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Jeudi
11 mai 2023

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 mai 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prières / Prayers.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR
SCARBOROUGH–GUILDWOOD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Mitzie Hunter as the member for the electoral district of Scarborough–Guildwood, effective 6:01 p.m., May 10, 2023. Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. Paul Calandra: On a point of order: Pursuant to standing order 78, I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUEEN'S PARK RESTORATION
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA RESTAURATION
DE QUEEN'S PARK

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 10, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to enact the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023, and to make certain amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act / *Projet de loi 75, Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur le Secrétariat de la restauration de Queen's Park et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et à la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): When we last debated Bill 75, the member for Peterborough–Kawartha had made his presentation. We are now in questions to the member for Peterborough–Kawartha with respect to his remarks. Questions? Okay.

Further debate?

MPP Jamie West: I'm going to be speaking about the Queen's Park Restoration Act, but before I begin, I hope that my colleagues will allow me to diverge a bit just to

share a message that was shared with me last night that I think will resonate. It's non-partisan, but I think it will resonate with all of us. It says:

"Big day tomorrow across the province. It's the district Mine Rescue Competition ...

"And this year, Goderich is hosting ...

"Tomorrow, we will welcome 15 students and their teachers as spectators. These students have an interest in mining and/or emergency services.

"Our local volunteer firefighters will also be in attendance.

"This is the brainchild of my husband, our local mine rescue officer and myself.

"To our knowledge, it's never been done before.

"Important people at Compass Minerals, Workplace Safety North, and Unifor are paying attention ...

"Not sure how it will go ... but tonight we are pretty excited about it!

"Name tags, flashlights, ear protection and handouts are ready to go ...

"This year's 'problem' was written by an MRO (mine rescue officer) from the southern district.

"The MRO from our region, who wrote the problem was sent up to Timmins to judge and facilitate up there ...

"Because as we all know ... the Hollinger mine disaster is the reason that we have Ontario Mine Rescue at all ...

"This is one of two MROs that train Windsor, Goderich and Hagersville ...

"There are only two teams at districts this year ...

"There should be three.

"We will all be missing our friends from the competition team at Windsor.

"We play hard together, but we learn from each other. We support each other.

"When the tornado hit Goderich in 2011, the only fatality in the whole town was the man who was working the boom, loading boats at the mine.

"Windsor was called in for mutual aid to recover the body. This was a hard job for Windsor because a lot of people on the Windsor team were originally from Goderich ...

"To quote my husband:

"We are used to working together.

"We are used to learning together.

"Salt is always salt. Work is always just work ...

"And our miners here hope that Windsor gets back to work because we miss the friendly competition and the opportunity to learn together to keep our workplaces safe ..."

Thank you, Speaker and my colleagues, for allowing me to share that. I know that we all care about safety for our mining communities.

I'm proud to stand and talk about the Queen's Park Restoration Act. I'm going to say this bill is exciting and extremely dull. It is exciting because of the work that we're going to do, but in terms of the bill itself and what's in the bill, it's very dry and dull and spells out how to move forward. As a member of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, I'm going to share some of the process of how we got to here. I'll also talk about the bill itself, but I think that in the debate we've had so far, the meat and potatoes of the bill have been discussed a lot, and there's a good understanding, I think, from all of my colleagues about what's in the bill.

This morning when I was thinking about what I was going to say and preparing, I thought of the Greek proverb, "A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they shall never sit." Obviously, this was written a long time ago, when it was old men who made the decisions, and so I want to recognize, as well, women and everybody else who makes decisions. But I think that's the core of the journey we've been on in committee when we look at the restoration of Queen's Park.

When we first started discussing it, we all came to the table with what we wanted, things we'd like to see, even small things in terms of—there's technology in use here, but there are no charging stations. There's no way to plug in anything at our desks. I have, a couple of times, had to go to my office to plug in my laptop to let it recharge so I can come back to have it here.

Very quickly, we learned as a committee, as a group, that this really was about planting trees under whose shade we'll never sit. Some of us might be here when the project is completed. But the reality is that political careers typically do not last a very long time, and this project will probably end after many of our careers have sunsetted—either after we retire or after we've been replaced—because as I say often here, we are just renting these chairs. When that realization hit for all of us, I think what happened for many of us is, we understood the opportunity we had to make this place better for everybody, and that, I think, is when the committee really clicked. It really was a turning point for the committee.

I really enjoyed being on the committee, I have to say—the opportunity to work together, to have very open conversations. A lot of what we do here can feel adversarial at times, but I think that when it comes to what we're doing for the Queen's Park restoration, that sense of "adversarial-ness" is gone.

It's easy for us as parliamentarians to think about what changes we would like to see. For example, many of my colleagues from the government side don't have a place to put their stuff when they come here. I have an office really close to here, actually, just one floor up, but some of my colleagues on the opposition side have to walk as far as the north wing. Many of the Conservative members, the government members, show up and put their stuff in their car, or they all pile it into the whip's office, or they're working in the cafeteria or holding meetings there. It's an opportunity to expand in that area and make this a better

workplace for the people who want to meet with ministers and to have that flexibility.

But it's not really about us. We feel sometimes like we're the centre of the universe. Once you're elected, everyone here is incredibly nice to you, incredibly polite. I'm reminded of this because the first time I was at Queen's Park, I was kicked out, as a visitor, for being too rambunctious—and honestly, I deserved to be kicked out, and our group. In the gallery, you're not allowed to make comments. We were upset and we made a lot of noise, and they cleared the galleries. But the reality is, coming back, it was a whole different experience. When you're escorted out of this building and then the next time you come back they hold the door and call you, "Sir," it's a little startling.

0910

When we come here as MPPs, we feel like the centre of the universe because we're preparing for debate. The days are very hectic. Yesterday, by noon, it felt like I had done two days of work with the meetings that I had, with everything going on. That's how it can feel. But in order for us to be effective like that, in order for us as MPPs to be that engaged with our community and bring their voices forward, there is a whole system behind this that also has to be successful. There are our staff, specifically. But there are also the Clerks. There are also the maintenance people. There are also the cleaners. There are the tour groups and the students who come. There are all these other components to the building that, if you're not paying attention, you just don't recognize. These facility upgrades are for them; we're a small component of it. A lot of the place really works well for most of us. So there'll be some tweaks and nudges that will help us as MPPs, but the majority of what we're doing, the majority of what this project is—that we're going to plant trees that, for many of us, we may not see the shade—really is about the people who work in this building, who have careers in this building, and the people who visit this building, the students who come here.

It's also about improving the safety. I'm reminded, for example, that half of this building is made out of wood and half of this building is made out of marble. The reason half of it is made out of marble is because there was a fire. The wooden portion burned down, and they were only able to save half of the building. So the architect who redesigned it chose marble for the building. I don't want to frighten people to think that this is a fire trap or anything like that, but there are things we can do to lessen the risk of fire, to ensure fire protection services.

That's something we need to keep in mind, understanding that not only is this our workplace, but this is a tourist destination. This is a place where, all the time, people are wandering around on tour, learning about this historical site.

There have been some renovations that have been done in the past—obviously, there are cameras; when you think of a building from 1893, there wouldn't have been cameras back then—but there haven't been a lot. It has been a lot of piecemeal work. I worked in construction for more than a decade, and there is only so much you can do

before you've got to start from scratch; there's only so much you can do to tinker and nudge.

We were fortunate, on the standing committee, to go for a tour of this building. Many of us in our offices would recognize there's some need for improvements. I'm in one of the corner offices of the building before it goes into another hallway, and there is a snake of Cat 5 cables that goes through my office. Our House leader is next door to my office, and there's probably one less cable in his office and one less in the office after that. But it is literally just a snake of cables all tie-wrapped together that punches a hole through the wall and goes to the next office and the next office. It's because there's no more room to bring it through the walls; there's no more room to cover it up. We went into the air return system, which is only supposed to be for air coming in and out of the building, to allow some ventilation and clean air, and a lot of that space is being used for cabling and infrastructure to go through. It was shocking to see a lot of this stuff—and not shocking in a Mike Holmes, Holmes on Homes renovation disaster way, but just to understand how flexible the maintenance workers have been in upgrading the building and what has happened.

I want to recognize as well that as a committee, we also went to Ottawa to see the House of Commons, which is already going through a restoration project. That really helped open our eyes about the restoration and what we're up against. We want to be as fiscally responsible as possible. We know that this is an important project, but we also know that the people of Ontario want to ensure that we're spending money wisely. The project in Ottawa is massive; it's much larger than what we're going to be doing here, but it really helped us understand the scope of what's happening.

We live in a museum. This is very old building. It's a lot of historical site—so it's not the same as renovating your house, where you can just kick down a wall. There are a lot of things that we have to do here to ensure that we preserve the structure around us. Everywhere I look in this room has carvings and, really, art. Our chandeliers themselves are art. The ceiling is painted as art—the cameras can't pan up there. It's a beautiful building.

It reminds me, actually, of one evening when I was leaving late, and one of the precinct protection officers, Ralph, was staring at some cabinets on the first floor, on the west side. I was coming down the stairs, and Ralph was looking into the cabinets, and I thought maybe the glass got broken or something, and I asked if everything was okay. He said, "Oh, yes, we just rotate through, and I haven't been here for a while. They changed the display, and I'm just enjoying it. Are you open to some advice?" I was very new—it was within my first year of being an MPP—and I was open to any kind of advice, so I said yes. And Ralph said, "Long days, short years. How many times do you rush to the House and walk past the artwork on the walls without stopping to look at them? These are long days that you're having, but looking back, they're going to be short years, and one day, you won't be here anymore. I would recommend that you enjoy them." And I do make

a point of looking at the different artwork that's on the walls, the busts, even the marble handrails or the flooring—I don't know the right term for the flooring, but the tiny little stones, the mosaic in the flooring that someone on their hands and knees placed individually to make the design. Those are all things that I ignored for the first couple of months when I was elected, or took for granted—but recognizing that all of this stuff that is in here makes this place where we work beautiful. As ugly as it can feel some days—we can really get heated in debate—it's a beautiful place to work.

Yesterday, the OLIP interns were here, and my first intern kept saying that my office was the most smiley place that she'd ever worked. And one of the reasons I think I'm always smiling here is that I know how privileged we all are to be here and to be the voices of our ridings. No matter what kind of mood I'm in, even if I'm not feeling well, I am always smiling in this building because it is a beautiful place to work, and we're all so fortunate to be here.

I'm going to go to the bill. I'm feeling more nostalgic about the work that we do, but in terms of the bill, we have real hazards in the building that have to be addressed.

We have a steam heating system. We're at the time of year, I think, when many of us are happy to be on House duty because there's a sense of air conditioning in here that we haven't been transitioned to in our offices. It's warm outside, but the steam heating system is still running, because if we get a cold snap, it takes a long time to restart it, and so we have to transition. There is a time where it's very, very warm here, and it's not comfortable in a suit; it's not even comfortable in a T-shirt. So we have a steam heating system that is not energy-efficient, to begin with. It's outdated. It requires a lot of fabrication in order to repair it—because sometimes the maintenance people have to actually get parts fabricated to fix it. And it's potentially a fire hazard. Steam can be dangerous under pressure. There's a lot of work behind that.

We have a wiring system that's out of date. I talked about the Cat 5 cables, but also, the cable trays are absolutely loaded. There has been a project to remove redundant cable, but it's hard when they're buried and twisted. There are areas that have been discovered that have exposed wires, like any building, that are being addressed. I don't want to panic people, but there's a lot of work over the time.

Anyone who has been to Queen's Park will notice that we have Culligan Water containers on every floor, because you can't drink the water because of the lead pipes that are in the building.

As in most buildings this old, there's asbestos and lead and PCBs that have to be addressed. So when we do this project, we're going to have to decant. We can't all crowd over to the east wing while they do the west wing; it just won't work. It's going to be a large project, and going to Ottawa helped us to understand that.

This is going to take a long time to do, like I've said often. Best of luck to all of us that we will be here at the end of it, but the history is that many of us may not be.

One of the members resigned to pursue another career option recently. So that's the reality for us. We can come back as visitors. But this really isn't about making the place great for us; it's about making this place great for everybody else.

0920

With all the work that's coming ahead, I want to recognize the members on the committee and the work that they have done together. This is really, I would say, the most non-partisan committee I've ever been on. And my colleague was on the committee with me previously—it felt non-partisan then too. It is very non-partisan. I don't think my mom would ever understand that I get along with Mike Harris. But, quite frankly, that member and I are the co-chairs of the subcommittee, and we have casual conversations, straight-up conversations about concerns and what we can do.

Part of this project really is about, when we do the renovations and we make this investment, that we want to ensure that this building reflects all of the people of Ontario. The quote I said talked about "old men," and implied in that is "old white men," in the Greek philosopher days. But the makeup of this province and the leadership of this province is no longer just old white men, and we want that to be reflected. We want newcomers to Canada to be reflected in this building. We want people from different backgrounds to be reflected in this building. We want this to feel like a place that reflects Ontario and everyone in Ontario. We want people to feel seen when they come into the building. We want to improve the security of the building—not just for ourselves, but for the staff who are here and for the visitors and the tours.

We want to ensure that we have consultations with as many people as possible. I think that, as a committee, the thing that worries us most is that you don't know what you don't know. And so as we're reaching out to Indigenous groups and heritage experts and accessibility advocates, we start thinking about: Who we are missing? What advice will we not get? In our last meeting, actually, we were talking about: How do we open this so that people can just apply and submit information? And quite frankly, we're going to get something wrong at the end of the day, because we're human.

I'm reminded often of this quote: "The sign of a good negotiation is when both sides walk away with a rock in their shoe." And so our goal, at a minimum, is not to get it so very wrong that people feel like they have more than just a rock in their shoe—that there's a nudge of something we could have done a little bit better, but they understand that we were absolutely doing the best that we can.

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

Further debate?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Before I speak to Bill 75, I'm sad to share that this morning Ontario woke up as a province in grief. Today, as many of us know, we are sadly mourning another officer murdered in the line of duty. We are devastated by the loss of Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Eric Mueller, and we are praying for the other

officers who have been injured in this tragedy in eastern Ontario. We anxiously await their recovery. Madam Speaker, as details emerge, we will be moving for a moment of silence later this morning. Our hearts are with the families of the officers impacted by this senseless event. Our thoughts are also with the brotherhood and sisterhood of the Ontario police community. These are special people who put themselves on the line each and every day. As I've said many times here, everyone has a right to feel safe in their own home and community.

Madame la Présidente, tous ont le droit de se sentir en sécurité chez eux et dans leur collectivité.

Again, we will have more to say on this later.

I'm delighted to speak on this bill, because I believe in this place. It's such an honour for me to be here and sit with my colleagues in this Legislature and be part of a righteous opportunity to be part of democracy each day, a place where we can all contribute to bend the moral arc, the fabric of the values of who we are as Ontarians, and understanding what matters most. This place is utterly magnificent, and it belongs to absolutely everyone who calls Ontario home.

I can tell you, after my election on June 2, proudly representing the people of York Centre, I really entered this building for my very first time. Although I may have been here insignificantly throughout my youth, I don't remember those visits, unfortunately. When I walked down these stairs for the first time and asked one of our own guides in our home of democracy to show me around, as an elected member, it was overwhelming, the sense of awe that I was here.

We're here at so many times in our collective history, since this building was built—most recently, just this past Saturday, at the 21-gun salute and ceremony for the coronation of King Charles III. God save the King. We have witnessed so many events and miracles that have been part of this building's history. Ontario is huge, and we know that, and our views are long because our province is so huge, and we know that as well. But we know that experience tells us never to take a clear sky for granted. Change can be abrupt and dramatic, and the biggest storms seem to appear out of nowhere and challenge even the most experienced forecasters.

When I go back to my first minutes in this building, shortly after my election, and how utterly magnificent this building is—it didn't dawn on me how many parts of this building have seen generations that need repairs and restoration, because we only see the beauty, we only see the carvings in the wood, we only see the majesty that exists. As I came to know here, as many of us have, walking the stairs, as the member said, in the days prior, where the halls can be hot and in the summer they can be even hotter—we understand that this is a dome of democracy, something amazingly precious. I wonder, if this building could talk about its life, what it could reveal about its story.

Our democracy reminds us that we need to understand change, and we have to understand that change changes with time.

Madam Speaker, the place is defined by our dreams. It speaks to a present written—a current present; not a present, necessarily, that we give somebody, but it could be that as well—by our shared responsibilities, and it speaks to the future potential of those who will succeed us here one day.

When I look around on all sides of the House, it really is gratifying to see how much appreciation people have of this place. And I'm grateful for my colleague and mentor and friend, our government House leader, who has really led the freshman class to appreciating all that this chamber, all that this Legislature tells to us.

These hallowed halls are telling us that we will carry on in past traditions—and that, Madam Speaker, is one of the reasons why you are in the chair. You're a presiding officer, and this is part of our tradition. But there's more that exists. There's the bricks. There is the culture of the stonework. There's the respect of where these lands sit and how they sit. It talks about our history and those generations who were here long before us.

It's amazing that we should never lose focus on what this building has meant to the approximate 1,980 people, since Confederation, who were elected to serve here. I remember when the Clerk of the House told me, on my very first few days, my number. Each of us has a number; they can't take that away from us. My number is 1,947. When I look around the room, those who have been in so many preceding Parliaments—their numbers are lower. When you think about the honour that we have, to be one of less than 2,000 people who call this place home—I still can't get over that. I think of the courage, dignity and the respect that our predecessors who were here had that allowed us to serve on this day, that allowed us to serve from different faiths and different backgrounds, that allowed us to understand that this historic building has hosted numerous gatherings over the years.

0930

We've celebrated, just in the last number of months since I've been here—understanding this is a gathering place for many. Every day, there's a reception, and when I miss a reception or I don't know about it, I feel that I've missed out on something special in our own building. We've celebrated, in recent months, Black History Month, and I want to thank everyone, including our Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity and the member from Ajax, who put on this event. This event happened here in this building. I think of Persian Heritage Month, with the delicious food and teas that they served, and I thank our Minister of Children, Community and Social Services and the member from Carleton and others who attended that event. I recall the lunar new year celebration and the member from Richmond Hill, who took leadership in that; and the member who led Hellenic Heritage Month, in March—this was a wonderful opportunity—the member from Oakville North-Burlington. We celebrated Sikh Heritage Month. We celebrated Dutch Heritage Month. We celebrated Jewish Heritage Month and Polish Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month. And only in Ontario and only in

this building, this magnificent dome of democracy, could we have done something as beautiful, because as the government House leader has said and the Premier has said and I have said, our diversity is what makes Ontario and this Legislature unbelievably special; *parce que notre diversité est notre plus grande réussite*.

Nothing can ever replicate the diversity that we have in Ontario, and I tell people this in my riding of York Centre that is incredibly diverse; I tell it whenever I travel. It is something that we celebrate. This is something that will never be replicated likely anywhere in the world.

When we look at this building, a building that was built a long time ago, it has not undergone, as the member said, a major renovation in slightly over 100 years—and I would argue it depends on what you call a renovation, because when I saw the old pictures of Premier Davis or Premier Rae or Premier Peterson sitting here, the carpet may have looked different and the chair covers may have looked different.

But really and truly, nothing lasts forever, and we need a building that will serve us for tomorrow. We need to make sure that from a safety perspective and from an operational standards perspective, this building will serve parliamentarians for years to come.

Even when it comes to safety—and again, I want to thank the leaders of the Clerk's office and the Speaker's office and the government House leader's office who take the emergency preparedness so seriously. When we look forward, we're confronted with new challenges that we never, historically, had to deal with. It is still a great honour, with ease, as a member—or as we have our staff be able to walk through our building with such ease and comfort. But there are technological improvements that must be made as science and technology changes, and we have to be part of that change. We can't take our safety for granted. We can't compromise on this.

We must make the investments necessary to ensure that everyone who works here is not only safe but works in a healthy workplace. This is absolutely important.

I want to acknowledge the importance of the visitors and dignitaries who come in this building. Again, we are so excited to showcase this building because it is magnificent. We don't tell our dignitaries and our guests—the behind-the-scenes tour. But we know that in order for us to continue showing off this building for generations to come, it has to have the physical improvements and infrastructure changes that it needs.

I want to recognize in this workplace, in this special dome of democracy, the members and the staff and the legislative staff and the custodial staff, the special constables and peace officers who keep us safe—these are amazing people—the librarians, and everyone else who works as part of the House of democracy.

When we have a safe community, we have absolutely everything, and I spoke about this when I started my remarks. When we have a Queen's Park for tomorrow that will allow this to go another 100 years, our successors many generations down will thank us for the efforts and leadership we did in 2023 to pass this bill—understanding

that we are now laying the seeds for a foundation for tomorrow, just like those when this building was built did. So this bill is a big deal.

If passed, the Queen's Park Restoration Act, 2023, will establish a secretariat within government tasked with planning and executing a full-scale restoration of the Legislative Building at Queen's Park, including temporary relocation of operations. As the government House leader has said and others who are on the committee have said, we're learning from people who have done this. We're not reinventing the wheel to start with nothing. That's the beauty of seeing other houses of democracy that have already gone through the restoration—to have the best practices, to learn what they have learned, to take the nuggets of the information forward so that we can benefit.

This government will leverage its significant expertise in managing this large-scale infrastructure project—and we're doing that. You just have to look behind Whitney Block, and you see that we're taking buildings, the Hearst Block and the Macdonald Block that needed renovations, so that we will have offices for those people in Ontario public service—first-class offices, safe offices—and for the people who work here and for the members. We deserve nothing less.

The Queen's Park Restoration Act, 2023, will provide a strong foundation on which government is given the authority and accountability necessary to execute this in a timely matter.

As I wrap up some final thoughts, I want to say how proud we all should feel that we took our place in this building in a moment in time, because it doesn't happen to everyone; we're not all that fortunate—that those who saw fit to elect us brought us to this place. That's why, each time I walk in the door, I always say to myself, "How blessed are we?"—not "how blessed am I?"—because it doesn't matter who we are or who we love or who we worship or how we worship or where we came from or how we got here, this place is ours. It belongs to everyone, and what matters is that we're here together, diverse and different and absolutely incredible.

I really want to again give my thanks to everyone for their dedication who works in this building, because they are heroes.

