to get to \$10 a day. Families in this province deserve \$10 a day. We are urging them to increase their investment and provide flexibility so we can support all parents in Ontario. That is what we are doing through our negotiations with the federal government in a constructive way, to deliver a deal that gets us to \$10, delivers sustainable funding and supports all families in this province.

When it comes to what we can do in this province, what you can do is start voting for the budgets and the investments we're making every single year to reduce costs and

increase access. Unfortunately for that parent and for many others, they would be, I think, deeply concerned to know that when members of the New Democrats and Liberals had a chance, they voted against measures to make child care more affordable.

We're going to continue to bring forth initiatives that reduce costs, increase access, and we're going to make the case to the federal government to get this deal done so we can finally make child care affordable for all families in Ontario.

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COVID-19 RESPONSE

Mr. Roman Baber: My question is to the Premier.

Yesterday was one of the worst days in Canadian history. The federal government, the Premier's new bestie Justin Trudeau, denied about 15% of Canadians from boarding a plane or a train. The Premier and I made a different choice, and we all agree that it's still a choice. And if the vaccine works, then the Premier and I are protected. And if it doesn't work, then why are we denying Canadians basic mobility rights?

Millions of Canadians are now landlocked in their own country. We are all Canadian. We teach kids not to discriminate, and we don't discriminate because of people's medical choice. My question to the Premier: Will he stand up for more than one and a half million eligible Ontarians and oppose Justin Trudeau's travel ban?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: No, Mr. Speaker. Obviously, a travel ban is an important way of ensuring that the virus, to the best of our ability, doesn't cross borders. We are always prepared to help our neighbours across Canada, as they have been prepared to help us. But at the same time, we understand how important it is, especially with this new variant, to ensure that we put all measures in place, that we keep the people of the province safe, and that includes all Canadians at the same time. So we welcome the move by the federal government and we will redouble our efforts to make sure that all Canadians and all Ontarians are vaccinated. It is the best way for us to move beyond this pandemic once and for all, and perhaps the member opposite would help us in encouraging even more Ontarians than the 90% that we're approaching to get that vaccination.

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

Mr. Roman Baber: But the policy and the response by the government House leader makes no sense because the vaccine doesn't prevent transmission and wanes after six to eight months. I'm vaccinated, but my family came to this country to avoid discrimination. Millions of Canadians, vaccinated and unvaccinated, disapprove of this policy. Enough with the fear. Get vaccinated to get the protection, but don't force others to do things against their will.

I wore my Canadian pin today instead of my Ontario pin because I choose to believe that we're still the kindest

people in the world and we know right from wrong, and this is wrong. We should not ban Canadians from traveling for work or seeing family over the holiday because of a choice over their own bodies. We should stop looking the other way. It's the holiday season. How can anyone enjoy the holidays when we're denying Canadians basic freedoms? Will the Premier do the right thing and oppose Justin Trudeau's draconian discrimination?

Hon. Paul Calandra: I always have to remind the honourable gentleman that he voted in favour of all of these measures that we brought in place for many, many, many months.

We will not apologize for working with our federal partners, working with other provinces, working with our municipal partners and 34 public health agencies across the province to ensure that Ontarians are safe. It demands a whole-of-government approach and it demands co-operating across the country. And we have seen in the past that when the borders were left open, when there wasn't appropriate testing at our airports, that different variants came here, and we are trying to avoid that.

Of course we want everybody to have a happy and safe Christmas, and holidays for that matter. That is why, of course, we're encouraging people to get vaccinated, because it works, Mr. Speaker. We are seeing the results of these vaccinations in how it is keeping our hospitals in a better spot than they were before the vaccination. So I would encourage the member opposite to do as he did for so many months: support the government in helping us put this pandemic behind us.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Mr. Deepak Anand: My question is to the Minister of Energy. But before I ask the question, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the residents of Mississauga and thank Premier Ford for making the single-largest hospital infrastructure investment in Ontario history to build a new state-of-the-art Mississauga hospital. Thanks to the residents of Mississauga for your support. It is a result of your advocacy.

And to the minister: Minister, our government recently released phase 2 of Driving Prosperity, our plan for the future of Ontario's automotive sector. Some of the goals of this excellent plan are to reduce barriers to EV ownership, support Ontario's growing EV manufacturing market and critical minerals sectors, and help achieve Ontario's goal of building at least 400,000 vehicles, electrical and hybrid both, by 2030.

Minister, what is your ministry doing to achieve this bold goal?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member from Mississauga-Malton, in the heart of Peel region, for a very, very timely question. Just this morning I had the chance to join my colleagues the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Education in his home riding of King-Vaughan, to announce an historic expansion of Ontario's electric vehicle infrastructure. Today, our government announced that at least two EV fast-charging

stations are going to be built at all 23 ONroute locations along Highways 400 and 401, some of the busiest highways in the world, Mr. Speaker.

It's a great day for all Ontarians. It's made possible thanks to a landmark agreement between our government, the good folks at Ivy Charging Network, ONroutes across the province and also Canadian Tire. I'm really proud to be a part of a government that is taking this important step to building out the infrastructure and building up our economy and making it easier for people to get into the electric vehicle market.

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

Mr. Deepak Anand: Thank you, Minister. This is fantastic news and I am glad to hear of the great work you are doing, along with the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, to build this critical infrastructure all across Ontario.

I often hear from my constituents that they are interested in electrical vehicles but they are worried that if they purchase one, they will not be able to travel far from home. Minister, can you share with this House what today's announcement will mean for those who already own an electrical vehicle and for those, like me, who are considering purchasing one, as well as for Ontario's economy as a whole?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member for his advocacy for the new hospital in his community as well.

Today's announcement that we made is going to have a positive impact for all Ontarians. I am talking about the electric vehicle infrastructure announcement. It means convenience; it means greater range and more opportunities for people actually to get out and rediscover Ontario, be it Sandbanks in my riding or some other part of Ontario. It means building the capacity to support more electric vehicles on our roads.

It is also good for our environment, Speaker. With more available charging stations, we can put our 94% emissions-free electricity system to good work powering those vehicles on our highways and reducing emissions. We know the future of vehicle production is shifting to electric vehicles, largely because of the policies that we put in place with our government to make this important step forward and to make it easier than ever to drive an EV, while boosting our world-class auto sector and continuing to protect the future of our environment.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Chris Glover: After the 2018 election, this government acted urgently on their bizarre priorities of freezing Ontario's minimum wage at \$14 an hour and removing two paid sick days that were guaranteed to all employees. They kept the minimum wage frozen for more than 24 months, through the pandemic, and fought against demands for paid sick days and worker protections. By doing so—by freezing the minimum wage—they took \$5,300 out of the pockets of the lowest-paid workers in Ontario. Today, the living wage in Ontario is \$17 an hour

and inflation is at a shocking 4.1%—the highest in 30 years.

That is why the NDP announced an amendment to the government's fall economic statement this week, sharing a plan to mandate a \$20 minimum wage, while still providing stability and supports for small businesses. Will the Premier pass this amendment and provide desperately needed relief for workers by committing to a \$20 minimum wage? Yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Today we're at \$20, Speaker. Two weeks ago we were at \$15. Yesterday it was \$17 and today we're at \$20. I look forward to tomorrow's announcement from the NDP of what their new policy will be—or maybe this afternoon; who knows?

Here is the reality: The policies of the Liberals and the NDP who supported them so often saw this province lose some 300,000 jobs. That's 300,000 people who lost the opportunity to provide for their families—and these were good-paying jobs—as manufacturing fled the province. That was what confronted us in 2018.

What we did was ensure that those companies could come back, that our small, medium and large job creators who wanted to could invest in the province of Ontario. We are starting to see the results of those. In fact, we saw the results prior to the pandemic, but even now, as we emerge from this, we are starting to see job creation coming back in a big way. That's why we've increased the minimum wage. That's why we've cut taxes for our lowest-income earners. Of course, they voted against that all the time, but—

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

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Mr. Chris Glover: I think that sounds like a “no” to the workers of Ontario.

This government has said no to making a deal for \$10-a-day child care, no to supporting optometrists who provide critical eye care, no to renewing small business grants for businesses trying to stay afloat and no to paid sick days during a global pandemic. Yet they seem to have no trouble saying yes to the private operator of the ETR, letting them off the hook for a billion dollars in penalties. They said yes to spending \$10 billion on the 413. They said yes to special rules for big box retailers over small businesses and yes to MZOs for developers building on environmentally sensitive areas.

Why is this Premier so quick to say no to helping workers, and yet so eager to say yes to large corporations and developers when they need a favour?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, we brought in a bill, which was passed just yesterday, that was a significant bill to help workers in the province of Ontario, to encourage our trades—additional investments in trades and getting more people into the trades. The NDP, of course, voted against that and were vociferous in their lack of support for that.

We brought in paid sick days. They voted against it.

Interjection.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I hear the former Liberal leader laughing at it. He talks about the time that it took us to bring in sick days. I reminded him yesterday it took him 5,110 days to bring in two sick days. We did it much quicker and we brought in three sick days on top of the 20 that were already there.

We'll take no lessons from either of them when it comes to protecting the workers in the province of Ontario. Ultimately, they want a job, and this party is ensuring that people have access to good, high-quality jobs.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Stephen Blais: From the beginning of the pandemic, which hit Ontario in March 2020, small businesses across our province have been suffering. For months and months, small business owners, chambers of commerce, business improvement areas, advocacy groups and of course Ontario Liberals were calling on the government to offer financial supports to small businesses. After nine months of dithering, in December, when the government finally decided to offer small businesses these supports, we learned today from the Auditor General that they failed to properly protect taxpayers.

The government has lost over \$200 million to ineligible grants. Some businesses received more money from the government than they lost during the pandemic, Mr. Speaker. It took seven weeks for the government to flag the fact that businesses were applying with mailing addresses and bank accounts outside of Ontario.

Some 14,000 ineligible businesses received over \$210 million from taxpayers, and the government has given up on getting that money back. Why does the government feel that these businesses deserve this \$200 million from taxpayers? Why are they giving up on this money?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: This coming from a member who is part of a party that literally drove out thousands of small businesses across the province of Ontario. When we talk about losing 300,000 manufacturing jobs, what we forget is that when those factories closed under the previous Liberal government, so too did the small businesses that supported those factories, the workers who came in for lunch, the coffee shops, the individuals who supported all of that business. Why did they leave the province of Ontario? Because of the high hydro policies of the former government, because of the high tax policies of the former government.

In Ottawa, they had to leave because they didn't have access to a light rail system, which the member was in charge of building. It came in over budget, was late, and then ultimately didn't work.

Look, what we did is, during a pandemic, we ensured that small, medium and large job creators had the support that they needed to get through the pandemic. We worked with other levels of government, and the results have been encouraging. We're seeing job creation come back incredibly in the province of Ontario—more work to do,

of course, but you know we will get that job done, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Stephen Blais: Now, \$210 million isn't a lot of money to this government that doesn't have a plan to ever balance the budget, but it's a lot of money to Ontarians. Most Ontarians understand that \$200 million would have made a big difference to improving school ventilation, to paying school bus drivers more to get our kids to school, to investing in autism services.

We've learned today that after months and months of requests and dithering, finally, on December 17, the Minister of Finance directed officials to develop a program to provide support for small businesses. The Auditor General tells us that the minister approved the final version of that program on December 19, and it was presented to Treasury Board on the 21st. This, of course, is the time frame when the minister was sunning himself in the Caribbean.

Did the government lose \$200 million because they delayed their decision and had to rush? Or did they lose \$200 million because the finance minister was on the beach when he was making these decisions?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, can you imagine a Liberal member of provincial Parliament who was in charge of building the light rail system in Ottawa that came in over budget, that was late and still doesn't work—of a party that spent so much money and has nothing to show for it, that made us the most indebted sub-sovereign government in the world. Ontarians have more debt than any other people in the world—

Mr. Roman Baber: You made it worse.

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

The member for York Centre will come to order. Restart the clock.

The government House leader will conclude his answer.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I know the member opposite probably regretted reading that question the moment he started it.

When it comes to good, strong fiscal government that people can rely on, it is always a Progressive Conservative government that does that. It is always a Progressive Conservative government that makes the investments needed to bring our economy and move the people of Ontario forward.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, through you to the Premier: This week, British Columbia was hit with another round of disastrous climate-driven rains.

As the world gets hotter, our weather gets wilder. People lose their homes, they lose their farms, they lose their livelihoods, and sometimes they lose their lives.

The Premier's own Ministry of the Environment produces internal documents showing that they won't meet their own inadequate climate targets. The Premier's failure to act and his government's failure to act is putting people's homes, jobs and lives at risk.

Why has he not done all he could in the last three years to dramatically cut carbon pollution?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate the member's question. We both, I think, share concern with what we're seeing in British Columbia.

Simply put, he is. If you look at the Auditor General's report, which we greatly appreciate, which uses 2019 as a benchmark—that member will know we got elected in 2018. A few things that were not included that I think would be worth mentioning and I would love to sit down with the member opposite to discuss: clean fuel standards, which is the equivalent of taking over 300,000 cars off the road, reducing emissions by one megatonne; public transit, the Ontario Line, which the member opposite knows we've recently signed, an equivalent of 7.2 million litres of fuel, 28,000 cars off the road; working with industry rather than driving them out, as the previous government did; the electrification of the arc furnace at Algoma, three megatonnes in reduction, the cement association regulations that we posted, which is the equivalent of three megatonnes by 2030—again, meaningful action in partnership with industry, who share this government's desire to fight climate change and drive down greenhouse gas emissions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. Again, through you to the Premier: If people's homes and jobs and lives mattered to the Premier, then he would have acted over the last three years to cut emissions over the last three years—not a deathbed repentance as an election looms. The Ministry of Energy would have acted to ensure that the gas utilities in this province dramatically cut emissions through providing deep energy conservation programs to their customers. That hasn't happened. The Premier could have been that 800-pound gorilla coming down on the Ministry of the Environment for failing to act to cut emissions for the last three years. He didn't do that. In fact, he let the crisis deepen.

What does he have to say to the young people in this province who see three lost years under his jurisdiction?

Hon. David Piccini: Again, that member would know—at best case, you're using a-year-later data for measuring GHG reductions. I mentioned in my previous answer—I'm not sure if the member opposite heard it—this is 2019, and I outlined a number of initiatives this government has taken since then, decisive action that this government has taken since then.

The member mentioned climate resiliency. It's a shame that that member opposite voted against the climate change impact assessment. He mentioned BC. Their minister and I had an important conversation about adaptation and resiliency at the COP conference in Glasgow. We both share in a commitment to working with the federal government to increase infrastructure dollars, which our Minister of Infrastructure is advocating for from the federal government to build adaptation and resiliency. It's just a shame that member opposite voted against all of that.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

As extreme weather events become more frequent and severe, good land use planning will become even more important to protecting people, property and communities. But according to today's Auditor General's report, the government's highway plans are disconnected from good land use planning. The Auditor General says this will increase air pollution, climate pollution and degrade water quality.