As I consider myself proud that this is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to stand for election, to run for election and to be right here, it just reminds me of how blessed we are.

So I hope everyone will support Bill 75, because we believe in our province and in our future; parce que nous croyons en notre province et en notre avenir.

We will all take inspiration in knowing—and I've said this before, but the lines fit again. This province is big. It's bigger than all of us. It's more important than any of us. Ontario was here before us; it will be here long after us, and most importantly, it belongs to every one of us.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Calandra has moved third reading of Bill 75, An Act to enact the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023, and to make certain amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? In my opinion, it is carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): We will now recess until 10:15.

The House recessed from 0939 to 1015.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

IZUMI AQUACULTURE

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak about an innovative company that is joining us here today in the Legislature. Most of us will recognize the name Izumi from countless sport fishing championships and an incredible 38-year television show highlighting places to fish all across Ontario—the best recreational fishing in the world.

To the members of this House, I want to let you know that Izumi Aquaculture, led by brothers Wayne and Bob Izumi, are here today to tell us about the tremendous new industry that they're helping to build. They are utilizing floating raceways in former pit and quarry sites, in a manner that actually improves the surrounding environment, while building our capacity to feed ourselves and so many more.

Fresh fish is a dietary staple, a wonderfully nutritious and delicious protein that adds to the very wide palette that is "Good Things Grow in Ontario." Upper Canada steelhead salmon is delicious. All of us are invited to join the Izumi brothers and several other members of the team at Izumi Aquaculture to sample the delectable treat that is locally sourced and expands our food security and capacity.

I hope you will all join us today after question period in room 230 for a taste and to learn more about this innovative approach.

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE IN HAMILTON WEST-ANCASTER- DUNDAS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I had the honour of attending the opening for the Auchmar Manor, which is a historic building in my riding. The Auchmar Manor was built in 1855 by Sir Isaac Buchanan, a political leader who represented

Hamilton in the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario pre-Confederation.

The manor is just one of the magnificent buildings in the area that are an important legacy of our history. Walking through Hamilton, Dundas, Ancaster, you can visit historic locations like Dundurn Castle, once the family home of Queen Camilla's great-great-grandmother. Everywhere you go, there's a celebration of the pairing between food and heritage. You can grab a bite at the Collins Brewery, built in 1840, dine at Quatrefoil, built in the 1860s, grab a beer at the Coach and Lantern, built in the 1700s and used during the War of 1812, or meet friends at the vibrant Café Domestique, which was built in 1911.

The organization that hosted me is Doors Open Hamilton, who prepare these buildings for tours, offer walking tours and do advocacy for their preservation locally and here at Queen's Park. I want to thank the organizers who gave their time, especially local historians Stan Nowak, Diane Dent, Richard Allen, Shannon Kyles and the many, many others, the many volunteers who give their time to honour and preserve these great buildings to make sure that they are standing for many future generations to enjoy. Thank you so much for all that you do in the riding of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

FUSILLADE À BOURGET

Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin: C'est avec tristesse que je me lève en Chambre ce matin pour vous dire qu'il y a une tragédie qui a eu lieu dans notre circonscription cette nuit. J'ai été réveillé ce matin par le président des comtés unis de Prescott et Russell pour m'annoncer que trois officiers de police ont répondu à un appel domestique dans le village de Bourget. Il y a eu une fusillade, et un de ces policiers n'est plus parmi nous, donc a perdu la vie.

J'aimerais dire que nos pensées sont avec les amis et la famille de l'officier Mueller puis aussi dire à nos premiers répondants que nous sommes là pour les aider et que nous pensons à eux. Pour une petite communauté comme Bourget où il y a pratiquement 500 habitants, ou peut-être un peu plus, ce sont des choses auxquelles on ne s'attend pas.

1020

Je dois dire que je suis fier de faire partie d'un gouvernement qui supporte les policiers puis qui fait sûr qu'ils aient les outils pour venir en aide, pour le bon travail qu'ils font tous les jours. Pour cette raison, j'aimerais remercier tous les premiers répondants. On pense à eux. J'espère qu'ils vont avoir les ressources nécessaires pour passer par-dessus cet événement-là. Nos pensées sont avec les familles.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH CARE

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Good morning. Mino-gigizheb.

This week is nurses' week, and I'd like to talk about nurses in the north. Federal nurses working in fly-in First Nations clinics are in a crisis. They work 24-hour shifts in out-of-date facilities, thousands of miles away from their

homes and families. I know this takes a toll on their mental and physical health, and the burnout is at an all-time high. The health care crisis faced by the people of Kiiwetinoong is made worse by these conditions, which leads to unnecessary suffering and needless deaths.

All levels of government have a treaty obligation to provide health care.

Rather than dealing with the causes of this recruitment and retention crisis, the federal government spends millions of dollars contracting out work to private nursing agencies, and we know Ontario does the exact same thing. This approach leaves patients in the north without the consistency and the quality of care they deserve and creates a situation where staff and nurses are working alongside freelance workers at double their salaries. We cannot continue to accept this. This is not normal, and we need to improve.

I'd like to say to the nurses: Meegwetch. Thank you for the work that you do in the north.

OAKVILLE AWARDS FOR BUSINESS EXCELLENCE

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I'm incredibly proud to recognize and celebrate the achievements of some of Oakville's most innovative businesses and successful entrepreneurs at the 28th annual Oakville Awards for Business Excellence. The event was organized by the Oakville Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Oakville West.

I would like to extend my congratulations and recognize the award recipients, the recipients of:

—the RBC Large Business of the Year award, Reunion Coffee Roasters;

—the Bell Community Builder award, the Oakville Community Foundation;

—the O'Connor MacLeod Hanna Professional Services Provider of the Year award, Wellness for the Body;

—the Cogeco Entrepreneur of the Year award, Star Quality Private Investigations;

—the Henderson Partners Mid-size Business of the Year award, Ultimate Pool Service;

—the Visit Oakville tourism award, Paradiso Restaurants;

—the CN not-for-profit excellence award, the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides;

—the Media Resources Service Industry of the Year award, Soccer World;

—the KPMG Small Business of the Year award, On The Spot carpet cleaning;

—the Sagen young professional of the year award, Rebecca Pointon of Spinco Oakville; and finally

—the Business Icon Award, Siemens Canada, which proudly has its Canadian head office in Oakville.

Congratulations, once again, to all the award recipients. Your passion and dedication to your businesses and our community is inspiring.

NURSES

Ms. Chandra Pasma: As we celebrate Nursing Week in Ontario, I'd like to take a moment to thank the hard-working nurses of Ottawa West-Nepean and all across Ontario, including the amazing nurses of ONA Local 83 at the Ottawa Hospital, Local 84 at the Queensway Carleton Hospital and the wonderful RPNs of CUPE 4000 and CUPE 2875. Their dedication and unwavering commitment to patient care has supported so many of us through so many difficult, challenging, heartbreaking and life-affirming moments of the past few years, and they have done all of this incredible work in spite of the very challenging conditions they've had to work in and the serious disrespect with which they have been treated by this government.

A sincere and heartfelt thank you for all of the work that you do and keep on doing.

Now it's time for us to have your back. It's time for the government to negotiate a fair contract, to stop fighting the court's decision on Bill 124. It's time to stop the privatization agenda that is pulling nurses out of the public health care system, leaving public hospitals short-staffed and contributing to longer wait times and frustrated patients. It's time to stop the temp agency insanity that puts profits in the pockets of investors while treating nurses on the public payroll unfairly. It's time for the government to show nurses the respect you so deserve so that you can keep on doing the job you love.

POLICE OFFICERS

Ms. Jess Dixon: I had a topic in mind that was far more cheerful, and then I woke up this morning and found out that we had lost another police officer in the line of duty, Sergeant Eric Mueller. Part of me considered just standing here for the remainder of my time, because there really are no words, but what I wanted to say was, to the officers out there and the friends and the family, how deeply sorry I am.

I was the partner of a police officer for quite some time, and we were together during the period of the Nova Scotia shooting. He wasn't even a patrol officer; he was in major crimes, so not generally responding to calls. But after that happened, I experienced these incredible panic attacks when I would call him and he didn't immediately answer his phone. I would have this fear that he was dead even though most of the murders that had happened now had not even happened at that point in time.

All this to say that I understand, in some small way, what the families of these officers feel when they say goodbye and they go to work in the morning, no longer knowing if they will come home safely. I will continue to be an advocate for them, and again, just express how deeply, deeply sorry I am to all of these officers.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: May is National Lyme Disease Awareness Month across Canada. It is an opportunity for

Lyme patients, advocates and educators to spread awareness about how to prevent Lyme and tick-borne diseases.

I want to recognize some of the groups working tirelessly across Ontario to improve the lives of people who have Lyme disease: Linda Kelso and the Ontario Lyme Alliance; CanLyme; Rossana Magnotta and the G. Magnotta Foundation for Vector-Borne Diseases; as well as Dr. Melanie Wills with the University of Guelph Lyme disease research lab. They are all advocating for more resources for patients with Lyme disease across Ontario and Canada.

Lyme disease is a significant and growing health issue across our province. It is a tick-borne bacterial infection. Lyme-carrying ticks are on the rise across Canada, and the highest rates of human-acquired cases are in Ontario. If left undiagnosed and untreated, Lyme can mimic other diseases like ALS, multiple sclerosis and lupus.

Speaker, once May is over, people with Lyme disease will still be suffering. Ontario needs to do more to help those already diagnosed with Lyme and to prevent further spread of the disease.

I encourage this government to help tackle Lyme in Ontario by implementing all 10 recommendations from the 2018 Report of the Lyme Disease and Tick-Borne Illnesses Task Force.

Speaker, I challenge all MPPs to join me and take a bite out of Lyme on the front lawn this afternoon, right after question period.

LOIS FAIRLEY NURSING AWARD

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I proudly rise to carry on a great Nursing Week tradition, begun by my predecessor Percy Hatfield, to recognize in the House the recipient of this year's RNAO Lois Fairley Nursing Award, Mary Cunningham. Mary has been serving for 46 years and has been part of the intensive care unit at our Ouellette Campus since 1990. Mary mentors and guides all those who have had the privilege to work with her. She has helped develop the provincial standards for nursing in critical care, as well as for end-of-life programs. It is Mary's work to care for families that truly shines through, while consistently giving of her knowledge to our community's newest nurses. Her colleagues have rightfully described her passion for caregiving as being contagious.

1030

The Fairley family and the Windsor-Essex chapter of the RNAO selected Mary from among nominations received from the public. Lois Fairley, the namesake of the award, was both a graduate and an employee of Windsor's Grace Hospital for 38 years. Lois served as a director of RNAO and president of the Ontario Nurses Association, as well as sitting on the St. Clair College nursing program advisory committee.

Mary Cunningham demonstrates, just as Lois Fairley did, that amazing people work in nursing, and it's truly fitting that she's bestowed with this honour.

Thank you so much, Mary, for your service to us in Windsor-Essex and to the province of Ontario.

NURSES

Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta: I really want to thank all the colleagues who have mentioned Nursing Week. It's truly heartwarming to receive all those wishes.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, this week is National Nursing Week, a chance for us to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contributions that registered nurses, registered practical nurses, nurse practitioners and nursing students make to our health care system everyday. This year's theme is "Our Nurses. Our Future." using the hashtag #HeyNurse—showcasing the many roles nurses play in a patient's journey to wellness, connecting patients to the high-quality care they need closer to home.

As a registered nurse and a clinician myself, I recognize the invaluable contributions nurses make to our province, being the gentler touch in health care, the face of dignity and the voice of compassion that so many of our patients need. As we know, nurses have worked through unprecedented challenges and have continued to rise to the occasion. That is why the theme "Our Nurses. Our Future." is synonymous to me with investing into the success of our nursing students, and that is exactly what our government is doing.

The Learn and Stay program provides free tuition and textbooks for RN and NP students located in priority communities, and with this level of investment, it is no surprise that in 2022, Ontario experienced a record-breaking enrolment, recruiting 30,000 nursing students to grow the workforce for future generations.

Today, colleagues, let's use the hashtag #HeyNurse to thank exceptional nurses in our community.

Happy National Nursing Week.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the presence in the chamber today of a former member of this assembly, the member for Toronto Centre in the 42nd Parliament: Suze Morrison.

Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce three members of the Izumi Aquaculture group: Mr. Gerry McGuire, Mr. Ryan Smith, and two-time Canadian open-fishing champion Mr. Wayne Izumi. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. This morning, I'd like to introduce the policy and the communications team from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. They are here in the members' gallery: Abigail Hill; Tessa Jourdain; Chelsea Combot; Jennifer McPhee; Sarah Lukaszcyk; Stan Williams; Annie Mac-killican; Francene Antone; Randi Jacob; Jada Reynolds; and, again, the former member for Toronto Centre, Suze Morrison.

Welcome to Queen's Park, and meegwetch for the important work that you do.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I'd like to introduce Marilyn Heinz and Charles Taylor from beautiful

Burlington. Marilyn was recently recognized as a 25-year volunteer with Acclaim Health. She connects with people through the Tele-Touch program. And this is Charles's first visit to Queen's Park.

Mr. Deepak Anand: It is my pleasure to welcome Chris Rankin, Jen Rankin and Kyle Rankin, the proud family of page Mackenzie Rankin from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I am very pleased today to welcome to the chamber my new constituency assistant, Amy Lester.

Welcome, Amy.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's my honour today to welcome John and Nicki Groenewegen, constituents of mine from Guelph who have come for a tour of the Legislature and who will have lunch with me today as part of a fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Guelph.

I would also like to acknowledge that Tessa Jourdain from the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres is also a constituent of mine from Guelph.

Thanks for being here at Queen's Park today.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome, from my constituency of Vaughan-Woodbridge, Nicholas Vine and Aleksandra Dowiat, whose daughter Sophie is page captain today.

Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome Wanda Deschamps and her son Adrien here to Queen's Park. Wanda is a local EDA volunteer, and she's also the founder of Liberty Co, which advocates for increasing neuro-divergent employment in Ontario.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome Ahnaf Al Habib, Si Ya Li, Fiona Mooney, Mahir Tasnif and Kaayaan Rashid in the Speaker's gallery. They're from Greenbelt Youth Action at Riverdale Collegiate in my riding.

Welcome to the Legislature.

Ms. Doly Begum: I am very pleased to introduce and welcome Mr. Fayzul Karim to the House. He has joined our constituency team, and it has been wonderful.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: I'd like to welcome a former constituent of mine from the Merritton area. He was a former page, too.

Jackson Burch, happy birthday to you, and welcome to your House.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to take a moment to inform the House of a change in the allocation for independent members' participation in House proceedings, as there are now 11 members sitting as independents, seven of whom are representatives of the Liberal Party. Fortunately, I've been able to consult precedents from the previous Parliament, when at times we had the same proportion of independent members, and we now need to revert to practices that were previously in place.

During question period on days the House sits, I will continue to recognize one independent member to ask a

question each day and a second independent member to ask a question every Tuesday. On Wednesdays, we will return to having a second question for independent members on alternating weeks.

With regard to members' statements, there will continue to be one statement allotted to an independent member every sessional day, with each individual member entitled to make a statement once per 11-day period.

As a result of the resignation of the member for Scarborough–Guildwood, there are now seven Liberal independent members rather than eight, which changes the amount of speaking time available to the Liberal independent members as a group.

At the beginning of this Parliament, I explained that in order for each independent member to have an opportunity to participate in debate on second and third reading of government bills and on substantive government motions proportional to what any other individual member might have, each independent member would be allotted three minutes of speaking time per debate. As there are now seven Liberal independent members, and since standing order 26(a) does not permit speeches longer than 20 minutes, I am now prepared to recognize any of the Liberal independent members for one speech of up to 20 minutes. This time may be shared amongst the Liberal independent members pursuant to standing order 26(d), but it may not be banked.

Thank you for your attention.

ERIC MUELLER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Solicitor General has a point of order.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: With a heavy heart, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for this House to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Eric Mueller, who was tragically killed in the line of duty earlier this morning in Bourget.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Solicitor General is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to observe a moment of silence in remembrance of Ontario Provincial Police Sergeant Eric Mueller, who was tragically killed in the line of duty earlier this morning in Bourget. Agreed? Agreed.

Members, please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Premier and the housing minister told the Integrity Commissioner that they only learned about the proposal to remove 15 giant swaths of

land from the greenbelt shortly before the public did on November 4, 2022. Remember that date: November 4, 2022. Because new evidence revealed just this morning suggests that those in the Premier's inner circle were aware of it much earlier—before August of that same year.

To the Premier: What was the exact date when he was made aware of this greenbelt proposal?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have been very clear on that, and they have, of course, worked with the commissioner on this.

Having said that, it is clear to me, and I think it's clear to all of us on this side of the House anyway, that this is really more about the NDP's ideological opposition to building more homes for the people of the province of Ontario. Whether it is for long-term-care homes, which they yesterday talked against, whether it is for more housing in all different types of communities, whether it's purpose-built rental housing—that is what this is really about for the opposition.

As I have said on many occasions, whether it is as part of long-term care or as part of building homes in communities where people are desperate to have them, we will not be swayed. We will continue to remove obstacles that are in the way of people owning their first home, renting their first apartment, so that our economy can continue to grow. We will not be swayed from that mission on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I'd like it in the record that the Premier is sitting right here and did not answer that question, and I really did want to hear specifically from the Premier on this matter.

Interjections.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I can say he's here.

Speaker, timing matters—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let me clarify this. Stop the clock.

We can't make reference to the absence of another member. It's also true that the standing orders allow any minister to answer the question.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to go back to the Premier, because he's right sitting here—and I would like him to answer this question, because it is to him.

Speaker, the timing matters; timing matters quite a lot. In 2018, this government swore up and down that they wouldn't touch the greenbelt, but the evidence suggests that no later than August 2022, they were considering breaking that promise. And that matters, because in September, one developer, Rice Commercial Group, purchased two parcels of land for \$80 million—parcels of land that could not be developed because they were fully in the greenbelt, land that is now worth considerably more

because it can be developed. The developer also happens to be a major donor to the Conservative Party.

To the Premier: Did the Conservatives tip off one of their major donors that they were planning to carve up the greenbelt?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, I think the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have been clear on that, and they continue to work with the commissioner on that.

But the member opposite is correct; in 2018, we said, very clearly, that we were going to do our best to build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario, and it started in 2018, with transit-oriented communities. We said that we were going to build housing around the transit that we were building across the province of Ontario. Whether it was the subways in Toronto or the GO train expansion across the GTA, we were very clear that we were going to do that. They voted against that.

We've also been very clear in this Parliament that we were going to start to ensure that 1.5 million homes were built for the people of the province of Ontario. We are in a housing crisis, and for years we saw the NDP and the Liberals put obstacles in the way of new construction coming online. We are going to remove those obstacles; we are going to build homes for the people of the province of Ontario so that the younger generation can enjoy all of the benefits that we did, when we—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Ontarians know that this isn't about building housing—not one unit. Ontarians deserve a government they can trust. One way this government could clear this whole thing up is by releasing the unredacted records.

Speaker, back to the Premier, sitting right in front of me: If they have nothing to hide, when will they release the full records related to their greenbelt grab?

Interjections.

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

I see nothing out of order for a member to make reference to the presence of another member.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: They can call it anything that they want, but the people of the province of Ontario know very well the record of the NDP and the Liberals, when it comes to building housing in the province of Ontario. Systemically, over 15 years, they put obstacles in the way that have brought us into the position where, one of the largest jurisdictions land masses—in the world, frankly—has a housing crisis. We're going to remove those obstacles for the next generation of Ontarians who want the same dream that we all had the benefit of.

Since I've been in this House, they've talked about ethics. The only person I know of who has breached the

ethics in this House was the member for Waterloo—that's the only person in the time that I have been here.

We are going to double down for the people of the province of Ontario, so that all of those people who are out there making offer after offer and can't have a home—we have your backs. We are going to build more homes. Despite what they say, despite what they did, we will get it done.

Interjections.

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

I'm going to caution all members of the House that personal attacks are out of order. We have to ensure that our language is civil so as to ensure that we can have a constructive debate this morning in question period.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Start the clock. Leader of the Opposition.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, this government just loves a backroom deal; it's like they can't help themselves. We just learned of another one in Caledon.

Last year, the then mayor secretly requested a ministerial zoning order from the housing minister so a developer could build a warehouse on prime farmland. The town council and local planning staff did not support this project. Local residents weren't even notified, much less consulted. But the then mayor ignored the wishes of his democratically elected council and asked the housing minister for an MZO, which he was given.

1050

To the Premier: Does he think that those secret, undemocratic dealings are acceptable? And will he revoke this MZO?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Let me get this straight: A democratically elected mayor asked for an MZO so that he could bring jobs into his community. Not only are they against housing, but they're against jobs for the people of Ontario. They tie it up nicely in a bow. It highlights why Ontarians, election after election after election, have turned their backs on the NDP and why in the last election they shrunk the caucus by over 10 members.

Are we going to put MZOs in place for people who can bring jobs to the province of Ontario? You're darned right we are. We're going to do that. Are we going to continue to bring MZOs in those communities that want to work with us to bring more housing, jobs and opportunity? Yes. Will we go even further and bring MZOs in those communities that fight jobs and opportunity—but that we know are good for the people of the province of Ontario? You're darned right we will, because we have a mandate to grow the economy, build jobs and continue to make this the most prosperous province in Canada, and we'll get it done.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: This MZO was first requested by Rice Commercial Group. Just to remind everyone, that's the same developer who bought \$80 million of protected greenbelt land just two months before the Conservative government opened it up to be paved over. In January 2022, the developer asked Caledon for an MZO. By September, without the support of the town council, they had it.

I'm going to give the Premier another chance to clear the air right now, and if he won't do it, maybe at least the minister will stand up.

To the Premier: Were there any conversations that occurred between anyone in his government and the Rice Group before the mayor requested this MZO?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I said, the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing have worked with the commissioner, as you would expect, Speaker.

Now we've got the full triumvirate complete: They're against jobs, they're against housing, and now they're against a hospital being built in Newmarket, the new Southlake hospital. Yesterday, they were against long-term-care homes being built in Pickering.

This is the mandate of the NDP: Oppose everything, oppose growth, oppose jobs, oppose the people of the province of Ontario. Don't build rental housing. Ensure that the next generation of this province only has to rely on the government. That is the strategy of the NDP. That's when they're happiest—when people rely on government.