Will the Premier listen to the Auditor General's warnings and prioritize protecting people, property and communities by cancelling Highway 413?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member opposite for the question. As he knows, gridlock exists across the greater Golden Horseshoe. That's why our government is dedicated to taking action to reduce congestion, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We are saying yes to important highway projects like Highway 413, like the Bradford Bypass, which will help get people where they need to go faster, which will reduce congestion and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I hope, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will support us.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: With all due respect to the minister, today's Auditor General's report made it very clear that decisions that are completely disconnected from land use planning are reckless and dangerous. Paving over 2,000 acres of farmland, 400 acres of greenbelt and over 85 waterways puts Ontarians at risk. Their property, their lives, their communities are at risk.

If the minister is going to say no to protecting people, property and communities, will the minister at least be honest with the people of Ontario and release any land use plans, financial plans and transportation plans that have in any way guided the minister's decision to build Highway 413?

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Auditor General for her recommendations. I also want to acknowledge that shortly after becoming minister, I launched my own internal audit of the planning division. But again, Speaker, we're in a housing crisis. We need to use every tool at our disposal. Quite frankly, I make no apologies for the work that I have been able to accomplish in such a short period of time. Our predecessors sat back idly for nearly 15 years, which led to the housing crisis in Ontario.

Since 2018, we have passed seven pieces of legislation and updated the provincial policy statement. We've released A Place to Grow, the growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. We've redesigned our community housing renewal system. We've redesigned and renegotiated our Indigenous housing program. We were the first province to sign on to the national housing benefit. We've

created the Municipal Modernization Fund, the Audit and Accountability Fund. We've increased rental starts, we've increased housing starts, and we've led to a provincial-federal—

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

That concludes our question period for this morning.

There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1134 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

VOS FOOD STORE EQUIPMENT LTD. ACT, 2021

Mr. Bouma moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr58, An Act to revive Vos Food Store Equipment Ltd.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 89, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MAKING NORTHERN ONTARIO HIGHWAYS SAFER ACT, 2021 LOI DE 2021 VISANT À ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ DES VOIES PUBLIQUES DANS LE NORD DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Bourgouin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 59, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to make northern Ontario highways safer / Projet de loi 59, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun pour accroître la sécurité des voies publiques dans le nord de l'Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member for Mushkegowuk–James Bay to make a brief statement explaining his bill.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I am pleased to be here to re-introduce my private member's bill, which is intended to make it safer for northern Ontarians to travel our highways during the winter months.

Briefly, this bill seeks to reduce the number of winter closures on Highways 11 and 17 that are oftentimes caused by poor road conditions and maintenance standards that are not at par with those on southern Ontario highways. The bill thus amends the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act in relation to standards for road maintenance in winter.

A new section 100 sets out a classification system for Ontario highways that consists of five classes of highways. The section classifies all 400-series highways, the QEW highway and Highways 11 and 17 as class 1 highways.

The section also sets out the time within which snow must be removed from each class of highways after each snowfall. Class 1 highways have the strictest requirements for snow removal, requiring that the pavement be bare of snow within eight hours of the end of a snowfall.

SAFE AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ACT (ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE), 2021

LOI DE 2021 POUR DES COLLECTIVITÉS SAINES ET SÉCURITAIRES (TRAITANT DE LA VIOLENCE ARMÉE)

Ms. Hunter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 60, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act and the Health Protection and Promotion Act in respect of addressing gun violence and its impacts / Projet de loi 60, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé et la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé en ce qui concerne la violence armée et ses répercussions.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member for Scarborough–Guildwood to briefly explain her bill.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: On behalf of my constituents in Scarborough–Guildwood, I'm honoured to present this bill today.

Gun violence is a public health crisis. The Safe and Healthy Communities Act (Addressing Gun Violence), 2021, would amend the Health Insurance Act, ensuring that services shall include prescribed hospital-based and community-based violence intervention programs. This bill also includes provisions for trauma-informed counseling for survivors and others affected by gun violence.

This bill also amends the Health Protection and Promotion Act, which will allow boards of health to have programs and services for reducing gun violence. They would also have programs and services for increasing the capacity of the community to assist survivors and others affected by gun violence to stop gun violence in our community.

MURRAY WHETUNG COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR LES PRIX MURRAY WHETUNG POUR SERVICES À LA COLLECTIVITÉ

Mr. Dave Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to provide for an award for exceptional cadets / Projet de loi 61, Loi prévoyant la remise d'un prix aux cadets exceptionnels.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member for Peterborough–Kawartha to briefly explain his bill.

Mr. Dave Smith: The Murray Whetung Community Service Award Act, 2021, provides that the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries shall provide for an award to be given each year to a cadet in each local Royal Canadian Air Cadet squadron, Royal Canadian Army Cadet corps and Royal Canadian Sea Cadet corps who is selected by their corps for demonstrating exceptional citizenship and volunteerism within their community and their corps.

FAIRNESS FOR ROAD USERS ACT
(CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH
OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2021

LOI DE 2021 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ
ENVERS LES USAGERS DE LA ROUTE
(CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ
UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES
CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 62, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 62, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d'avoir causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d'une contravention.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member for Oshawa care to briefly explain her bill?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This is a reintroduction of my bill from the previous session, and it amends the Highway Traffic Act. If a person causes or contributes to causing an accident which causes death or serious bodily harm and, at the same time, the person was contravening the Highway Traffic Act or its regulations, then the person is guilty of an offence. The court may sentence the person to a fine of up to \$50,000 or to imprisonment for up to two years or both. The court may also suspend the person's driver's licence or permit.

We all know that terrible things can happen on the roads when people violate the Highway Traffic Act; however, as it stands now, in the event that someone dies or is significantly injured as a result, there is not a significant penalty that can be given upon sentencing. This bill would seek to remedy that so families no longer suffer insult after suffering injury.

COOTES PARADISE WATER
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2021
LOI COOTES PARADISE DE 2021
SUR LA RESPONSABILITÉ
DANS LE DOMAINE DE L'EAU

Ms. Shaw moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act with respect to public reporting on the discharge or escape of polluting material / Projet de loi 63, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne la déclaration au public de rejets ou d'échappements de matières polluantes.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

1510

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This is a reintroduction of the Cootes Paradise Water Accountability Act. My community of Hamilton was devastated to learn that 24 billion litres of sewage spilled into our beloved Cootes Paradise for over four years and we had been kept in the dark for over a year. Neither the city of Hamilton nor the Ministry of the Environment told Hamiltonians what was in their water.

Section 30 of the Ontario Water Resources Act currently requires the ministry to be notified when polluting material is discharged or escapes. The bill amends this section to require the ministry to, in turn, notify the public of the discharge or escape, in accordance with the regulations. This bill would ensure no other community is ever again left in the dark like Hamilton.

AWENEN NIIN ACT (WHO AM I)
RESPECTING IDENTITY
DOCUMENTS, 2021

LOI AWENEN NIIN (QUI SUIS-JE) DE 2021
CONCERNANT LES PIÈCES D'IDENTITÉ

Ms. Monteith-Farrell moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 64, An Act to amend the Photo Card Act, 2008 and the Vital Statistics Act respecting access to identification documents / Projet de loi 64, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2008 sur les cartes-photo et la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil en ce qui concerne l'accès aux pièces d'identité.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Judith Monteith-Farrell: The bill amends the Photo Card Act, 2008, to provide that no fees shall be charged to the applicant for a photo card. The bill also amends the Vital Statistics Act to provide that no fee shall be charged in connection with registering a birth, adding or changing a birth registration, having a search made for a registration of a birth or obtaining a birth certificate. No

fees shall be charged in connection with obtaining a certified copy of a registration of birth, change of name, death or still birth.

The Vital Statistics Act is also amended to require the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services to establish an advisory committee. The committee's mandate is to make recommendations to end procedural and systemic barriers to obtaining personal identification documents in Ontario. The committee is required to consult with all relevant stakeholders, including, at minimum, the stakeholders specified in the bill, and the committee is required to report its recommendations to the minister. The minister is required to inform the assembly of the recommendations the minister will implement.

BRUNT AND KENDALL ACT
(ENSURING SAFE FIREFIGHTER
AND TRAINEE RESCUE TRAINING), 2021
LOI BRUNT ET KENDALL DE 2021
(FORMATION SÉCURITAIRE DES POMPIERS
ET DES ÉLÈVES POMPIERS EN SAUVETAGE)

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997 and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 in relation to rescue and emergency services training for firefighters and firefighter trainees / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la prévention et la protection contre l'incendie et la Loi de 2005 sur les collèges privés d'enseignement professionnel en ce qui concerne la formation des pompiers et des élèves pompiers en services de sauvetage et d'urgence.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll invite the member to briefly explain this bill.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: This is another reintroduction of my bill from the previous two sessions known as the Brunt and Kendall Act (Ensuring Safe Firefighter and Trainee Rescue Training), 2018, in memory of Adam Brunt and Gary Kendall, and to keep our future firefighters safe. The bill makes amendments to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, and to the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to implement measures to provide for the safe training of firefighters and firefighter trainees in rescue and emergency services.

It is my honour to have the support of the families, first responders and safety advocates and to again bring the Brunt and Kendall Act before this Legislature.

PETITIONS

POST-STROKE TREATMENT

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a number of petitions today that have been sent by Jim McEwan, who has been a tireless advocate on behalf of folks who have suffered

strokes. I am pleased to read this: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 2021/2022.

"Whereas young adult stroke survivors in Ontario continue to be denied provincial government-funded physiotherapy on the basis of age, after completion of their initial rehab programs; and

"Whereas, as a consequence, these young adults are prevented from recovering to their best potential and possibly returning to work or continuing their post-secondary studies; and

"Whereas, to date, both Liberal and PC governments have failed to permit such funding, although both parties have previously taken steps to publicly support its implementation;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand Ontario's government-funded community physiotherapy clinic program to include stroke survivors between the ages of 20 and 64 with a doctor's referral, and after completion of initial rehab programs."

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will affix my signature and will be pleased to send it to the table with page Isabella.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition entitled "Take Action: Cootes Paradise Water Accountability Act." I'd like to thank Environment Hamilton, the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and Hamilton 350 for their work in protecting our water.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the environment ministry first identified concerns about pollution from a spill in Hamilton's Chedoke Creek in July 2018, neither the environment ministry nor the city of Hamilton informed the public about the 24 billion litres of sewage spilled over four years;

"Whereas the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks has repeatedly failed to publish information on reported spills in a timely and accessible manner and has been warned that this failure to report information of hazardous spills limits the public's ability to know about the quantity and potential impact of reported spills in Ontario, including those that might affect them directly;

"Whereas, if passed, this bill empowers local residents to respond and organize around spills in their community;

"Whereas water is life, and each of us has a responsibility to protect water;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Cootes Paradise Water Accountability Act."

I wholeheartedly agree with my fellow residents of Hamilton, and I'm going to add my name to theirs.

1520

POST-STROKE TREATMENT

Mr. Joel Harden: As Ontario's disabilities critic, I'm honoured to read the same petition that was recently read,

gathered by Mr. Jim McEwan. Thank you, Kathleen Hardy, for leading this particular page of the signatures.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas young adult stroke survivors in Ontario continue to be denied provincial government-funded physiotherapy on the basis of age, after completion of their initial rehab programs; and

“Whereas, as a consequence, these young adults are prevented from recovering to their best potential and possibly returning to work or continuing their post-secondary studies; and

“Whereas, to date, both Liberal and PC governments have failed to permit such funding, although both parties have previously taken steps to publicly support its implementation;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand Ontario’s government-funded community physiotherapy clinic program to include stroke survivors between the ages of 20 and 64 with a doctor’s referral, and after completion of initial rehab programs.”

Happy to sign this, Speaker, and I’ll send it to the Clerks’ table with page Hayden.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Jessica Bell: This petition is from the Elementary Teachers of Toronto and the Ontario Autism Coalition. It reads:

“Fund Our Most Vulnerable Students, Fund Dedicated Remote Teachers for Students in ISP Programs in the TDSB.

“Hybrid learning forces teachers to divide their attention between students in-person and online, which will result in students not getting the attention they need and deserve;

“Intensive support programs at the TDSB are meant to provide additional supports for students with special behavioural, communication, physical and intellectual needs;

“Educators and experts have repeatedly pointed out that there is no evidence to support hybrid learning as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when offered to students with special needs;”

That is why “we, the undersigned, petition the Toronto District School Board and the Ministry of Education” and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to commit to funding and providing a dedicated remote teacher to all students enrolled in the intensive support program to supplement their in-person programing.”

I thank you for this. I’ll be signing my name to this and giving it to page Nathaniel.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a “Petition in Support of Repealing Breed-Specific Language in the Dog Owner’s Liability Act and for the Animals for Research Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all animals are capable of aggressive behaviour; and

“Aggressive behaviour can be found among many breeds or crossbreeds of dogs; and

“Evidence shows that DNA is never a predictor of aggressive behaviour in dogs; and

“Breed-specific legislation (the banning of specific breeds) is not an effective or cost-efficient solution to reduce aggressive behaviour of dogs; and

“The solution to preventing dog-related incidents is best addressed through comprehensive training and education programs, breed-neutral legislation promoting responsible ownership;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a bill repealing breed-specific language from the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and Animals for Research Act and instead implement a comprehensive educational prevention strategy that encourages responsible dog ownership of all breeds.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and will send it with page Felicia.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I have a petition entitled “Support the Green New Democratic Deal.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford is going in the wrong direction on the environment by ignoring our climate emergency and cutting funding to deal with the climate crisis;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the government of Ontario to implement the Green New Democratic Deal to:

“—achieve net zero emissions by 2050, starting by cutting emissions 50% by 2030;

“—create more than a million new jobs;

“—add billions of dollars to Ontario’s economy;

“—embark on the largest building retrofit program in the world by providing homeowners with rebates, interest-free loans and support to retrofit their homes to realize net zero emissions.”

I agree with this and I’ll affix my name to this in support of all of the thousands of Ontarians that would like to see some action on our climate.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Marit Stiles: I’m pleased to introduce this petition on behalf of Gary Kyle. It reads as follows:

“Petition in Support of Repealing Breed-Specific Language in the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and for the Animals for Research Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among many breeds or crossbreeds; and

“Breed-specific legislation and breed bans are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

“The problem of dog attacks is best dealt with through comprehensive programs of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a bill repealing breed-specific language from the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act, and instead implement a comprehensive bite-prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds.”

I do support this petition. I’m going to be affixing my signature and handing it along to page Ellie to table with the Clerks.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here in support of repealing breed-specific language in the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among many breeds or crossbreeds; and

“Breed-specific legislation and breed bans are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

“The problem of dog attacks is best dealt with through comprehensive programs of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a bill repealing breed-specific language from the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act, and instead implement a comprehensive bite-prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and will send it with Athisha.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mr. Joel Harden: I also have a petition that I’d like to read into the record for the House.

It reads, “Petition in Support of Repealing Breed-Specific Language in the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among many breeds or crossbreeds; and

“Breed-specific legislation and breed bans are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

“The problem of dog attacks are best dealt with through comprehensive programs of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support a bill repealing breed-specific language from the Dog Owners’ Liability Act and the Animals for Research Act, and instead implement a comprehensive bite-prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition—it’s looking at the right side of the leash—and I’m going to pass it to page Alfie for the table.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly to “Fix Long-Term Care in Ontario.”

“Whereas there are more than 32,000 people waiting for a home in long-term care in Ontario, leaving some languishing in hospital beds and others living in a place where their safety isn’t protected or their needs met; and

“Whereas many residents of long-term-care facilities are being left in bed for 18 hours at a time, face lengthy waits for help to bathe and change clothes—even to get to the bathroom; and

“Whereas workers in long-term-care facilities report being run off their feet and frequently work in conditions where they are grossly understaffed;

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

“—commit to creating 40,000 more long-term-care beds, including 15,000 new beds over the next five years;

“—set standards to ensure each resident is offered a minimum of four hours of hands-on care per day;

“—hold a find-and-fix public inquiry into long-term care; and

“—update the long-term-care residents’ bill of rights to give couples the right to stay together.”

I still support this petition, will affix my signature and will send it with page Ella.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to the Ministry of Education from parents, guardians, community members and teachers.

“Fund Our Most Vulnerable Students, Fund Dedicated Remote Teachers for Students in ISP Programs in the TDSB.

“Hybrid learning forces teachers to divide their attention between students in-person and online, which will result in students not getting the attention they need and deserve;

“Intensive support programs at the TDSB are meant to provide additional supports for students with special behavioural, communication, physical and intellectual needs;

“Educators and experts have repeatedly pointed out that there is no evidence to support hybrid learning as an effective pedagogical tool, especially when offered to students with special needs;

“Students, parents and caregivers can and should expect a safe and supportive educational environment that safeguards their privacy from video cameras that could capture their likeness or behaviour;

1530

“Students enrolled in intensive support programs at the TDSB are being forced to rely on hybrid learning to receive teaching instruction from their classroom teacher, thus leaving vulnerable young students without the supports that they need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the ... Ministry of Education to commit to funding and providing a dedicated

remote teacher to all students enrolled in the intensive support program to supplement their in-person programming.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and will send it to the table with page Isabella.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, I believe, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice: “I move that notwithstanding—”

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Speaker, for your excitement at this. I appreciate it.

I move that notwithstanding standing order 74(a) and 101(d), the order for second reading of Bill 58, An Act to proclaim March as Endometriosis Awareness Month, be called today; and

That one hour shall be allotted to the debate on the motion for second reading of the bill, with 20 minutes allotted to the government, 20 minutes allotted to the official opposition and 20 minutes allotted to the independent members as a group; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Mr. Calandra seeks unanimous consent to move a motion without notice: “I move that notwithstanding”—

Hon. Paul Calandra: Dispense.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Dispense? Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPORTING PEOPLE
AND BUSINESSES ACT, 2021

LOI DE 2021 VISANT
À SOUTENIR LA POPULATION
ET LES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2021, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant diverses lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Further debate? I recognize the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the good people of Niagara West for sending me here to the Legislature to be able to speak on behalf of my constituents on the many issues that have been raised by the people of Niagara. I appreciate the opportunity to rise today in the chamber to speak about what the government of Ontario is doing under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford and our cabinet and caucus to respond to the needs and the concerns of so many constituents who have raised areas of concern about what the government can be doing better to support small businesses, to support job creators, to support the entrepreneurs who make life in so many of our communities so much better with their contributions—their economic contributions, yes, but also the ways that they give back to the social fabric of our communities: their participation in supporting and fundraising for local food drives, for local hockey teams, for the many organizations that make up our civil society.

I want to begin by also acknowledging the difficulty of the past couple of years, specifically with regard to COVID, and acknowledge the extraordinary measures that have been taken by our government and by governments of all sizes and stripes in order to ensure that the health and safety of Ontarians was maintained, that the health care system that we all value so much was not overwhelmed, and also that our seniors, our vulnerable, our children and, indeed, all Ontarians are being kept safe.

We recognize that there was an immense impact as a result of these measures. It’s why our government moved forward to advocate with the federal government for the supports that they put in place with their fiscal firepower; as well as taking action through movements such as the small business grant, through reductions in hydro costs, through changes to the business education tax that is in place, through changes to the small business corporate tax rate. These are just a few of the measures that our government has taken over the past couple of years in order to support our small businesses that have, frankly, gone through a very, very challenging time, which we recognize. But we also acknowledge that there is always more that can be done.

One of the areas that I’ve heard so much about from my constituents, even those who have expressed gratitude and appreciation for the steps that the government has taken to support our small businesses in these unprecedented times, and one of the things that I hear regularly from many of the entrepreneurs who are in my family, in my neighbourhood and in our community, whom I meet at various events—and, frankly, many of the concerns of those who have gone on to grow businesses that employ many, many people in our communities—has to do with red tape.

It’s something the Premier speaks about regularly. It’s something that our government is acutely aware of, although we know the previous government was not, and it’s why the legislation that I have the opportunity to speak about today, Bill 13, is indeed important legislation. It’s legislation that I believe will make a big difference in the

lives of many businesses because what it seeks to do is reduce unnecessary duplication and unnecessary costs and burdens on our small businesses and on those job creators who give back in so many ways, hiring people and helping put food on the table of so many in our communities. It does so in a way that protects the health and safety of Ontario's families, Ontario's workers, Ontario's economy and our environment.

Speaker, today I'm going to go through a few of the changes that are coming forward as a result of the Supporting People and Businesses Act, but I also want to take a little bit of a step back and look back at the past couple of years since our government has come to office. We've brought forward two packages, every single year, of red tape reduction bills. That's quite an accomplishment. I remember sitting in opposition and hearing the Liberals come forward with a red tape reduction bill that, frankly, was measly at best. It barely began to take a bite into the onerous red tape that is holding back so much entrepreneurial innovation in our province. But our government and our Premier, Doug Ford, made a strong commitment to multiple times—not just once a year, but multiple times a year—coming forward with substantial packages.

I look back at the past year alone, since the beginning of the COVID pandemic, passing four high-impact burden reduction bills: the COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, which allowed for a huge reduction in red tape; the Main Street Recovery Act, 2020; the Better for People, Smarter for Business Act; and the Supporting Recovery and Competitiveness Act.

The Supporting People and Businesses Act, as part of this ongoing commitment to reducing red tape and ensuring that we're meeting the needs of our small businesses, is truly significant.

I've heard a lot from the members of the opposition and indeed from the members of our own caucus about particular aspects of the legislation, but I haven't heard yet a clear delineation, aside from the minister and the parliamentary assistant when they introduced this important legislation. So, for the record, to ensure that today, for anyone who comes and looks at the Hansard or is watching today at home, we have a clear enumeration of the types of actions that are being taken in today's legislation, I'm going to walk through a few of the ministries and some of the steps. I'm not going to go into a great deal of explanation as to each of these measures, although if I had the time, I would be more than happy to and to share with my constituents and those members who are here in the House today.

I want to speak about a few aspects of the red tape reduction package. Looking first at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the red tape package is going to be addressing a number of areas. It's going to be modernizing veterinary facility accreditation to ensure a wider range of species and clients. It's going to improve the Ontario Feeder Cattle Loan Guarantee Program. It will amend regulations under the Milk Act, in dairy phase II, and it will improve administration of the Farm Registration and Farm Organizations Funding Act.

Moving on to the Ministry of the Attorney General, the legislation that we're debating today will modernize the Barristers Act, a substantial move that will help many in our province access justice. It will update the Crown Administration of Estates Act. It will update the Courts of Justice Act. It will extend outdoor liquor sale licences, something that I've heard a great deal about in my neck of the woods—Speaker, as I'm sure you know, a strong beverage production region for the province. It will also ensure that there is an ability to be responsive to delivery needs and pickup services.

Moving on to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities, today's legislation will increase the college degree-granting caps. It will consolidate transfer payment agreements, making it easier to be able to ensure that our colleges and universities are receiving the funds that they need to do important work, and it will remove barriers to entrepreneurial activities for post-secondary educational institutions.

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As well, this legislation will provide for a review of the Ontario Student Assistance Program performance requirements for private post-secondary institutions. It will also create tuition fee transparency for university and college students, while reducing duplication of reporting requirements for the Ontario Student Opportunity Trust Fund and Ontario Trust for Student Support. It will support digital learning for private career colleges and expand degree authority for publicly assisted colleges. It will also expand credentials in the public college system to include applied master's degrees—a lot of red tape being cut in the post-secondary sector, Speaker.

As well, we're going to be seeing that under the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, part II of the Water Opportunities Act, 2010, will be repealed—good news for the people of Ontario.

Within the Ministry of Education, the ministry I have the opportunity to serve the students of this province in, we will be removing the confirmation of supervisory officer appointments and approval of second job, to remove a redundant confirmation process for the hiring of supervisory officers in school boards. We're modernizing the Ontario College of Teachers Act—proposing to modernize—by ensuring that the Ontario College of Teachers can effectively regulate the teaching profession in the best interests of students and better reflect the communities it serves. We're looking to remove and reduce administrative burdens for First Nations students to access provincial schools, an important step in reconciliation. We're modernizing the Education Act to align with the Municipal Elections Act, and we're making it easier for children with special needs to access the therapies they need in school, an important move by any government, Speaker.

In the Ministry of Energy, we see that today's legislation will help enable limitation periods for electricity system settlement processes and simplify the regulated price plan for electricity. We're modernizing the Ontario Energy Board, while also enabling more choice and competition in electricity suite metering, while also moving to

implement something that's been called for for a long time, the Green Button standard, an amazing step forward by the Ministry of Energy.

Today's bill, Speaker, in the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, looking at this particular area, will allow us to consolidate environmental permissions and will clarify authority to change a class of projects. Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority transparency changes will also be coming into effect. We're modernizing environmental permissions, excluding fertilizer from being regulated as a hazardous and special product, while simplifying environmental compliance approvals. We're recovering value from waste, while updating the audit requirements for tires. We're simplifying the gasoline volatility regulation and protecting public lands from adverse possession.

We're modernizing the regulatory framework for defined-contribution benefit plans to ensure that we're helping more workers, while expanding online access to services for businesses and not-for-profit corporations. We're giving businesses flexibility to use virtual services and improving access to critical government services, during COVID-19 and beyond, by ensuring access to easy-to-use and secure online services. We're expanding the jurisdiction of the Condominium Authority Tribunal and strengthening Ontario's consumer protection on electrical safety. We're replacing outdated technology with efficient alternatives and modernizing the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. We're also creating tools to enhance government productivity so that Ontario's back-office work is becoming more secure, cost-effective and efficient. We're updating the Vital Statistics Act and consolidating government transfer payments.

We're working with the Ministry of Health to enhance and clarify the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act, aligning the appointment process for ministry board-governed operational agencies and modernizing the regulatory framework for the laboratory sector. We're modernizing the governance of health regulatory colleges and updating reporting requirements for recreational pool operators.

We're looking to modernize references to engineers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and simplify the Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act, 2021. We're making it easier for those on social assistance to find jobs while working and integrating employment programs such as Ontario Works employment assistance and Ontario Disability Support Program employment supports. We're streamlining the Second Career program and clarifying employer obligations when serious injuries occur. We're modernizing first aid requirements, making it easier to keep workers safe, while also standardizing head protection requirements across all regulations. We're amending various requirements which apply to mines and mining plants, while still maintaining worker safety and health protections.

We're moving to align payroll remittance at the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and Canada Revenue Agency, to protect more temporary workers.

We're looking to give municipalities more tools to streamline planning approvals and get homes built.

We're looking to support better, faster transit in York region and support efficient delivery of goods to retail stores, restaurants, hotels and distribution facilities, to support our main street businesses.

We're supporting economic recovery through provincially significant employment zones and amending regulations to allow municipalities to get low-interest loans from the Canada Infrastructure Bank, a meaningful step towards helping our municipalities.

We're making it easier for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area to reduce emissions, to support the Atmospheric Fund in its mandate to invest in projects that would reduce emissions.

We're providing clarity to the practice of professional forestry, amending the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and amending the Public Lands Act. We're making public land transactions easier, while reviewing tree reservations on private land.

We're exploring deer hunting opportunities and consulting on challenges experienced by bear hunt operators. We're modernizing the Northern Services Board Act and supporting our Critical Minerals Strategy.

Speaker, we're doing all this while also establishing a public registry for licences of occupation, updating mining closure plan standards and the recovery of minerals in Ontario, while clarifying regulations for carbon sequestration.

We're making it easier to volunteer by proposing changes to police record checks and making it easier to get a registrant identification number when you're in touch with the Ministry of Transportation. We're expanding multi-year farm and online licence plate renewals for heavy vehicles—something long asked for in my community—and consulting auto tech stakeholders on potential industry advancements, while also looking at introducing exemptions for first-responder vehicles. We're studying the impact of single traffic guidelines and implementing a seasonal vehicle self-declaration of valid insurance.

We're taking action in these and so many other areas in order to make it easier to live, to work and to provide the services that so many of our entrepreneurs, municipalities and workers rely on. I'm very proud to support this legislation, and I hope that all members, as they've heard some of the steps that are being taken and debated in today's bill, will step forward as well to support a future in Ontario that has less red tape and more protection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and responses?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I have a really simple question. In committee hearings, we brought forward a number of possible amendments that the government members rejected. One of them was amending section 2 of schedule 20 to allow for vulnerable sector checks to be added to the list of police record checks that would be covered free of charge. This was something that was a request that was made by the Ontario Nonprofit Network, and I'd like to

know from the member opposite why he didn't support that amendment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I return to the member from Niagara Centre, and I apologize for giving the wrong name—or is it Niagara West?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's Niagara West. You did it again. That's okay. Thank you very much, Speaker.

I appreciate the member opposite raising this. It's definitely an area where I think continued work is going to be ongoing. One of the important pieces that I spoke about at the beginning of debate today was the fact that our government has taken multiple steps towards reducing red tape. We've taken multiple approaches to ensuring that we're reducing costs for consumers, that we're reducing costs for businesses and that we're also taking action in a continual way.

We recognize that all legislation that comes forward in order to improve access to services is not a one-and-done, and we know there are always ways that we can continue going forward, but that's why we brought forward eight pieces of legislation to date which have made substantial improvements in improving access to so many of these services.