What we want to do is to give people the opportunity to succeed, because when we do that, this province and this country prosper, and that is what has grown this province for generations. It is why millions upon millions of people come here. They don't want a handout. They want the opportunity to succeed, and we'll give them that.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, do you know what we will oppose? We will oppose every time this government gives out favours to wealthy insiders and donors to the Conservative Party. It's despicable.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I have tabled legislation that is going to bring some integrity and transparency and accountability back to government—a bill that's going to help prevent this government from continuing to put their insider friends first. It goes to a vote in less than an hour.

To the Premier: Will his government support my legislation for much stronger integrity rules?

Interjections.

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

To reply, government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: As I said, in the five years that I have been here, the only person who has breached the integrity rules was the member from Waterloo. That hasn't stopped the NDP from making all kinds of spurious allegations against members of the Conservative Party, but not once has a member of the Conservative Party been found to be in breach. So what do the NDP do? They want to change the rules. We don't need to change the rules, because we have good rules in the province of Ontario. It is not our problem that the NDP get caught up in breaching those rules.

What we're going to focus on—and again, while they try and stray and move all over the place. Yesterday, I was reminded that they voted against mining. They voted against new subways in Toronto. They voted against housing. They voted against purpose-built rentals. They voted against long-term care. Now we hear that the Leader of the Opposition does not want new hospitals built in the province of Ontario. What they want is a province and a generation of Ontarians whose only source is the government. They want people to rely on the government.

We want people to succeed. We'll give them the resources and the tools they need to succeed, like we have done for generations, when Progressive Conservatives have been in charge.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

People in Scarborough are once again feeling abandoned as the SRT is being decommissioned without an adequate replacement. The original plan was that the Scarborough RT routes would be converted to a dedicated off-street busway during the seven-year closure of the line. This would save riders 10 minutes compared to on-street service. However, this month it was reported that buses would continue to operate on-street, and even though council has voted to convert the busway, they lack the funding to do so.

Speaker, why is the government refusing to help the long-suffering residents of Scarborough?

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

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question.

I think she knows very well that our government has been the first government to be there for the residents of Scarborough when it comes to transit. Our government, under the leadership of this Premier, put forward a plan for a three-stop subway extension in Scarborough for the first time. We did that not just on our own; we did it with city of Toronto support—city council supported it. Unfortunately for the residents of Scarborough, that member opposite and the entire NDP caucus voted against our plan for the residents of Scarborough.

We've been there for the residents of Scarborough with respect to transit, with respect to health care, and with respect to housing.

This is an infrastructure deficit we inherited from the Liberals that we are addressing—but the members opposite continually vote against.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: Speaker, the people of Scarborough have no idea when that Scarborough subway will be built—and especially after the chaos with Metrolinx and the 12-year delay of the Eglinton LRT, this government should not be talking about building subways or anything. That is embarrassing. That reputation for Metrolinx is embarrassing.

Scarborough transit users already have some of the longest commute times in the city because the government has failed to provide the needed operating funding for the TTC. On top of that, regardless of what this government will say, with recent service cuts, guess which routes are most affected? In Scarborough—with increasing commute times once again for commuters.

Now this government is refusing to fund the \$2.9-million investment necessary to ensure residents in Scarborough get the dedicated bus line and SRT replacement while they're waiting for that subway.

So my question again to the Premier: Will this government commit to funding an adequate replacement service for the people of Scarborough?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Through you, Mr. Speaker: I called Scarborough the forgotten city until this party, the PC Party, came into office—they were no longer forgotten. They were ignored under the previous two governments, NDP and Liberal, when it came to hospitals—zero funding. They were ignored when it came to the medical school—zero funding. And when it came to the Scarborough subway, not one single member of the NDP, not one single member from the Liberals that had all their members in Scarborough, even tried to attempt to do the Scarborough subway. They voted against the hospital, they voted against the medical school, they voted against the subway—and the nerve to stand up here?

We're tunnelling a Scarborough subway. but not only that, we're going to continue expanding the Scarborough subway right across Scarborough and make sure that 630,000 people finally have a voice after decades of being ignored—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock.

The next question.

1100

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Trevor Jones: My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Our province, much like the rest of the world, is in a time of great economic uncertainty. Ongoing supply chain disruptions, inflation and increased interest rates have created pressures for people across Ontario. Individuals and families are looking to our government for leadership and help during these challenging times to provide support so that life can be more affordable. They need to see that our government is continuing to focus on initiatives and investments that will provide financial relief.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is continuing to work on behalf of all Ontarians during these challenging economic times?

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the great member from Chatham-Kent–Leamington for that great question.

Speaker, our government has a responsible plan to ensure that our province remains on a strong and steady economic path forward. Our economic plan to build Ontario is grounded in our commitment to supporting families, empowering our workers and strengthening our business partners. We have laid a strong fiscal foundation on which our government will continue to build Ontario with a plan for recovery.

We eliminated licence plate renewal fees as well as licence plate stickers and refunded the past two years' fees for eligible vehicles.

We extended the current gas tax and fuel tax cuts until December 31, 2023.

That puts real money back into the pockets of Ontarians. This is what the people of Ontario expect and deserve from their government.

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

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you to our amazing parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance for that response. It's very reassuring to hear that our government is consistently introducing measures that will put money back in our pockets.

That said, the people of our province expect that their government will continue to look for further ways to reduce costs and make life easier.

Unlike the previous Liberal government that was out of touch with the people of Ontario, our government remains committed to focusing on issues that will help individuals and families in their everyday lives.

Speaker, can the parliamentary assistant please explain how our government is making life more affordable for all Ontarians?

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you again to the member for that question.

We are making transit more affordable by eliminating double fares for most local transit services in the greater Toronto area for commuters and also those who use GO Transit services. Our government is also working to expand this initiative to support more people commuting into Toronto.

For low-income seniors in Ontario, these uncertain times are even more challenging. That is why we temporarily doubled the Guaranteed Annual Income System payments for eligible seniors until December 2023 to ensure more seniors who need financial help will get it. And we'll be introducing legislation to expand the GAINS program, starting in July 2024, to see about 100,000 additional seniors be eligible for the program, for a 50% increase in recipients. We are also proposing to adjust this benefit annually so that it will increase with inflation.

Our government continues to support the people of Ontario.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Premier: Ontario municipalities say they are facing financial disaster due to revenue losses caused by Bill 23.

A recent Peel region report said Bill 23 will cost the region \$2 billion to \$6 billion in lost revenues. To replace those lost revenues, Peel will need to raise property taxes by at least 25% and more than double the utility rate. And Brampton says it will need to raise property taxes by 80% because of Bill 23.

Last year, the minister promised to make municipalities "whole" for these revenue losses. So why doesn't his budget include a single penny to do so?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, the member opposite was on local council; so was I; so were many of the individuals in this chamber. I never blamed anybody for my budgets. I sat at the budget table. I made decisions that were based on the best interests of my constituents when I was an elected official. I did the same thing when I was a CAO.

Municipalities control their own destiny in terms of what they decide—the service levels and the taxation levels for them. We work with municipalities. We've indicated that we want to better understand the impacts of More Homes Built Faster. That's why we announced recently the appointment of auditors who will work with a select group of municipalities, and what we find will inform us on our decision moving forward.

But to sit there and try to draw a line from this government to a decision made in a local council—the member knows better than that.

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

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, there is no money in the budget to make municipalities whole, as this minister promised. Not only that, according to expenditure estimates, this government is actually cutting the Streamline Development Approval Fund by 25% and cutting the Municipal Modernization Program by 70% compared to last year's estimates. These programs fund initiatives to speed up housing development approvals and fund audits.

If the minister is really holding off on compensating municipalities for Bill 23 because he wants to perform audits first and make sure municipalities are speeding up

approvals, why is he cutting the very programs that fund these initiatives?

Interjections.

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

The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: I've heard this whole song and dance before. Have I ever seen a municipality, have I ever seen a politician—outside of ours—that doesn't love spending money? You guys love spending money. The municipalities love spending money.

Mr. Speaker, when I went down to city hall, I heard the same song and dance. First meeting with the CAO—"We've got to raise taxes 30%." Well, guess what? We found a billion dollars, did a 0% tax increase, never went once to the province hat in hand.

We're there to help the municipalities—but isn't it amazing that they forget about all the new income and revenues up to the city coffers when they start building homes? The tax revenue—they forget about that.

We don't have an income problem at the city halls across the province; we have a spending problem. That's the issue.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Mr. Dave Smith: I think it's time for some good news today—so I'm going to ask the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

As summer approaches, many Ontarians are looking forward to enjoying the natural surroundings, facilities and trails at Ontario's parks. Our park system has been referred to as the hidden gem of Canada, but it's no secret that they're becoming widely known and very popular. With attendance numbers showing that there is a greater demand for our provincial parks, it's important that our government continues to invest in upgrades and amenities that individuals and families can enjoy.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to make the Ontario Parks experience even better than it has been in the past?

Hon. David Piccini: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I, too, am a Petes fan.

On to another subject: We'll talk about Ontario Parks. He's completely right; Ontario parks are no longer the hidden gem of Canada. Every year, we know more and more people are visiting Ontario's beautiful provincial parks. In every corner of this province, there is an Ontario park just ready to be explored. I'm proud that under this Premier's leadership we're expanding recreational opportunities for Ontarians—Alfred Bog, a new non-operating provincial park in the National Capital Region; Mississagi Provincial Park, a tripartite agreement with Serpent River and Mississauga First Nations and the city of Elliot Lake; or the brand new, urban provincial park that we just announced intent to create in Uxbridge. Wherever you look, there is a beautiful provincial park in Ontario.

That's why our government has made a historic commitment in the next two years of over \$42 million to

support the beautiful infrastructure at Ontario provincial parks so families can make memories—

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

Mr. Dave Smith: That was such good news that not a single member of the NDP heckled.

My constituents appreciate the importance of our parks system, having the privilege of living near the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park and the Petroglyphs Provincial Park, where there are so many opportunities to experience the outdoors.

Ontario's provincial parks operate in many regions across our province. While they vary in size and location, our park system is vitally important to the tourism sector, as well as preserving ecosystems and contributing to the overall well-being of Ontarians. For this reason, our government must continue to make investments into infrastructure and programming that will help to draw even more visitors to Ontario parks.

1110

Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to expand and build upon the provincial parks system?

Hon. David Piccini: I think that member spoke a little too soon. I might get cheeky in my response, so I'm sure I will get heckled.

This Premier made a historic commitment to expand capital and announced not one but two new provincial parks. And we announced just recently—by our incredible member, PA Yakabuski—over \$3.3 million in vital infrastructure upgrades to Algonquin Provincial Park.

Speaker, when we make these historic investments in the budget for new provincial parks—it's regrettable that the NDP and members opposite voted no. They voted no to expanded recreational opportunities for Ontarians; it's just shocking. I'm not surprised they voted no to public transit. They voted no to tax cuts on low-income families. They voted no to record infrastructure spending in rural communities.

On this side of the House, we're going to grow Ontario for all income brackets, for all Ontarians, regardless of your background, while also expanding—

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier.

My constituent Bill is an 87-year-old who reached out to my office in March. With failing vision, he urgently needed cataract surgery. But Bill was told he would have to wait 19 months for his surgery in a public clinic—over a year and a half wait. The underfunded public system forced Bill into a private clinic.

To the Premier: What is normal about this government making seniors go to private clinics for their vital health care?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You do understand that community clinics, including cataract clinics that we have expanded on the first of this year in Windsor, in Kitchener-Waterloo and in Ottawa, are now, today, performing more cataract surgeries so that your constituents, my constituents, the people of Ontario who have been languishing on wait-lists do not have to have that experience?

The suggestion that when you go into a community surgical centre you are paying with anything but your OHIP card is categorically false.

I think the member opposite should be spending more time explaining to Bill how Bill 60 is actually going to improve that access and continue to decrease wait times in the province of Ontario—which, by the way, in Canada, we actually lead.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Back to the Premier: Clearly, the minister understands that people in Ontario are being fleeced because of this government and for-profit health care privatization.

Bill couldn't wait. He's a lifeline for his partner because he drives. In Conservative Ontario, an 87-year-old senior was burdened with \$4,510 to pay. It is unconscionable, and it's on this government. I highly doubt this government has any clue what the private clinic is pulling from the public purse on top of this ridiculous amount. This clinic actually nickel-and-dimed Bill for COVID-19, adding a \$10 charge on his invoice.

Again to the Premier: What is normal about an 87-year-old getting gouged for their essential health care?

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: And what is acceptable about a status quo that means that individuals have to wait 19 months for surgery?

By expanding our community's surgical access through Bill 60, we are actually ensuring that people get those shortened wait times to make sure they can be back with their family, back in their jobs, back with community.

Bill 60 has some additional parameters that will ensure people know exactly what the OHIP-funded services are in that clinic. But more importantly, what we are doing is ensuring we are expanding access so that individuals do not have to travel as far and get access faster. What part of that process is the member opposite concerned about? Because what I see is a win, where people get shorter wait times, back in community, faster service.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

This week, we've had committee hearings on Bill 97 and heard from many stakeholders about what Bill 97 will mean for their municipalities, their professions and their neighbourhoods. It seems that once again, the government

is insisting on hoarding power and removing meaningful consultation while promoting sprawl. Bill 97 allows lands subject to MZOs to not comply with local official plans, the provincial policy statements, and provincial plans. Collectively, these plans are intended to serve the public interest and include policies on life safety, accessibility and flood hazards. As drafted, for lands subject to MZOs, these policy documents may not apply to downstream approvals for permits, licences and other approvals. This is dangerous.

Will the government confirm that policies related to life safety, flood hazards and accessibility remain applicable to lands subject to an MZO?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the honourable member: It was quite a day yesterday at committee, I have to say, and some of her questions were—I wasn't sure where she was going.

But the government House leader has been pretty clear this morning about where we're going. We're going to continue to use those planning tools, minister's zoning orders, Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerators, to get priority projects done.

We've got more active cranes in Toronto right now than most American cities put together—I gave you the list the other day: Chicago; Washington, DC; San Francisco and Seattle, combined.

Again, let the honourable member know what she's actually voting against when she votes against the use of MZOs—4,420 long-term-care beds, a big step forward in our government's mandate to provide 30,000—under her government's watch, 600 beds.

We're going to continue to use these tools to move forward—

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Once again, thank you. I'm always grateful for your non-answers.

In committee, I was just simply asking whether you respected planners and conservation authorities. Those are pretty clear questions that weren't answered.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 97 contains a new Planning Act definition of "areas of employment" that excludes institutional buildings, stand-alone retail and offices. Employment lands that currently have these Planning Act protections will lose them from their removal of conversion to permit residential uses. Under Bill 97, residential uses will always outbid job-creating uses such as offices, retail and other commercial uses. In Toronto, this could impact up to 25% of all employment lands, along with 150,000 jobs on these lands.

Will the government consider allowing service uses that workers need close to their place of employment that are not captured in this new definition? Because we know that the distance from place of work to residence is the most critical factor for a better quality of life.

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

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, she's all over the place in terms of what she's putting on the record.

The facts are clear: We're supporting the building of long-term-care homes through some of our planning tools. We're supporting 117,000 housing units, 650 supportive housing units, 152,000 new jobs, because of the minister's zoning orders that we're using.

I was in your city last night with the Toronto Rotary Club and the Homes for Heroes Foundation, whom we partnered with in Kingston. The executive director of the foundation was pretty clear to Rotarians in this city that our MZO in Kingston saved him half a million dollars and got shovels in the ground faster to help 20 homeless vets who didn't have a place to call home. Those are the partnerships that we're creating.

Under the Liberals, they're going to continue to vote against all of our measures that create housing, create jobs—

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

The next question.

1120

INVASIVE SPECIES

Mr. Trevor Jones: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Aquatic invasive species can have a devastating impact on Ontario's lakes, rivers and fisheries. We must protect Ontario's biodiversity and maintain our ability for recreational activities in the water, like fishing, swimming and boating.

Unfortunately, when watercraft move between lakes and rivers, they can spread invasive species. Without taking proper steps, these invasive species can introduce and spread disease into our waterways, costing us millions to repair the damage. It's vital that our government takes the necessary action to help stop the spread of invasive species and protect our environment.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is protecting Ontario's waterways?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Thank you to the member for Chatham-Kent-Leamington. The member so nicely gets to ask questions twice today.

Speaker, Ontario is one of the most biodiverse provinces in Canada. That rich biodiversity includes more than 30,000 species, over a million hectares of forest, and more than 250,000 lakes, representing over one fifth of the world's fresh water.

Last week, I joined the Invasive Species Centre in Port Sydney, my hometown, to learn about their boat-cleaning unit used to protect our lakes and rivers—Speaker, don't tell my mother I was in town; I didn't get by for a visit. The unit is equipped with a series of tools designed to help boaters quickly and easily clean their boat of any invasive plants or small invasive like zebra or quagga mussels.

At the start of the boating season, we're encouraging boaters to do three simple things: clean, drain, and dry

their boat to prevent invasive species from travelling from one lake to another.

Working together, we're protecting our natural resources, mitigating damage to our economy and keeping Ontario's natural resources safe for future generations.

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

Mr. Trevor Jones: It's so important to know that our government is actually taking action to protect Ontario's natural resources.

In my beautiful community of Chatham-Kent-Leamington, we're literally surrounded by the Great Lakes. We also enjoy fishing, one of our most important recreational summer activities.

We know that even bait for fishing can pose significant risks and lead to the spread of invasive species and fish diseases. For this reason, it's critical that our government partners with agencies like the Invasive Species Centre to address major areas of concern. Our government must do all we can do to help reduce the harm caused by invasive species to Ontario's environment and our economy.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the ministry works with the Invasive Species Centre and other organizations to protect Ontario's natural resources and our precious environment?

Hon. Graydon Smith: I want to again thank the member across the way for the thoughtful question.

We work collaboratively with organizations and experts dedicated to protecting our province from harmful invaders. That's why Ontario is investing an additional \$1 million this year with the Invasive Species Centre and the Nature Conservancy of Canada to help combat the threat of invasive species. Half of that funding will support the implementation of a comprehensive plan to fight phragmites in Ontario. That plan, developed by the Green Shovels Collaborative, will enable stakeholder and partner engagement, multi-year planning and site assessment as well as Indigenous and public engagement in preparation for the broader management of phragmites in the province. The rest of the funding will be used to support projects led by community partners that will respond and reduce the current harm caused by invasive species.

Our long-term partnership with ISC has been central to the ministry's efforts to prevent and reduce the harm caused by invasives in Ontario affecting our environment and impacting our economy.

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

I've given this matter serious consideration, and even though the standing orders are silent on this matter, I would strongly advise the Minister of Natural Resources, the next time he's home, to visit his mother.

Laughter.

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

The next question.

HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is for the Premier.

The homelessness crisis is escalating across Ontario, with municipalities now declaring a state of emergency on homelessness—Niagara, Hamilton—and with over 10,000 people who are unhoused right now in Toronto, city council is poised to declare a state of emergency of homelessness this week. Cities across the province are in crisis, and the Ford Conservative government is abandoning them.

Will this government enact a homelessness strategy and work with municipalities to improve the lives of unhoused people in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, it's hard to comprehend the New Democrats and some of the questions.

Over the last two weeks, we have had municipal councils from all across the province celebrate our Homelessness Prevention Program and the fact that our government recognizes the fact that we are adding an additional \$202 million to make our commitment almost \$700 million; the fact that under the leadership of Premier Ford, we negotiated a historic agreement with the federal government during the pandemic and provided \$4 billion to our municipal partners for a variety of measures, but most importantly, the \$1.2 billion we provided them under the social services relief fund. Literally, our municipal partners saved lives in the middle of the pandemic because of their quick action with the dollars that we provided them.

Do we have additional work to do with municipalities? Absolutely. All of our service managers now have a by-name list in effect, and we want to continue to work with them so that we can move people—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary question, the member for Toronto Centre.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: While the housing crisis worsens every single day in every single city across the province, my constituent is staying in a shelter. His name is Fred. He's facing transphobic violence. He's living with bedbugs. Fred desperately wants out of the shelter. He wants to find affordable and safe housing, he wants work, and he wants to complete his master's degree, but the stress of shelter life is really eroding his mental health.

When will the Premier finally answer the call from cities begging for help and produce a real plan to build real affordable housing for constituents like Fred?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I do want to thank the member for her question.

Speaker, it is this Premier and it's this government that recognized the desperate need for more housing supply. The previous Liberals, supported by the NDP, never, ever made housing a priority—on the contrary, they were closing schools, they fired nurses, and they let our hospitals crumble. Well, no more. It's this PC government that will get housing built for everyone.

Our plan is working. Record purpose-built rentals in the past two years; record housing starts; record funding for

the Homelessness Prevention Program, the highest going to the city of Toronto; protection for tenants and landlords; providing those wraparound services for those in supportive housing; and doubling the adjudicators on the Landlord and Tenant Board—all while reducing red tape to get more housing built. It's this Premier and this government that will get it done for everyone in Ontario.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the great Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We should all be proud of the robust agri-food sector that Ontario has worked so hard to create. Because of the hard work and dedication of so many farmers, the production of chickens, turkeys and eggs contributes over \$1.8 billion to our province's economy. Ontario's poultry industry is integral to our agri-food sector and provides food products to our province's growing population.

However, in order to remain prosperous and competitive, it is vital that our government continues to prioritize investments into industries that are part of our province's agri-food and rural sectors.

Speaker, can the minister explain how our government is continuing to support the expansion of Ontario's poultry sector?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the question from the member from Brantford—Brant, because it's very important to recognize the amazing work that our feather boards are doing on behalf of Ontarians and Canadians and people around the world.

When you take a look at what Ontario chicken, Ontario egg, Ontario turkey and Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission are doing collectively—they're growing the demand for good, safe, quality chicken around the world. I'm so very pleased to stand with them to further research that will enable them to continue to increase production to satisfy the demand not only in Canada but around the world. We're partnering with the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario, the four poultry organizations, as well as the University of Guelph to create and stand up and build a state-of-the-art research facility near Elora that will prove to set best practices around the world.