One of the ways, as the member opposite was correct to note, is that we are providing free police record checks, which will reduce administrative burdens for police services, making it easier for people to become volunteers

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: It's very good to rise in the House today and continue the conversation with my friend the member from Niagara West. I know that member has an incredible working relationship with the communities in his riding.

I remember that when we were dealing with this bill at committee, we heard that to the extent that municipalities can delegate authority to make planning decisions already, we're saving months off the time that it takes for a process to go through councils. I was wondering if he could explain further what it will mean to his communities in Niagara West to be able to take weeks, even months, off the planning to get new, attainable housing online in his community.

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Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes, my thanks to the member for Brantford—Brant, a strong advocate for his community and someone who understands the importance of building up Ontario, of getting things done in this province.

For too long, we had a government in place that frankly didn't seem willing to build affordable housing, that didn't seem willing to take the steps necessary to get more homes built, the right mix of homes, at the right places. And who suffered as a result of that? Low-income families, first-time home buyers, young families, people striving to get into the market.

Those who already had a home, frankly, made out very well, and so we saw the Liberals didn't seem to have a huge desire to get things built. But now what we're seeing is a huge increase in housing starts in this province as a

result of the actions being taken, such as the ones in this legislation, to ensure that people who previously weren't able to get into the housing market have that ability to bid and to put in offers on new housing. So we're building new houses, we're getting more done. That's a result of measures such as the ones in this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and responses?

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you to my friend from Niagara West. I just have a few questions, because one of the things I didn't hear in the member's comments was child care. I'm under a lot of pressure at home. People are writing us all the time, Speaker, about the fact that the federal government has put a lot of money on the table, and they want to see a deal signed. I would like to see an aspect of how to implement it in this bill.

I want to read some of these comments: Trish Davis, who is an ECE, says she wants a deal with the provincial and federal governments for \$10-a-day child care because she believes children are worth investing in, and so are their hard-working educators. Michelle Tribe writes, "Yes, I'm child-free, but I know how important it is to raise a family and why we have to invest in it." And Jill O'Reilly, someone I know very well, writes, "Because children shouldn't be a second mortgage or rent payment."

I'm wondering if my friend has anything to say about how we can get a deal between the federal government and the Ontario government for \$10-a-day daycare for these voices and so many families, Speaker.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm very grateful that the member for Ottawa Centre brought this up. Of course, being located right next to Canada's great Parliament, it's incredibly important that he's also able to be a strong advocate, along with the Ontario government, in ensuring that the federal government comes to the table with a plan that supports Ontario's families. We can absolutely agree on the importance of investing in our families, in our students and in our educators. It's an area that the Premier has shown great leadership on. It's why our government brought forward the CARE tax credit and expanded and enhanced the CARE tax credit to ensure that up to 75% of the child care costs for low-income families are being addressed.

But with regard to the ongoing negotiations between the federal government and our government, I think it's appropriate that the member opposite also stands with this government in ensuring that the commitment of the federal government to \$10-a-day child care is a reality, and when they come forward with an amount that won't lead to \$10 a day, it's incumbent upon the member opposite, as upon all of us, to stand for the working families of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and responses?

Mr. Dave Smith: In the member's speech, he talked a little bit about the Critical Minerals Strategy and some of the changes that are being made to the Mining Act. The question I have for him is: When you're mining, sometimes there is a waste product that comes out when you're mining, and that's just thrown aside right now in

tailoring ponds and other areas. We've changed this so that you can actually reuse that waste product without going through a terrible series of years to get permission to do it. The prime example is that when you mine silver, the waste product is lithium.

Do you think this is a good idea, that we're making it easy to get lithium from the waste product so that we can enhance our electric vehicle production in Ontario?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: A tough but fair question from the member from Peterborough—Speaker, absolutely, 100%. I look just south of my community, in Welland. The amount of by-product that was formerly considered waste which is now being used and considered in fact as a great resource for electric vehicle development—such as the lithium for batteries, in fact, mentioned by the member, in the waste products from silver—it's a testament to human ingenuity, it's a testament to innovation going forward, but it's also a testament to our government's commitment to ensuring that no good product that's made here in Ontario is going to waste.

Looking at our Critical Resources Strategy and saying, "How can we think smarter about these types of issues to ensure that we're capitalizing on our critical role as a centre of trade, as a centre of innovation in the auto parts manufacturing sector, but really in so many of these precious minerals that we have taken for granted but that under the former government were not being used to the fullest of their potential?"—this is the type of strategy that will ensure that we're able to see more good jobs in the mining sector, more good jobs in manufacturing and more good jobs for the hard-working people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'll correct you, Speaker: That's Manitoulin. I have too many of my members who actually do that, Speaker.

I'm going to be listening very closely to the member's answer on this one; I hope that he helps me understand something. Now, we all can agree that there's a new variant that is coming, streamlining and hitting all of our communities. We all know that we're going to be looking at stricter protocols. We all know that there are going to be revised and re-implemented protocols that are going to be happening. My question to him is: This is a red tape bill. I understand that; this is what this government is priding itself on. But it's not red tape—barriers is what I want to talk about, barriers to small businesses and the support program. There are many of those small businesses that have not received an initial answer to the first round, let alone the second round. Of course, we would be very supportive and we've been asking this government for a third round. How do we deal? What is the message that you want me to tell those small businesses that are still incurring that barrier?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Absolutely, and I'm glad that the member opposite is communicating with the small businesses in his riding. I hope when he has the opportunity to speak to them and help them with the process—of course, applying for a number of these different grants and

programs that our government has brought forward to support many of these small businesses—that he's also making them aware of the steps that our government has taken through things such as reducing hydro rates, ensuring that the Liberals' Fair Hydro Plan didn't increase hydro to the extent that it was going to; that they're taking advantage of the small business corporate tax cut that we put in place; that they're taking advantage of the new subclass that we've put in place for property tax; that they're taking advantage of, also, the opportunities through reductions that our government has made in WSIB premiums.

I hope that the member opposite, as he's speaking with his constituents, rightly, about the ways that they can access government supports, as they have—and I hope he continues to do that—is also raising with his constituents the numerous ways that our government is providing training so that we're scaling up businesses across Ontario: yes, in his community; yes, in mine; and in every community across this province. It takes all of us in this House to help show that leadership and work together with our small businesses, and I'm confident that the member will continue to do so.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Further debate?

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's certainly an honour to rise today and speak to the Supporting People and Businesses Act.

I have to say, though, Speaker, that I think "support" is a bit of a stretch for the title of this bill. It lacks so many of the concrete supports that people across Ontario have been asking for throughout the duration of the pandemic: things like a \$20 minimum wage, rental protections, affordable child care, safe schools for their kids and meaningful supports for small businesses that have been struggling and that are continuing to struggle. This bill tinkers around the edges, but does not go the distance to actually support people and businesses in our community that have been suffering for two years under the weight of COVID-19.

Speaker, Ontarians are facing an affordability crisis. The rising cost of housing and living means thousands of my constituents' budgets are in the red. Yet this bill does nothing to help people—people like workers. There's no paid sick days. There's no \$20 minimum wage. It does nothing to help the most impoverished people in our community who are living on ODSP and OW by raising their rates. It does nothing to help tenants who can't afford their skyrocketing rents, who are trying to recover from rental arrears, nor does it do anything to help the housing crisis that we're facing.

It's not just people that are hurting on pocketbook issues; so are our small businesses. Many are now worried about what the Omicron variant means for their bottom line. They're terrified of another lockdown, Speaker.

So what kinds of supports are the businesses in my community of Toronto Centre asking for? I recently received a letter from Julius, a small business owner, who said: "As a small business owner, I cannot afford a

potential fifth lockdown. My business will not survive. I need this government to take steps such as:

“—mandating vaccinations for all front-line health care workers and education workers;

“—mandating vaccinations for workers in settings that require a vaccine certificate;

“—recognizing that COVID-19 is an airborne virus;

“—supporting improved ventilation ... and filtration ... in indoor settings,” as “recommended by the science table;

“—promoting the use of high-quality masks, including three-ply, surgical or respirator masks;

“—strengthening the province’s COVID-19 vaccine certificate to ensure that it is both secure and verifiable, by moving to the exclusive use of the QR code as proof of vaccination;

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“—support businesses in ensuring that QR codes are used to access the facility;

“—making rapid tests more accessible...;

“—ensuring that all Ontarians have paid six days;

“—taking immediate action to stop the disturbing rise in harassment and threats against our health care heroes.”

Again, that was from a business owner in my riding.

Julius has been clear in that list of the supports that he wants to see, that business owners expect to see from this government, and none of that is actually in this bill. None of it is in here.

My community members aren’t just worried about the survival of their small businesses; they’re also worried about the viability of our main streets as a whole, many of them representing cultural communities in areas like, for example, the Church and Wellesley Village. Main streets are increasingly losing their healthy diversity and vibrancy of the stores and shops and businesses that are there, as more and more cannabis stores over-saturate our neighbourhoods.

During committee hearings on this bill, my opposition colleagues tabled an amendment to have our colleague’s private member’s bill on cannabis store licensing included within the schedules of this bill, but it was voted down by the Conservatives. I want to thank the member from Davenport so much for her work on that file. It’s clear that municipalities need more say in the location and quantity of these stores in our communities.

To quote a constituent, Brian, who wrote to my office about this:

“There are applications for numerous cannabis retailers (five at last count) in our neighbourhood.

“How many cannabis stores does one neighbourhood need? Why is it that Cabbagetown has only one liquor store, yet it needs five cannabis retailers?”

When we looked at another location, Joanne also wrote to my office and said that this specific location is directly across the street from the Young People’s Theatre and a public library. She wrote, “Does no one actually check out these locations and make a judgment call before they tell them to start renovating,” that “they are virtually good to go?”

“The whole public notice process seems to be all for show and it is given no meaningful consideration. These outlets are replacing businesses that added variety and character and charm to neighbourhoods.”

Speaker, when reviewing this bill, I also heard from parents who are deeply concerned about the safety of our schools and about cuts to education. We know that major investments are urgently needed to ensure smaller and safer classes.

Parents at Church Street public school specifically reached out to my office recently when they were devastated to learn weeks into the school year that one of their junior kindergarten classes was going to be collapsed. Four-year-olds who had just started making friends, rebuilding relationships after being gone for two years, who had just started to build relationships with their teachers, had their education disrupted once again. Worse, these young students were merged into an already packed senior kindergarten class with as many as 32 other students. One parent named Tanha told me that her son cried every single day of the week he found out.

Cramming these kids into classes as large as 32 could spell disaster for an outbreak at the school, even with children under 12 now getting the vaccine, because we know those four-year-olds still cannot get vaccinated. We are putting these kids at risk. Tanha told me, “With up to 32 students packed into classrooms, forget about social distancing. My son has already gotten sick twice.”

This government is balancing the books on the backs of our children, gambling with their safety in the face of all evidence that smaller class sizes will prevent spread and keep our children safe.

Another parent worried about education cuts and growing class sizes, named Natalia, reached out to my office, saying, “I was worried about sending my kid to in-person class in the first place because of the possibility of not being able to meet the public health protocols related to COVID-19.

“It is hard to imagine our kids being safe in a class with an average of 29 kids per class. And this worry seems to be every single parent’s concern.

“Our kids come from all sorts of health backgrounds, some having immune system deficiency, some having parents or grandparents dealing with certain health issues, and some having special needs. This increase in class sizes will put every one of those at a greater risk.

“The pandemic is not over yet and the numbers are going up once again. With heading towards winter, entering the peak season for colds and flus and kids having less outdoor activity, having more populated classes will only put kids and their families at a greater risk.” Again, that was a letter that I received from Natalia in my riding.

Yet, this government is still cutting 10,000 teachers and education workers, and taking \$800 million away from our kids, and I have to ask—it doesn’t make any sense. The title of the bill is about making life better for people and businesses. This doesn’t sound like life is getting better for families in my community.

Another change that does not go nearly far enough with regard to this bill concerns the changes to the infrastructure act within it. The Premier has been in the news recently talking about electric vehicles, but I would suggest to the Premier that he try driving one in downtown Toronto. If he did, he would see just how lacking our clean energy infrastructure and charging infrastructure really is.

A condo manager, David, in my riding of Toronto Centre recently reached out to my office because he wants to install electric vehicle charging stations for their building, but he learned that it's prohibitively expensive for his building and that there are no provincial programs to help his building invest in the kind of climate-resilient infrastructure that we need to build today.

David wrote to me and said, "We have got estimates of \$20,000 to install enough additional electrical infrastructure going from our electrical room to several 'hubs' in our garage.

"Until there is some sort of subsidy program to install chargers in multi-residential buildings, I think it will be impossible to persuade people to buy e-vehicles—no matter what subsidy there may be on the vehicle itself! The federal government had, and will again have, a subsidy program for chargers (about 50% of the cost) but they required that at least 20 be installed, and for a fairly small building like ours this is too many."

What we're hearing here is that we've got condo managers trying to figure out how to get these electric chargers put in their building, but hey, if your building is too small, too bad, so sad, there are no supports for the subsidies. A smaller building trying to foot the bill for \$20,000 to get chargers installed in your building parking lot is a devastating amount of money, and they simply cannot do it. It does not matter if we're talking about subsidies on the vehicles, we need to be supporting, particularly, high-rise residential buildings—or low-rise residential buildings in this case—to put in that infrastructure in their parking garages, or those tenants and those condo owners and those renters are never going to be able to successfully convert to electric vehicles.

The kinds of solutions here to these problems are already on the table. When I look at the NDP's Green New Democratic Deal, these are the kinds of solutions that we're trying to put forward within that package, but those kinds of investments are absent from this bill.

Similar concerns were echoed to me by my constituent Jean-Etienne, who wrote to my office opposing the recent news that Hut 8 Mining and Validus Power are planning to reopen a 45-megawatt gas power plant that could emit 200,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year near North Bay. As much as I'm a downtown Toronto resident, it always warms my heart when I get letters from constituents who are concerned about issues that are happening in the north, because the issues that are happening in the north affect us too.

Jean-Etienne wrote, "These private interests are pulling Ontario backwards with regards to our objective to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius, as discussed recently during COP26.

"If Hut 8 Mining and Validus Power decided to invest in fossil rather than renewable energy, it is because the price on carbon is too low to make a real impact.

"My wife and I are thinking about having our first kid here in Cabbagetown. Like several young couples our age, we are worried about the future, especially when seeing disasters happening west in British Columbia in the past weeks. Sadly, the Ford government is going in the wrong direction and we would like a real plan proposed at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to attain our climate objectives."

What I'm hearing from my constituents is clear: This government is not doing enough on the environment, and the tinkering that we see in this bill is not going to address their substantive concerns that they would like to see.

We're talking about families that are putting off having children because of their climate anxiety, because of the type of future that they don't want to leave to the next generation. When in our history have we had families say, "I will not bring children into this world because the future is so uncertain and so unsafe and so dangerous"? If that doesn't give every single person in this room goosebumps like it's giving me right now, you all need to take a hard look in the mirror.

I'd like to move on next and talk about some of the pieces related to the Electricity Act and the Electrical Safety Authority that are also in this bill. I'd like to specifically use this as a moment to once again raise the issue of electrical safety in high-rise buildings as a deep concern for the safety of tenants across Ontario, but again, specifically in my riding of Toronto Centre.

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Speaker, over three years ago, a residential high-rise complex in St. James Town caught fire, at 650 Parliament Street, and the building had to be evacuated. There were more than 1,500 tenants in that building. The damage was so great that those tenants were displaced for more than a year and a half before they were able to return home. Over the next year, while that building was being repaired, nearby buildings in the neighbourhood also had to be temporarily evacuated because of flooding adjacent to electrical rooms. Tenants in my riding now have no confidence that anything is being done in this province to improve electrical safety. Many tenants fear that our aging stock of buildings—particularly high-rise buildings, many of which went up in the 1960s and 1970s, where the critical life systems in those buildings are coming to their natural end—can now be described as an aging stock of tinderboxes.

These fears are made worse by how elevators across apartments in Toronto Centre regularly go out of service. If corporate slumlords refuse to maintain the elevators that their tenants are using every day, how can we trust that they're paying attention to the safety of the electrical circuits that are behind the walls?

Speaker, when I spoke to the fire officials who went into 650 Parliament Street after that fire, the main circuit breakers in the building hadn't been exercised in probably over a decade. They were seized shut. That's how that fire

happened. When there was a power surge, the breaker didn't blow, the breaker didn't break, and an electrical fire arced up through 17 floors. It was devastating, and it was entirely the result of neglect in these aging buildings. And what is this government doing to improve the ESA rules that apply to these high-rise buildings—where landlords can neglect the critical life systems in these high-rise apartment buildings?

Speaker, I received a letter from Shawn, who wrote to my office when an elevator broke down during the third wave of the pandemic: “I did not have a choice but to get in the elevator of seven people after waiting 25 minutes because I was really late for work.”

So again, it's not just the electric systems failing people's safety, but failing their ability to actually exist in the world and make a good living. How are you supposed to get to work, how are you supposed to get your kids to school on time when the electrical components in your building are so shoddy that you're down to maybe one out of three elevators on a regular basis, and worse, during COVID, when people are scared to be in such a confined, small space with so many of their neighbours in such an unsafe way?

Speaker, I want to go back to 650 Parliament for a minute. I received an incredibly powerful letter from a constituent named Kay in St. James Town, who was a resident of 650 Parliament Street, who lost their home for a year and a half. It's a bit of a long one, so I hope you'll bear with me. It's a couple of pages, but I do want to read it all into the record because it's incredibly powerful, and I hope I've got enough time left on the clock for that. Kay wrote to me and said:

“On August 21, 2018, my family's life was thrown into chaos, along with 1,500 of our neighbours. The fire at 650 Parliament Street was the largest disaster of its kind in Canadian history. Building management left us, literally, out in the cold, referring us to Toronto's overburdened shelter system, and even to the Red Cross, if we couldn't find friends or family to take us in. On the day of the fire, the building staff locked themselves in an office in a nearby building and refused to even speak to frightened tenants. Over the months that followed, we were faced with thefts and destruction of our belongings, breaches of our privacy, and lies from the company about when we would be allowed home and what was happening. Some people slept on cots in the community centre for months.

“You can imagine our surprise when we discovered that all of this was legal. Despite the fact that the fire was caused by negligence, it was labelled an accident.

“After a year and a half of suffering, at the beginning of 2020, we were promised a return home to fully renovated apartments with new, state-of-the-art heating and electrical systems. What we got was boxy new radiator systems that are impossible to control, conduit run along the walls, and mould in our neglected bathrooms and kitchens. Deep gouges in the living room floor show where our furniture was carelessly dragged and thrown around, and many pieces were too broken to keep. Valuables were stolen, and personal items rifled through.

We were faced with trying to repair and replace items during a global pandemic. There are still, at the end of 2021, holes and cracks in my kitchen walls.

“People ask why we came back to an apartment with management that treated us so badly. But the truth is that under the current system, we can't afford to leave, and can't expect better treatment living anywhere else. What the building did to us could have been done to any tenant, anywhere. We could choose to leave our rent-controlled unit and pay a lot more to live somewhere else, but if another negligent landlord allowed more problems to happen, the result would be just a repeat of what we went through.

“Representatives at every level of government say that what we went through was unacceptable, but they haven't taken action to prevent it happening again, to us or to someone else. All renters are at risk; what we have gone through could easily happen to anyone. Without changes to the law, it's really just a matter of time before another building faces disaster.

“When building owners and managers are not required to complete basic maintenance on their properties, and to maintain a reserve fund for needed repairs, there is every reason for them to neglect issues until they become catastrophic. When basic systems in these aging buildings finally fail, landlords force tenants out during renovations, or apply for above-guideline rent increases so that they don't have to pay the cost of their own negligence.

“We everyday people are expected to have several months' salary tucked away for an emergency, and are treated like we're irresponsible if we can't just shell out thousands when the problems of life occur. Landlords, meanwhile, set nothing aside for a rainy day and make their failures into our problems. When small things break down, we're left without elevators, or laundry machines, or hot water, for days on end, without compensation of any kind. When something bigger breaks, and something goes horribly wrong, we're forced to fend for ourselves. No matter what happens, tenants lose, and the landlords always come out as winners. If we stay, we're hit with an AGI and forced to pay higher rents for no increase in service. If we leave, another tenant moves in at a higher rate, because rent control ends when our lease does.

“Tenants deserve an Ontario government that cares about our families, not about lining the pockets of landlords and luxury condo developers. We deserve safe, well-maintained homes, with access to all the services that we are paying for. We deserve real rent control, including vacancy control, so that we can have properly managed buildings” and move “without getting hit with thousands of dollars in rent increases.”

Speaker, I can see I've run out of time. Again, I want to say that was a quote from a resident named Kay, who was devastated by the fire at 650 Parliament Street last year. I would strongly encourage the members opposite to really think about what it means to be making life better for the people of Ontario. I think tenants like Kay have put forward a clear case for what your priorities should be, and, quite frankly, I do not see those priorities reflected in this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I appreciate listening to the member opposite. She mentioned affordable housing. I know that she feels very passionate about transit and housing. I think we can all agree that we have a massive infrastructure deficit. We strongly believe, on this side of the House, that we should use every avenue possible to get shovels in the ground to create more affordable housing, and more housing affordability that the member speaks of.

My question is pretty simple. I want the member opposite to confirm that she not only agrees but also supports some of the measures in this bill that would allow a local council to delegate authority to staff so that they could speed up the building of much-needed infrastructure like affordable housing and transit. We'd love to hear her agreement and support for that piece of the bill.

Ms. Suze Morrison: Respectfully, back to the minister: Do you know what would speed up affordable housing in the province of Ontario? Rent control. Rent control would speed up affordable housing in the province of Ontario. I have tenants in my riding who are receiving \$400-a-month rent increases right now in a brand new condo that was developed and planned 10 years ago. You can't tell me that the cuts in rent control that you made, the loopholes in rent control that you put in place in 2018, had anything to do with that building actually getting built and developed. You cannot say that. You cannot take credit for that. But you want to sit over there and tell me—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I'll remind the member to go through the Chair, please.

Ms. Suze Morrison: —that cutting rent control is going to make life more affordable. Tell that to the nurses in my riding who are getting a 1% wage increase while their rent goes up \$400 a month.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I remind all the members to please channel their thoughts through the Chair.

Questions and response?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate this opportunity. I want to ask the member from Toronto Centre—she's gone on in detail about the risk that people are facing in buildings that were built in the 1960s. I have many of those buildings in my riding, and my guess is, many of us here in the chamber today have that as well.

1620

Could you expand a bit upon the scope, the number of buildings and residents that we're looking at whose dwellings at this point may be far riskier than they think they are?

Ms. Suze Morrison: Thank you so much to the member from Toronto—Danforth—I almost said Davenport—for the question. I think the scope is quite large. I don't think we actually fully understand the scope of the problem, but it could be hundreds of thousands of units. In the St. James Town neighbourhood alone, we've got 35,000 people living in that neighbourhood, all in these aging high-rise buildings that went up at the same time and that have been passed around like a hot potato from

investment landlord to investment landlord. None of these landlords want to take responsibility or take on the financial responsibility for actually fixing the critical systems in the building that are long overdue for repair. Instead, they say, "Hey, I'm going to sit and make a ton of money, hot-potato this problematic building onto the next person and not actually fix any of the issues in the building." These buildings are incredibly unsafe, and we desperately need this government to be looking at it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to go back to the member, because she didn't address the question. I appreciate her feeling about wanting to go back to the time when there was no rental construction built in this province. But there is a provision in this bill that would allow municipal councils to delegate certain authority to staff so that we can get shovels in the ground on some very important infrastructure projects: things like transit and housing. I'd love to find out, Speaker, through you to the member, whether she agrees with those initiatives and whether she supports them. It's a simple question.

Ms. Suze Morrison: Respectfully, back to the minister: There is no correlation between rent control and supply. There is zero correlation. I would like to take the minister back in time to when we were in committee when you passed this cut in rent control back in 2018. I remember specifically Geordie Dent, the executive director of ACTO, sitting in that committee meeting with the graph in his hand that showed that there was zero correlation between supply and cuts in rent control; that we have had more cranes in the sky under rent control, we have had more cranes in the sky without rent control. There is no correlation between the two things. He sat in that committee room and he looked at you, Minister, he looked at all of those committee members, and he said, "Look at the graph." There is no correlation, and continuing to perpetuate that myth is hurting the people of Ontario who deserve rent control in this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member, who's a neighbour of mine in Toronto Centre. The government always talks—they have standard responses, and the standard response is (a) to blame the Liberals, (b) insult the NDP, or (c) fuddle some numbers, put out some numbers. And the government's numbers are never what's actually happening on the ground. What's happening on the ground, as the member from Toronto Centre has said, is that people are being priced out of their houses. They're facing \$400 rent increases because there is no rent control. Can the member talk more about what is actually happening on the ground?

Ms. Suze Morrison: What's happening on the ground in my community is that people are being priced out of our community, they're losing the homes they have lived in for decades and they're being taken advantage of by landlords who think, at a time when the health care heroes that this government wants to prop up as heroes in this

province are only getting a 1% wage increase this year, that it's okay that their wages are only going up by 1% but that their rent can go up by 30%, by 35%, by 40%. Find me a nurse in this province who can afford a \$400 increase a month on their rent. I've heard from PSWs who are now becoming clients of the service providers that they work at, accessing things like rent banks and food banks.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Hon. Steve Clark: Delegation of authority is something that's not new in local councils. There's a variety of things as part of municipal legislation that allow councils to delegate authority to planning staff, administrative staff to try to speed up the process. It's a long-standing measure that's used in municipal operation.

This bill, Bill 13, provides the opportunity for councils to delegate authority to staff, as part of an opportunity to speed up approvals, things like affordable housing, infrastructure like transit.

So, Speaker, I would love to, in this question period, ask the member opposite whether that section in Bill 13 is something that she agrees with and supports.

Ms. Suze Morrison: It's quite fascinating and interesting for me to listen to the minister talk about empowering municipal councils and respecting the work that they do with regard to development, when I do recall it was this time last year when I watched as under the cover of night, in the middle of a pandemic, in the middle of a lockdown, this minister rolled bulldozers into my community in Toronto Centre against the wishes of our city council, who had heritage-designated the foundry building, tried to tear that building down in secret, with no notice to the community. And why were they doing that? Why? We still don't know. But we know it was super illegal. The city mounted a legal court case against this government and forced them to stop the demolition of the foundry, in large part due to community organizing that went on in Corktown.

So I find it quite fascinating to hear the minister opposite talk about respecting council decisions, because you certainly did not respect the decision of Toronto city council to heritage-designate the foundry building in Corktown.

Mr. Joel Harden: It was a real pleasure to listen to my friend from Toronto Centre. Thank you so much for your speech today. I want to take us to something you mentioned. It would seem there are two big consequences of free enterprise, full-steam-ahead thinking that I see coming in this bill from over here. One you mentioned is the proliferation of cannabis shops in your neighbourhood. I see it too. Certainly I have nothing against cannabis, but the notion of having five in two city blocks in some of our neighbourhoods in Ottawa Centre is raising eyebrows. The other thing is, "Supply, supply, supply" seems to be what we hear a lot from this government and this housing minister. But what I see in Ottawa Centre, the construction cranes in Ottawa Centre, is very high-priced housing that's being built, on an expedited basis. I'm wondering if you

could elaborate on whether you see that in your neighbourhood, too.

Ms. Suze Morrison: Absolutely. We're seeing million-dollar condos going up on every corner. Do you know what we're not seeing? We're not seeing affordable housing. We're not seeing affordable rentals getting built. We're not seeing co-ops getting built. We are not seeing any type of investment in community housing, really.

Look at Regent Park, for example. That entire redevelopment project—we're not getting any net new subsidized housing units in that entire redevelopment. We are going through a 10-year project to redevelop Regent Park and all its community housing, and we aren't getting a single new unit of subsidized housing through that project, thanks to lack of investment by this Conservative government and the Liberals who had 15 years before them to do it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Mississauga—Centre.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I'm honoured to rise today and offer my remarks in support of the Supporting People and Businesses Act. I want to first commend my colleague the Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction—representing team Mississauga so very well—for all of her hard work and dedication in making this bill a reality. This sort of legislation requires extensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, and I think it speaks to the commitment of this government and being responsive to the needs of Ontarians.

The Ministry of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction has, since day one, continued to prioritize the economic strength of this province by eliminating costly regulatory burdens. In fact, this legislation is the seventh red tape reduction package put forth by this government to date. Over the last three years, we have eliminated about 6.5% of red tape and as a result are saving businesses, not-for-profits, colleges, universities and other organizations \$373 million annually in regulatory compliance costs.

I note that the work that they have done throughout this pandemic and the work that they continue to do has made a significant difference for Ontario's businesses, who have struggled to cope with the burden of this virus.

I also want to make note of how this legislation was truly a collaborative effort between multiple ministries. That's 13 ministries representing the ability of this government to prioritize co-operation and to tackle the complex issues facing people and businesses in Ontario. Breaking down inter-ministerial siloes is an ongoing theme for our government. We know that many issues facing our province cannot be neatly defined within the jurisdiction of a single ministry—they do not fit nicely into one box, if you will—so collaborative efforts like these are critical to ensure the government is responsive to the issues that matter most to Ontarians.