1130

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Speaker, this is great news for Ontario's poultry sector and for farmers in communities across Ontario. Investments made by our government into infrastructure and programs that will improve practices in the poultry sector are vital to increasing food production and expanding business operations.

Ontario has a long history as a leader in agriculture and food production. We must continue to support this growth. The people of Ontario expect that our government will advocate for farmers and for food producers. This work is essential for the health and well-being of all residents and for growing a stronger Ontario.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how investments by our government will support agri-food businesses across Ontario?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: This investment absolutely demonstrates our commitment to our Grow Ontario Strategy. We have three pillars in that strategy whereby we're looking to enhance a secure and stable supply chain, we're looking to continue to invest in research and innovation, all the while attracting the best talent. When we're investing in research, we're going to be attracting interested talent from around this world.

That research centre near Elora that the poultry industry will be building on behalf of so many will look to drive new advancements in animal health, nutrition, best practices when it comes to biosecurity and housing, and also address consumer-oriented research. This is going to be a state-of-the-art facility that people around the world will look to.

Again, Ontario is leading by example. We're growing confidence and enabling our farmers to be the very best in the world as well.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Premier.

A year and a half ago, this government decided that it would no longer be sending mailed reminders to Ontarians when their driver's licence, health card or licence plate was in need of renewal. The communication on this initiative has been abysmal. This out-of-touch decision means that many Ontarians with busy lives to lead are only discovering these important documents are expired when they arrive at an emergency room or have already been pulled over by the police, facing a \$110 fine.

Why is it that this government can't maintain a simple service we've had for decades or, at the very least, have a strategy to transition into a new program which makes the lives of Ontarians better?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member for the question.

Speaker, first of all, I would like to take the time to thank the staff at amazing ServiceOntario for the incredible work they do each and every day.

I've said this many, many times in the House: We are modernizing our system. Thank you to the Minister of Transportation for her great support.

We are now offering renewal reminders online as well. Individuals can go to ontario.ca/serviceontario or ontario.ca/renewals as we continue to modernize our system and make sure that everyone is able to get their renewals done on time.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: The ServiceOntario staff are so frustrated right now because they weren't consulted, and the renewal program is not working.

Mr. Speaker, this government likes to talk about how it's saving Ontarians money, but this is an example of how they're costing good Ontarians money. A ticket for an expired licence plate is \$110. One person said they may be eliminating one fee, but they're certainly making up that difference in fines.

In February of this year, the police in Waterloo region, for instance, issued 47 tickets for expired licence plates in a six-hour period.

A parent who needs health care for their child is asked to pay \$75 if their health card has expired.

These aren't bad people; these are hard-working Ontarians; they're people who need a reminder. Why is this government choosing to penalize them?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for their question.

I would also suggest to the member opposite that, once in a while, when they are sending out their notices or their information to their constituents, they can also remind them that there are renewal options available. Just try one time and you will see. You will get a better experience as well.

We have heard from Ontarians that they want more options when accessing government services, and that is why the changes we have implemented are just the beginning of government services and our commitment to building the ServiceOntario of the future and, honestly, to make life easy for the people of this province. That's what we are doing as a government. I know you don't like to do that, as an opposition. You want to make their lives more difficult. But as a government, we continue to make their lives easy, and we will continue to do it.

At the end of the day, the people of this province always—

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

The member for Brantford–Brant.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Mines. We hear plenty of talk from the official opposition about how important critical minerals are for the future of our economy. We hear them talk about how important the mining sector is for the constituents they represent. Yet time and time again, the NDP vote against our government's investments, our programs and our legislation that will help this vital sector grow and thrive.

There is tremendous potential in northern and Indigenous communities to create jobs and to promote economic prosperity for their regions and, indeed, for the entire province. Unlike the opposition and the previous Liberal government, our government cannot let this once-in-a-lifetime and once-in-a-generation opportunity slip away.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is taking action to advance Ontario's mining sector?

Hon. George Pirie: I want to thank the member from Brantford–Brant for the question.

The people of Ontario, including the great riding of Timmins, a mining community, voted in a historic PC majority because they wanted action. They know we have a generational opportunity to build the supply chain from mining critical minerals in the north to manufacturing electrical vehicles in the south, but we can't take 15 years to build a mine if we're going to get it done. The NDP and the Liberals think it's acceptable to take 15 years to build a mine, but I'll tell you who won't accept these timelines. It's not acceptable for our government or for mining companies, and it's not acceptable for the people living in northern NDP ridings who rely on this sector to put food on their tables.

The members opposite had a chance to support their constituents by voting in favour of the Building More Mines Act, but they chose to vote no.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It is encouraging news that our government is implementing measures that will strengthen Ontario's communities and our economy.

Unfortunately, I think it's obvious to everyone in here today that the NDP don't care about what's important to the people of their ridings. The NDP are still the party of no—no to jobs; no to economic investments for rural, remote and northern communities; no to electric vehicle production and supporting our manufacturing sector; and no to creating a stronger economic future for all Ontarians.

The important work by our government in launching the Critical Minerals Strategy is because we believe in making investments to support the made-in-Ontario supply chain for electric vehicles.

Can the minister please expand on what actions our government is taking to secure the critical minerals that are needed to produce electric vehicles?

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you again for the question.

The Building More Mines Act is all about keeping pace with business so we can build a supply chain that connects critical minerals in the north with manufacturing in the south. The EV revolution has already begun, and this bill will ensure Ontario continues to lead the charge—but the opposition still voted no; I'm not surprised, because they also voted no to our Critical Minerals Strategy investments, include \$35 million for exploration to find the mines of the future and \$5 million to solve the supply chain challenges through innovation.

Speaker, the people of Ontario, especially in the north, will always be supported by this government, despite the party of no.

Our government, under the leadership of this Premier, will secure the critical minerals we need to realize this opportunity of a lifetime.

1140

ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier.

The Premier's plan to move the Ontario Science Centre to Ontario Place and cut its size by 50% has caused concern across Ontario. The Ontario Science Centre has a 20,000-square-foot workshop building world-class exhibits that are shipped around the world—Kuwait, Thailand, China, and here in Ontario, Science North. This Premier is cutting the centre in half, and it's a pretty safe bet that the exhibit-building facilities won't be part of the new package.

Why is the Premier putting at risk a critical piece of museum infrastructure, the Ontario Science Centre workshops, that is a point of pride for the people of this province?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Thank you for the question.

I get excited when we start talking about the Ontario Science Centre and what it means. It has been a beacon for not only Ontario but across Canada for the tourism industry for a lot of years—for over half a century, actually.

When you talk about space, you've got to talk about workable space. We won't get to that—because you were speculating.

But what we will talk about is what the Ontario Science Centre represents to Ontario and the rest of the country, and the upcoming move to a world-class situation down in Ontario Place. When we talk about that move—that beacon that I spoke of is going to get even brighter for tourism.

Tourism supports almost 400,000 jobs, and when we talk about what's going to go on in Ontario Place—that raises the bar for everybody. I get really concerned and almost take it—not quite—personally when we talk about not developing tourism in this province, because it drives industry, it drives the GDP, and it's important. It lands in every riding that we represent—every one—so let's not keep saying no—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Boy, if any answer says to me that that world-class workshop is in trouble—that is the answer that gives that response.

Speaker, the Ontario Science Centre is not just a source of pride for educators, academics and parents, but it's also a place where skilled Ontario workers—carpenters, electricians, electronics designers—provide science exhibits to science centres around the whole world. If the government destroys the ability to create new exhibits, then you can't regularly upgrade and revitalize the centre with new exhibits as time goes by.

Is it the plan of the government to move the centre, let it deteriorate and then wipe it out completely at another date?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about long-term plans here; we're talking about not allowing something to happen; we're talking about speculation—all sorts of things.

When we talk about the Ontario Science Centre as it stands right now—which is, by the way, still opening and

doing a great business. The people there are doing a fantastic job, whether they're building the exhibits or they're opening the doors for spectators. Let's make that clear.

The other side of it is usable space—having opportunities for more exhibits, better-placed exhibits, the next generation of exhibits, and building them on-site. Just because something gets a little bit smaller doesn't mean we're taking away usable space to either display or build. Don't make those assumptions. That's the wrong road to go down.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Speaker, we all know that across Ontario, many people are affected by mental health issues or addiction challenges, and this can have a serious impact on their quality of life and that of their families and everyone around them.

We know that Indigenous communities have been disproportionately impacted by mental health and addiction challenges, and sadly, many of these individuals face barriers in accessing safe and effective care. For Indigenous peoples, mental health and addiction care must respect the unique needs of their communities and honour their culture and traditions.

Speaker, can the associate minister please explain how our government is expanding access to critical mental health and addiction services for Indigenous communities?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you to the fantastic member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington for the important question.

He's right; for many Indigenous communities across the province, the consequences of addiction and mental illness are far too real.

Last week, I had the privilege to spend time in Middlesex county to meet with the chiefs of the Chippewas of the Thames, the Oneida of the Thames and Munsee–Delaware First Nations to talk about investments we're making to improve mental health and addictions services for Indigenous communities across the province.

I announced recently that our government has provided \$33 million in additional investments for important capital projects, as well as for culturally safe and appropriate services in Indigenous communities—investments, for instance, like the \$1 million going to my hosts last week, the Chippewas of the Thames, to build a mental health and addictions crisis management centre. This is how we're going to plug Indigenous communities into the recovery-oriented continuum of care that our government is building to ensure that everyone gets the supports they need, where and when they need them.

BIRTHDAY OF MEMBER'S MOTHER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Point of order, Speaker: I would like to wish my mother a happy 90th birthday.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader under standing order 59.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me just thank all members for another very productive week on behalf of the people of the province.

On Monday, May 15, after the routine, we will have a ministerial statement on Police Week; and in the afternoon, we will commence third reading of Bill 85, which is the budget bill.

On the morning of Tuesday, May 16, we will have third reading of Bill 85; in the afternoon, we will continue with Bill 85; and in the evening, private member's motion number 51 standing in the name of the member for Oakville.

On Wednesday, May 17, we will continue with Bill 85 in the morning; we will continue with Bill 85 in the afternoon; and in the evening, we will have a private member's bill, Bill 101.

On Thursday, May 18, we will continue again on the budget bill, Bill 85; in the afternoon routine, a ministerial statement on the Ministry of Francophone Affairs annual report; and in the afternoon of that day, we will deal with private bills.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRENGTHENING MEMBERS' INTEGRITY ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RENFORCER L'INTÉGRITÉ DES DÉPUTÉS

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 with respect to fees, gifts and personal benefits / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés en ce qui concerne les honoraires, les dons et les avantages personnels.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

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

On May 10, 2023, MPP Stiles moved second reading of Bill 100, An Act to amend the Members' Integrity Act, 1994 with respect to fees, gifts and personal benefits. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Begum, Doly
Bell, Jessica

Gélinas, France
Glover, Chris

Sattler, Peggy
Schreiner, Mike

Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgoin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Karpoche, Bhutla	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 30; the nays are 71.

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

Second reading negated.

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

The House recessed from 1157 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Meghan Stenson): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 91, An Act to enact two Acts, amend various Acts and revoke various regulations / Projet de loi 91, Loi

visant à édicter deux lois, à modifier diverses lois et à abroger divers règlements.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated May 11, 2023, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

PETITIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm pleased to read this petition. Petition to "Protect the Greenbelt."

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government has removed 7,400 acres of land from the greenbelt;

"Whereas the government says it will replace the lost land with land elsewhere—but many of the proposed additions are already protected;

"Whereas the government has eroded environmental protections to make it easier to build badly planned housing developments;

"Whereas Ontario is already losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

"Whereas the government Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt;

"Whereas the government's repeated moves to tear up farmland and bulldoze wetlands have never been about housing, but are about making the rich richer;

"Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats and prevent flooding;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop all plans to remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland and sensitive wetlands."

I agree with this petition, I affix my signature and I give it to page Maya for the table.

POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'd like to present the petition "Petition in Support of Ontario Getting More Boots on the Ground by Making It Easier to Recruit and Train Police Officers."

"To the Solicitor General:

"Whereas the government of Ontario is committed to ensuring the safety of Ontario communities; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario is committed to supporting our hard-working women and men in blue, who put their lives on the line every day in police forces across the province of Ontario to keep our communities safe;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"To support the passage of Bill 102, Strengthening Safety and Modernizing Justice Act, 2023, to ensure the following:

"(1) Make it easier for police services across the province to recruit and train more police officers by removing tuition fees for the basic constable training program at the Ontario Police College"—OPC—"and immediately expand the number of recruits that could be trained each year;

"(2) To expand the Basic Constable Training Program at the Ontario Police College ... immediately to accommodate an additional 70 recruits per cohort from 480 to 550;

"(3) Starting in 2024, expand the Basic Constable Training Program to four cohorts per year instead of three;

"(4) Additionally, to support recruitment efforts at a time when local police officers have signalled challenges in doing so, introduce legislation that, if passed, will eliminate the post-secondary education requirement to become a police officer as set out in the Community Safety and Policing Act, ... CSPA, and if passed, the act would amend the ... CSPA, to provide that a secondary school diploma or equivalent is sufficient education for the purposes of being appointed as a police officer; and

"(5) To make the elimination of the tuition fee for the basic constable training program at the Ontario Police College retroactive to January 1, 2023, and recruits who paid for their 12-week basic constable training earlier this year to be reimbursed."

I fully support this petition, affix my signature and provide it to page Cole.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have a petition here, "To Raise Social Assistance Rates," and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

"Whereas the recent small increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they

and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a ‘basic income’ of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned ... petition the Legislative Assembly” of Ontario “to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I'd like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer for sending me these petitions, and I fully support it. Thank you.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I wanted to table the following petition on behalf of the residents of Barrie–Innisfil:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike that Ontarians and Canadians cannot afford;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicle, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023, the government continues to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will raise the cost of everything;

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

“To support the passage of Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023.”

I strongly support this petition. I will sign it and pass it on to page Dominic.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my honour to present the following petitions on behalf of the Alzheimer Society Southwest Partners. It's titled, “Develop an Ontario Dementia Strategy.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it currently takes on average 18 months for people in Ontario to get an official dementia diagnosis, with some patients often waiting years to complete diagnostic testing;

“Whereas more than half of patients suspected of having dementia in Ontario never get a full diagnosis; research confirms that early diagnosis saves lives and reduces care-partner stress;

“Whereas a PET scan test approved in Ontario in 2017 which can be key to detecting Alzheimer's early, is still not covered under OHIP in 2022;

“Whereas the Ontario government must work together with the federal government to prepare for the approval and rollout of future disease-modifying therapies and research;

“Whereas the Alzheimer Society projects that one million Canadians will be caregivers for people with dementia, with families providing approximately 1.4 billion hours of care per year by 2050;

“Whereas research findings show that Ontario will spend \$27.8 billion between 2023 and 2043 on alternate-level-of-care (ALC) and long-term-care (LTC) costs associated with people living with dementia;

“Whereas the government must follow through with its commitment to ensure Ontario's health care system has the capacity to meet the current and future needs of people living with dementia and their care partners;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to develop, commit and fund a comprehensive Ontario dementia strategy.”

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

1310

GESTION DES APPÂTS

M. Guy Bourgoin: Il me fait plaisir de lire une pétition intitulée « Modifier les zones de gestion des appâts ... du Nord-Est et du Nord-Ouest.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que les zones de gestion des appâts dans certaines villes ne permettent pas aux pêcheurs d'acheter des appâts dans leur propre zone pour aller pêcher dans des lacs à proximité;

« Alors que 95 % des lacs approvisionnés à Hearst sont situés à l'ouest de la ville et les zones courantes font en sorte qu'il n'y a pas d'option légale pour les pêcheurs de se procurer des appâts et d'aller pêcher ces lacs;

« Alors que le gouvernement a investi beaucoup de temps et d'argent au cours des années pour assurer une population de truites élevée et saine pour que les pêcheurs puissent l'apprécier et en profiter;

« Alors que les propriétaires de pourvoiries dans la région ne peuvent plus se procurer des appâts en proximité de leur camp avec les zones courantes et ils n'ont aucune option routière à s'en procurer près de leur camp;

« En conséquence, nous, soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« —demande d'offrir une exception ou une exemption pour les villes du Nord suivantes : Chapleau, Wawa et Hearst, où les deux zones se trouvent à être séparées basé sur la voie ferrée et les chemins routiers;

« —nous demandons au gouvernement Ford et au ministre des Richesses naturelles de modifier la législation des nouvelles zones de gestion des appâts pour faciliter l'achat de ceux-ci pour les pêcheurs, et d'assurer la

continuité de ce sport et ce mode de vie qui représente tellement les gens du nord de l'Ontario. »

Il me fait plaisir de signer cette pétition et de la donner à Senna pour qu'elle l'amène à la table des greffiers.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I have the following petition to table:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) identifies intimate-partner violence as a major global public health concern, as it affects millions of people and can result in immediate and long-lasting health, social and economic consequences; and

“Whereas other Canadian provinces including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and Newfoundland and Labrador have passed legislation on the disclosure of intimate-partner violence history, to protect its citizens from domestic violence; and

“Whereas the disclosure mechanisms outlined in Clare’s Law would be an additional tool for police services to prevent intimate-partner violence; and

“Whereas over 43,786 people, as of April 19, 2023, have signed the petition ‘Justice for Bobbi: Adopt Clare’s Law in Ontario’ on change.org; and

“Whereas people at risk of potential harm have the right to be informed of their intimate partner’s violent past—if the partner was a repeat offender of domestic violence;

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

“To urge the government of Ontario to adopt mechanisms for disclosure outlined in Clare’s Law—whereby information relating to intimate-partner-violence convictions can be used to assess risk of and prevent harm from intimate-partner violence.”

I will heartily support this petition, and I will sign it and send the petition with Lazo.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Marit Stiles: It’s really a pleasure to join everyone here today and present this petition on behalf of the Ontario Nurses’ Association—all those fantastic front-line nurses who care for patients across Ontario. This petition includes 2,622 signatures from just the GTA alone, and it reads as follows:

“Petition for Better Staffing, Better Wages and Better Care in Ontario’s Public Hospitals.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas registered nurses and health care professionals are the backbone of Ontario’s public health care system; and

“Whereas nurses and health care professionals are fighting for better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals; and

“Whereas the government has the power to direct the funding and priorities for the Ontario Hospital Association in this bargaining process;

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

“Support nurses and health care professionals represented by the Ontario Nurses’ Association in their collective bargaining with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) by demanding the OHA reach a negotiated agreement with nurses that results in better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals.”

I could not be happier to support this petition. I’m going to affix my signature and I’m going to give it to page Liam to table it.

TAXATION

Mr. Nolan Quinn: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the federal government is increasing the escalated carbon tax by 14%, on April 1, 2023;

“Whereas carbon tax cost increase will put more pressure on consumers who are already struggling with inflation;

“Whereas we call on the federal government to stop the carbon tax, which is a tax hike that Ontarians and Canadians cannot afford;

“Whereas the government of Ontario is helping to reduce the cost of living by keeping taxes low, freezing and eliminating licence plate renewal fees and scrapping the requirement to have licence plate stickers for passenger vehicle, light-duty trucks, motorcycles and mopeds and building on these measures in Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023, the government continues to help Ontarians with the cost of living;

“Whereas we call on the Ontario government to urge the federal government to halt the carbon tax increase, that will raise the cost of” living for “everything;

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

“To support the passage of Bill 85, Building a Strong Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2023.”

I sign my name on top of here and give it to page Nicholas in support of this.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here for better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas registered nurses and health care professionals are the backbone of Ontario’s public health care system; and

“Whereas nurses and health care professionals are fighting for better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals; and

“Whereas the government has the power to direct the funding and priorities for the Ontario Hospital Association in this bargaining process;

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

“Support nurses and health care professionals represented by the Ontario Nurses’ Association in their collective bargaining with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) by demanding the OHA reach a negotiated agreement with nurses that results in better staffing, better wages and better care in Ontario’s public hospitals.”

Speaker, I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Maya to take to the Clerks.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LAURENCE GEORGE SOUTH

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): It’s now time for orders of the day.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance for the late Mr. Laurence George South, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty’s government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty’s loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance for the late Mr. Laurence George South, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty’s government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty’s loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group. Agreed?

Agreed.
Today we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former member of our provincial Legislature, the late Mr. Laurence “Larry” George South, who was the MPP for Frontenac–Addington during the 33rd and 34th Parliaments.

Mr. South’s family, including his wife, Joyce, are watching from home this afternoon. But joining us in the gallery is former member of provincial Parliament Steve Gilchrist, who represented the riding of Scarborough East during the 36th and 37 Parliaments. Welcome.

I now recognize the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Ric Bresee: It is an honour to rise in the House today to pay tribute to a highly respected member of provincial Parliament, a husband and a father: Mr. Laurence George South. I would also like to recognize Mrs. Joyce South, who was married to Larry South for 69 years and who I do understand is watching from home. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, we are sorry for your loss.

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Laurence George South was born on February 26, 1925, in the east end of Toronto, to Gladys and George South and was the second of three children. After graduating

high school at Malvern Collegiate, he served in the Canadian Armed Forces during the end of World War II, for which I would also like to offer all of our thanks for his service. After serving, Larry returned to Toronto and was educated at the University of Toronto, receiving a bachelor of science degree in engineering and shortly after receiving his master’s degree in engineering.

But apparently education was not the only focus of those educational years in Larry’s life, for it was during this time at the University of Toronto that he met the love of his life, Joyce. They married in 1953 and raised four children: Greg, Brenda, Kevin and Nancy.

Larry dedicated 25 years to his career with what was then called the Ontario Water Resources Commission, which later became the Ministry of the Environment. Although his work was based in downtown Toronto, he was fortunate enough that his engineering work took him all around the province, to smaller rural communities and to the large cities and towns.

He had a passion for his work with the Ministry of the Environment, so it was no surprise that when he retired in 1985, he ran to be the member for Frontenac–Addington and succeeded. I am told that he had a goal in mind all along of being reunited with the Ministry of the Environment. In fact, later, Larry was named to be the parliamentary assistant to the then-environment minister, Jim Bradley. I am confident that his expertise was incredibly valuable to the minister.

One of the great things about the Internet is that it keeps people connected. It was incredible to see on Larry’s obituary guestbook all the kind words and personal anecdotes that people had to share about him.