1630

Monsieur le Président, au cours de la dernière année et demie, les Ontariens et les Ontariennes ont continué de traverser l'une des périodes les plus difficiles de l'histoire de notre province. La pandémie de la COVID-19 a touché

presque tous les aspects de notre vie d'une manière ou d'une autre. Les Ontariens et les Ontariennes ont été confrontés au fait que leur vie devait changer radicalement pour enrayer cette menace pressante pour notre santé et notre sécurité. Il va sans dire que chaque Ontarien et chaque Ontarienne a sacrifié plus qu'il ou elle ne l'aurait cru possible, mais c'est leur détermination, leur courage et leur ténacité face à cette adversité qui nous ont conduits à la position dans laquelle se trouve notre province aujourd'hui.

Ce n'était pas différent pour les entreprises de l'Ontario, qui ont dû faire face à des défis sans précédent pour mettre leurs biens et leurs services sur le marché. Mais nos entreprises, tout en faisant face à des restrictions de santé publique, ont également dû faire face à des exigences inutiles et obsolètes, immobilisant des ressources à une époque déjà suffisamment difficile.

Cette bureaucratie renifle le rythme des affaires dont les entreprises ont besoin pour être concurrentielles sur le marché. Cette bureaucratie entrave la progression de l'économie ontarienne à une époque où nous devons faire tout notre possible pour la favoriser. Cette bureaucratie empêche le progrès social de notre province, parce que nous sommes parfaitement conscients du fait que tout ce que notre gouvernement s'efforce d'accomplir dépend du dynamisme et de la santé de l'économie de notre province.

En donnant la priorité à la réduction des formalités administratives et à la réduction de la paperasse, ce gouvernement minimise, entre autres, la frustration des propriétaires d'entreprises qui cherchent à réaliser leurs rêves dans cette grande province. Nous ne resterons pas les bras croisés à regarder les entrepreneurs et les créateurs d'emplois de l'Ontario être freinés par des règlements insensés et désuets.

The reduction of red tape also helps our province be more financially lean, since reducing regulations and the paperwork that they necessitate lowers administrative costs.

Some say that reducing red tape means that we are weakening protections for public health, safety and the environment. We say that you could not be further from the truth. When we modernize and streamline regulations, focusing them on their intended targets and not maintaining rules for the sake of maintaining them, we are giving ourselves the ability to improve the standards that Ontario businesses abide by. When our businesses thrive, we thrive. Continuing to make our hard-hit businesses jump through the hoops of outdated and archaic restrictions harms all of us in the process.

Speaker, this government will always be there to support our job creators, because they invest in our communities and make Ontario the economic engine of our country. At its core, reducing red tape and making the lives of Ontario's business owners less restricted by senseless regulations improves the lives of all Ontarians as a result.

With that said, how does the Supporting People and Businesses Act help to further make progress in supporting people and businesses? It will do so in five key ways, but I would like to focus on one of them, given the

time I have allotted to speak today. A critical way this legislation will support people is in making access to health care services a priority across these sectors. As a registered nurse and as a lifelong advocate for our provincial health care system, this is a particular part of this legislation that I, of course, want to highlight.

We are a province that prides itself on a strong, public, world-class health care system, and this government, from the very beginning of our mandate, has always been committed to strengthening the ability of our system to provide the health care Ontarians need and deserve. To ensure that all Ontarians can continue to receive the high-quality health care they need, in this legislation we are modernizing the regulatory framework for our laboratories. This modernization will relate to the ways in which our labs are licensed. Through this legislation, this government will introduce a streamlined process for approving and renewing laboratory licences so that they can continue their vital work in supporting the provision of health care to Ontarians.

This will not in any way compromise the rigorous standards laboratories must adhere to that guarantee the utmost health and safety of technicians and patients alike. Rather, this is yet another way this government is streamlining processes to better serve the patients of Ontario. Speaker, we saw throughout this pandemic just how essential our laboratories were in so many aspects of our health care system. They are at the backbone of health care, being central to things like testing and innovative research on new medicines and treatments. By making these changes, we are ensuring they can continue this crucial work more effectively.

Now I would like to move on to a second way that this legislation will support people and businesses through access to health services. In the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act are Ontario's medical radiation safety regulations, which are the mechanisms in place ensuring Ontarians are kept safe and healthy when receiving treatment involving radiation. Through this bill, we are updating safety requirements in HARPA regulation 543 to align with the updated federal guidance from current Health Canada safety codes. This will ensure that the requirements provisioned in this act better reflect today's context and the best available evidence and evolving technology.

With HARPA first being enacted in 1990, of course much of the technology and practices involving medical radiation have evolved and changed. By modernizing the legislation, we will strengthen the protocols which keep Ontario patients safe when receiving important radiation-based treatments, such as radiation therapy for cancer, while removing obsolete protocols which hamper care provision.

In addition to this, we will improve the review and approval timelines for the designation of new CT machines, including streamlining burdensome approval requirements to replace CT devices in hospitals. CT machines are, of course, crucial in identifying diseases and injuries within a patient's body, such as tumours, lesions and blood clots,

and act as catalysts for further treatment. This process of streamlining inefficiencies will help more Ontarians have access to critical CT scans and help begin treatment processes in a game-changing, faster way.

Speaker, these initiatives included within this bill to increase access to health services are game-changing. Simply put, they will change lives. This bill dispels myths that removing obsolete and burdensome regulations, streamlining processes and modernizing protocols is to the detriment of Ontarians. In fact, it is the exact opposite.

As a health care professional, as an advocate for public health care, I could not be more proud of the progress this government is making in our health care system and elsewhere.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Time for questions and responses.

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to thank the member for her comments, and I wanted to ask her a similar question that I asked a colleague in an earlier round of debate about child care. I'm hearing from a lot of parents back home about child care. They're anxious to see this government finalize an agreement with the federal government. I was hoping that this bill could have some clarity for those parents and the education workers in the system toiling every single day to make sure that ends can meet. But you know what's shocking, Speaker, is the low levels of salary for some people who are working in this sector.

I'm wondering if the member has any information she can share with the House today about an imminent agreement between this government and the federal government, because what I'm seeing, to be honest, Speaker, is like molasses rolling up a hill. It's not moving very fast. I know they want a great deal, but parents want child care spaces, okay? So do we have an update that the member can fill us in on?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you so much for that question. It just really boggles my mind. Why does the opposition insist on getting an unfair deal for Ontario? We are, of course, at the negotiating table with our federal counterparts, and my suggestion to the members opposite would be to actually talk to their federal leader, Jagmeet Singh, and ask him to advocate to the Prime Minister to get Ontario a fair deal. We will not sign something that will put our families at risk, that will increase the inflation that's 5% already even more.

1640

A good deal takes time. Our Premier and our Minister of Education are at the table, and we will negotiate a fair deal that puts Ontario families first.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: First of all, I'd like to thank the member from Mississauga Centre for coming to Mississauga-Lakeshore today for that great announcement of the largest hospital in Canadian history.

How will the changes to the laboratory sector and the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act benefit the people of Ontario?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you so much for that important question. Yes, I was thrilled to be in Mississauga-Lakeshore this morning with our Premier and many of our ministers to announce the historic deal in restructuring and renovating our health care system in Mississauga that will serve our future generations.

But in this bill, we are proposing to modernize the regulatory framework for the laboratory sector by consolidating two regulations. These proposed changes will reduce existing operational and administrative burdens for regulatory compliance and will streamline licensing fees. Ontarians will benefit from additional flexibility in laboratory operations and will enjoy a broader range of access to laboratory services in the province. Thank you for the question.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to follow up on the member from Ottawa Centre's question to the member opposite. I found the response really inadequate. What we are hearing from families in my community is that they cannot even get onto any waiting lists anymore for child care, let alone any kind of subsidized space. We are seeing child care costs now averaging at about \$1,600 per child per month, which is completely unaffordable. When I speak to my community members in my riding, I hear this repeatedly at the doorstep. It is their number one issue and concern right now, that this government gets to the table and negotiates a solid deal with the federal government for \$10-a-day child care. What are they waiting for?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you for the question. I know that child care is top of mind for many parents across this province and especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We know that the pandemic has a detrimental impact on women and on women's participation in our workforce. That's why investments in child care and in school infrastructure are more important than ever. And that's why I was so proud to be in my riding—I believe it was last week—with the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Education to announce a \$600-million commitment—\$600 million to building more student spaces and more child care spaces across Ontario. I don't remember the exact number of how many child care spaces we have announced in this \$600-million commitment. But this government is building phenomenal infrastructure across the province, and I couldn't be more proud of that commitment.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you to the member for Mississauga Centre for her remarks today. My question is on digitization.

Speaker, I was so thrilled when our government became the first in Ontario's history to appoint a dedicated minister for digital government to help bring the Ontario government into the 21st century—kicking and screaming, some might say.

Recently, Speaker, I had the chance to renew my health card and my driver's licence online from the comfort of

my own home without ever having to leave or go to a ServiceOntario centre, get in a lineup. It was fantastic, and we need to see more of that. I know that this legislation is helping us move in that direction. So I'm wondering if the member from Mississauga Centre could share a little bit on what this legislation is doing to make Ontario more digital.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Thank you so much for the question. Just to follow up on the previous question, in that announcement of \$600 million, we are committing to 26 new schools in Ontario as well as 1,525 new child care spaces.

But now on to digitization: I think it's about time that government moves to the 21st century. We are putting fax machines on notice within this building and within all of our ministries. That's great news. But I think allowing our ServiceOntario offices to offer some of their services online, such as health card renewals, driver's licence renewals, licence plates etc., is another way we are helping Ontarians access digital services. Just as a reminder, the services will still be available for those who may not have access to the Internet or to computers. But we really need to move on to the 21st century, and that's exactly what we are doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I was listening carefully to the member's response to my last question, and the member from Ottawa Centre's question as well. This government keeps talking about all the child care spaces they've suddenly—first of all, I want to just say that \$600 million was the approval of schools and child care and everything, but already has been sitting there waiting on this minister's desk for years—years. I want to point out something else. This is just one school board, Mr. Speaker, but I have in front of me here the list of child care centres operating out of the TDSB that are waiting for approval from this minister, from this government. I count 25, for this board alone—no movement at all. These are communities desperately in need of child care spaces, and this government is trying to spin a tale in advance of an election. It's crass, it's unnecessary. They need to get the work done and actually approve these spaces.

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: Of course, I can't speak to a board which is not even in my riding or in my area. But what I can say is that in that last announcement that I mentioned, we are actually announcing 32 new child care centres across Ontario. So in 32 communities across Ontario, moms and dads will have more access to child care spaces.

We know that we are behind, but that's not a result of our government. That's the result of the neglect of previous governments. Frankly, every file in every ministry we open, we see the long neglect and lack of vision by 15 years of the Liberal government. That's why we need to act fast, and we are doing that. This bill is one way that we're helping businesses and people in Ontario. Education, of course, is one of our priorities, and I can't be more proud of the work of our Minister of Education.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Lorne Coe: COVID has required the government to make many adjustments to how we provide services across many sectors, and one of those is the court system, which the Attorney General has been making major improvements to over our government's mandate, through several bills and initiatives, including this one. One of those initiatives, Speaker, includes amending the Barristers Act. Can the member talk about the changes the government is making to the Barristers Act and elaborate on why we have to keep Ontario's justice system up to date for her hard-working constituents?

Ms. Natalia Kusendova: I know that access to justice is an ongoing issue in the region of Peel. I know that our courthouse in Brampton is very overwhelmed and there are very long wait times. So I think this particular change will also help more people gain access to justice. What we are proposing is to repeal a section of the Barristers Act to remove an outdated courtroom procedure that prioritizes cases of senior lawyers and does not recognize licensed paralegals. This eliminates a provision that is inconsistently applied. I think it's important that we are making this change, because, as we know, lawyer is still a male-dominated profession—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm proud to be standing today to speak about Bill 13. This is a big bill. It's an omnibus bill with a bunch of schedules in it. There are too many schedules in this bill for me to go into detail today. I also just want to clarify right at the start that I will be sharing my time with the member for Spadina-Fort York today.

This bill is pretty comprehensive. I don't have the capacity or the time right now to go into all the sections, but I do want to speak to a few sections that came up in committee that were also raised by residents in my riding of University-Rosedale.

The first section that I want to talk about is schedule 2. That was the schedule that opens up the cannabis act. There were some measures that we introduced in committee to improve how the siting and the location of cannabis stores are decided in Ontario today. The reason why this has come up is that University-Rosedale has a lot of cannabis stores, because the municipality of Toronto decided to approve the location of cannabis stores in our municipality. How the cannabis store rollout happened in the beginning is that municipalities could either say yea or nay to deciding on cannabis stores. That's it. Toronto said yes, and as a result, we now have a whole proliferation of cannabis stores in our riding. To give you an example, we have 11 cannabis stores in Kensington in a 400-metre radius. That's a lot.

1650

I want to give credit to my colleague the member for Davenport, who introduced a bill that would bring in amendments to give greater control over how cannabis stores are located, to factor in density and location, to give communities and municipalities greater say, similar to the

process that is already used and is already working with the deciding of liquor licences in Ontario. So there is already an established process in place.

I want to give credit to Serena Purdy, who is the chair of Friends of Kensington Market. She came and spoke in committee about her concern with the extreme free market mentality this government has moved forward on with cannabis. She talked about how cannabis stores have driven up the rent and driven out businesses in Kensington. Kensington is not just a place for people to go party and play; it is also a place where thousands of people live, and these people want to buy their food locally, they want to get their shoes repaired locally, they want to go to retail stores locally. What Serena raised was that many of these businesses are being priced out—they couldn't survive the pandemic—and they're being replaced by cannabis stores, and it is contributing to the increase in rent.

She also identified some additional measures that this government might want to consider. She is asking this government—and I think that this deserves thought—that there is greater care given to making sure that cannabis stores are not concentrated in areas where there are mental health facilities and people with high rates of addiction, because cannabis is a recreational drug, but it is also a drug that is associated with high rates of addiction. There are mental health consequences for people, especially young people, who are heavy users of cannabis. It is a drug that needs to be regulated carefully. She asked you to consider that.

The amendments that were introduced by the Ontario NDP were voted down by this government, and I think that's unfortunate. I urge you to reconsider it.

The second measure that I want to raise for Bill 13 is schedule 10. Schedule 10 gives the minister or the cabinet more authority to exempt programs or activities from having a full environmental assessment done on them. That is a concern.

The reason why it is a concern is because it is a continuation of this government's legacy of blatantly disregarding the environment and, as a consequence, blatantly disregarding human health. They are related. It's been hard to watch this government continue its headlong assault on the Ontario government's move to regulate greenhouse gas emissions and do our part, as a very wealthy province, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition to a climate-safe province.

We have seen this government ignore the rollout of a tax on carbon and instead spend millions of dollars fighting the federal government's right to tax carbon in court. We just saw the Auditor General's report, which reads like a litany of assaults on our environment. We learned about the Ontario government's failure to abide by the Environmental Bill of Rights when it issues ministerial zoning orders or when it guts conservation authorities and their power to protect us from flooding.

We got to see the government's absolute failure—I give it an F—on waste management. This is also in the Auditor General's report: We are a province that produces some of the highest waste per person in the world, and we do an astonishingly poor job at recycling and reusing the waste

we create. And our condos, our apartments, industry, business and big institutions like schools are some of the worst offenders.

It was shocking to read in the Auditor General's report that the vast majority of waste, even the waste that is carefully sorted into recycling and compost, then gets to the sorting station and is re-dumped back into landfills—yes—because our waste management industry is poorly regulated. That is on this government. Waste management is primarily a provincial responsibility, and this government has done a very, very, very poor job of moving forward on that.

It was also shocking to learn in the recent Auditor General's report on the environment that Ontario companies spill hazardous materials about 8,000 times a year into our air, land and water. Most of these spills are from the oil and gas sector. The majority of those spills are from pipelines. The environment ministry does not even tell Ontarians when a hazardous spill has occurred, who caused the spill, or what specific impacts a spill could have on human health and the environment. That is immoral. So why I'm bringing this up here, when I'm speaking about Bill 13, is because this is another example of the Ontario government really doing a pretty poor job of protecting the environment.

The environmental assessment process has a purpose. Its purpose is to assess what impacts the project will have and to uphold Ontarians' right to know what these decisions are before they're made and to participate in a public consultation process so that their concerns are heard. I'm sure if there was a member opposite who had a sewage facility being sited or a quarry being sited or a dump facility being sited in their riding, their neighbours, their constituents would want a process to ensure that there is public consultation and that their concerns are addressed. But schedule 10 in Bill 13 is just another example of how they're reducing the power of the environmental assessment process. That is a big concern with this bill, and I believe that this schedule should be withdrawn.

The final two things that I want to mention in the time that I have—another schedule that we have concerns about is schedule 17.

I had the privilege of listening to Karen Brown, who represents elementary school teachers, express her concern about the reduction in size of the Ontario College of Teachers from 18 to 12. This is from a reduction that already happened, that the previous government did a few years ago, when they brought it down from 37 to 18 to 12. Her concern is that these changes to the Ontario College of Teachers consolidate the power in the hands of a very few. I want to summarize what she said in committee because I think it's important for all the members opposite to know about it.

Karen Brown said, "If adopted, schedule 17 would complete the transformation of the college from a professional regulatory body to an extension of the Ministry of Education in all but name. This transformation threatens the quality of Ontario's public education system, undermines the trust of teachers in the college and devalues the teaching profession." That is very concerning to hear.

I think that this government should take an additional look at schedule 17 because it seems like it is not in the best interests of our education system for that to be there.

The final measure I want to raise is schedule 20. Schedule 20 does something that I support: Schedule 20 removes the fees required when you go and ask the police for a criminal record check. Maybe you're applying for a job and they're requiring a criminal record check, or you are concerned that your criminal record or lack of criminal record is not being accurately reflected by the police and you want to make sure that that information is accurate. It is a good thing to remove the fees required for this. The challenge is that 80% of checks that are being done by the police—so that's constituents asking for the police to do these checks—are actually vulnerable sector checks. Those are the checks that you need if you want to volunteer at your local school, or if you want to take your class out regularly with a teacher because they're going on an excursion, or if you want to read regularly in class as a volunteer to the kids at your school, or if you want to regularly visit a congregate facility or a retirement home, or if you're working with vulnerable people.

1700

The challenge is that this government decided to keep the fees associated with vulnerable sector checks, so these people still have to pay. I think that is something we can improve. The Ontario NDP actually introduced an amendment to improve schedule 20 to make sure that vulnerable sector checks aren't—so people don't have to pay a fee on them. It is a pity to see that the Ford government decided to deny that amendment. I urge you to rethink that. We should be encouraging people to participate in voluntary activities; we should not be making it more expensive for them to do so.

Before I hand over my time to the member for Spadina–Fort York, I just have to say, why this bill at this time? We could be debating how we're going to improve the long-term-care-homes sector to take out profitable for-profit companies from the sector. We could be working to increase education funding so that kids with ISPs or autism or who are really struggling with mental health challenges get additional support. We could be working on a health care plan to reduce the massive surgery backlog that the Auditor General raised in her report today. We could be moving forward on a green new deal plan so that we could tackle the greatest crisis of our time, the climate crisis. But we're not. We're debating this.

That is all I have time for today. Thank you for listening to me. I'd like to hand over the rest of my time to the member for Spadina–Fort York.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Spadina–Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to thank the member from University–Rosedale for sharing her time with me.

We're talking about Bill 13, and there are 25 schedules in this bill on very different topics. I sat in on the committee meetings on this. People were really surprised to see people from the environmental sector, people from education, all deputing about the same bill even though

they're coming from different sectors and talking about very different issues. I think the problem with these kinds of omnibus bills is that they undermine our democracy. It really makes it difficult to debate and make people aware of the issues that are actually involved here.

There are some very concerning issues in this bill. The biggest one, I would say, is the power that the minister is giving himself or herself to override the need for environmental assessments on construction projects. I'll talk more about that in a minute.

The other one is that there are three sections that increase the power of the Minister of Education over the running of our school boards and over our College of Teachers. I think that is very scary, especially for someone like me, who comes from the education sector and who actually got into politics in order to defend our public education system, our publicly funded school systems.

When I look at this bill, what I don't see are the things that are of most concern to the people in Spadina–Fort York.

I'll read a few quotes from some of the residents in my riding. One is concerned about Bill 124, which this government passed. It caps public sector wage increases at 1% even though inflation is 3.1%. Her name is Maxine Seider. She said, "As a registered dietitian working at a hospital we, along with many other interprofessional staff at the hospital—crucial in the care for people with COVID-19 ... have been stuck with the 1% wage increase. We often work overtime without pay, take on additional projects, and cover our colleagues when we're short-staffed.

"A 1%" pay increase "means our salary is decreasing every year" as the rate of inflation creeps up.

When you call these people health care heroes—this is being challenged in the courts, this Bill 124. The government has taken measures that may infringe on the constitutional rights of these members to free and collective bargaining.

I've got a quote from Yolanda, a custodian in one of our schools. She said, "We have extra duties to perform, for example extra paperwork regarding COVID and extra cleaning, yet we do not receive any extra pay for this service."

Dana Malcolm is an injured worker. Schedule 6 of Bill 27 is about injured workers. This government has implemented deeming, and so injured workers are not getting the pay that they need in order to survive. In fact, most injured workers are now sinking into poverty because they are not getting the support from WSIB that they need.

Dana writes, "I was electrified on March 11th, 2017. I worked at the Great Blue Heron Casino for 21 years at the time. I was plugging in a Shuffle Master and the electricity ran up my left arm and out the top of my head.

"It has been an absolute dehumanizing experience dealing with a corporation which is in control of my health care. Since my injury is invisible, I'm constantly having to prove my injuries. I have lost count of how many times I've had to explain my psychological problems and the physical effects the stress has caused me."

This government should be looking after the injured workers in this province, and that's what should be in this bill. They should also be looking after small business owners, many of whom are still struggling in the aftermath—well, maybe in the midst—of this pandemic.

Sonya Grundy says, as an independent contractor who has run a business consulting firm in Toronto for 10 years, “I tried to apply for every single government subsidy, small business loans etc. and I didn't qualify for a single one of them. The Ontario government did nothing to help me. Independent contractors were completely forgotten about. I am a successful professional who contributes daily to our economy, as do many other independent contractors across the province. And when all of us felt the sting of the pandemic, we reached out to our provincial government for help, but received zero financial support from them, despite all the promises the Premier made. We fell through the cracks, and no one cares.”

The final one is from Jackie Rankine. She's concerned about people who are living on social supports, including Ontario Works, which is stuck at \$735 a month, and ODSP, which is at \$1,050 a month. Jackie writes, “In light of inflation rates in excess of 4%, what plans does the government have to increase social assistance rates, the majority of which go to rent and food?” Believe me, on \$735 a month, I don't know how anybody is affording rent or food, and that's something this government should be looking at.

There are a number of other concerns with this bill. Schedule 2 opens the Cannabis Licence Act, and when the bill was at committee, we asked the committee—we moved an amendment—to incorporate the member from Davenport's Bill 29, which would give municipalities the power to plan for the location of cannabis shops. Unfortunately, the government voted it down.

It's not that we are against cannabis shops; the legalization of cannabis was a good move. But right now what's happening is that we're seeing clustering of cannabis shops. Meg Marshall from the Bloorcourt and Queen West BIAs says, “Our small business retail storefronts are a crucial part of what makes Toronto such an attractive place for tourists and visitors.

“We are supportive of cannabis retailers but need measures in place to avoid creating too much clustering.

“That's why we support MPP Marit Stiles's bill to give municipalities a stronger role in the cannabis licensing process.” That's something that I'm hoping this government will reopen, that amendment that we moved in committee.

Let's see. I've got one minute left, and I will just say there are three sections of this bill—section 4, section 5 and section 17—which increase the power of the Minister of Education over the running of school boards and over the College of Teachers. This I find very, very concerning. As a high school teacher in the 1990s, I watched Mike Harris move our publicly funded schools toward the private sector. He underfunded our public education system by \$1.2 billion and introduced a private school tax credit that would have cost \$700 million if it had been fully

implemented. I see the same sort of privatization happening with the power grab that's happening with section 4, section 5 and section 17 of this bill, so I hope the government will remove those sections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Will Bouma: I always appreciate my opportunities to have conversations with the member from University–Rosedale, because I appreciate her perspective, and I just wanted some clarification. I can understand that they would like us to do more on the environmental file—in fact, I know that we are doing more. But I think, if I heard her correctly—and I'm hoping she can correct me on that—that we are doing nothing in this bill for the environment. I know for a fact, from debate this afternoon, that we are making it easier to get rare-earth metals out of what used to be waste in mining facilities. I think that's a really good thing, and I was wondering if she could agree with me on that.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member opposite. Yes, Bill 13 does include schedule 12, the Mining Act. What concerns me about this government's activities when it comes to mining is the government's treatment of the community of Grassy Narrows. The government has decided to move forward with allowing claims, permits, to be sited on Grassy Narrows traditional territory, which is a violation of Grassy Narrows's constitutional rights and their right to have consultation and accommodation. They were not even informed of the decision to allow those mining claims to be approved.

1710

What is even more concerning is that this government, in question period, has been so bold to say that this isn't exactly mining. It is mining. It is the first step of mining. Mining doesn't happen unless a claim is made. So that is extremely concerning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to go back to schedule 12 and give the member more opportunity to answer the question. To the member for University–Rosedale: Let's not forget that a lot of these tailings ponds where these rare-earth minerals or these extra minerals are sitting are lands that had been taken away through our colonial system that we have, that have not met the threshold of proper negotiations or discussions or consent with First Nations. To expedite that process without even acknowledging that those areas had been taken, had been explored, had been exploited without any discussions with some of the First Nations—that is absolutely crucial to this process.

To say we're expediting it—let's slow down and let's have that first discussion that was never held with First Nations on their rightful entitlement to their lands.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much to the member for Algoma–Manitoulin for that question. That is a question to the Ontario government around what has been their process when it comes to schedule 12 in Bill 13. What has been their consultation and accommodation process

with First Nations communities that are very clearly affected by this schedule?

When it comes to the community of Grassy Narrows, they have been very clear that the mining claims were not something that they knew about or supported and that they are asking for these claims to be rescinded. Can you rescind these claims?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Brantford–Brant.

Mr. Will Bouma: Good. I appreciate the support on increasing that and I understand the point from the member for Algoma–Manitoulin to make sure that proper consultation is done.

Another point: One of my first meetings after my election was with a great corporate citizen in Brantford named Ferrero. They asked if there was a way that we could make producers of waste fully responsible for recycling it. I said I would work on that, and wouldn't you know it—it made me look really good—that was one of the first things we did in government.

If I'm not mistaken, the member had stated that there was nothing that our government had done on fixing recycling programs in the province of Ontario, which had stagnated under the old system. Yet I'm pleased to say that with the new programs in place, Ferrero is very, very close to being net zero.

I was wondering if the member could give further clarification on her statement that this government has done nothing on recycling.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much to the member for Brantford–Brant. It is important that there are MPPs, MPs and councillors that understand the value of the concepts of reusing, recycling and ensuring that there is significant waste diversion.

That is why I was really shocked to read the Auditor General's report on her investigation of our waste management. She was very clear that our province produces some of the highest waste per person in the world and does a very poor job of recycling and reusing the waste we create. She was extremely clear about that.

It's actually less about residents, who divert about 50% of their waste, and it's a whole lot more about industry and commercial waste and businesses and the challenges they have where, even if they sort their waste, when it gets to the sorting station or the transfer station, the vast majority of it is being put back into the landfill because there's poor regulation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the member from Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'd like to ask my friend from Spadina–Fort York a question. I enjoyed your speech.

Schedule 20 of this bill, as I understand it, asks vulnerable sector volunteers to still pay \$60 for a record check. I know how much you care about volunteering in your community, and that's something I see across the province. People want to get involved in their communities, particularly people in vulnerable situations, my friend, and I'm wondering if you could help the government understand why that obstacle is something that

should be removed. I know you've got a lot of stories from your community.

Mr. Chris Glover: Thank you for that question. Actually, this is an issue that's very near and dear to me, because before becoming an MPP, I was a school board trustee at the Toronto District School Board and I was the chair of the community use of schools advisory committee. We had community groups from across the city and across the sectors. We had music groups, sports groups, and almost all of them were run almost exclusively by volunteers.

In 2015, there was an act passed that mandated police record checks. The police record checks are good, because we want to protect the vulnerable people in our population and the people that the volunteers serve. But there was a fee attached to it. With this bill, this government has waived the fee for categories 1 and 2 volunteers, but not for category 3. The fees can be, as the member from Ottawa Centre said, up to \$60. That can be a real impediment for people who want to volunteer in our communities, so I'd ask the government to change that—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you.

I recognize the member from Oakville.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: My question will be to the member from University–Rosedale. I know a lot of members in here have pets; I think we all love animals. Our government passed Bill 136, the PAWS Act, which was the most comprehensive animal protection legislation in North America, great legislation. I think that's something we can all be proud of.