For example, many spoke of Larry’s favourite method of transportation. He had a passion for trains and the railroads. He travelled across Europe many times by train and took a special train trip across Europe, accompanied by his nephew Gary, that was organized around the cities and places and things that held fond memories for him.

Some also commented on the profound impact and lasting impression that Larry had made on their lives, whether through his career or his political life or just as a human being. His optimistic outlook on life, sense of humour and love of politics was infectious. For so many of them, it was a pleasure to know him, even for a short while. Most importantly, there was an outpouring of affection on how much he would be missed. He will be forever remembered as a man of many hobbies and an infectious laugh.

We lost Mr. South on October 28, 2022. So to Joyce, Mrs. South, and every member of the South family, to all of Larry’s friends and colleagues, we are truly sorry for your loss. I hope that the joyful memories you have help to ease the pain of your grief. We thank you for his service to this House and to the people of Ontario.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is such a privilege to honour the life of Larry South today. These tributes provide a moment to reflect on the duties and responsibilities and the joys of

public service. It is an opportunity to give us pause, park the partisanship and acrimony, and contemplate the work that we are called to do in Ontario's Legislature. It was with this in mind that I approached the tribute to Laurence "Larry" George South, MPP for Frontenac-Addington, who served his community from 1985 to 1990.

Larry South died peacefully in his 98th year at his beloved home, Larry's Landing, on the St. Lawrence River near Gananoque, Ontario. This is a beautiful part of the world. I know it well and I love it, as did Larry and his family.

I want to also acknowledge that Joyce, his wife of 69 years, and his family are watching today's tribute from home. Joyce, we send you our love and our sincere condolences on the passing of your life partner.

I truly enjoyed learning about Larry's life of public service. I can tell you it provided a moment of hope for me. I honestly wish I'd had the opportunity to meet Larry.

It's also worth noting that we should all be aware that at some point, as parliamentarians, someone in this place is going to get up and share information about us, so extending the effort to learn and honour the work of a former MPP is a positive way to inspire some good karma, and this was an easy task for Larry George South.

By all accounts, Larry South lived a life of service that would make any member of any political party proud. After serving in the army at the end of World War II, he pursued an engineering degree at U of T. He worked in many communities across this great province and brought his expertise as an engineer. Some of you may know that engineers in Ontario take an oath; some wear an iron ring to seal a deal. As engineers, they take a pledge to practise integrity and fair dealing, tolerance and respect and to uphold devotion to the standards and dignity of the profession, conscious always that their skill carries with it the obligation to serve humanity by making the best use of the earth's precious wealth.

Some of the best people I know are engineers. They are smart and they're thoughtful, and let's be honest, sometimes they're a little quirky, and it seems that Larry was a similar fellow. He had a 25-year career with the Ontario Water Resources Commission, later the Ministry of the Environment. His engineering work took him across the province to small rural communities, large towns and cities; in other words, he got to know this great province.

For many of us, politics is very personal. It's why the debates get very heated at times, but the personal side of our lives helps us do this work, which is why I was so intrigued by the story of Larry and his wife, Joyce. She campaigned daily with her husband and coordinated the telephone blitzes. I think it needs to be said that none of us could do this work alone. Our partners, friends and family walk alongside us, and we are better people for it.

In the early 1970s, Larry and Joyce discovered the waterfront property on which they would build their dream home. He and Joyce created a special place at Larry's Landing. People from all walks of life enjoyed Larry and Joyce's hospitality at social events, political events, reunions, parties and weddings. These were my kind of

people. One of Larry's favourite lines while sitting by the river was, "It would take a lot of this to kill a man."

A firm believer in civic duty, democracy and advocacy, Larry worked tirelessly for his constituents. This is what they said about him:

"South was the only candidate to come and see me. He is visible, and he helps with local issues." Public Service 101: Show up, listen, be respectful. This was Larry South.

"Politics for South is the art of being able to do for others, and his political motivation arises from what he calls a simple wish 'to help people with the little things.'"

In addition to enjoying painting as a hobby, Larry designed and constructed a number of beautiful stone features throughout his and Joyce's property.

Life for us in politics sometimes ends—it comes a little faster than we thought. But I will say that Larry filled his life with family and friends, and he continued to weigh in on politics in Ontario from his beautiful Larry's Landing.

His infectious laugh and love of a good story ensured he was a popular person in the community. He was well respected because people saw him as somebody they could trust and someone who was in politics for the right reasons.

On behalf of His Majesty's official opposition, I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to the entire family. Our province is a stronger, more vibrant place because of Larry George South.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's an honour to rise today to pay tribute to a veteran, a community booster, a father, a husband and an honourable member of this Legislature, Mr. Laurence George South, member of provincial Parliament for Frontenac-Addington from 1985 to 1990.

Larry South was born and raised in Toronto's east end. He attended Malvern Collegiate and went on to serve his country in the army in World War II. When he returned, he got his education, getting a bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Toronto. But it wasn't the most important thing about attending U of T. It was there that he would meet Joyce. Joyce and Larry would spend the rest of their lives together and raise four children.

Joyce and Larry built their dream home on a waterfront property that became known as Larry's Landing where they raised Greg, Brenda, Kevin and Nancy. It's where they watched their family grow with the arrival of their grandchildren Heather, Jack, Evan and Fiona, and great-grandchild Jonah.

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Larry was passionate in everything that he did and, as I've been told, was a master storyteller. Larry knew what he wanted, where he stood, and he would let you know with a smile and a story. He liked to laugh.

An engineer by trade, Larry was passionate about serving his community and, like every good politician should be, he had a positive vision for the future. He saw, at a time when most people didn't, that we needed to protect our environment and natural resources. Larry had a 25-year career with the Ontario Water Resources

Commission and brought his expertise to this Legislature and to the work here. He understood that governments had to take action to protect our natural spaces and ecosystems and to reduce waste.

I like to look back on Hansard when we have a chance to do these tributes and read some of the things that, in this case, Larry had to say. You can see in the Hansard his passion and sense of humour, and here's a really good example. When debating the budget in November of 1989, the topic was a tax to help with the disposal of tires—I think we can all remember that. Larry had this to say to his colleagues across the aisle: “I ask the member opposite who disagrees with this position whether he has travelled on the Toronto subway recently and seen the caption: ‘Politicians are like disposable diapers. They will take 70 years to become environmentally friendly.’” And it's still true today, maybe.

Then he went on to say, “I wish to repeat that the opposition has failed to understand the problem that presently exists. This measure will reduce the potential environmental hazards of used tires. It will cover the disposal of the tires and research into innovative recycling methods. Is this an unfair tax? I do not believe that it is.”

And from that same debate, Larry's quoted as saying “A clean and safe environment is one of the cornerstones of our efforts to improve the quality of life in Ontario.” Some 30 years later, I think we're all still fighting that battle.

I spoke to Jim Bradley who served with Larry, and here's what Jim told me: The riding that he served was a big riding, and not an easy riding to run as a Liberal, and in parts of it, it's true today. So Larry worked hard to get elected and then to serve the people of his community. Larry knew that the important things in our job here are those everyday things that we can help people with.

To Joyce, who I know is listening today, and to all his family, the life of an MPP isn't easy. Many of us have to leave our families and travel great distances to be here at Queen's Park. It's hard for us. It's even harder for our families. So I want to thank you on behalf of this Legislature and our party for sharing Larry with us.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. We give thanks for the life and public service of Larry South.

BRUCE OWEN

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you'll find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance for the late Mr. Bruce Owen, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in remembrance for the late Mr. Bruce Owen, with five minutes

allotted to His Majesty's government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independents as a group. Agreed? Agreed.

Today we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former Member of our provincial Legislature, the late Mr. Bruce Owen, who was the MPP for Simcoe Centre during the 34th Parliament.

Joining us in the Speaker's gallery are Mr. Owen's family and friends: his son, Trevor Owen; his daughter-in-law, Heather Owen; his grandchildren Jonathan Owen, Benjamin Owen-Kelly and Alexandra Kelly; and his friend Brian Dixson. Also in the Speaker's gallery today, we have with us David Warner, who was the Speaker during the 35th Parliament, and Steve Gilchrist, who was the MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments. Welcome.

I recognize the member for Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: I'm honoured to rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable community champion who worked tirelessly to make his community and Ontario a better place. As a colleague from the Simcoe region, I want to acknowledge his contributions to our community and the legacy that he has left, which we will measure ourselves by as we move forward.

A local lawyer, deputy judge and former MPP for Simcoe Centre, Bruce Owen served his community for over six decades with integrity and compassion, and through his passion for music. Bruce put service above self, and he dedicated his life to serving his community through various roles.

Bruce passed away at the age of 90 on Monday, February 7, 2022, leaving a proud legacy and family that has left our community a better place. I want to welcome his family here today.

For over 20 years, Bruce practised law in the city of Barrie, serving his clients, particularly in the areas of wills, estates and real estate law. He also served as a deputy judge in Small Claims Court.

Bruce served as a leader in the community through various roles before getting into politics. He was president of the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club and the mental health association local chapter. He was involved in the Barrie Concert Association, Georgian Music and as a director of the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

Bruce left a lasting legacy, as in 1972 he was part of the Kiwanis Club and was one of the first volunteers to help establish Kempenfest, which is now known as the city of Barrie's signature event. I've been there many times, and this year Kempenfest will be celebrating their 51st year from August 4 to 7. If you're in the area, I invite you to come out.

Bruce also served as a member of provincial Parliament, and his determination and resilience in politics led to his election in 1987 after a number of failed attempts. But Bruce distinguished himself as a staunch community advocate who never turned a blind eye to those in need, and demonstrated his unwavering commitment to serving

his constituents and making his community stronger and better.

In that role, he championed the introduction of the legislation that prohibited smoking in Ontario workplaces. That was controversial legislation at its time, but now, many years later, it is seen and taken for granted, and has improved the health of Ontarians across the province.

Bruce was also a staunch advocate for the current location of the Royal Victoria Hospital building in Barrie, a significant regional hospital that serves the health needs of many in the region. Bruce also worked tirelessly to successfully attract funding for the development of more than 1,000 not-for-profit housing units in the area, and we know with the crisis we are facing today that that is a critical piece of a contribution to his local constituents.

Bruce was also very involved in making sure that one of our biggest employers in my riding of Simcoe–Grey, in Alliston, came to Alliston. Today, the Alliston Honda Canada manufacturing plant employs approximately 4,200 associates, has the manufacturing capacity to produce 400,000 units every year and is now part of the drive to make Ontario one of the top EV producers worldwide, with the electric CR-V unit coming off production in the Alliston plant today.

Though Bruce was known mostly as a community leader, many people remember him for his passion for music as a lifetime musician. Bruce toured the Barrie area as a soloist and visited virtually every Barrie church, singing Ave Maria at Protestant churches and the latest gospel hits at Roman Catholic churches. He performed a solo in the papal choir when Pope John Paul II visited the Martyr's Shrine in 1984. He was an accomplished musician who left a lasting impact on all who heard his wonderful voice.

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Speaker, in recognition of Bruce's extraordinary career and his multidimensional personality, he was awarded the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award and the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award, recognizing his unfailing dedication, commitment and exceptional achievements as a volunteer in Ontario and across his riding. Let us remember Bruce Owen as a remarkable man who dedicated his life to serving others and making his community stronger and better. Let us honour his memory by continuing his work by striving to make our communities better places for everyone.

Bruce's impact on the city of Barrie, Simcoe county—including my riding of Simcoe–Grey—and Ontario will be lasting, indelible and not forgotten. His legacy will continue to live on through the lives that he has touched and the work that he has accomplished.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour to rise today to pay tribute to a former member of this great House. As we engage in these tributes, it really strikes you how the actions people undertake with a kind heart and an open heart last forever. It also strikes you about the character, quality and dynamism of individuals who have been able to serve in this House.

Bruce Owen was the former MPP for Simcoe Centre and served between the years of 1987 to 1990. The words that strike me the most when considering Bruce are service—service without thought of self or thought of reward—and also determination and further commitment. He had a very active life in politics and community activism outside of the Legislature as well, and he earned many accolades in his life. In fact, in his determined perseverance and his commitment, he tried eight times for a seat either at Queen's Park or in the House of Commons, and eventually succeeded in 1987. He never, ever gave up.

Before I speak to Bruce's professional achievements, I want to recognize the family and friends who have come here today to honour his life and career. Bruce is being honoured today by his son, Trevor, and daughter-in-law, Heather; his grandchildren Jonathan, Benjamin and Alexandra; his friend Brian; as well as David Warner and Steve Gilchrist, both members of provincial Parliament who had the opportunity to serve as colleagues with Bruce. Also, the family I'd like to recognize who can't join us here today are his daughters Valerie; Pamela and her partner Ron; and grandchildren Brianna and Chad. Of all of his achievements, Bruce clearly surrounded himself with loving friends and family, an amazing personal life achievement.

Bruce was first elected to Ontario's Legislature in 1987, and during that time, he worked on the committee of government agencies, general government and social development. Before politics, Bruce was a social worker as well as a tannery and furniture worker before passing the bar. Trained in law and having served as a Small Claims Court judge as well as alderman in Barrie city council, he was a passionate public servant who was well-known for giving time to his community when called upon. He was proud of his legislative success of banning smoking in the workplace, a controversial piece of legislation at the time, but something that we can all thank him for to this day. This act likely saved many lives and much suffering.

He wore many hats before, during and after his time in the House. He was credited for having a vital role in some of the developments in Barrie and across the province that we now enjoy. Some of them are his work to help get Centennial Park built, Collier Place and the Portuguese Cultural Centre. He also helped to found and access funds for Kempenfest, a large festival in Barrie including artisans, entertainers and other vendors. They will be hosting their 51st year this August. He also fought for large event and concert areas, something he continued to champion long after he retired from politics—again, that commitment and that determination to service. He also worked with international companies like Honda to bring investment into the auto manufacturing industry in Alliston.

His passion for the arts and music also had him experience some amazing moments. Bruce was well-known for participating not just at his church, but at spiritual places of different denominations, as long as he could sing and help others enjoy the gift of music. He would sing Ave Maria at Protestant churches, gospel at

Roman Catholic parishes. He even sang a solo once in the papal choir when Pope John Paul II visited Ontario in 1984. I should point out here that Bruce was an Anglican, but he was ecumenical when it came to sharing the gift and the joy of music.

His role as the president of the Barrie Concert Association really spoke to his love for music. His work with the organization saw him work tirelessly to bring in performances from across the world into Barrie. For this dedication, he earned the National Art Centre's award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring. Upon winning this award, Bruce said he felt "stunned and completely surprised—I'm just a small-town boy from a reasonably small city," because he was the first community volunteer to win the award, and he reminded the interviewer that the last year's winner was the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. But it was a well-deserved award for Bruce. Peter Herrndorf, the director general and CEO for the National Arts Centre stated that Bruce "has worked tirelessly for over 40 years promoting and touring the performing arts in his community."

His time as the president of the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club and mental health associations all speak further to his commitment to public service. For these efforts, he was awarded the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award and Ontario's June Callwood leadership award.

I'd like to quote the people who knew and loved him best. His son, Trevor, said, "He always thought poverty was around the corner, so he was acutely aware of the failings of capitalism and the need for medicare, and that drove him—the drive to work so he would never be poor and to drive to help others for justice so they wouldn't end up like he did with a blind eye." Trevor also said, "When my mother died three years ago, he would weekly cook a meal for one grandchild that is health-challenged, and took him food every week and brought him groceries." It is truly beautiful to read these heart-felt words from his son.

On behalf of the official opposition, we would like to extend our condolences to Bruce's family members here today. Bruce had a life well lived and he exemplified service to his community as well as sharing his love of the performing arts. Thank you all for sharing Bruce with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: We rise today to commemorate the life of a lifelong public servant and champion of the arts, Mr. Bruce Owen, member of provincial Parliament for Simcoe Centre from 1987 to 1990.

Bruce's life was spent in service of his community as a lawyer, a judge, a city alderman and an MPP. His career was defined by a passion for improving the lives of others.

At Queen's Park, Bruce was widely respected by his colleagues of all political stripes. He was a passionate, community-oriented politician who used his position to effect meaningful change. He was part of the leadership that brought Barrie Centennial Park, Kempenfest, the current RVH building and an MRI to Barrie. He also helped to bring Honda to Alliston and legislation that banned smoking in the Ontario workplace.

Bruce's community involvement saw him assume a wide variety of roles, whether it was his involvement with the local chamber of commerce, his position on the Industrial Commission and Planning Board or his advocacy for mental health during his time with the Kiwanis Club—he was always working with and for his community.

His advocacy for the arts was an enduring theme throughout his life, and it was said that Bruce's love for the arts was really demonstrated by the fact that he was always ready to solicit support for the local symphony.

His musical passion matched his ability and he was, at various points, a soloist in nearly every church in Barrie. He sang classic hymns at the Catholic parishes and Ave Maria at the protestant churches—maybe he was sending a message. In 1984, Bruce performed a solo in the papal choir when Pope John Paul II visited Canada.

Bruce proudly used his musical abilities as a tool to grow closer with the community he loved so dearly. His commitment to the growing arts was recognized in 2000 when he became the first community volunteer to be awarded the National Arts Centre award for Distinguished Contribution to Touring. Bruce opted to give his cash prize towards a new performing arts centre. Similarly, he was the recipient of the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award and the June Callwood leadership award.

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As I said a bit earlier, I like to call some colleagues who knew the person we're giving tribute to. I was talking to Jim Bradley today and I asked him about Bruce. He shared some of his memories about Bruce's tenure here at Queen's Park, and what he said was that Bruce cared deeply about the community he represented and served. He made friends across party lines and was well liked and well respected by his peers in this Legislature. He was not shy to let you know where he stood on an issue. He was dedicated to our party—as Jim said, he was as Liberal as they come—and he worked really hard to get elected to this Legislature. He ran a number of times. On top of that, he said Bruce was a community builder, whether it was his work or his volunteer efforts or his public service.

As I said earlier, our families and families of members past have to give up a lot. I know his son, Trevor, is here today. So, to Trevor and his family, some of whom aren't with us, I just want to thank you. Thank you for sharing him with us here in this Legislature. He made a difference.

To Trevor; his daughter-in-law, Heather; grandchildren Jonathan, Benjamin and Alexandra: We are honoured to celebrate the life and service of your father and grandfather. He is remembered by his friends, colleagues and the people of Simcoe county whose lives he touched and improved with his kindness and dedication to service.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We give thanks for the life and public service of Bruce Owen.

BILL MURDOCH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Barrie–Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Speaker. If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late Mr. Bill Murdoch with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late Mr. Bill Murdoch with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition, five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government. Agreed? Agreed.

Today, we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former member of our provincial Legislature, the late Mr. Bill Murdoch, who was the MPP for Grey during the 35th Parliament; Grey–Owen Sound during the 36th Parliament; and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound during the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments.

Joining us in the Speaker's gallery are Mr. Murdoch's family and friends: his wife, Sue Murdoch; his daughters, Karen and Angie Murdoch; his sons-in-law, Dale Snyder and Eamon Mac Mahon; his siblings, Elizabeth Harris and John Murdoch; his siblings-in-law, Gord Harris and Cathy Murdoch; his granddaughter, Luella Mac Mahon; and his friends Arnie Clark, Terri Clark, Ron Hopkins, Jean Hopkins, Sam Luckhardt, Kathy Luckhardt and Kelly Shute.

Also in the Speaker's gallery with us today are David Warner, the Speaker during the 35th Parliament, and Steve Gilchrist, who was the MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments. Thank you.

The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the official opposition, it is an incredible honour to pay tribute today to Mr. Bill Murdoch, and I'd like to welcome his family to the Legislature.

He served in the various iterations of the riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as a Progressive Conservative from September 6, 1990, to September 18, 2008; as an independent from September 18, 2008, to April 23, 2009; and, once again, as a Progressive Conservative from April 23, 2009, to September 7, 2011.

In the Canadian Parliamentary Guide, he's listed as a farmer, and although he had a long and varied career in industry as a farmer, I couldn't think of a greater compliment, and hopefully some day I will be listed in that guide as a farmer.

I never had the chance to meet Bill Murdoch, but I did feel his impact. I was on the board of the 2009 International Plowing Match. And the way plowing matches work, once you know you're getting a plowing match, you go to the one before or a couple before. I'd never been to a plowing match—it never came to northern Ontario—so I went to the one in Teeswater. Now, I didn't see that parade, but I was there for a couple of days, and everyone there was talking about Bill Murdoch and that parade, because that's when Bill Murdoch was an independent.

And the Tory party rode on their float, and Bill Murdoch rode on a fire truck. I've got to say, what I heard, he had a lot more support than the Tory party in that parade. I felt it. Although I'd never met him, I felt it. And I ran, as well, in the 2007 election. I wasn't successful the first time, as Bill wasn't successful the first time. But I felt that feeling. And I thought, wow, people feel that he's standing up for them.

And it wasn't the first time that he'd run afoul of his party, because in a 1999 Toronto Star article, he was described as a "Braveheart MPP," partly for the movie poster that was in his office but partly for his habit of speaking his truth to power. Sometimes when you do that, when you buck the system, you pay a penalty. And Bill Murdoch was willing to buck the system for what he believed, and I really respect that.

And he paid—the one I really enjoyed: He was a parliamentary assistant for northern development and mines. He went out to placate us disgruntled northerners about something, ended up agreeing with the disgruntled northerners and losing his parliamentary assistant post. I really like that.

But the one that caught me by surprise, I have to say, was the headline, "Ontario Tory Mulls Move to Give NDP Party Status." That one caught me by surprise, because, as everyone knows, I come from a long lineage of Tories. Actually, Ernie Hardeman is my uncle. He also has a bit of a history with Bill Murdoch, and I understand that. He truly believed in the legislative process, as we all do. When you truly believe in the legislative process, sometimes you think outside the box. He didn't make the same jump I did, and I'm proud I made the jump, but he mulled it for a very important reason.

I'd like to end my time here with a quote from Bill Murdoch. It was from the Owen Sound Sun Times regarding his retirement. He decided to leave, and that's something that, actually, very few of us have the chance to do. Often, people decide it for us.

When they asked what his greatest accomplishments were—and something that spoke to my heart: "But when you help somebody that has a hard time getting through the bureaucracy, which is one of the biggest downfalls of democracy is the bureaucracy ... I think that's the biggest accomplishment, if you can actually go away saying we did help somebody." Anyone who has done work in a constituency office knows that feeling.

And further he went to say, when they asked what he was going to do now, "I'll still have my farm to run, I'll still belong to the local service clubs, and I'll still be outspoken. I just won't be going to Queen's Park anymore."

As a farmer, as a parliamentarian, I couldn't think of a life better lived. I'd like to thank the family for giving the people of Ontario his time to serve—to serve as a maverick, to serve as a farmer, to serve as himself. Thank you very much.

1400

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Orléans.

Mr. Stephen Blais: It's an honour to stand and help pay tribute to Bill Murdoch, who represented the riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound in its various formations from 1990 to 2011 here at Queen's Park.

Born in Meaford in 1945, Mr. Murdoch was a lifelong community advocate. Prior to his entry into public life, he was a farmer, a businessman, a Freemason, a Legionnaire and a conservationist. He began his political career at the municipal level by serving as a councillor and reeve in Sydenham township for 12 years and then as warden of Grey county. He is the former chairman of the Grey county planning and advisory committee and former chairman of the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority. He served on the AMO board, as well as the Grey Bruce Tourist Association. Clearly he lived a life of public service.

His first bid to enter the Ontario Legislature for the Tories, the Progressive Conservative Party, for the riding of Grey in 1987 was unsuccessful, but he was never one to give up a fight. He ultimately won his seat in the second attempt in 1990 and served the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for 21 years, winning five consecutive elections. During those 21 years as MPP, Mr. Murdoch served in government, in opposition and as an independent member.

One of the things he's most well-known for, Mr. Speaker, is the creation of the Ontario tartan. The Ontario tartan, approved in the year 2000, is based on the tartan of Ontario's first Premier, John Sandfield MacDonald, and it is green, blue, red and white. As those who might know the story know, it took a little while for that tartan to formally come into service and use because of some technical issues. But after six years of fighting the good fight, it was ultimately successful in the mid-2000s.

Mr. Murdoch was a man of conviction and of compassion. He was an advocate for his constituents and was never afraid to speak his mind and challenge the status quo. In fact, he spoke out against the Conservative government's downloading costs to municipalities and for picking fights with teachers. For that, he was labelled a maverick and would continue to go on and often clash with his party and others. But he always stood firm to his principles and on behalf of his constituents.

He received many accolades over the years, but one that stood out to me was from the member of Parliament of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Alex Ruff, who said, "Bill's reputation for speaking his mind and 'fighting for the little guy' was known throughout the province, and I dare say, the country. Any elected official would be hard pressed to find a better constituent politician in the country to seek advice and learn from."

After he retired from the Legislature and his life in politics in 2011, Bill was well known as a host of Bayshore Broadcasting's Open Line show on AM 560. He hosted Murdoch Mondays, Midweek with Murdoch, Rock and Talk with Murdoch, as well as many other programs over many years. Outside of his work in the Legislature and as a farmer, Mr. Murdoch was a supporter of local music. At one point, he managed a band called the Tombstones, organizing many concerts within the local community. He

also helped build the Grey Bruce Music Hall of Fame. He enjoyed fishing and hunting, playing hockey and baseball, and I understand that he was an avid collector of hockey jerseys as well as posters for the International Plowing Match going back, I think, all the way to the First World War.

He fought cancer for two years with dignity and with grace but ultimately passed away August of last year at the age of 77. He leaves behind a legacy that inspires many others to follow in his footsteps. He'll always be remembered as a dedicated public servant, a fierce debater, a generous friend and a loving husband and father.

So to Sue and family and friends who are with us today, thank you for sharing Bill with all of us for so very long. He'll be missed.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is indeed an honour for me to rise in the Legislature today.

I'll begin by telling a story about Eddie Sargent. Now, some here might remember Eddie Sargent. Eddie Sargent was the MPP for Grey North for one term, then that was followed by Grey–Bruce for the rest of his political career, and his political career mirrored my father's: 1963 to 1987. Eddie Sargent realized that if you're not going to be sitting at the cabinet table or you're not from downtown Toronto, you had better do something to make a name for yourself, and Eddie Sargent was a character.

Here's a story about Eddie Sargent: He was at a picnic in the summertime one year, and there had been a lot of rain. It was on a farm, and his car got stuck in the mud. They're going to push the car, and Eddie Sargent comes up behind the car. He's got his beautiful white summer suit on, and one of his supporters says, "Eddie, are you crazy? You're going to ruin that suit." He says, "That's right, and they'll be talking about it for years." The fact that I'm telling that story today proves it true.

But do you know who told me that story?

Hon. Todd Smith: Bill Murdoch.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Bill Murdoch told me that story, and Bill Murdoch wasn't lost on Eddie Sargent's career. They may have been from different political parties, but I believe absolutely that when Bill Murdoch was elected in 1990, Eddie Sargent, even though he was on the opposite side—not the opposite side, but a different side, because I know my father often talked about the camaraderie and the friendship he had with Eddie Sargent. But Eddie Sargent was saying, "Oh, that's just wonderful. Our riding is going to be represented by a character once again," and a character is exactly what Bill Murdoch was.

I want to thank former MP Larry Miller, former MPP Norm Sterling, former MPP Bill Walker, MP Alex Ruff and also current MPP Rick Byers for their help in helping me establish some of these stories and facts about Bill Murdoch.

Hon. Todd Smith: We could be here a while.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, we will be here for a while. I just want you to know that.

Outspoken, unconventional, standoffish maybe at times, but never dull: That was Bill Murdoch—unique, one of a kind. In this business, you’ve got to set yourself apart. You can be like most birds and fly in flocks, or you can be like the eagle and soar alone, and that’s what Bill Murdoch did, many times. He soared alone, because the tide was not with him, but that didn’t matter; he really didn’t give a you-know-what.

But he cared about the people he represented. When Bill came to this House—our House; your House—he came here to represent the people who sent him here. It really wasn’t that important what the people in the front rows were worrying about; it was what the people in his riding wanted to hear from Bill Murdoch. As my friend from Orléans said, Alex Ruff’s quotation after the death of Bill Murdoch was 100% on. I don’t have to repeat it, because you did. Bill was a template for anybody who wants to be a true constituency member who represents their people here at this Legislature.

I also want to thank Anna Sajfert—I don’t know if Anna is in the gallery; hello, Anna—for her help in putting this together, as well. She worked both for Bill Murdoch and Bill Walker, so I had a chance to get two opinions in, you know?

Bill started out long before I even got here. There are tales about Bill Murdoch. He brought a motion to this House—and Speaker, I think your friend and mentor Bert Johnson would have been in the Chair that day—to ban voicemail. If you look at the 10 reasons, it was almost like a David Letterman 10 reasons: “Top 10 Reasons to Ban Voicemail.” Look it up. For any of you people—and I know most of us have been sitting on hold for what seems like days, not being able to speak to another human—we know in the 21st century it’s not going to work. Bill probably knew it wasn’t going to work, but he brought it forward anyway, because he knew that the people down back home were going to agree with him 100%.

But he had his victories, too, and you alluded to it: Tartan Day, April 6—which, by the way, is my mother’s birthday. Tartan Day was something that was huge for Bill Murdoch. He was very, very proud of his Scottish roots, and when it was able to pass in this Legislature, that was a high point for him and his people.

I’ve got to tell you: When I got here, I butted heads with Bill. I was a new member in 2003, and some people might say I’m bull-headed—I can’t imagine why—but I butted heads with Bill. But I soon realized I might as well be butting heads with that wall over there, because Bill was an immovable object. When he had his mind made up, you weren’t changing it.

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So I learned to be his friend and we got along very well after that, and many times we agreed 100%. Some days we disagreed, not necessarily on the issue, but how we might manage the issue. And on that very first term I was in, Bill got together with another character, one of the other great characters. You know, we’re discouraged from being characters in this place anymore, because, “Oh, the party says we’ve got to do this, the party says we’ve got to do that. Oh, you know how this is going to look in the media.”

Another character was Peter Kormos, and many of you people over there will know Peter. I knew Peter well as well, because I got to sit with him as House leader, and I sat practically beside him when I was on the other side. So Bill got together with Peter and drummed up this crazy idea that Bill was going to become a member of the NDP, so that the NDP could keep party status after the 2003 election. Now, whatever happened, I wasn’t party to all of the conversations, but do you know what? Sort of like Eddie Sargent and the suit, people were talking about it for a long time.

But what he was: He was a champion for the underdog, and I think maybe you see that in yourselves sometimes. He said, “When I have the opportunity to actually speak for”—as my dad used to say—“the little man, the little people,” he never said it in a derogatory sense, but he meant it in a way that they’re not in a position to speak for themselves. Well, Bill Murdoch made damn sure that he was here to speak for them. He was a champion for the underdog.

And I’ll tell you a little story—I know we’ve got all afternoon, right? Bill had a still, and somebody in the area had a donkey by the name of Carl. Now, Carl was becoming old and had become lame—a bad leg, sort of like myself, you know?—and he was going to be euthanized. Well, Bill took the donkey home to his farm, and he had that donkey for years. Carl, who obviously lived for years after that, was an animal just like Bill: He wasn’t going to give up.

Well, when Bill came out with his Billy Beer—Bill had a still down in Bognor swamp, and he brewed all kind of stuff, and one of the things he was brewing was Billy Beer. And in the case of Billy Beer, there were only 23 pints, because one had to be taken out for quality control. A pint was always missing. But on his label for Billy Beer, there was also a picture of Bill and a picture of Carl, and the inscription read something like this, because Carl had a nice bit of hair in between his ears. He said, “Billy Beer: Guaranteed to grow hair on your....”

Laughter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We had caucus on Tuesday mornings then, not in the afternoon, and Bill would show up for caucus at the last minute with a bacon sandwich, heaped with bacon. Why ruin a sandwich with lettuce and tomato, right? I’ve been told on good authority that more than once, down in the cafeteria when he thought they weren’t moving fast enough, he went around the counter and made his own bacon sandwich. That was Bill. And do you know what? He would always make sure he got enough bacon on that sandwich. But he always brought a real perspective to the table in caucus—always—and you can rest assured that we learned a lot from Bill. As rural members, we learned something from Bill: that at caucus, you don’t have to be shy. You need to bring that rural perspective.

And then that same day, Tuesday, we sat in the afternoon and Bill would always get the first statement. He would get the first statement, and then he would be out of here like a rocket back to the riding to serve his people—

or maybe down to the Bognor swamp to make another case of Billy Beer; I don't know. But he would get out of here on Tuesdays.

He also had, as you mentioned, what I would consider to be—and I know people say it's believed to be—the largest hockey jersey collection privately held in Canada. It's amazing: 700, maybe 800 jerseys. But I know this: If it's the biggest one in Canada, it's the biggest one in the world, because there ain't nobody else out there who loves hockey like we do.

So I got to visit Bill's farm one time—you're talking about a farmer. I went to see Bill at his farm, and when he wasn't out fighting for the little guy and he wasn't brewing down in the swamp, he loved it on that tractor. I showed up unannounced one day, and there's Bill in his glory, shirtless. The sun was beating down; it must have been 107 degrees. And he was as happy as you-know-what, sitting on that tractor and cutting hay, because that's where he wanted to be.

Talking about Bognor, Norm Sterling was telling me that Bill came in one time and apologized. He said, "I know I'm not supposed to do that. I'm not supposed to be going to those people directly, but I went to the liquor board and I said, 'You've got to get a cooler for the beer in the liquor store in Bognor because they need cold beer just like you guys.' But I apologize"—he actually apologized for doing it. But that was Bill Murdoch. He felt those people down in Bognor needed a cooler? They're getting a cooler.

You talked about the Tombstones musicians. Bill couldn't sing, but he was the manager of the band. Not only was it the Tombstones—and they built that music hall of fame, they started it—but they also used a retired hearse as their vehicle for driving around to shows.

I got to sing down in Keady one time. Bill called me down to come and do a fundraiser for him. So we're down in Keady, and that's when I first met Susan, his wife. So I got to sing at the fundraiser and I sang with Susan. And after, when we got back to Queen's Park, I said to Bill, "How in the name of Sam Hill," as they say, "did you ever land something like Susan?"—a beautiful, charming woman with the voice of a nightingale. I said, "Bill, how did you do it?" He just laughed at me: "Yak, that's my secret."

But you've got to know that a guy is comfortable in his own skin when, one day, Bill comes into the caucus and says, "Yak, take a look at this." I say, "What?" He shows me a picture, and I said, "What is that, Bill?" "Well, that's a picture of my colonoscopy. Don't you think that it's in good shape?" He shows me a picture—because that was Bill Murdoch. He was so comfortable in who Bill Murdoch was, he says, "Yak, have a look at this."

I got a chance to speak to Bill before he died, and nothing had changed. He was still the same Bill Murdoch, the one we shake our heads at, but the one that, deep down, you just got to love. He stuck to his principles: the principles he came here with were the principles he left with, and the principles that he retained until the good Lord called him. Bill believed in his people, he believed in

the little guy, and he believed that if you or me or anybody else has a chance to stand up for the little guy, that's our job.

I want to thank the family—Susan and all of the family joining with us today. I know, Speaker, you listed—did you list everybody's names? Yes, you did; thank you very much—because I was so enthralled with all of other stuff. I want to thank you all not only for being here today but for sharing this unique and wonderful man, not only with us but with all of the people of Ontario. We miss him dearly. He leaves a legacy that, I dare say, will never be repeated ever again. God bless Bill Murdoch. Rest in peace.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We give thanks for the life and public service of Bill Murdoch.

MARION BOYD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: If you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements of remembrance of the late Ms. Phyllis Marion Boyd, with five minutes allotted to independent members as a group, five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government and five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal Opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Agreed? Agreed.

Today, we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former member of our provincial legislature, the late Mrs. Marion Boyd, who was the MPP for London Centre during the 35th and 36th Parliaments.

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Joining us in the Speaker's gallery are Mrs. Boyd's family and friends: her husband, Terry Boyd; her friend Joseph Addley; her siblings, Sheila Bauer, Marg Black and Dave Watt; her siblings-in-law Grant Black and Lin Watt; and her friends Nancy MacIndoe, Peg McArthur, Pat Schram, Kim Tessier and Dave Tessier.

Also in the Speaker's gallery are David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament; Steve Gilchrist, MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments; and Marilyn Churley, who was the MPP for Riverdale in the 35th and 36th Parliaments and the member for Toronto—Danforth in the 37th and 38th Parliaments. Welcome.

I recognize the member for Don Valley West.

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's an honour to rise today to pay tribute to Marion Boyd, who sadly passed away in October 2022 at the age of 76 and was MPP from London Centre from 1990 to 1999.

To describe Marion Boyd as anything less than a trailblazer would not be doing her justice. Born here in Toronto, Mrs. Boyd was a proud alumnus of Glendon College in my riding of Don Valley West, and it was at Glendon where she met her husband, Terry, as first-year students. Thank you, Terry and the rest of Marion's family and friends, for being here today.

Mrs. Boyd was a proud feminist, organizer and believer in social justice, and it was those traits that resulted in her

impressive and fruitful life. As an administrator at York University, she was successful in organizing the first union contract for faculty members. Afterwards she moved to London, where she served as the executive director of the London Battered Women's Advocacy Clinic. In that role, and in many other projects, she fought tirelessly to support women facing abuse, a cause she would continue to fight for during and after her political career.

In 1990, she had a big win. She defeated sitting Premier David Peterson in a major upset and was immediately sworn into Premier Bob Rae's cabinet where she would remain until the NDP government's defeat in 1995. She was first appointed Minister of Education before serving as Minister of Community and Social Services, but of course she's most well known for being the first woman to serve as Attorney General. For most of her time in cabinet, she also served concurrently as the minister responsible for women's issues.

Her most famous moment, of course, was Bill 167, the Equality Rights Statute Amendment Act, which would have enshrined rights for same-sex couples similar to those of straight ones. While, regretfully, the Legislature voted against this proposed law, this bill was forward-thinking and one of the first of its kind in Ontario, in the country and in the whole world, and I commend Mrs. Boyd for taking the initiative to do what was right and stand up for the LGBTQ community even though this position was unpopular at the time. That kind of resolve is what inspires me and, I'm sure, many of us still sitting in the chamber today.

When the NDP government fell, Mrs. Boyd retained her seat and dutifully served as her party's critic for justice and native issues until her loss following redistricting in 1999.

Today, we remember Marion Boyd for her tenacity, her spirit, her commitment to fighting for what is right, and I thank her friends and family for joining us here today to honour her and her illustrious life.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Rob Flack: I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the Legislature today to give tribute on behalf of the government to former MPP Marion Boyd.

Now, Marion and I did not travel in the same political circles, as my friends across the aisle will understand. I didn't know her well, but I came to respect her immensely. In preparing this tribute, I was reading her obituary the other day and some of the tributes that came out after her death last fall, and the quote that stuck to me was simply, "Marion's life of service is a gift to be treasured." We hear that a lot: life of service. We all do it. I get it, but when you read about her life and what she advocated for and how she led, Marion's life truly was of service and a gift to be treasured.

When preparing this tribute as well, I don't think anyone can say that her life wasn't a commitment to community—London in particular—our province and our country. As was said, she ran provincially in 1985 as the NDP candidate and lost. She ran again in London North Centre in 1987 and lost. Persistent as she was, she ran for

the NDP federally in London East during the 1988 free-trade election and lost. But in 1990, Ms. Boyd, through perseverance yet again, was successfully elected to the Legislature as the member for London Centre.

I remember this very well, Speaker, because I lived at that time in London Centre. And who was our MPP, but none other than—and actually a very good friend of mine—then-Premier David Peterson. So what was so significant about that night was, obviously, there was a change in government; a pretty big swing. And I remembered the then-Premier-elect saying, "I guess it wasn't such a bad idea for an election after all." I think somebody else was elected in that election, if I'm not mistaken, Speaker, but those of us in London were really taken aback by the defeat of the Premier in that seat, and a significant defeat it was. The upset sent shockwaves through the city and the province and, I can say, as a Tory knocking on doors in that election in that riding, which we knew we weren't going to win, it was astounding. It was an amazing upset; it was an amazing victory. And her perseverance certainly showed the way.

As I said, I met her a few times—not a lot. But, again, when I did talk to her and when we did speak, she really wasn't as partisan as you might think. She really cared about the community and we'll hear, I'm sure, about the many things she advocated for.

As we all know, she was appointed Minister of Education on October 1, 1990, by then-Premier Bob Rae. While holding this position, Premier Rae decided to add the minister responsible for women's issues to her portfolio in 1991. It was a great addition to her responsibilities as she was widely known as a feminist, which—okay. But forget that. I'd like to take the word "feminist" away. She advocated for things she truly believed in and was an organizer.

Before becoming an MPP, she was the executive director of the London Battered Women's Advocacy Clinic—that I remember being on and sat on the committee—to end woman abuse. While holding the position of minister responsible for women's issues, she led a campaign against domestic violence. In many ways, she was ahead of her time.

Back to politics: She became the Minister of Community and Social Services in 1991 and remained in that role until 1993, when she became, as was said, Ontario's first female Attorney General, paving the way for future women to hold this position, such as Ministers Madeleine Meilleur and Caroline Mulroney. As well, Ms. Boyd was the first non-lawyer to hold that position—I don't know if that ever happened before or since in this House, but I rather doubt it.

She was once quoted as saying, "So many people don't have the same opportunities, yet when you get to know them as individuals they have just as much potential." This must have been what Premier Rae and her colleagues experienced when they got to know Marion. I've been told from people who've sat in this House that at the time they saw her as a capable and well-respected leader.

After the 1995 election, Marion went on to serve as the MPP for London Centre until 1999. Impressively, she was

one of only 17 NDP members who retained their seats in the 1995 provincial election and went on, while in opposition, to hold key positions within the NDP caucus, highlighting again her strong advocacy skills and leadership abilities.

As I wrap up, I'd like to take time to recognize her family members, who I'll come up to and say hello to in a few minutes if you would allow me, please, and thank you for your attendance. After politics, I think everyone knows Marion continued her life of community service. In 2000, she was appointed chair of the Task Force on the Health Effects of Woman Abuse. She also served as a bencher on the Law Society of Upper Canada and as an adjudicator with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Marion Boyd served her family, her constituents, her province and her country with excellence and distinction. God bless Marion Boyd. Her treasured gifts of service will be missed.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to honour the life and legacy of my friend and mentor Marion Boyd: Ontario's first woman—and first non-lawyer—Attorney General; former Minister of Education, Minister of Community and Social Services and minister responsible for women's issues; a bencher at the Law Society of Upper Canada; a licensed lay worship leader in the United Church; and a lifelong champion for social justice.

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It's always a privilege for MPPs to pay tribute to those who came before us, but it is a rare opportunity to be able to publicly thank and celebrate a former MPP who had such a profound influence on my own life and my standing before you today.

Like many Ontarians, I first learned of Marion Boyd on September 6, 1990, when she gained fame as the NDP "giant-killer" who defeated former Liberal Premier David Peterson in the riding of London Centre. Shortly afterwards, I came to Queen's Park myself, as a staffer in the NDP government, where I was in awe of and definitely intimidated by Marion Boyd. She was so strong, so principled, so competent, so inspiring, so clear-eyed and unwavering in her vision and commitment to social justice.

To many of us—and, I'm sure, to the leader of the official opposition—Marion was already a feminist icon when she arrived in office because of her remarkable record of advocacy and achievement as executive director of the London Battered Women's Advocacy Centre.

Irene Mathysen, elected alongside Marion in London-Fanshawe in 1990, remembers Marion's incredible courage, integrity and leadership in the London community. Marion was at the table when the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse was established, Ontario's first VAW coordinating committee. Marion worked tirelessly with the London Police Service to make London the first community to implement mandatory charging, raising local, provincial and national awareness of domestic violence as a criminal offence. Marion was

there to march in London's first Pride parade. She helped organize London's first Take Back the Night march.

Here at Queen's Park, Marion continued to make a difference for women, children and marginalized communities in this province, especially in her role as Attorney General. In 1992, the Morgentaler Clinic was firebombed. Death threats were made against doctors, and women seeking abortions were intimidated and harassed. As Attorney General, Marion worked immediately and closely with her cabinet colleague and then-health minister Frances Lankin to initiate and implement a legal injunction for no-protest zones around abortion clinics and hospitals that protected women's access to health care until provincial legislation was passed in 2017. This was, her family told me, one of her proudest accomplishments.

Recalling that experience and their time together as MPPs, Frances Lankin describes Marion as brave, strong and tough, someone whose positions on issues were always carefully considered and well thought out.

Of course, Marion will forever be remembered for her courage in bringing forward Bill 167, legislation that prohibited discrimination against same-sex couples. Although the bill failed in a free vote, Marion paved the way for recognition of equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community and was delighted to be vindicated five years later by the Supreme Court ruling. I was here for Marion's leadoff speech on that bill, in which she brilliantly referenced the Canadian family known to the world as representing the best in family values: Matthew Cuthbert; his sister, Marilla; and their adopted child, Anne Shirley. In using the example of Anne of Green Gables, Marion spoke to the obligation of recognizing that families come in many different forms and all are equally deserving of support. I knew in that moment that Marion was more than a feminist icon; she was also a kindred spirit.

After the 1995 election, I moved into Marion's riding and was excited to become involved in her NDP riding association. I came to know her warmth and her kindness, her generosity and compassion, her deep connections with the NDP volunteers who had helped her through six campaigns, from her first three runs for office to her electoral successes in 1990 and 1995 to her final campaign in 1999.

Marion had a smile that could light up a room, often with a twinkle in her eye and an infectious, impish grin.

Another of her cabinet colleagues, Marilyn Churley, said, "Marion was a saint among us, but a saint with a wicked sense of humour and a lovely, sparkling laugh."

Marion was also deeply committed to supporting and encouraging other women to stand for elected office, and I was a direct beneficiary of that when deciding to run for the school board in 2000. She said, of course, I should, and took out her chequebook to write me my first campaign donation. Although she had moved out of London by 2013 when the by-election was called in London West, she was one of the first people I talked to about running. Her confidence and steadfast support were instrumental in my decision.

Marion's passion for social justice was matched only by her deeply held faith and her love of family. Family

meant everything to Marion: her loving husband, Terry; and dear friend and confidant, Joseph Dunlop-Addley; her cherished daughter, Tina, who sadly passed away in 2017; her parents, and especially her mother, Dorothy, who Marion shared an apartment with in Toronto while serving at Queen's Park; her siblings, their spouses and their children; and her large close-knit extended family circle. I want to welcome all of Marion's family members and friends who have joined us today, and especially my own long-time friends Terry and Joseph.

On behalf of this Legislature, I offer our deepest condolences for your loss and our profound gratitude for Marion's distinguished life of public service which made life better for so many Ontarians.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We give thanks for the life and public service of Marion Boyd.

KEITH MACDONALD

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late Mr. Keith MacDonald, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow members to make statements in remembrance of the late Mr. Keith MacDonald, with five minutes allotted to His Majesty's government, five minutes allotted to His Majesty's loyal opposition and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group. Agreed? Agreed.

Today we are honoured to remember and pay tribute to a former member of our provincial Legislature, the late Mr. Keith McDonald, who was the MPP for Prince Edward—Lennox during the 34th Parliament.

Joining us in the Speaker's gallery is Mr. McDonald's granddaughter Monica Lindsay, and also in the Speaker's gallery are David Warner, the Speaker during the 35th Parliament; Steve Gilchrist, the MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliament; and Marilyn Churley, who was the member for Riverdale and also the member for Toronto—Danforth.

I recognize the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Todd Smith: It is an honour to be able to rise today and pay tribute to Keith McDonald, who represented Prince Edward—Lennox in the Liberal government from 1987 to 1990.

A special hello to his wife, Eleanor Lindsay—she's home and watching online, I understand, herself a former municipal warden and tremendous supporter of local health care in the new Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital that we're building in Picton—as well as members of her family who are watching online; and a

special welcome to Monica, Keith's granddaughter, who joined us today. It's great to have you here.

From time to time, we get into some pretty heated discussions in these chambers, and it shows our passion. Well, when Keith got to this place, he already had quite a reputation for being a fiery competitor with a no-quit attitude.

Keith grew up on a farm right in the middle of what we now know as Sandbanks Provincial Park. He raised cattle and crops, and he welcomed guests to the old Lakeland Lodge, which was there as well. It was a well-known cottage operation where his family welcomed tourists from all across the continent.

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While he was attentive to his chores, Keith's passion was sport. He was a tennis champ at Belleville's Albert College, and his skills were honed against guests at the lodge over the summer months. He was an all-star third baseman in softball and baseball, but Keith's favourite sport was hockey, and he was pretty darn good at it. According to an interview that he gave the Picton Gazette, he started skating on Athol Bay at the tender age of three, and he often skated against much older competitors.

He was so interested in hockey that the farming business might have been impacted at least once because of it—probably more often than not. One winter when Keith was in his twenties, his dad, Norman, spent some time down in Florida, and he left the cows in his son's care. Keith got a bit tired of milking the cows and wanted to focus his attention instead on being on the ice, and he found a solution: After about a week, he picked up the phone and told Norman that he had sold the whole bunch of them, the whole herd. He was just a pest, though; he didn't actually do it.

Keith really was a pest. He was a lot like Matthew Tkachuk, who's playing for the Florida Panthers right now, getting under the skin of the Maple Leafs and, previously, the Boston Bruins. He would do anything in his power to give his team an edge. He didn't only dish it out; he could also take it. Keith had to drop the gloves many times, and win or lose, he made an impact. People really took notice. Back in the late 1950s, he was recruited on the famed Belleville McFarlands, who went on to win the Allan Cup as Canadian senior champions in 1958, and then subsequently won a world championship for Canada in the old Czechoslovakia, in Prague, in 1959.

Around the same time, there was this young buck named Bobby Hull who was coming up through the system, another Quinte-area product; we've recently mourned his death. He was training with the Macs, and he was known for his physique, as well, and his toughness that was necessary at times. Keith made an impression on the young star, the Golden Jet, too. As a matter of fact, "He's tougher than a night in jail," the Golden Jet remarked. Keith was always in his teammates' corner, and that reputation stuck with him later in life. Keith inspired these attributes in his five step-grandchildren, and they showed similar grit, skill and determination whether they were in the classroom, on the diamond or on the ice years later.

He was also a fan favourite, and, fittingly, he was the first person inducted into the Prince Edward County Sports Hall of Fame. While he stayed involved in sports as a referee, Keith transferred his passion to the political arena. He rose to become the reeve in Hallowell, and Prince Edward county's warden in 1974. Counting his three years here, Keith spent more than 30 years in politics municipally and provincially.

While Keith made no secret about missing his Prince Edward county home, he was active in his time here at Queen's Park. He served as chair of his government's eastern Ontario caucus and the standing committees on economic policy and municipal government reform. He was really interested in clean energy, tourism and preserving farmers' livelihoods in a time of emerging free trade. Those were among his main causes of choice.

Back in county politics, Keith was the model of decorum—in some ways, not all ways. He insisted that he and other councillors show up to meetings wearing a shirt and tie, and he always had time to listen to the people he represented. He often showed up to meetings first and left last. At one point, after surgery, wearing a full leg cast up to his hip, he was regularly climbing the stairs to the second-storey chambers at Shire Hall to serve.

Where he might not have been such a great model of decorum was in advocating for those constituents. We heard about Bill Murdoch earlier; I wouldn't put him in that category, but he was pretty tough. Those who followed Prince Edward county council still spin some yarns today when they're talking about those old council debates and his unprompted monologues at times. Regardless of the night's agenda, there'd be a moment when Keith would say, "I've been talking to so-and-so," and then he would find a way to lay out a constituent's concerns with a passionate plea for help. Sometimes there was just no stopping him, short of the mayors ruling him out of order and sending him home, which happened on many occasions.

The neighbours knew they had found a sincere advocate, and they knew his firm handshake and his word were indeed his bond. He also argued strongly for fiscal responsibility at tax time, and he urged common sense solutions.

In total, when Keith retired from his political career following the 2014 municipal election, he had spent 45 consecutive years in public service, quite a remarkable legacy. Those who knew Keith beyond his gruff exterior—and I'm fortunate to have called him a friend—also know that he had a warm heart, and he had a lot of time for others.

Back on the South Shore farm that he loved, Keith was actively engaged in Prince Edward county community events until his passing at age 93. He was a larger-than-life character. He never quit. He's going to be missed in Prince Edward county and my Bay of Quinte riding.

Thank you to Keith's family for joining us online and here today in the chamber and allowing him to serve for so many years. We lost Keith MacDonald in March of

2021, but his legacy will live on in Ontario and especially in his beloved Prince Edward county.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: It's always an honour to stand in this Legislature. Today, it is an honour to pay tribute on behalf of the official opposition to the late Keith MacDonald, a fellow deputy whip. Keith MacDonald, the former MPP for Prince Edward–Lennox, passed away March 30, 2021. He served in Ontario's 34th Parliament between 1987 and 1990. In 1989, he was elected chairman of the eastern Ontario government caucus.

We are pleased today to be joined by his granddaughter Monica Lindsay; Karen Haslam, the MPP for Perth during the 35th Parliament; David Warner, the Speaker during the 35th Parliament; and also former parliamentarian Steve Gilchrist.

I had the pleasure to speak with Matt Ronan, Keith's stepdaughter's partner. Through this conversation and through his very gracious email, I gained greater appreciation and understanding of the incredible work and dedication that Mr. MacDonald provided throughout his political career and community involvement.

Speaker, I could not be as expressive on the life of a man whom I have never met, so I would like to read the very eloquent submission from his stepson-in-law Matt. Matt writes:

"Keith MacDonald was a farmer, an athlete and, as a lifelong politician, a fierce advocate for the people of Prince Edward county. A descendent of Loyalists, Keith farmed his land on the shore of Prince Edward county his entire life. Keith and his family ran the family farm on land that is now Sandbanks Provincial Park and ran a resort, Lakeland Lodge, on the same land.

"Keith did not have children of his own to pass the farm that was in his family since approximately 1814. He sold the land to the Ontario government to extend the boundaries of Sandbanks Provincial Park in the 1970s. Working with the provincial park, Keith continued to farm his land until 2020.

"It was difficult for him to see the farm, his farmland, reforested, but I know he was proud that this land would be shared with all who visit. When walking the new provincial park trails in the Sandbanks, you can read the family history and their relationship with the land on the many historical plaques placed by the parks.

"Keith was a hard-working, scrappy athlete who excelled in sports. Despite his many medals and him being a member of the 1959 world championship Belleville McFarlands hockey team, Keith would always say that it was his drive and work ethic that earned him a position on championship teams and not his underlying talent.

"Keith was a grinder who took and gave beatings. By the time he was 70 he had his hips and knees replaced multiple times. He literally could not lift his arm more than halfway up because of the damage he had done to his shoulder. His doctor said it was like he was sewing into wet cardboard when he went to surgically repair it the last

time. This did not stop Keith. He would simply find a way to get the job done.

“Loved by the fans and the teammates and despised by the opponents, Keith truly had the respect of them all.

“At one point, Keith was given the opportunity to join the Detroit Red Wings. While he loved hockey, he could not stray far from his farm and returned home to Prince Edward county.

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“Prince Edward county was his life. Keith served the people of Prince Edward county and the Bay of Quinte for over 50 years. In that capacity, he was the same scrappy, hard-nosed person as he was in hockey and farming. As a representative of the people, he was tenacious in support and worked hard on their behalf. As MPP, he served with pride, and while he lost in the next election and the NDP rose to power in Ontario, he was not saddened to be coming home to his farm and the people of his county.

“He would go on serving the community after losing his first wife to cancer.

“Later in life, Keith married another well-known local politician, Eleanor Lindsay. Eleanor Toby Lindsay was the first female warden of the county and was an environmentalist who also fought hard to preserve the beauty that is Prince Edward county. Keith took pride in Eleanor’s accomplishments and always boasted of her passion for the county. Having no children of his own, Keith was welcomed into the family by Eleanor’s children, Jennifer and Jim Lindsay, and their partners, Matthew Ronan and Lisa Lindsay.

“Keith relished family dinners and always wanted to discuss and debate local politics. While he knew how to create the debate, he was more interested in hearing the views of his new family and was interested in getting the views of the younger generation. Soon after, Keith and Eleanor became grandparents of five and the family farm became the place for the grandchildren—Gavin and William Ronan; and Mallory, Monica and Max Lindsay—to explore and learn to interact with nature. He was very proud and supportive of his family.

“In late January 2021, Keith’s health declined, and he had a long stay at Belleville General Hospital, and the end was imminent. Keith was stubborn and would not pass away until he returned to his beloved Prince Edward county, where he passed away with his family by his side. He will be missed but not forgotten.

“In Keith MacDonald’s own words”—and Matt quotes—“I lost as many fights as I won, but I could go out there and help the team by playing my style and doing whatever I could, and I was going to do it.””

Thank you, Matt, for sharing these words with us today, because they were definitely eloquent and well written.

As you can see, Speaker, Keith MacDonald was a giant of a man and so well loved by his family and community. It’s always a pleasure to be able to pay tribute to previous members of this Legislature. As you heard previously, we will also be those people, so it is always a great honour.

Thank you to the family for sharing Keith with the province of Ontario. It’s definitely a better place because of him. Thank you so much.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Beaches–East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It’s an honour to rise today to pay tribute to Keith MacDonald. Born July 18, 1927, Keith MacDonald was elected to the Ontario Legislature on September 10, 1987. Mr. MacDonald proudly served the riding of Prince Edward–Lennox until 1990. He brought the voice of the rural community right here to Queen’s Park under the Liberal Party of Ontario. During his term, he was named deputy government whip and served on two standing committees.

Mr. MacDonald was not only an MPP, but also a lifetime farmer and a member of the Cattlemen’s Association of Ontario. He raised cattle and crops all over Prince Edward county. Mr. MacDonald attended his final cattle auction in Hoards Station in January 2021.

What is also clear is his love for sports. As a youth, Mr. MacDonald was actively involved in baseball, softball, tennis and hockey. His participation in hockey continued as he managed and sponsored teams. Mr. MacDonald was a referee for the Ontario Hockey Association for many years. As a player, he rose to prominence locally as a member of the Belleville McFarlands hockey club that captured the Allan Cup in a seven-game series contested in Kelowna, British Columbia, and then the world championship the following year in Prague. He is lovingly memorialized at the Prince Edward County Sports Hall of Fame, where he was the first approved member.

Mr. MacDonald’s long history of community involvement includes terms as councillor, deputy reeve and reeve of Hallowell township, as well as warden of Prince Edward county. He was a tireless public servant and aimed to serve his community well. I’m sure he is remembered as fondly in Prince Edward county as he is here at Queen’s Park.

Keith MacDonald passed away peacefully at Hospice Prince Edward, Picton, on Saturday, March 27, 2021, at the age of 93. At the end of his long life, surrounded by his loved ones, I hope he was proud of all he accomplished for his community and of his years of public service, both in this chamber and outside of it.

Thank you to Monica Lindsay, Keith MacDonald’s granddaughter, who is here today; Karen Haslam, MPP for Perth during the 35th Parliament; former MPP for Toronto–Danforth Marilyn Churley; former MPP for Scarborough East Steve Gilchrist; and David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament, for joining us here today at Queen’s Park to remember and pay tribute to the wonderful life and legacy of Keith MacDonald.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We give thanks for the life and public service of Keith MacDonald.

VISITORS

Mr. Graham McGregor: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the member for Brampton North has a point of order.

Mr. Graham McGregor: Yes. Thanks, Speaker. Today at Queen’s Park we’re joined by the all-star team

from the city of Brampton. We've got Deputy Mayor Harkirat Singh; regional councillor Paul Vicente; Peel School Board trustee Karla Bailey; CAO Marlon Kallideen; our commissioner of planning, Steve Ganesh; the GR team, Chris Ethier and Andrzej Hoffman; and council staff Harkiran Sandhu and Rupinder Birk. Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Orders of the day?

Hon. Paul Calandra: If you seek it, I'm sure you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to see the clock at 6. Agreed? Agreed. It is therefore 6 o'clock.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SANTÉ MENTALE DES ÉTUDIANTS

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Education should continue its advocacy to education stakeholders in the province of Ontario, such as school boards, faculties of education and the Ontario College of Teachers to strengthen professional learning on mental health for educators and school staff, keeping in mind strategies to support mental health and well-being with a focus on social-emotional learning skills, mindfulness, outdoor learning and physical activity initiatives with advice from local health units and approaches that foster a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Singh Grewal has moved private members' notice of motion 49. Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation. I recognize, again, the member for Brampton East.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: I rise here today not only as the elected representative for my riding of Brampton East but as a mental health advocate for all students and staff across the province of Ontario.

Speaker, my motion presented today is geared towards enhancing community safety, reducing violent and aggressive behaviours, increasing mindfulness and facilitating resiliency amongst youth by providing them with adequate mental health supports and practices in schools. Ontario's children and youth need more mental health supports to better succeed. With this motion, students will better be supported in school and will see increased energy levels, concentration and optimism, resulting in a better overall academic performance.

According to the Ontario Child Health Study from 2019, approximately one in five Ontario students between the ages of four to 17 years old meet the criteria of at least one mental health matter that they would like or need

support for. From 2019 to 2021, the need for mental health supports for youth increased from 35% to 43%. That's exactly why we need to bolster mental health supports for our students, and that's simply what our government, led by Premier Ford, intends to do.

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In my riding of Brampton East, we have hundreds of families that rely on school boards for support to do their part in raising the future of Ontario when there isn't appropriate help readily accessible. It has long-term effects on the students and those around them. Many concerned parents have brought forward incidents of their child feeling isolated or stressed due to academic and social factors. Ontario has a diversified population of families, eager to work hard and establish a brighter tomorrow. Through hard work and sacrifice, these families should have peace of mind, knowing that adequate supports are available to help their children face mental health pressures.

Speaker, just under half of the students part of the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey report that, in the past year, there was a time where they wanted to talk to someone about a mental health problem but didn't know who to turn to. We understand that students spend a great deal of their day at school and can naturally wish to turn to their teacher for support when struggling with mental health.

Our province's teachers and education staff do an impeccable job of nurturing students and play a significant role in their development. They often go above and beyond their basic responsibilities, investing extra effort to understand each student's unique needs and providing personalized support. They design engaging lessons, facilitate classroom discussions and encourage critical thinking and creativity. However, our educators are not trained mental health professionals.

Speaker, struggling with mental health can naturally lead to negative repercussions which can impact students' lives and cause them to react drastically. This can be in the form of avoiding classes, having difficulty making friends and/or behaving differently with teachers and classmates. In more extreme situations, it can also lead to students acting out through violent acts and aggressive behaviours.

With this motion, our government, through the Ministry of Education, will be able to better equip and train our province's educators with the appropriate resources they need to support students and help them overcome the mental health struggles that they may face.

A recent study conducted by the Toronto School Administrators' Association reported that nearly three quarters of principals and vice-principals at Toronto schools are finding it increasingly difficult to manage student behaviour, with many of them expressing a concern about the rise in violence.

There is stigma amongst youth when it comes to talking about mental health, and instead of seeking help and support, youth tend to act out and express themselves in a manner with negative connotations. To address this concern and reduce the stigma, this advocacy campaign needs

to be implemented to provide students with a safe space that they can feel heard.

Speaker, as many of you have heard, there are six schools in Mississauga and Brampton that were targets of online threats to “shoot them up.” While the Peel and Dufferin-Peel Catholic school boards and Peel Regional Police do a phenomenal job of protecting our families and loved ones, we need to take preventative approaches to reduce crime in schools by providing accessible mental health resources.

This past week, we had a concerned mother come into my constituency office with a heartbreaking but eye-opening story. Her son was physically bullied at school, but didn’t feel comfortable telling anybody about it and instead made the excuse of feeling sick and avoiding going to school. While at school, he was bullied and faced aggression from his bully, and he was physically injured as a result.

On the other side, when you look at the other side of the story, we have a bully that’s acting out violently by injuring another student, likely in response to unaddressed or unresolved feelings. With the support of mental health, maybe that can be solved as well. While our educators do an amazing job instilling knowledge and teaching students the curriculum, they’re not always equipped to identify and recognize distress signals and mental health concerns among students.

Speaker, I’m moving this motion today in response to the countless stories such as this that I’ve heard from concerned parents, to address the growing epidemic of students needing mental health supports in order to provide them with better, nurturing classroom environments.

The previous Liberal government, with the support of the NDP, failed to understand the severity of such instances and the need for sufficient in-school supports for students and staff. They failed to provide sufficient funding to school boards to ensure that all students had access to mental health supports and services that they needed and that there were enough mental health professionals accessible to provide that adequate support. I hope they now recognize this shortcoming and support this motion.

It’s critical to have educators and school staff equipped to handle various situations so they can embed mental health promotion into the education experience and help foster a safe and inclusive classroom environment. Simply put, our government gets it. That’s why we have already made strides in paving the way for better mental health resources for these students. Every year since 2018, we have consistently increased funding to support student mental health in Ontario. For the current school year alone, we invested \$90 million, which is roughly five times the amount we initially invested in 2018, which is a nearly 555% increase.

In November 2022, the Ministry of Education conducted a consultation with community stakeholders to identify and highlight what’s happening in schools and the greater community in relation to mental health and to

review the coordination of mental health resources and services in schools. Ultimately, this consultation led to the recommendation of embedding age-appropriate mental health learning and resources throughout the curriculum. Our government took prompt action on this issue, and in just five months, we executed a plan to integrate mental health learning and materials for grade 7 and 8 student curriculums. We also introduced mandatory learning on mental health literacy for grade 10 students, which will help cover key topics such as how to recognize signs of being overwhelmed or struggling, as well as how to access help when needed.

I would like to commend our Minister of Education, Minister Lecce, and his ministry team, as well as MPP Pierre for their dedication and action in delivering our government’s commitments to support students and help them succeed.

Speaker, an advocacy campaign like the one I’m moving today will not only continue to build our government’s priority of supporting the mental health and well-being of students and staff across the province but also act as a proactive and preventative measure to increase mindfulness, decrease violence and aggressive acts, facilitate resiliency and, ultimately, enhance community safety. It will also focus on providing educators with social-emotional learning practices that can be introduced into the classroom routine to promote mindfulness and facilitate a suitable learning environment. Finally, the campaign will focus on establishing healthy relations between educators, students and peers in order to foster healthy and welcoming inclusive classrooms.

Providing targeted training on mental health strategies such as social-emotional learning skills, mindfulness and physical activity initiatives will allow for educators to become well equipped with the tools and resources they require to support good student mental health and will allow them to become someone for struggling students to turn to and seek support from.

School Mental Health Ontario is an organization that focuses on supporting the mental health and well-being of students and is our province’s official school mental health implementation partner. In line with the motion being moved here today, they believe that to create a mentally healthy school, as a whole-school approach, which they ask to be adopted—which means that mental health promotion should be integrated into all aspects of the educational environment, curriculum and practices.

They also stated the following: “Schools are a critical part of the overall mental health care system in Ontario for children and youth. The role is focused on wellness promotion, prevention, and early intervention. The goal is to help young people flourish while reducing the number of students in need of intensive mental health supports.”

By focusing on wellness promotion, prevention and early intervention, our government can help schools better develop students, their skills and the resilience they need to maintain good mental health while also identifying and addressing issues before they become more serious. By prioritizing mental health training for educators and school

staff through this campaign, we can ensure students in Ontario have access to the support they need to thrive both academically and socially. This advocacy campaign is catered to supporting students, which will lead to better outcomes in both the short and long term, including improved academic performance; stronger interpersonal relationships with peers, teachers and families; and better overall well-being.

1510

In summary, the motion I am moving today is asking for this House to support the Ministry of Education in spearheading an advocacy campaign to encourage educators in implementing mental health practices in their classrooms and provide them with the appropriate resources to do so. This will result in mentally healthy classrooms and will facilitate academic student success which ultimately will lead to greater community safety.

To achieve this goal, the campaign will focus on key implementation strategies mentioned earlier which include: outdoor learning opportunities and emotional well-being practices that can be utilized for all grades; providing educators with social-emotional learning practices; and fostering welcoming and inclusive classroom environments. Together, we can make a difference and ensure that all students in Ontario have the tools they need to thrive.

And then as these new resources are implemented, our ministry, supported by the PA, has been working very hard to make sure that these resources are available for grade 7 and 8 students and teachers as well as they revise the grade 10 curriculum to include mental health literacy.

As I mentioned before, most mental health issues developed between the ages of 15 to 24 during the COVID pandemic, and through this motion we'll be able to better support them.

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

Ms. Chandra Pasma: I'm happy to have the opportunity to rise in the House today to speak to this motion put forward by the member for Brampton East, which deals with mental health in education. This is a subject which I know concerns many people in Ontario: parents, teachers, education workers, administrators and mental health professionals are all raising the alarm about the need to address the mental health crisis among our children.

It's one of the top things I hear as the education critic for the official opposition. Wherever I go in the province, people are telling me about how kids are not okay, how they're dealing with high levels of anxiety and depression. My inbox is full of stories.

We know from a report earlier this year by People for Education that 59% of our students in Ontario are depressed about the future and 39% report that the pandemic has made their mental health worse. This is something I also have personal experience with. All three of my children experienced mental health challenges during the last three years and one of them is still dealing with very high levels of anxiety.

Mental health is something we should all be talking about much more. It wasn't discussed at all when I was a

child, within my family or at school. I grew up in a Dutch Calvinist family and community, and as I'm sure the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane would agree, Dutch people can be very, very blunt. But that was not true when it came to expressing our emotions. We were expected to stiff-upper-lip our way through everything. Depression and anxiety were never things that were acknowledged, let alone mental illness.

And that's despite the fact that anxiety is something I've struggled with my whole life. I've had to put in a lot of work as an adult to learn to identify the signs and symptoms of anxiety and strategies for dealing with it.

Thankfully things are pretty different now than when I was growing up. One of the interesting things about virtual school—which my children participated in for a full year—is that, as parents, we actually got a glimpse into what happens during the school day, and my husband and I could see how every single day, the teachers incorporated mental health and wellness information and activities into the day, including having children identify their emotions and talking about strategies for coping with various feelings.

Last week, there was an open house at my youngest kids' school for Education Week and I got to visit their classrooms. And I noticed that in both rooms there was a space set up for self-regulation.

In my son's class, it was called the "chill zone" and there were little canvas chairs to hang out in, a stack of books and some posters on the wall with information on self-regulation and strategies for grounding; the "nervous thermometer" to identify how anxious you're feeling and various options for coping skills with options for movement, like squeezing something, shredding something or using a fidget toy; sensory options like a soft blanket or sitting in a bean bag chair; and processing options like writing in a journal, drawing or talking to someone you trust.

My daughter's classroom had lists on the wall of coping skills with different options for at home, like calling a friend, listening to songs or hanging out with your pet, and options for school like deep breathing, taking a minute to go to your happy place or chatting with your teacher or another trusted adult.

I was so glad to see these, Speaker, and I'm so grateful for the work that teachers and education workers do every single day to support our kids, to help them to understand their mental health, and help them to cope with challenges.

I am happy to support anything that makes it easier for teachers and education workers in this important work of supporting our kids, whether it's more instruction on children's mental health in teachers' college, professional development for teachers and education workers, or resources provided by local public health units.

But I think it's also important to acknowledge in this House, Speaker, that talking about mental health and teaching and encouraging kids to adopt strategies is only step one. There are often times when mental health requires more than just self-awareness, more than just coping strategies, and more than just talking to a teacher

or a friend. There are also times when mental health requires dedicated mental health support from a professional.

And this is where I find myself incredibly frustrated as a parent. As I mentioned, I have a child who is currently experiencing mental health challenges. I'm going to try to talk about this in a way that doesn't breach my child's privacy or right to confidentiality, but last week, my child was in a state of crisis, experiencing incredibly high anxiety and stress. And I sat with them, reminding them to try all of the strategies that we've learned, and nothing was helping, Speaker.

My child is experiencing a mental health challenge that simple deep breathing won't fix, but unfortunately, we have been entirely on our own as parents to find and fight for help for this child. And I know as well that despite my frustration at being forced to fight for my child, my partner and I are pretty privileged in the resources that we have when it comes to fighting for our child. My child and other children in Ontario deserve support.

It is important to talk about mental health with kids, it is important to give them strategies, but it is also absolutely imperative that we provide them with the necessary supports and resources around them to help them when they need it. And sadly, that is just not happening in Ontario right now. We are failing our kids. Half of schools have no access to mental health resources, and less than one in 10 have regularly scheduled access.

After three years of historic disruptions on a global scale, we are only spending 27 cents per day per child on supports for children's mental health. That's not enough, and it's leaving our kids with nowhere to turn. We need to at least make sure that every single school in the province has regularly scheduled access to at least one qualified mental health professional.

Le problème est plus sévère pour les écoles francophones qui ont, en plus, la difficulté de trouver des professionnels en santé mentale francophones, surtout quand les salaires sont plus bas pour des professionnels qui travaillent au sein de nos conseils scolaires francophones. Le Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est a un seul psychologue et six positions qui sont vacantes. Une des positions a été vacante depuis sept ans. Il faut absolument que le gouvernement mette en place des solutions pour adresser la pénurie de main-d'oeuvre dans le système d'éducation francophone.

It's also important to acknowledge, Speaker, that the mental health of teachers and education workers is suffering. I hear regularly about the toll that the pandemic and the working conditions within our schools, along with the disrespect shown by the government with Bill 124, is taking on our teachers and education workers. They are experiencing incredibly high levels of burnout and stress. Many teachers and education workers are ending up on long-term leaves due to stress, anxiety and depression. We're seeing an increase in the number of resignations and early retirements.

The Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario would normally have three resignations in a school year.

This year, they've had 28 so far, and there are still two months in the school year. In the Peel District School Board, there have been more resignations than retirements this year for the first time ever.

If we want to make sure that there are caring adults in the classroom and in our schools to support our kids, then we need to look after the mental health of workers as well. And that means that we have to look at the question of why everyone's mental health is struggling, Speaker. Because yes, mental health challenges are a constant feature of human life and a normal one that we should talk about and work to address all the time. But we are also in a moment where the mental health of our students, teachers and education workers is particularly struggling, and we also need to ask why that is.

1520

There's a parable that's often attributed to Desmond Tutu, although I don't know whether he actually told it or not, about a village where a child is seen floating by in the water, struggling to breathe. The villagers rush in to save the child and provide artificial respiration. While they're doing that, there are another two children in the water, and so they rush to save those ones too. And as they're saving those children, there are more and more children coming, and it's all hands on deck to save the children. And finally, one villager stops to ask, "Why are these children in the river? We need to go upstream to figure that out."

When we ask that question, we discover that many of the factors that are contributing to mental health challenges among kids, teachers and education workers are actually within our control as legislators:

- crowded classrooms;
- the lack of focused attention from teachers who are trying to juggle 35 or more students in one classroom;
- seven or more teachers in a single year, because there aren't enough full-time teachers and occasional teachers;
- kids with disabilities or special education needs who aren't getting the supports they need, the supports that they've been promised
- barriers to accessibility that prevent some kids from participating fully;
- exclusions that prevent some kids from participating at all;
- high levels of violence in schools that result from kids lashing out because of the lack of support.

For teachers and education workers, it's the moral injury of doing your best every day to meet the needs of the children you look after, but falling short because the expectations and conditions are unreasonable. It's the expectation of handling a grade 4 class with 20 kids, 13 of whom have an IEP, and two of whom have severe autism, all by yourself, with no support personnel, as happened to one Ottawa teacher who is now on leave. It's being the only full-time EA in a school of 800 kids, running from room to room all day, triaging who has the greatest emergency, like an EA in Toronto last month. It's being sent to school in Kevlar as the solution to violence.

Looking beyond the education system, it's going to school hungry because your mom, on ODSP, can't afford

food. It's sleeping in a hotel or shelter night after night because you can't find affordable housing, and then trying to focus in school. It's kids absorbing the stress of parents worrying about the cost of living, low wages and long waits for health care.

If we truly want to look after and protect the well-being and mental health of our children, then we need to start investing in our public education system, providing affordable housing, livable incomes and good health care, so that our province is a place where everyone can thrive and where everyone gets the mental health care they need, when they need it.

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

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I want to thank the member for Brampton East for sharing his time with me today and for bringing this important motion forward. I'd also like to thank the member from Ottawa West-Nepean for sharing her personal story, her children's story, and also for sharing some of the ideas and some of the things that I certainly believe in—and we believe in, as well—that we need to do.

The mental health of students has become a pressing issue in our educational system, with three quarters of recently surveyed principals and vice-principals of Toronto schools finding it increasingly difficult to manage student behavior. With the increasing pressures of academic performance, coupled with personal challenges, it's essential to prioritize the well-being of our young learners. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education should continue the work they're doing, working with stakeholders to improve the professional learning opportunities for educators and school staff, and encouraging and facilitating the opportunity to focus on social-emotional learning skills and mindfulness, while also working with the community sector to ensure a seamless delivery of additional care, when and where appropriate.

And of course, when we look at a continuum of care, which is something that we all understand based on the Roadmap to Wellness, and the importance of delivering a seamless level of care on a continuum of care basis, to ensure that we can deal with the issues, whether it be in the classroom at school or where additional services and supports are required that there is a seamless hand-off to the appropriate service providers to be able to look at those more complex cases, teachers and other education workers are in a unique position. We need to understand that and to appreciate the importance of how they can influence the mental health of their students. They interact with them daily and can identify the signs of emotional distress, helping students cope and develop healthy habits.

I don't know how many times I've heard stories of young people with eating disorders not being identified in the classroom or even by their parents. So the education and providing those supports to be able to understand the needs of the youth are obviously extremely important because they lead to, then, providing the supports where and when those supports are necessary.

Teachers interact every day with these children, and they can identify the signs of emotional distress. This will

help students cope and develop healthy habits. However, we know that teachers often don't have the resources, the training or supports necessary to address the mental health needs of their students. By providing teachers and other education workers with the appropriate resources, we can create safe and supportive spaces where students can find peace and learn the resiliency skills that will carry them through whatever challenges they may face.

We've all heard the statistic that 70% of the mental health and addictions issues we see in adulthood could have been identified, and there could have been supports for individuals so that they wouldn't carry them into adulthood. Well, that is part of why this is so important.

One crucial resource that teachers require, I believe, is mindfulness practices. Mindfulness practices such as meditation and deep breathing exercises have been proven to reduce stress and anxiety while improving concentration and overall well-being. Mindfulness can be easily integrated into the daily routine, and teachers can create a calming space in their classrooms for students to practise. While this may not be enough, it is the beginning.

I can tell you, having been in India just recently, looking at the system of yoga and meditation, that by introducing it into the classroom for just a half hour a day, they were able to reduce violence by 30%. I thought that maybe was unique to the culture, but I've also seen similar statistics out of California, where schools that had high rates of violence within them started utilizing a half hour of mindfulness and yoga as part of their curriculum. They also saw a 30% drop in violence in schools. These practices, I believe and we believe, can create an environment where students can develop resilience and emotional intelligence.

Moreover, teachers and education workers require access to a range of mental health resources beyond mindfulness practices. A review of the physical education and health curriculum to include active and outdoor learning practices would also allow us to integrate components of land- and water-based healing practised for generations by Indigenous communities across the province. We know that these do work; we've seen them utilized in Indigenous communities, and we're also seeing, by introducing them into the system, how they're impacting children and youth.

Just recently, I was in Kenora with Kenora Chiefs Advisory, and I had the opportunity to visit Strecker Farm in Kenora. Over 3,000 children every single year are going through a program there with equine therapy, with art therapy, with activities that are providing them with all they need to change their lives and improve their lives.

Building resiliency requires a multi-faceted approach, and teachers must be equipped with the necessary resources to support their students. This is why this is so important. We need to work towards creating an environment where the children have each and every type of support necessary. We can't keep doing the same thing over and over again, thinking that somehow we're going to get a different result. We need to look at other jurisdictions where we see positive growth in the children and

youth by utilizing systems that may seem strange to us but actually are working because they have elements that are necessary for the development of a child, many of which wouldn't otherwise be there in an environment other than a school.

Mental health awareness programs can help teachers and other education workers identify the signs of distress and provide students with the necessary resources in the school or the community setting.

Now, I said it: We need to have that connecting piece, and where I believe as a parent—and having been now the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions—we sometimes fall is that connecting piece between the education system and the actual community-based services. There has to be better communication. There has to be a continuum of care where those children are able to get the supports outside of the classroom where and when they need them.

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We know that many of the issues that children face each and every day can't be resolved within the school confines. They need to include family. They need to have complete supports for individuals—and children can see each other, speak to each other and understand what those needs are. This is how the problem will get resolved, and this is why we're working towards that.

Findings from the 2021 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey indicate 42% of students reported there was a time in the past year where they wanted to reach out and talk to someone about a mental health concern but were unsure of whom they could turn to. Providing all education staff, including teachers and administrators, tools and resources they require to support good mental health will ultimately lead to the academic, social and emotional success of students. This is something that I know is true—again, as the minister meeting with different organizations and young people, the number of times I hear that the young person doesn't know where to turn.

As a matter of fact, just recently this past weekend, I was at the Kids Help Phone walk in Vaughan–Woodbridge, and I had the opportunity to speak to some of the children. You know, it's incredible that a Kids Help Phone line spoke to 16 million children in the course of one year across Canada. The statistics are staggering. These kids need support. These kids need an outlet. They need that connecting piece. And the more we can do as a government to create those connections I believe will make a huge difference in their lives. We can't do this in a silo. We can't allow the system to continue functioning the way it is. We need to break those silos and build those connecting pieces, and that requires building stronger partnerships with our community children and youth mental health providers.

When it comes to dealing with the diverse and complex mental health needs of our young people, we want to build their social-emotional learning and resiliency in appropriate settings and ensure they also have access to the continuum of care that we're building here in the province of Ontario. It's important that students in need of mental

health supports are able to get those supports easily, and teachers and other education workers engaged with them will require supports to be able to do that kind of work with students so that they can get the support they need in the community sector. Those outside supports can be critical through transition periods, over the summer and changing schools.

Investing in mental health resources for teachers and all education workers is an investment in our children's future, and it's an investment we as a government believe in. By prioritizing mental health, we create an environment where students can flourish academically, emotionally and socially. Mental health resources help students develop the resilience, empathy and the emotional intelligence necessary to succeed academically and in life. We need to equip those teachers, as I said, with the necessary resources and empower them to create a safe and supportive space that fosters emotional well-being.

With this motion, I believe our government is building on the work that the Minister of Education has been doing to better equip and train our province's educators with the appropriate resources they need to support students and help them overcome the mental health struggles that children face each and every day.

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

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise to speak to this motion from the member from Brampton East. Speaker, schools need more resources to provide mental health services for students, and professional training for educators certainly is a good idea, but they actually need support. They need more EAs. They need more mental health workers. They need a government that's going to actually invest in providing those supports in our schools. I can tell you right now, from my own personal experience, educators go above and beyond the call of duty.

I asked my daughter today if I could talk about her own experience—my oldest, who had a severe eating disorder when she was in middle school. It was her teachers who worked with us to identify it, to help her and then to advocate for her to get supports. But the challenges, even for a privileged family like ours, to navigate the system and actually get the supports we needed were huge. I can't imagine what it's like for families who—maybe English isn't their first language or they don't have the privilege that our family had. And then, on top of those educators helping us get supports for her, my youngest daughter's teachers went out of their way to support our family, going way above and beyond the call of duty, because they knew that what was affecting her older sister was also affecting her younger sister.

And so this issue is pretty darn personal for me. People ask me why I'm such an advocate for this. It's because I know what it's like to have a family struggle trying to navigate the system, and I know what it's like for a family to have teachers who are trying to navigate classrooms of 30-plus students, and then, off the side of their desks, doing everything they can to help a family that's struggling.

And so it's good that this motion has come forward, but we need a government that is going to recognize that according to the Financial Accountability Officer, we're going to underfund education by \$6 billion over the next five years. We need to be honest with ourselves and with the public that only in TDSB, it's one social worker for every five schools. The percentage of Ontario schools with no access to a psychologist has doubled in the last decade; 91% of schools report that they are in need of mental health supports from psychologists, social workers and other specialists. Just 9% of Ontario schools have regular access to mental health specialists, and 46% report having no access at all.

Nicolle Kuiper, a grade 7 teacher in the Halton District School Board, summed it up by saying we have a system "teetering on the verge of collapse." So when we talk about funding cuts to schools, that has real implications on students.

And I agree with the associate minister: We have to make a stronger connection between our schools and community mental health supports. It's why I'm a strong advocate of youth wellness hubs, and I appreciate the government's support of funding the ones in Guelph and Wellington county. But we also have to acknowledge that 28,000 children in Ontario right now are on a wait-list to access mental health supports. That wait-list can last up to two and a half years.

The base budget increase that went to mental health organizations of 5% in the budget is a good step forward, but let's be honest. Let's be honest with the people of Ontario that mental health organizations said, "We need an 8% increase just to maintain existing services," especially in the inflationary period we're facing. We have to be honest with people about this, that we have to do more for our children. We just absolutely have to do more.

I appreciate the member talking about outdoor ed. I'm a huge believer in outdoor ed, and the pandemic showed us the importance of outdoor education. But in 2019, when the government cut funding for outdoor education, it led to the termination of programs in the Halton, Bluewater, Trillium Lakelands and Simcoe district school boards. Four of 10 TDSB outdoor ed schools were closed. One child in Halton, Ciara, an Oakville teen, said that Doug Ford's cuts to end the environmental program—these are programs that changed her life.

And so, yes, let's support this motion, but yes, let's invest more in the mental health services our children need and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government still has some time. The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I obviously support this bill. I've had my own challenges with mental health. The pandemic has been hard on everyone, including some of my staff at the restaurant. Whenever we were able to take off the masks—the majority of my staff at the restaurant struggled to take their masks off, not because of COVID, but because they were worried about having a maskless face in society.

My children were extremely lucky. My wife is a teacher, so they were able to have her at home. We have a fairly big backyard, so we're privileged in that regard. But my son struggled last year when we went away for March break and went down to Niagara Falls. The first time he went into a pool that did not have a scheduled hour for family, he had the mask on. There were only two other people in the pool, and my son struggled to go into the pool enclosure.

So as much as I'd like to believe that my children were fairly okay throughout the pandemic, there are some challenges that they've gone through. My wife being a teacher, she sees it every day. The nine months that they were off, it was tough. It was challenging. The three months last January, she felt it pushed them back a full year.

So I fully support this motion. I thank the member from Brampton East for bringing it forward, because my daughter Norah is here today and, ultimately, I'd like to know that the children are looked after, so thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for debate, but the member has two minutes to reply. I recognize again the member for Brampton East.

Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to start by thanking the members from Vaughan–Woodbridge, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Ajax for all of your support in introducing this motion and encouragement behind the scenes in bringing this motion forward. I'd also like to thank the member from Ottawa West–Nepean for sharing her personal story with us in the House today and how we should further support mental health in our schools, as well as the member from Guelph for sharing his personal story and thoughts on how we can further expand and improve mental health here in Ontario. Our government is a government that believes in consistently improving the services that we provide to all Ontarians, and I'd like to thank the members for their feedback and their comments.

To summarize, this motion is a stepping stone and a step in the right direction to further increase the supports, to build on the work our government has already done to improve mental health of our students across Ontario. In the last minute, I'd just like to share some of the great things that the Ministry of Education has been able to do, with the support of the minister and with the support of the PA:

- \$50 million for school boards to meet mental health needs;

- \$26 million to hire permanent mental health workers in secondary schools;

- \$10 million for community mental health leaders in school boards;

- \$6 million to support school mental health in Ontario;

- \$3 million in supports for racialized and marginalized students;

- \$2 million to raise awareness for parents and mental health; and

- \$2 million to support prevention and proactive mental health initiatives.

With the members in this House supporting this motion here today, we'll be able to further bolster our supports for mental health in school and make sure that our students thrive in a healthy and welcoming environment.

With that, I'd like to thank all of the members here who listened to this debate, and I'd like to thank all of the members who support this motion going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

Mr. Grewal has moved private members' notice of motion number 49. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All matters related to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until Monday, May 15, at 10:15 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1543.

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