But my question to you is this: With respect to this bill, Bill 13, we're modernizing the accreditation model for veterinary facilities that would make it easier for veterinary practices to offer services to a wider range of species and clients. For animal lovers, this will provide greater access to services from veterinarian practices and expand availability. My question is: Is this a component of the bill that you could put your support behind?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much to the member opposite. The challenge with omnibus bills is that all these schedules are lumped together and we have to go through and make that judgment of what of these measures do we support and how can we introduce amendments into committee to improve this bill. And then when it comes to third reading, we have to make a tough decision of whether we are going to vote for this bill or against this bill.

By and large, there are measures in this bill that are supportable. Measures to protect animals and their welfare is certainly something that I strongly support and believe in. But there are also some measures in this bill overall that make it really hard to support. Measures around watering down the Environmental Assessment Act and on giving the Ministry of Education far greater control of the Ontario College of Teachers are things that are really concerning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): We have time for a very short question and a very short response.

Mr. Joel Harden: I'd like to ask my friend from University–Rosedale, who spoke about the proliferation of cannabis shops in a short committee, to elaborate in

whatever capacity she'd like to on that point, because it's important to us in Ottawa too.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much. I would like to just reiterate some of the concerns that were raised by Serena Purdy. She is the chair of the Friends of Kensington Market. Kensington is, to say it politely, a very cannabis-friendly community, but for them it has gone too far, because they have upwards of 13 cannabis stores in an area of 400 metres. It's too much, and so they've made it really clear to me, and we've made it clear—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's always an honour to rise to speak in the House. Today, I'll be speaking on Bill 13, third reading. Speaker, there are 25 schedules in this bill. I'll say some of those schedules I support, so I'm going to focus my comments on schedules I have concerns with.

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I know the members opposite want it the other way. That's not my job in opposition, sorry.

I want to talk about two schedules I feel need to be improved, and the lost opportunity to improve them. The first one is schedule 2, Speaker. We have been hearing in communities across the province and we heard a number of people come to committee talking about concerns about the way in which the cannabis market is being rolled out and how it affects other businesses—lots of concerns, even in cannabis-friendly areas, like Kensington Market, like the member from University–Rosedale mentioned, and other neighbourhoods where we're seeing clustering of cannabis stores that are crowding out other businesses and in some cases actually hurting other small businesses. So we have business improvement associations and other small business advocates raising serious concerns—also concerns about addressing monopolization potential in the cannabis market, and also concerns about making sure we facilitate the market in a way that eliminates the illicit underground market.

1720

So in the absence of provincial direction on this—and I do think we need to have a serious conversation in this province and in this House about how we do that—the member from Davenport put forward a bill, and members put forward an amendment that would at least enable municipalities to be able to create some rules in the absence of provincial rules. While I don't think that will necessarily fully address all these issues, I think it's a step in the right direction and should have been considered in this bill. I want to put it on the record with government members that this is a serious issue that we as a Legislature need to address.

Secondly, I want to talk briefly about schedule 20, a schedule I largely support. I support the non-profit sector. I think it's important for background checks to be paid for to support non-profits that are struggling right now.

I can tell you, Speaker, that the non-profit sector has done heroic duty during this pandemic in particular. Many non-profits have had their revenues go down because

people have less money to contribute—they haven't been able to do fundraising events—but the demand for the services has gone up. As a matter of fact, the Ontario Nonprofit Network asked for a \$680-million stabilization fund to help stabilize the important work non-profits do for our communities. In the absence of that, having background checks paid for would certainly support volunteers across this province. By the way, non-profits have seen a 61% decline in volunteers due to the pandemic.

The government has said that we'll cover level 1 and 2 checks, but that, on average, only covers 20% of the police checks. If the government would extend it—and I put forward amendments to do this—to cover level 3 checks, we could cover 100% of volunteers around this province. I just want to highlight that the Ontario non-profit sector employs over a million people, engages with 5.2 million volunteers, and contributes \$50 billion to Ontario's GDP. We need to do everything we can to support this sector. Expanding police checks to cover all three levels would do a significant amount to support the sector.

I want to talk about three schedules that should be removed.

First of all, schedule 17, which undermines the ability of the Ontario College of Teachers to actually be a self-regulatory body, which then undermines the profession of teaching, which I think then undermines the quality of public education in this province: The decline in the number of OCT members reduces the ability to have a diverse number of people on the OCT, which I think can be detrimental, particularly to rural and remote areas, as many deputants brought forward.

Also, schedule 8 raises some serious concerns about potential conflicts of interest in the appointment of supervisory officers, who will no longer be required to be full-time-focused on that role.

Finally, Speaker, the schedule I want to close with is schedule 10, and the further erosion of the environmental assessment process. This government, with Bill 197, hollowed out the environmental assessment process in this province. This bill's schedule 10 further erodes the environmental assessment process. I remind members that it's not only about protecting the environment; it's about protecting people's health. Last week, the Auditor General's report said that air pollution alone contributes to an additional 600 cases of lung cancer in this province and 6,600 premature deaths each and every year. That's why environmental assessments are important. To give the minister such extreme and extraordinary powers to determine what will be assessed and what won't is moving the province in the wrong direction. We've seen that with the recent Environmental Registry of Ontario listing that would exempt the Holland Marsh highway—or the Bradford Bypass—and Highway 413 from a full environmental assessment. Any highways that create that kind of damage to our environment and to communities, to human health, should be fully assessed by the environmental assessment process, and I encourage the government to move in the other direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Will Bouma: I always appreciate the conversations with the member from Guelph. He has a business background, and he understands many things in ways that I can't. That's why I love having our conversations.

I know we were listening intently in committee together when we were talking about clustering in cannabis. I was curious about that, because there has been a lot of talk in here about the negatives of clustering of businesses, and yet, when I look online, I see advantages of clustering in businesses. All you have to do is walk down Bay Street, you see so many banks. In any of our communities, so often, it's car dealerships that are all grouped together.

I was wondering why, in this instance, with his background, if he could explain why clustering doesn't work, why this is bad even though it's so good for so many other businesses in the economy.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the member's question. Likewise, I've enjoyed the conversations I've had inside and outside the committee room with the member from Brantford-Brant.

One of the concerns about the way in which clustering is working in the cannabis market is that it's happening in neighbourhood and retail spaces, and that is starting to crowd out other small businesses. One of the things that makes places like downtown Guelph or Kensington Market or downtown Paris, Ontario, such great places is the diversity of small businesses supporting a variety of activities that service people in the community. When that starts being crowded out, like too many of one store—in this case, cannabis stores—it can be detrimental to the vitality of the business neighbourhood. That's why I'm so concerned about addressing this issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Questions and response?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the member for his comments. I listened to them quite intensively. He's absolutely right: The Auditor General did raise the alarm bell, did raise red flags, did raise everything to bring notice to a lot of the public consultation that this government has been bypassing: the exemptions on the Bradford Bypass, the fact that they're going to bypass, as well, the 413 with the public consultation.

Public consultation is so important because it gives the opportunity for them to come to public hearings to give a different perspective, a people's perspective, of what the issues are, and the concerns. We don't have all the answers in this room. Some of the best laws that have been created have withstood the test of time because we had proper consultation and we went out of this Legislature in order to meet with the people.

I want to go back to the member: What do you see is the really big important part of public consultation and the benefits that it brings to legislation?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I thank the member for Algoma-Manitoulin for that question. I'm looking at what's happening right now, and I want to say that this is a non-partisan comment: I look at what's happening in British Columbia right now, and I look at what is happening in Atlantic Canada. It highlights just how vitally important it

is that we get infrastructure right in this province, that we actually get land use planning right in this province, because our children, our grandchildren—heck, ourselves—I used to always say climate change was going to hit us in the future. It's hitting us right now. We have to get this right.

The environmental assessment process—which was brought in by a Progressive Conservative government—was brought in to engage the public to ensure that development was done right, that highway projects were done in ways that didn't threaten people and property and community. That is why I'm so concerned about schedule 10 and the undermining of the environmental assessment process by this government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): We have time for a very short question.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: I appreciate the remarks from the member for Guelph. I know he's passionate about conservation in our province. Of course, we have a lot of wonderful provincial parks and conservation areas, including some around your beautiful riding.

One of the measures in this bill is going to make it so that we prevent adverse possession on crown-owned land so that we can do a better job at keeping our provincial parks open for public use. I'm wondering if you support this measure in this legislation.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I appreciate the question. We obviously want to make sure public lands are available to the public. There is no doubt about that.

1730

Could I raise another concern here? Because I think it is important that the government brings forward some regulations. It is in regard to—I wrote this down. It's the schedule on the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that enables personal use. I'm in favour of personal forestry use—oh, I ran out of time. Check the committee notes out.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Further debate?

Mr. Norman Miller: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 13. Bill 13, the Supporting People and Businesses Act, contains more than 30 proposals that would make small and important changes across 15 different provincial ministries. Each of these changes intends to build a streamlined regulatory system that saves businesses and people time and money by modernizing regulations, digitizing services and removing redundant requirements. The legislation proposes changes to allow licensed restaurants, bars and other hospitality businesses to create or extend their outdoor patio and seating areas, and this is the item in the bill that I really wanted to have a chance to speak to.

To adapt to the physical-distancing requirements during the pandemic, many hospitality businesses created or extended their patios. Previously, businesses would have needed to apply to the registrar of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario for approval before they could extend a patio. However, the changes proposed in this bill would permanently allow businesses and restaurants to extend their patios without having to apply to the registrar of the AGCO.

We're all aware that Ontario's hospitality industry took a major hit as a result of the pandemic. As we begin to rebuild and strengthen our economy, we must provide hospitality businesses the tools they need to adapt and thrive in the future. I was in that business for 30 years, and I'm glad I wasn't in it the past couple of years. If passed, Bill 13 will better support the recovery of hospitality businesses and provide safer spaces for both restaurant staff and customers. Over the last year and a half, these businesses have been hard hit by the public health measures that were necessary to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Once outdoor dining was allowed, our government permitted temporary patio extensions to allow for greater distancing and occupancy restrictions. This temporary change is set to end at the start of 2022, unless we act now.

In Parry Sound, Trestle Brewing Company has been advocating for the continuation of this relief. Chris Pettinger, co-founder of the Trestle Brewing Company, wrote to me, and I want to read from his email:

"The continuation of this allowance has significant impacts on our business one way or another. It would mean we can employ more staff through the winter season in full-time positions and we would be able to accommodate more guests increasing our revenue. Your continued support for our little brewery is important to us and to our community."

I should point out that businesses like Trestle have invested a lot in building extended patios and adding heaters so the space can be used more of the year. By making this change permanent through the passing of Bill 13, the government will reduce costs and paperwork for businesses like Trestle.

Trestle is just one of many hospitality businesses across my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. The region is a tourist destination, attracting seasonal residents, cottagers and travellers. Strong hospitality businesses are essential to the health of our local economy. Reducing the costs and paperwork involved in extending a patio may seem like a small thing for an individual business owner, but it makes a big difference. It made a big difference during the pandemic and it will continue to make a big difference if this bill is passed.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, I would move that the question now be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): At this point, there having been just over six and a half hours of debate and 16 speakers so far, Mr. Miller has moved that the question be now put. I'm satisfied there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion that the question now be put, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion that the question now be put, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you very much, Speaker. I believe that, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bill Walker): Is there unanimous consent to see the clock at 6 p.m.? Agreed.

Report continues in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott
Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Peter Sibenik, Meghan Stenson,
William Wong
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Arthur, Ian (NDP)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Baber, Roman (IND)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation (Transit-Oriented Communities) / Ministre associé des Transports (Aménagement axé sur les transports en commun)
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (IND)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Solicitor General / Solliciteuse générale
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda C. (NBP)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutilla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries / ministre des Industries du patrimoine, du sport, du tourisme et de la culture
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Hon. / L'hon. Jane (PC)	Burlington	Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues / Ministre associée déléguée au dossier de l'Enfance et à la Condition féminine
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (IND)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (IND)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Associate Minister of Digital Government / Ministre associé délégué de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Hon. / L'hon. Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (LIB)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises et à la Réduction des formalités administratives
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	Deputy Speaker / Vice-président

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Wilson, Jim (IND)	Simcoe—Grey	
Wynne, Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	
Vacant	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	

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COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Randy Pettapiece
Teresa J. Armstrong, Toby Barrett
Lorne Coe, Rudy Cuzzetto
Goldie Ghamari, Randy Hillier
Christina Maria Mitas, Judith Monteith-Farrell
Michael Parsa, Randy Pettapiece
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ian Arthur
Ian Arthur, Will Bouma
Stephen Crawford, Catherine Fife
Ernie Hardeman, Mitzie Hunter
Logan Kanapathi, Sol Mamakwa
Jeremy Roberts, Dave Smith
Vijay Thanigasalam
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Michael Bushara

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Mike Schreiner
Jill Andrew, Robert Bailey
Will Bouma, Guy Bourgouin
Chris Glover, Mike Harris
Logan Kanapathi, Sheref Sabawy
Amarjot Sandhu, Mike Schreiner
Daisy Wai
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Gilles Bisson
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Aris Babikian
Deepak Anand, Aris Babikian
Gilles Bisson, Lorne Coe
Wayne Gates, Robin Martin
Norman Miller, Billy Pang
Amanda Simard, Marit Stiles
John Yakabuski
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lucille Collard
Lucille Collard, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Natalia Kusendova
Jim McDonell, Suze Morrison
Randy Pettapiece, Gurratan Singh
Donna Skelly, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Kevin Yarde
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Thushitha Kobikrishna

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Présidente: Laurie Scott
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Rima Berns-McGown, France Gélinas
Goldie Ghamari, Faisal Hassan
Jim McDonell, Sam Oosterhoff
Laurie Scott, Vijay Thanigasalam
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Taras Natyshak
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Hogarth
Deepak Anand, Toby Barrett
Jessica Bell, Stephen Blais
Stephen Crawford, Rudy Cuzzetto
Christine Hogarth, Michael Mantha
Taras Natyshak, Michael Parsa
Amarjot Sandhu
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Aris Babikian
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Fraser
Aris Babikian, Lorne Coe
John Fraser, Vincent Ke
Laura Mae Lindo, Paul Miller
Billy Pang, Jeremy Roberts
Dave Smith, Daisy Wai
Jamie West
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Isaiah Thorning

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Présidente: Natalia Kusendova
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Bhutila Karpoche
Aris Babikian, Jeff Burch
Amy Fee, Michael Gravelle
Joel Harden, Mike Harris
Bhutila Karpoche, Natalia Kusendova
Robin Martin, Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tanzima Khan

**Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight /
Comité spécial de la surveillance de la gestion des situations
d'urgence**

Chair / Président: Daryl Kramp
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Tom Rakocevic
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
John Fraser, Christine Hogarth
Daryl Kramp, Robin Martin
Sam Oosterhoff, Tom Rakocevic
Donna Skelly, Sara Singh
Effie J. Triantafilopoulos
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell