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Mercredi
31 mai 2023

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ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 31 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 31 mai 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Barrie–Innisfil has a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight's evening meeting is cancelled.

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

Hon. Steve Clark: I could have done that, took the credit and been everybody's friend too, Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HELPING HOMEBUYERS, PROTECTING TENANTS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À AIDER LES ACHETEURS ET À PROTÉGER LES LOCATAIRES

Mr. Clark moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing and development / Projet de loi 97, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l'aménagement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I look to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to lead off the debate.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise for third reading of our government's proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. Right off the top, I want to indicate I'm going to be sharing the government's leadoff time with a number of my colleagues: the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, the Associate Minister of Housing and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: That's good. Give them a big round of applause because my colleagues are going to use their time to really go into the details and the advantages of the proposed legislation. For members who are here this morning, the proposed changes that we're debating are responses to market conditions that have really continued far too long in our province.

Decades of inaction, combined with layers of red tape and NIMBYism, have created our province's housing

supply crisis. But our government has been working extremely hard, and we're going to continue to work hard to correct this. We're doing this for the many Ontarians who have literally been priced out of the market through no fault of their own. And we're doing this for those Ontarians who rent homes and need some relief.

The legislation before us is designed to support a greater package. The package is our government's most recent housing supply action plan, which also—and I want to stress this—contains some non-legislative items. I'll get to those at the end of my proposal. It's the latest in a series of steps that our government is taking to our ultimate goal of building 1.5 million homes by 2031.

Our plan also aims to make life easier and more affordable for people across our great province. That's why this action plan looks at, really, four different aspects of housing: rental units, home ownership, cost to build and land supply. If passed, the proposed legislative changes, along with our corresponding housing supply action plan, would make life easier for renters, would strengthen homebuyer protections, would reduce the costs of building a new home and would streamline the rules around land use planning and encourage the development of more housing.

Speaker, since introducing the bill earlier this spring, we've received support from across the province from a variety of sectors, and I'll highlight a few of them this morning. The Ontario Real Estate Association, OREA, commended our government on bringing forward several proposed solutions to address the housing supply and affordability crisis to support future homebuyers, tenants and landlords across the province.

Another stakeholder, the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, or FRPO, supports the new Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act and "the measures it introduces to protect residents from illegal evictions and to punish bad actors."

AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario—a great stakeholder—acknowledges that we have proposed changes that are in direct response to municipal feedback, including flexibility for site plan control and giving municipalities extra time to adjust to changes regarding both site plan and zoning refunds.

Of course, Speaker, we wouldn't be standing here today without the bold initiatives that our government has taken so far and has already put into place. In May 2019, our government released our first housing supply action plan, More Homes, More Choice. That plan cut red tape and made it quicker and simpler to build the right type of housing in the right places. The aim was to help make housing

less expensive to build and to help taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned dollars.

Then, after that, in the spring of 2022, we released our second action plan, *More Homes for Everyone*. That action plan was based on extensive consultations, including the province's first-ever Ontario-Municipal housing summit. We received even more feedback from mayors, reeves and wardens of Ontario's smaller, rural, northern and remote municipalities at our Rural Housing Roundtable. In addition, the Housing Affordability Task Force consulted with municipalities, with experts and with industry. *More Homes for Everyone* included targeted policies to help speed up approvals and it took steps to gradually refund fees if municipal decisions weren't made within a legislated time frame.

Speaker, those first two action plans did a lot, but we recognized that there was much more the government needed to do. So last fall, we came out with our third housing supply action plan, *More Homes Built Faster*. It built on the successful initiatives that the government had previously put forward in both legislation and regulation by taking more actions to ensure that Ontarians across the province can access a home that truly meets their needs and their budgets. In addition, we bolstered our action plans through legislation that the House passed that gave the mayors of Ontario's two biggest cities, Toronto and Ottawa, more powers to help address local barriers to building more homes.

Speaker, all of these steps—every single one of them—shared one overall goal and that was to build more homes in our province.

Interjection.

Hon. Steve Clark: Thank you. We also wanted, as a government, to make sure that those action plans were as effective as possible. To ensure that, our government created the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team. The team, chaired by Windsor mayor Drew Dilkens and vice-chaired by Hornepayne mayor Cheryl Fort, is made up of municipal leaders and experts as well from across the province and our non-profit sectors, with perspectives that reflect the diversity of housing needs across our great province. The team will monitor the effectiveness and progress of our action plans. It will also provide advice to the government on how best to implement the action plans so that we can continue to successfully respond to Ontario's housing supply crisis.

0910

Speaker, the action plans and the measures that we've taken are having an extremely positive effect in our province. In fact, we're seeing historic results in increasing housing supply. People in the House have heard me say this many times in the last two years: We've reached consecutive 30-year highs in terms of housing starts. In fact, in rental starts, we saw an all-time high for starts last year in 2022, and I'm happy to tell people—

Interjections.

Hon. Steve Clark: Yes, let's hear it for the housing starts.

We're also, Speaker, seeing very, very encouraging numbers for 2023. In early 2023, for the same period last

year, Ontario saw an increase of over 3,700 housing starts. It's about a 16% rise over 2022. Purpose-built rentals, for the same year: more than double a year ago at this time.

So, Speaker, why are the numbers up? Well, it's pretty simple. They're up because of the results of what our government has accomplished because of our housing supply action plans. They're a direct result of the measures that this government has put in place to ensure that we can get shovels in the ground faster. That's why the government is going to continue to move forward. We're going to continue to champion new proposals to further help increase supply.

I want to again emphasize, Speaker, that the proposed changes that we're debating today, changes that form the basis of the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants* plan, build upon the government's actions that I've outlined in my remarks. In addition to new rental housing units, which our past policies are helping to bolster, our new proposed changes would help make other aspects of life easier for renters.

First, our proposed legislation would clarify and enhance a tenant's right to install portable or window air conditioning in their unit. Second, our proposed changes will, if passed, further strengthen renter protections against evictions due to renovations or repairs, and evictions for landlord's own use of the unit. We also propose to double the maximum fines on offences under the Residential Tenancies Act: \$100,000 for individuals, half a million dollars for corporations.

We're also—I want to do a shout-out to our fantastic Attorney General, Doug Downey. As well, outside of this bill—again, I want to talk about some things that are outside of this bill but have direct, positive impact to our housing supply action plan—is the decision that the Attorney General made to make that historic investment: \$6.5 million to increase the Landlord and Tenant Board, to effectively double the amount of adjudicators. We're adding 40 new adjudicators, five additional support staff to deal with the backlog. I don't care what side of the LTB hearing you're at, whether you're a landlord or a tenant, this is going to be transformational for the LTB. Again, I want to thank Attorney General Downey for his commitment to working with us and adding this critical piece to our housing supply action plan. Thanks to the Attorney General.

Speaker, our plan would also better protect homebuyers and their financial investments. In March, I was pleased to join Minister Rasheed and Associate Minister Tangri for the announcement that our government is expanding deposit insurance for credit union members saving for the purchase of their first home. First home savings accounts were introduced by the federal government, and credit union members can use them to save for that purchase of their first home. Now the money in a first home savings account is fully protected through the province's deposit insurance regime, just like RRSPs and TFSAs.

We also have two other initiatives outside of Bill 97 that the government is exploring to support the buyers of new homes. First, we're looking at a cooling-off period on the purchases of new freehold homes, and second, we're

exploring a requirement that purchasers of all new homes receive legal advice on their purchase agreements. The minister is going to outline more details on those proposals later on in our government's leadoff.

Speaker, our proposals in this new action plan would continue to support greater intensification, while at the same time making sure sufficient land is available to accommodate the new homes our province needs. As I announced very clearly when we first tabled this bill, there are some measures that are outside of Bill 97, and I'm carefully clarifying that because there's been some miscategorization of this. Part of what we announced at the same time we tabled this bill was our intention to integrate key elements of two documents, the provincial policy statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The reason this is so important is it would create a single, province-wide, housing-focused, land use planning policy document. We believe it's very important for us to simplify existing policies, to refocus on achieving the housing outcomes that this government has indicated on many occasions we want to get to by 2031, and it would give large and fast-growing municipalities the tools they need to deliver housing. A single planning document would reflect our government's belief that all of Ontario, not just the greater Golden Horseshoe, should be a place to grow.

The other item that we announced, again, outside of the actual legislation is our intention to reduce the cost of building housing. We're planning on freezing 74 provincial fees at their current level. This is something that came as a direct result of our first housing summit, where big-city mayors told us and regional chairs said that it can't just be fees at the municipal level. So in response to direct municipal feedback, those 74 provincial fees are going to be kept at their current levels. These include several fees related to Tribunals Ontario, the Ontario Land Tribunal and the building code, and we're consulting on implementation of the fee freezes through Ontario's Regulatory Registry.

Speaker, I just want to deviate from my notes a bit, because there has been significant confusion about some of the things that are in Bill 97 and some of those consultation pieces that I spoke of. For example, today, my local Green Party president has told all the media that he's protesting the severance issues in Bill 97. Well, as members of the government know, there aren't any severance provisions in Bill 97. Again, one of the things I learned when I first came to the Legislature was that I wanted to read bills before I decided to take an aggressive stance. So I say to the leader of the Green Party and his local president, I've got a couple of copies of Bill 97 waiting at the constituency office today, so I hope you'll pick it up when you're there.

But I also encourage Ontarians, no matter whether it's the provincial policy statement and our growth plan consultation, whether it's the consultations of the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery—I encourage all Ontarians to use the opportunities that the government is affording to them to give us real feedback. Some of the

things I spoke about today that are in Bill 97 came as a direct result of feedback we received from stakeholders, like our municipal partners.

Speaker, I want to conclude by again emphasizing that our proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act builds upon previous actions put in place by the government, which I've detailed to the House this morning. These are all actions aimed to support homeowners, renters, landlords, non-profits, private sector builders and our municipal partners across Ontario. By working together, and with the tools and the support of the housing supply action plans, we can realize that goal of creating 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years.

Speaker, I want to thank you. It's great to see you in the chair this morning and, at this point, I'm going to yield the floor to the Associate Minister of Housing, the Honourable Nina Tangri.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The Associate Minister of Housing.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I want to thank the minister for his earlier remarks.

Speaker, it really is my privilege to speak today on further details of the proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for providing a very concise overview of this bill. You will be hearing later from the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery for a detailed exploration of the advantages of this proposed legislation for new home buyers.

But let me remind the members of this House about the work our government has done to help those Ontarians who rent their homes and what we're proposing to continue to make life better for tenants across this province.

0920

Our government recognizes that rentals make up a big part of Ontario's overall housing market. That's why our previous housing supply action plans have included initiatives to enable the construction of new rental housing. Since 2019, we've made changes to boost the supply of rental housing to help increase affordability and choice for Ontarians. And we're seeing progress. New rental construction is at a record high, with almost 7,200 starts so far this year. That's more than double the number of rental starts from the same period last year.

But we're doing more than just working to increase rental housing supply. Protecting tenants remains a top priority for our government. Since our government was elected in 2018, we've introduced and implemented numerous measures to help tenants. We've changed the rules to enable the construction of more rental units. We've implemented measures to protect against bad-faith evictions while clamping down on bad landlords. We've made ongoing investments in the Landlord and Tenant Board to modernize their processes. When renters were facing challenges during the height of the pandemic, we froze 2021 rents and we temporarily suspended the enforcement of evictions so tenants could remain safe in their homes.

The Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act and the plan now represent our government's latest efforts to

make life better for tenants. According to Statistics Canada data, the growth in the number of renter households has outpaced the growth in homeowner households, from 2011 to 2021, in Canada's 41 large urban centres. The time for this House to pass our government's proposed legislation that will improve the lives of so many of Ontario's renters is now.

Speaker, through you, let me give the members of this House some examples of how our bill would help renters.

Our proposed legislation would clarify and enhance the rules regarding air conditioning in rental units. We propose to amend the Residential Tenancies Act so that when a landlord does not provide air conditioning, tenants would be permitted to install a window-mounted or portable air conditioning unit. Of course, this would be subject to some rules. A tenant would need to give written notice to the landlord of their intention to install an air conditioning unit prior to its installation. In addition, the air conditioning unit would need to be installed safely and securely, without causing damage, while complying with any applicable laws. Renters would pay for the air conditioner, the installation and the maintenance. And tenants who have electricity included in their rent could be charged a seasonal fee by the landlord, based on the actual electricity cost to the landlord or a reasonable estimate.

Our bill has even more advantages for renters. At a time when renters are faced with uncertain economic forces like inflation, our government is acting.

Our proposed legislation, if passed—along with future regulations—would increase tenant protections against evictions due to renovations or repairs, as well as evictions for a landlord's own use of a unit. We intend to do this by giving tenants greater access to remedies and by increasing the reporting requirements that landlords must follow. If passed, this bill would require a landlord who is ending a tenancy to do renovations or repairs to provide a report stating that the rental unit needs to be vacant while that work is taking place. A future regulation would outline the details that must be included in that report. Regulations would also set out the required qualifications of the persons who could provide this report. Once these regulations are made, this document must be provided to the tenant along with an eviction notice; otherwise, the eviction notice would be considered invalid.

In situations where tenants have indicated they want to return to their old unit, our proposed changes would require landlords to provide written notification, without delay, of the estimated date when the unit will be ready for occupancy after the renovations or repairs are completed. In addition, written notification would again be required for any changes to that expected completion date and would need to include a new estimated completion date. And finally, when the unit is ready for occupancy, the landlord would be required to give the tenant a minimum 60-day grace period to move back in. This grace period is intended to accommodate the tenant's requirement to provide 60-day notice to end their tenancy in their temporary accommodation if they are renting elsewhere while renovations are completed. If the tenant does move back

in, the landlord would be required—as is the case currently—to charge the tenant a rent similar to what was charged before the renovations.

Speaker, as the law now stands, if a landlord fails to give the right of first refusal to an evicted tenant after renovations or repairs are completed, the tenant has two years within which to file a complaint with the Landlord and Tenant Board. Our proposed legislation would change the Residential Tenancies Act so that a tenant would have two years after moving out or six months after the renovations are complete, whichever is longer, to file their complaint. This would extend the tenant's access to justice.

Our proposed legislation and related regulations would also tighten the rules regarding evictions when a landlord wishes to use a rental unit for their own use or for one of their family members. To help ensure these types of evictions are genuine, our proposed changes would set a time frame, to be prescribed in the regulation, within which a landlord or their family member must move into the unit after the unit becomes vacant. If the move is not made by that deadline, the landlord would be presumed to have acted in bad faith. The tenant could then apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for a remedy, and the landlord would have the onus to prove to the board that the eviction was not in bad faith. The amount of time that a landlord would have to move in would be set at a future date, once our government has consulted on a fair and reasonable time period.

Our proposed legislation would also increase the maximum fines for offences under the Residential Tenancies Act. If passed, our legislation would amend the Residential Tenancies Act to double the fines under this act. The maximum fines would rise to \$100,000 from \$50,000 for individuals, and to \$500,000 from \$250,000 for corporations. We believe that increasing these fines would help deter rental housing offences such as unlawful evictions. Our government knows it is critical that tenants be protected from this type of behaviour.

Speaker, I've mentioned the Landlord and Tenant Board several times in regard to renovations and own-use situations. However, there are many kinds of landlord-tenant disputes that get resolved through the Landlord and Tenant Board, and it is essential that the LTB be ready to adjudicate these disputes. That's why our government is doubling the number of adjudicators to eliminate the backlog of cases at the LTB and reduce wait times for landlords and for tenants.

Our proposed legislation would also introduce other welcome improvements. It would amend the Residential Tenancies Act to mandate the use of the Landlord and Tenant Board's form for rent repayment agreements. These agreements are used when a landlord has applied to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict a tenant for owed rent, and the landlord and the tenant agree to a repayment plan. The LTB's rent repayment agreement form is a legal document that sets out the terms of payment. Currently, there is no requirement for a specific form or format to be used for a repayment agreement. This would standardize

these agreements, setting out in plain language the rights and obligations of both renters and landlords and the potential consequences if the agreement is breached.

Speaker, our government knows it is crucially important to protect and increase our province's stock of rental housing. Building on More Homes Built Faster, one of our government's earlier housing supply action plans which I mentioned earlier, our proposed legislation would make changes to the Municipal Act and the City of Toronto Act. These changes would be necessary to give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the regulation-making authority necessary to create a balanced regulatory framework governing municipal rental replacement bylaws. This would help streamline the construction and revitalization of rental housing, while protecting tenants.

0930

Speaker, as things stand, rental replacement bylaws vary amongst municipalities. This includes requirements that municipalities impose around number, size, height and cost of rental units, as well as right of first refusal for existing tenants.

Our government envisions a regulatory framework where any municipality that establishes a bylaw must require that replacement units contain the same core features as the units they are replacing. By this we mean features such as the same number of bedrooms. We're also considering permitting some flexibility when it comes to the overall size of the unit and the size of, for example, the bedrooms.

This regulatory framework could also require municipalities to impose a requirement on landowners to provide existing tenants with the right to move back into the replacement unit at similar rent levels. Our government is consulting on future regulations that would help ensure a balanced package of rules for these replacement bylaws.

I've outlined how our government's proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act would strengthen protections and new rights for tenants. This legislation represents our government's latest efforts to make life better for tenants and homebuyers across this great province. We have a responsibility to the people of Ontario to ensure that they have access to safe, affordable housing. This bill, if passed, will help us achieve that goal by strengthening protections and providing new rights for tenants, while also encouraging the construction of new rental housing.

I urge each and every one of the members here today to consider the impacts this legislation will have on the lives of so many Ontarians. Let us come together and pass this bill so that we can continue to make life better for renters and landlords across Ontario. We have done so much already, and yet there is still so much more to be done as we work towards our goal of building 1.5 million homes to ensure that every Ontarian has a safe and affordable place to call home.

Speaker, I would now like to turn the floor over to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Perth—Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and our great associate minister, as well, for their remarks this morning. I'm pleased to speak on our government's proposed Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act and its corresponding plan.

Specifically, Speaker, I'll be speaking on our proposed changes regarding the future of land use planning in our province. They would support our government's initiatives to produce a single land use planning document for the province. This would be a great improvement over the current situation we have with the provincial planning statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

This layer upon layer of planning rules is inefficient, Speaker. It causes great delays, which many government colleagues have heard through a variety of stakeholders: municipalities, builders and everyone else in Ontario. It's not helping us get more homes, which Ontarians desperately need built. That is why our government launched consultations on April 6 seeking opinions, advice and ideas on how key elements of these two sets of planning rules should be combined into one overall land use planning document for all of Ontario.

I want to emphasize that we are paying close attention to the consultations that we are hearing and we appreciate the interest of the public so far. This is crucial to our government's efforts to get the housing built that Ontarians desperately need. That's why we've made great headway in tackling Ontario's housing crisis. But, as the minister and associate minister have said, more needs to be done. A streamlined set of land use planning rules will go a long way in helping our partners in the municipal sector and the building industry to reach approval on new housing projects in a much more rapid manner.

What I also want to emphasize is that a single set of planning rules will benefit all of Ontario, not just the greater Golden Horseshoe. When proponents of a new housing project have one set of rules to follow, no matter where they are in Ontario, that translates into a simpler, quicker and less costly housing project. But right now, that is not the case. All of Ontario is subject to a set of planning rules detailed in the provincial policy statement, often referred to as the PPS. However, in the greater Golden Horseshoe, there is an additional set of rules contained in A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The greater Toronto area, which is just one area of the greater Golden Horseshoe, is expected to grow by 2.9 million people by 2046. And I want to say that again: We need more housing to accommodate the additional 2.9 million people in the next—Speaker, this is not just a housing issue; it's an economic problem that can affect the entire country. The greater Golden Horseshoe generates more than 25% of Canada's gross domestic product. It is literally the economic engine of Ontario and the country. But this economic engine needs workers who in turn have a place to live.

It is crucial that we get land use planning right so that new housing can be built quickly and without unnecessary

costs and delays. Compound those demands with the current situation we have in planning rules on top of planning rules which builders must navigate on their own, and it's easy to see how delays and costs end up adding up. A streamlined set of planning rules will help us meet all of those challenges more quickly with less cost. That's why we plan to integrate the provincial policy statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe into a new province-wide streamlined and housing-focused land use planning policy instrument. This new simplified and streamlined planning policy document would be called the provincial planning statement—still PPS, Speaker. It would give direction to all of Ontario and give specific direction tailored to the needs of Ontario's 29 fastest-growing communities.

Our proposed new provincial planning statement would be based on five pillars.

The first pillar is generating an appropriate housing supply. For this, our new PPS would give specific direction to 29 of Ontario's largest and fastest-growing municipalities with regard to planning for major transit station areas and greenfield lands. This will help us ensure an adequate supply of housing. Simpler and more flexible policies would apply to all other municipalities to accommodate more local conditions but would still encourage growth, Speaker. For example, our proposed policies would promote more rural housing by allowing greater flexibility in smaller communities. Smaller and rural municipalities would also engage with the private sector to provide the infrastructure needed for new housing. As well, municipalities would be encouraged to establish density targets for undeveloped land.

The second pillar, Speaker, on which our new PPS is based is making land available for new homes. This is part of our plan to build homes for Ontarians in urban and suburban areas, as well as rural parts of the province, while still maintaining strong environmental protections across Ontario. We would require municipalities to have enough land with water and sewer access ready to meet their communities' forecasted housing needs for three years into the future. We would also require municipalities to adhere to an at least 25-year planning horizon, and we would continue to encourage municipalities to build where it makes sense, such as locating office, institutional and residential development near transit, and mix retail and commercial areas with housing, schools and other community uses to create complete communities, Speaker. At the same time, we recognize that housing needs must be balanced against other necessities. That's why we would require that large parcels of land be preserved for agriculture and heavy industry that are best separated from residential areas to lessen the effects of noise and odours that may result from their operations.

The third pillar, Speaker, is focused on the need for infrastructure to support residential development. This means, for example, that school boards and municipalities should work together—I know, Speaker, in your role, you are very well aware of that need—and be innovative in finding new ways to integrate schools into new developments.

Infrastructure corridors are an important consideration that must be protected for hydro, transit and transportation to build the housing we need for the future and the industries that we continue to attract to our province. However, we recognize the growth demands being placed on large and fast-growing municipalities, so our proposed PPS would give special direction to them to offer some flexibility.

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The fourth pillar is balancing housing with the need to protect resources. For example, we would require municipalities to designate prime agricultural areas to support our province's productive and valuable agri-food network. We would also maintain all greenbelt protections, including policies on environmental and agricultural lands. Water resources must be protected, so municipalities would be encouraged to adopt watershed planning approaches, rather than requiring watershed plans. Similarly, aggregate resources must be protected to ensure we have the supplies we need to continue to build Ontario. If we're to make it easier and less costly to build housing, we must protect these aggregate resources, such as the sand and gravel that goes into making cement. We must also allow access to these deposits in more cost-efficient locations and streamline the approval process needed to extract these deposits.

Lastly, but certainly not least, our proposed PPS would encourage municipalities to focus on improving air quality and consider the impacts of climate change.

I now want to speak about the legislative measures in our bill that will support our aim to create housing-focused, land use planning systems. Our proposal is to enable the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to require landlords to enter into agreements for projects assigned to the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator. I know we hear this a lot from the opposition members on requiring landlords to enter these agreements for these projects, and so we are putting that in this bill right now. Our goal is to help ensure that commitments made by property owners are fulfilled, and they honour those commitments. A good example is in cases where a ministerial zoning order may be contemplated.

We're also proposing two changes to the City of Toronto Act and the Planning Act regarding site plan control. The first change would delay the date on which municipalities must begin to refund at least a portion of zoning bylaw and site plan application fees if they don't make a decision within a specific period of time. This process was set to begin on January 1 this year, as set out in the More Homes for Everyone housing supply action plan. However, we propose to move that date to July 1 of this year to better align with municipal processes and it's also, as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing mentioned, something we heard from our municipal colleagues at AMO and ROMA around these changes in Bill 23, and so we continue to listen to our municipal partners and work with them in adjusting these timelines to ensure, really, Speaker, that we get more housing built quicker.

Our second proposed change would enable municipalities to use site plan control for residential developments of 10 units or less in specific circumstances. More Homes

Built Faster, our housing supply action plan released last fall includes changes to the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act to limit municipalities' ability to use site plan control for residential developments with 10 units or less. We now propose further changes to the Planning Act and the City of Toronto Act that would give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the authority to make regulations to permit municipalities to use site plan control for residential developments of 10 or fewer units on a single lot in specific circumstances. If our bill is passed—and the minister did make regulations—those regulations would outline specific conditions where site plan control could be used for residential development of 10 units or less. These conditions are proposed to be circumstances where the site is near a shoreline or near a railway.

Speaker, I know the minister has mentioned—we've heard a lot mentioned around our proposed provincial planning statement, and it's great to hear that feedback and those important proposals we are making to get more housing built in Ontario in all communities: rural Ontario, suburban Ontario and downtown Toronto, and we'll continue to work with our municipal colleagues and our industry and home-building colleagues and all stakeholders to get more housing built. Our policies and proposed legislation changes are necessary if Ontario is to solve its housing supply crisis and also meet future demand for even more housing.

Speaker, before I conclude, I want to again mention our government's proposed consultation on our proposed planning statement. That consultation began on April 6 and has been extended—again, hearing from stakeholders across Ontario, extending that consultation period by another 60 days. August 4 now, I believe, is the deadline for submissions. I encourage anyone who is watching this morning and I encouraged all those who reached out to my office to submit feedback through the Environmental Registry of Ontario, and that feedback is very well regarded and read.

The plan, as I've outlined in my remarks, is—and of this legislation is to support our ambitious goal to build 1.5 million homes by 2031. I know our government has an all-of-government approach to get those homes built in Ontario—again, communities across Ontario. As I mentioned in my remarks, the economic value is also something that is overlooked sometimes.

Many, many employers in my riding of Perth–Wellington are looking for workers. They've been looking for workers since the pandemic has subsided, whether that's in advanced manufacturing, in our growing agribusinesses, in home construction, in skilled trades, even in health care.

But the number one need is housing. The nurses and the doctors need a place to live, as well; the accountants need a place to live—and ensuring that we have the mixed range of housing in communities across Ontario to meet those growing needs.

The Minister of Economic Development and the Premier continue to attract many, many businesses to Ontario, and I know one of the second questions they most likely get in their deliberations is, “Where are we going to find

the employees?” So our government is proposing ambitious proposals to meet that and build more homes to ensure that Ontario continues to grow and continues to be a great place to live, work and raise a family, to ensure that our economy continues to grow. As I mentioned in my remarks, it is the economic engine of Canada. And ensuring that the many, many new Canadians coming to our shores are welcomed and have a place to grow and have a place to—if they choose to own a place, to rent a place, but a place to call their own and to raise their family and to contribute, as so many before them have contributed to our society and our communities across Ontario.

In conclusion, again, I encourage everyone to submit a comment through the provincial planning statement, PPS, by August 4; we've extended it by 60 days based on the feedback we've heard from stakeholders across Ontario.

Our government continues to listen to Ontarians on a variety of issues, especially our ambitious goal to build 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

Now, Speaker, it's my pleasure to turn it over to the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery, or the minister of peanut butter sandwiches, as I like to call him.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for reminding everyone of the acronym for my ministry—peanut butter sandwich delivery.

Good morning, and thank you, Speaker, for this great opportunity to speak on such a wonderful bill, and it's all about housing.

I'm pleased to speak in the House today in support of the third reading of our government's Bill 97, Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023.

Together with my esteemed colleagues the Honourable Steve Clark, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Nina Tangri; and their parliamentary assistant, PA Rae, we have been working relentlessly to address Ontario's housing supply challenges.

Our great province is filled with hard-working Ontarians seeking the perfect place to call home and one that fits both their needs and their budget. We are dedicated to helping them achieve their dream of home ownership and ensuring they can confidently spend their hard-earned money. Using every tool at our disposal, we support Ontarians in making informed choices when it comes to finding a forever home in our province.

Speaker, we are all aware of the housing crisis in Ontario, and we recognize the immense economic impact of home building. Our goal is to construct 1.5 million homes by 2031, effectively addressing the housing supply crisis.

A strong residential construction industry is crucial for the prosperity of our province.

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Under our Premier's leadership, we have focused on cutting red tape and modernizing processes to accelerate home construction. That's why our government introduced Ontario's first-ever housing supply action plan in 2019, and look how far we have come since 2019. I believe this is our housing supply action plan 4.0. Speaker, I want

to acknowledge my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for his hard work on these initiatives. It seems like a movie or one of those dramas: season 1, season 2, season 3. So I will say this is season number 4, and I'm sure the minister will say soon there will be season 5, season 6, season 7 of the housing supply action plan—not that I'm saying anything, but just wanted to mention: hint, hint.

Speaker, housing supply action plan 4.0, recently announced by Minister Clark, includes our plan to strengthen protections for buyers and enhance their confidence in purchasing a new home. As the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery, we oversee Ontario's legislation for new homes, including the New Home Construction Licensing Act, and the builder regulator, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, or the HCRA.

We are committed to innovating and strengthening our protections for homebuyers, and here's how we plan to do it: In the coming weeks, we will consult with the public, consumer groups and the homebuilding sector. Through the Ontario Regulatory Registry, we aim to explore the possibility of a cooling-off period for buyers of new freehold homes and whether to create new requirements that buyers of all new homes receive legal advice on their purchase agreements. Speaker, we will explore whether a purchaser of a new freehold home should be able to cancel their purchase agreement within a specific time frame and how builders could be required to disclose a cooling-off period to purchasers. Additionally, we intend to consult on issues related to price escalation in the new home construction sector. These proposed changes would enhance consumers' understanding of their rights and obligations, and empower all new home buyers to make confident decisions in the most significant purchase of their lives.

Our government is committed to strengthening consumer confidence in the new home sector and protecting Ontarians from unethical practices in the home-building marketplace. Speaker, just in 2021, we established the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, the HCRA, an independent not-for-profit corporation that administers and enforces the New Home Construction Licensing Act, 2017, and licensing act regulations. The HCRA's mandate includes upholding professional standards for new home builders, protecting the public interest and educating consumers to make informed decisions. It is also to regulate builders of new homes and ensure compliance with a mandatory code of ethics. The HCRA has the authority to enforce compliance through education, warnings, placing conditions on a builder's licence or by suspending or revoking a builder's licence, and the HCRA has taken such steps to better protect consumers.

Speaker, just last fall, in fact, I believe our government passed changes to the licensing act that crack down on predatory actions by builders of new homes in Ontario. These changes increase the existing maximum financial penalties against unethical builders who unfairly cancel a contract. Those bad actors now face the risk of permanently losing their licence.

Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, through the housing supply action plan 4.0, our government is taking bold

actions to tackle Ontario's housing supply crisis. We have introduced various measures to increase the supply of housing, accelerate construction and strengthen consumer protection. We will continue to execute housing supply action plans every year of our current mandate, as we promised, to reach our goal of building 1.5 million new homes by 2031.

In 2021, we witnessed the highest number of new housing starts in Ontario in over three decades, and the credit goes to Premier Ford as well as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark, and our entire government, all government members, for making sure that Ontarians can have their dream homes. I'm sure all of us are working to make sure that we continue to make that dream a reality. As a government, Speaker, we are proud of this achievement, but we also know that it is just the beginning.

I must also address the rapidly growing condominium sector in Ontario and our ongoing efforts to enhance protections for condo owners and residents. I want to start with something that affects more than a million of our fellow Ontarians' condo living. Condos are not just homes. They play a major role as a housing option for millions of individuals and families, and are a testament to the strength and growth of our province, accounting for half of all new homes being built.

This robust expansion of the condo sector, which is valued at nearly \$45 billion and provides jobs for over 300,000 Ontarians, is something we can all be proud of, but it means we must constantly re-evaluate our laws and consumer protections. While most condos are well run and satisfy their owners and residents, we are aware that there are challenges. Therefore, we will continue to assess the potential future expansion of the Condominium Authority Tribunal's jurisdiction to support Ontario's valued condo communities.

Speaker, it is no secret that buying or selling a home is a significant milestone. As such, Ontarians should feel confident in the professionals who guide them through this process. That is why we are doubling down on protections for Ontarians navigating the real estate market.

The Trust in Real Estate Services Act, 2020, or as we say, TRESA 2020, makes important changes to how real estate professionals interact with the public, ensuring their practices reflects the changing realities of the industry. In the first phase of TRESA 2020, changes were made to allow registrants and brokers to incorporate and be paid through a personal real estate corporation. This first phase has also allowed registrants to use more recognizable terms, such as real estate agent and realtor, to describe brokers and salespersons in their advertisements.

The second phase of legislative and associated regulation changes, once in force, will also encourage transparency and ethical practices by introducing a new code of ethics regulation, strengthening disclosure requirements and other registrants' obligations, to better protect the public. In addition, the changes will allow a registrant to conduct an open offer process and disclose the details of competing offers, of course without divulging personal or identifying information contained in the offers at the

seller's direction. These changes, backed by the stakeholders and the Real Estate Council of Ontario, are all part of our commitment to Ontarians.

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Speaker, we also want to speed up residential home construction. Our partnership with Ontario One Call is crucial in achieving this. It aims to increase the efficiency, timeliness and coordination of digging activities by excavators and promote safe digging practices. Their role in coordinating excavation work and promoting safe digging practices is a cornerstone of our construction projects.

We are actively improving the locate delivery system to ensure businesses can start their projects quicker, avoiding unnecessary delays. In particular, we are looking at innovative models for locate delivery through a dedicated-locator model, which is currently in place for all broadband projects. This means a faster rollout of critical infrastructure commitments like new homes, improved public transit and expanded broadband services in underserved areas. These changes will help businesses get shovels in the ground faster and reduce delays in obtaining necessary information about the location of underground infrastructure, such as telecommunications, gas, electrical and water lines, helping the province deliver on the many infrastructure projects that are, in turn, helping Ontarians and fuelling our economic growth.

Speaker, our efforts don't stop here. We are also creating new data standards that support e-permitting for planning and development applications. Working with municipalities and home builders, the new data standard will provide clear, uniform rules and guidance about how data should be captured, shared and used.

I know I only have 50 seconds, but, Speaker, let's make our shared vision of a bright and prosperous future for all Ontarians a reality. The quicker we get shovels in the ground, the faster we can help Ontarians realize their dream of home ownership, or as my grandfather says, the Canadian dream.

I know you all will have valuable feedback on the proposed amendments. We definitely encourage everyone to give us your feedback, and I look forward to a productive debate conversation.

But in the end, I just want to say thank you to the minister, Premier, associate minister, PA and everyone—all my colleagues—for all the great work they are doing in making sure that Ontarians can have a home they all can enjoy with their families.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville. We have been contacted by many prospective homeowners—people in Durham region, in the Ottawa West–Nepean area, in the area of Stayner—who bought homes at pre-construction, put up hundreds of thousands of dollars in some cases in deposit money, and years later, they're waiting for their home to be built. The developer isn't building it unless they turn around and pay a whole lot more. They have contacted the Home Construction Regulatory Authority again and again and again, and they're not getting the answers that they

want. They're stressed. They're worried they're going to lose their life savings. They want this government to take action. What is this government going to do to ensure these people get the homes they purchased at the price they agreed to?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to my honourable colleague for the question. As my colleague mentioned, Speaker, we are actually taking actions. That's why, as mentioned in my remarks about the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, fines are being implemented right now as I speak. HCRA has already fined a few construction companies and developers. Again, we encourage individuals, if they come across a situation, to please reach out to HCRA. As a ministry, we have given the tools to HCRA to use those tools to make sure that bad actors are accountable for their actions.

But what I would appreciate is that my honourable colleagues would, I hope, vote for this bill to make sure, when we talk about a cooling-off period, that they support the cooling-off period by voting in favour of this bill and make sure—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Question?

Mr. Mike Harris: My question is to the member from Perth–Wellington. We are riding neighbours, and I was just wondering if he would be able to elaborate a little bit more on what this bill will do for our connected and shared communities, and especially how this can help in rural Ontario.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my great colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga for his question. Yes, I'm happy to talk about Bill 97. Obviously, we have a lot of renters in our riding, so it's protecting the renters there as well in rural Ontario but also, as I alluded to in my remarks—the proposed PPS—giving the flexibility. As the member from Kitchener–Conestoga knows, what works in downtown Toronto—no offence to my colleagues in downtown Toronto—will not work in Elmira or Milverton or Listowel, in our respective areas. Giving those municipalities the flexibility to decide settlement areas and settlement boundaries, again—and reducing duplication, Speaker, because what I hear and I'm sure all of my colleagues in government hear from our builders and others, even from municipalities, is the amount of duplication in the planning process and the site-control planning process, for example. We're ensuring we reduce that so we get more homes built faster in all parts of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

In committee, ACTO, the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, summarized how broken our illegal-eviction protection laws are. They did a review of how many tenants get back into their home after a bad-faith eviction: essentially none. And then they did a review of what the average fine is that a bad landlord gets if they illegally evict a tenant: It's between \$500 and \$3,000. How do you

expect Bill 97 to be effective if the Landlord and Tenant Board is not issuing significant fines to landlords that illegally evict?

Hon. Steve Clark: Listen, I know that the member opposite doesn't support the \$6.5 million that the government is spending to effectively double the amount of adjudicators and also add those very important staff administrative positions to the tribunal. In my speech, I mentioned the Attorney General; he's looked at this measure very much in detail. We believe, as a government, that having that significant influx of dollars in the Landlord and Tenant Board to effectively double adjudication services with staff support is going to go a long way toward creating that balance. To have a tribunal, it's all about the balance in terms of the process.

I appreciate that there are a number of voices, both on the tenant side and from the landlord side, that are a little apprehensive because the measures have not been fully implemented, but I have great faith in the Attorney General in making sure that those improvements will result in a fair system.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Laura Smith: I truly appreciated listening to everyone contribute to this conversation this morning. I really tuned in to the member from Perth–Wellington. He talked about partnerships with municipalities who will create homes for Ontarians that need these homes today, tomorrow and the next day.

I used to sit on school council, and we were constantly dealing with matters: There were too many kids in the school, or there were fewer than we needed, just because of a fluctuation in the developments and what was being developed in my neighbourhood.

My question is, we've always said that transformational change is necessary. Can the member—either the minister or the member from Perth–Wellington—please outline how this plan aligns with the commitments we made for the people of Ontario?

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The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Response? The member from Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Matthew Rae: Thank you to my colleague from Thornhill. As we made very clear almost a year—Friday's a year. In the election last year, we made a very clear commitment to build 1.5 million homes, and I'd also like to highlight the two other major parties in this place also committed to doing that.

We're actually taking action on that, Speaker, which this housing supply action plan bill does in Bill 97 through our protections for tenants and homebuyers, but also, again, the proposed provincial planning statement and those aspects, even in the city of Thornhill, reducing duplication and ensuring that there's one planning document. Right now, there are two, and that causes confusion and extra red tape for housing construction. So working with—whether that's mixed use, whether that's condos, whether that's semi-detached housing, ensuring those houses get built in all communities across Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We are working with tenants across the city of Toronto whose purpose-built rentals are slated to be demolished. They're terrified because they're worried they're never going to be able to get back into their homes once the construction of the new, bigger building is complete.

This government is looking at creating new rental replacement laws, and this is my question: When I look at the Residential Tenancies Act, there's no guaranteed right of return for a tenant who's evicted because of demolition. There's no guaranteed right of return. In this government's new rental replacement bylaw, are you going to allow cities to guarantee a tenant's right to return to their home?

Hon. Steve Clark: Well, the government has been clear, Speaker. Despite the mischaracterizations by the NDP about our consultation on rental replacement, we've listened to our municipal partners, and we've also been straight-up with Ontarians. At the end of the day, when the process is completed, the tenant should still be allowed to move back into an apartment at the same rental rate, with the similar features to the unit they had vacated.

It's a process we'll continue to collaborate on with municipalities. They've been very helpful throughout this process. They've given us some great suggestions and great advice, and it's been some of that advice, through consultation, that's helped inform the government on the path moving forward.

Again, the opposition is always going to see a ghost around every corner when it comes to government policy. We're going to continue to stand up with our municipal partners and listen to them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Quick question and a quick response.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: [*Inaudible*] by Jon, and Jon is an owner of farmland. He is struggling to find housing for his family members, and he asked, what is this government doing to support his family? I just wanted to ask the minister—he's probably had many such emails—what he would say to Jon about creating more housing in Ontario.

Hon. Steve Clark: We're going to continue to work. As has been said in the consultation, we're going to extend the PPS into August so that we can hear some of those voices. I encourage everyone who lives in rural Ontario to use that consultation period and let us know.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. The time for questions and answers has come to an end.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BOYD HERITAGE MUSEUM

LINDSAY LIONS CLUB

Ms. Laurie Scott: Last week, I had the opportunity to celebrate the anniversaries of two amazing organizations

in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. In Bobcaygeon, the Boyd Heritage Museum celebrated their 25th anniversary. They've spent over two decades working to preserve the economic, social and political legacy of Mossom Boyd, who arrived in Upper Canada in 1833 and became known as the lumber king of the Trent Valley. The history of he and his family are catalogued in artifacts from all significant points in his life, from humble beginnings to national and international success, from tools and log shanties to gorgeous 19th century gowns and dresses. The collections are so exquisite, the exhibit is known as the Downton Abbey of Bobcaygeon. Barb has been at the helm of this fantastic museum which has allowed the community of Bobcaygeon in the Kawartha Lakes region to remain connected to their history.

In the town of Lindsay, the Lindsay Lions Club celebrated their 70th anniversary. The Lions are made up of dedicated men and women who commit their time to help those less fortunate by working with local organizations such as the Ross Memorial Hospital, the Canadian Diabetes Association, the Salvation Army food banks, Five Counties Children's Centre and more to deliver help to those in need.

It was heartwarming to see so many volunteers of the community passionate about their service. With their youngest Lioness, Ellie, the future of this wonderful program is in good and capable hands. I'd like to wish them 70 more years of success.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: On the day before Pride Month, my message is simple: The Pride flag should fly in every school board in Ontario tomorrow. We're hearing from queer organizers and communities that they are braced for the possibility of violent protests and demonstrations linked to the rising hate targeting the 2SLGBTQ+ community across Canada. In Ontario, we don't have to look far to find examples of this, as the York Catholic board decided this week to not fly the Pride flag this June.

And this backlash is not just about Pride and queer rights. School boards across the province, including in Waterloo, are facing pushback as they work to accomplish equity work—work, I might add, that is not only important in terms of student success, but is also mandated by the ministry. Every student in Ontario deserves to feel safe and welcome, and they deserve access to visibility and support.

Yesterday, the Premier offered a no comment on this issue. The minister himself—the Minister of Education—expressed his disappointment. I want to tell the minister; your disappointment does not help queer kids feel safer at school.

I'll reiterate: The Pride flag should fly in every school board in Ontario tomorrow. In fact, with the rising tide of hate directed at the queer community by a vocal minority, displays of visibility like flying the Pride flag are particularly important this year. The Ontario NDP is proud to stand with the 2SLGBTQ+ community in solidarity.

GIRLS INC. OF YORK REGION

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to talk about having the honour of attending Girls Inc. of York Region Spirit of the Girl breakfast last Friday in my riding in Newmarket. Girls Inc. of York Region focuses on supporting the resilience of young girls and women and has served my community for over 40 years. Their research-based programs encourage girls to thrive socially, academically and emotionally in an affirming environment, providing gender-specific support to girls of all backgrounds.

It was my privilege to announce at the breakfast on Friday that our government has funded this meaningful work with two grants totalling over \$400,000 through the Ontario Trillium Foundation. This will help expand their innovative after-school programs to three new schools as well as help increase capacity to support girls and young women in York region. Specifically, this funding will enable them to expand staff training, provide a social worker for counselling and wellness checks and expand fundraising efforts.

I am so happy to see Girls Inc. of York Region empowering girls and young women to meet emotional and academic challenges with resilience, especially those who face various barriers. I am proud that our government will help them expand this crucial work. Thank you to Girls Inc. for making sure no girl is left behind.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. Chris Glover: The federal government has declared the first Friday in June the National Day Against Gun Violence, but we need to work to stop gun violence at the provincial level as well. Today, I will be tabling a bill to also declare the first Friday in June the provincial day against gun violence in Ontario.

Gun violence shatters lives and traumatizes communities. The number of shootings is rising, from 251 in 2005, which was dubbed the “year of the gun,” to 365 last year—and these are only Toronto statistics. Gun violence, like a virus, is spreading across the province.

On Friday, a number of community groups will be at Queen's Park to ask the Ontario government to address gun violence through a program of prevention, intervention and healing.

Prevention begins with addressing the root cause of gun and other community violence, which is poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor. We're calling on the government to raise the minimum wage, double ODSP and OW rates and build affordable housing so everyone has a home.

Intervention requires the police, but as the police say themselves, they alone cannot solve this issue. You cannot arrest your way out of gun violence.

Healing means we must deal with the trauma coming out of each episode of gun violence before it spirals into a vicious cycle of revenge. We need to prevent, intervene and help communities to heal.

1020

I hope the Legislature will support my call to declare the first Friday in June the provincial day against gun violence in Ontario.

SEASONS CENTRE FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I want to congratulate the Seasons Centre for Grieving Children, which is based in Barrie, Ontario, who received the 2022-23 Attorney General's Victim Services Award of Distinction from our Attorney General, Minister Doug Downey.

The Seasons Centre for Grieving Children offers services at no cost to families and opens its doors to participants aged five to 24. The centre relies totally on fundraising and generous corporate and personal donations.

The Seasons Centre for Grieving Children is extremely pleased that they have received this award, and I am pleased to welcome them here today. They're joined today by Hope from Seasons Centre, their mascot. She has been travelling around many places and hopes to raise awareness of childhood grief. The Seasons Centre has done a lot of work, and this afternoon, I hope many people will be able to meet Hope to spread the word for children experiencing grief and learn more of how they can bring these great services to their own community.

Today, we have members in the gallery, Rowley Ramey and Johanna Stockley, who do so much work for the centre, helping families and children. I hope everyone here can join me for a round of applause to thank them for all the work they and their team do.

PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: One code red, black or zero is one too many. That means few or no ambulances or paramedics are available to respond to emergencies. Another code black was called in my community again just last night.

Under this Conservative government, code blacks, reds and zeroes are becoming normal, and that is not acceptable. Ontarians deserve to have the confidence that if they have the medical emergency, they can call 911 and receive help quickly.

Paramedics are burning out at an alarming rate, and this government isn't taking the necessary steps to help our crumbling health care system. In fact, they are actively making the situation worse. The staffing crisis in hospitals leads to longer wait times to transfer patients to the care of nurses and doctors. Paramedics are held up in the hospitals instead of being on the road to save more lives. Bill 124 must be repealed today.

Last week was Paramedic Services Week. I thank every paramedic in Windsor-Essex and across the province for their dedication to serving their communities.

In October 2022, my NDP colleague MPP Shaw tabled a motion calling on the Conservative government to provide necessary funding to end instances when ambulances

are unavailable to respond to an emergency. The motion passed unanimously. However, in March 2023, the Financial Accountability Officer reported the government is withholding \$6.4 billion in much-needed support. The Conservative government must honour their promise, properly fund the public health care system, support front-line health care workers so they aren't doing their jobs without adequate support, and ensure code reds, blacks and zeroes are not the normal in Ontario, because lives depend on it.

WELLESLEY APPLEJACKS HOCKEY TEAM

Mr. Mike Harris: It is of course with great pride that I rise today, and for the first time in franchise history, the Wellesley AppleJacks are the Schmalz Cup champions. Wellesley willed their way to the Ontario Junior C championship with a 3-to-2 win over the Clarington Eagles earlier this month.

Noah Bender, a rookie goalie for the AppleJacks, was named tournament MVP.

Congratulations to coach Ryan Gerber and the rest of the staff, and of course, their great leadership.

Thank you for the players, fans, volunteers and sponsors that made this historic season possible.

They had a heroes' welcome in Wellesley earlier this week, complete with a fire truck escort through the streets for their championship parade.

We have a lot to celebrate in Wellesley as we are set to open a new and improved Wellesley arena next year. The community centre will feature a hockey rink, two soccer pitches, spaces for a youth drop-in centre and seniors' centre, a walking track and a gymnasium. The province is contributing over \$16 million to the roughly \$22-million facility. We got the arena built together, but you guys got us a banner to raise.

Speaker, I have one question for you: How do you like them AppleJacks?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Love 'em. Members' statements.

CROHN'S AND COLITIS CANADA'S GUTSY WALK

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and a wonderful Wednesday, everyone. There is nothing gutsier than a gutsy walk. The Crohn's and colitis society of Ontario does amazing work supporting people suffering from this chronic illness. Over 300,000 Canadians already have it, with someone new being diagnosed with Crohn's or colitis every hour in Canada. There are no known cures for Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, and that is why we need to walk.

For my family, this debilitating disease is quite personal, as my powerful and passionate daughter Becca was first diagnosed with Crohn's at 16. She has learned to live with this diagnosis, navigating health care systems both in Ontario and British Columbia, travelling through Asia,

working, studying and trying to live a full life. She is now 23 and realizes that she will never fully be able to plan ahead in life as Crohn's has a way of flaring up just when you least expect it. Becca McMahon, like others, puts on a brave face and tackles the world with courage every single day.

Today, I would like to encourage my fine-feathered colleagues to take part in this tremendously important crusade this Sunday, June 4, 10 a.m., all over Ontario. Be gutsy. Join the gutsy walk.

STEVEN TOURANGEAU

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Mr. Speaker, today I have a very sad statement. Today, I'm paying tribute to deceased OPP officer Steven Tourangeau who was killed in an automobile accident this week. Steven Tourangeau was a native of Essex county. He entered law enforcement and last held the rank of detective constable with the Huron county OPP. He was 35. He is survived by his wife, Danikah, and his three sons, Everett, Luke and Drew.

My wife Jackie and Steven were first cousins. Steven's mother and my wife's mother are sisters. And I know this family very well. Steven's father, Marcel Tourangeau, is a loving pépé with a big heart. Steven's mother, Kathy Tourangeau, is a dedicated mémé with a heart of gold. They are good people, beautiful people, and this is a tragic loss.

Today, my heart goes out to the family and to all the grieving parents who have lost a child before their time.

STEVEN TOURANGEAU

DAVID STEWART

Mr. Matthew Rae: On Monday, May 29, Steven Tourangeau donned the uniform of the Ontario Provincial Police, ready to serve and safeguard our rural communities. Regrettably, Speaker, Steven's return home was not to be. Detective Constable Tourangeau, a valued member of the OPP Perth county detachment and an integral part of the Huron-Perth community street crimes unit, met a tragic fate. His life was abruptly cut short in a devastating collision between his police cruiser and a school bus in Zorra township.

At the age of 35, we mourn the untimely loss of Constable Tourangeau—a loss that reverberates deeply throughout our community and the entire Perth County OPP Detachment. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Danikah, and their three young boys.

Speaker, it's incumbent upon us to acknowledge that we can never fully repay the debt we owe to our first responders—those stalwart individuals who place themselves in harm's way each and every day to safeguard our well-being.

Let us also remember the tragic fate of David Stewart, the school bus driver, who met an untimely end. For over a decade, David dedicated his days to driving a school bus, his second act following a successful career as a motorcycle and small engine mechanic. He leaves behind his

cherished wife and best friend, Wendy, whom he shared 47 years with. David was a loving father to four daughters and a source of immense pride as a grandfather.

My thoughts and prayers go out to both families, burdened with unimaginable grief during this difficult time. I want to let them know that the people of Ontario stand united, offering our support and unwavering solidarity.

1030

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It is with great pride that I introduce to the assembly, and welcome to Queen's Park, Jonathan van Bilsen, Port Perry's own award-winning photographer, patron of the arts, columnist, author, keynote speaker and host of the Jonathan van Bilsen television show on the Rogers television network. He is joined by his granddaughter Sophia. Welcome to the House.

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to welcome the board and staff of Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the people who produce wonderful dairy products in our province, and invite everyone to their reception this evening.

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Good morning, everyone. It is my pleasure to welcome to the House a delegation from Spain that I met with this morning: His Excellency the Spanish ambassador to Canada, Alfredo Martinez Serrano; as well as the Honourable Luis Garcia Montero, president of the Cervantes institute; as well as Philippe Robertet and Sonia Perez Marco. Welcome to Ontario and welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure to introduce members from my Waterloo riding association and the newly formed University of Waterloo NDP Club. Janice Jim is here, Mason Fitzpatrick, Damian Mikhail, Kevin Nguyen, Luke Marlatt, Craig Porter and Daniel Eskiocak. I want to welcome you to your House.

Hon. Doug Downey: I'd like to introduce Rowley Ramey, the managing director of the Seasons Centre for Grieving Children, along with Johanna Stockley, the office manager. They're here in the gallery, and they have Hope upstairs on the fourth floor. We hope you come upstairs and see her later.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce the people from the Canadian Franchise Association. I hope you have wonderful meetings at Queen's Park today.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: I would like to welcome my mayor and council members from the city of Richmond Hill this morning. Under the leadership of His Worship, I would like to welcome the mayor, David West; deputy mayor, Godwin Chan; and ward 6 councillor, Michael Shiu, as well as chief of staff, Emily Houdi. They are accompanied by my husband, Albert Wai. Welcome, everyone, to Queen's Park, and I look forward to our meeting after question period.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would like to welcome Janice Folk-Dawson from the Ontario Federation of Labour; Francis Pineda and Jim Zeng from the Injured Workers

Community Legal Clinic; Wayne Harris from the Ontario Network of Injured Workers; and from the Industrial Accident Victims' Group of Ontario, Maryth Yachnin, David Arruda, Aleks Ivovic, Patrick Cowley, Caleb Goff, Jenny Tang, Mohammad Naqvi, Julie Wang, Mark Wang, Alicia Cunningham, Zonia Guerrero and San Hun; and, from United Steelworkers Local 1005, Ron Wells, Jim McColl and Tony McLaughlin. Thank you so much for being here. Welcome to your House.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. Representing them, we have Cheryl Smith, Rosa Checchia, Patrice Dubé, Rey Moisan, Murray Sherk, Don Gordon, Brian Burnett, Adam Petherick, George Van Kampen, Vicky Morrison, John Wynands, and, of course, saving the best for last, from Bruce county, Mark Hamel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'd like to welcome Ramona Roblin and Alison Kelly from the PEC Period Party to Queen's Park today. The Prince Edward County Period Party is a grassroots project in Bay of Quinte that successfully advocated for free menstrual products to be made available in public washrooms, resulting in a pilot project rolled out earlier this month. Welcome to your House. We're so proud to have you here.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We're pleased to welcome representatives of the Canadian Franchise Association here for their numerous meetings and a lovely breakfast this morning. We had the pleasure of meeting with Sherry McNeil, the president and CEO, along with members that included John Prittie, Kirk Allan, Clark Harrop and Scott Munnoch, and there are many more.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I'd like to welcome a great Ontarian, a great community advocate, my friend Ashley Steinfeld, husband to Jimmy Steinfeld and father to Brixton and Grayson. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our introduction of guests for this morning.

REPORT, FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I invite oral questions, I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report titled Ontario Health Sector: 2023 Budget Spending Plan Review, from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

QUESTION PERIOD

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Marit Stiles: This question is for the Premier. At midnight tonight, this government will oversee the closure of the emergency room in Minden, against the outcry from more than 24,000 people who signed petitions to keep it open; against local families, seniors and kids' summer camps; against the local businesses and the business

owners who feel let down, ignored, by this Conservative government and who are understandably worried about what this means when a loved one has a heart attack, a stroke or an injury that requires emergency care.

Distressed, furious residents; shuttered emergency rooms; no health care when you need it—I want to ask the Premier: Is this the kind of legacy the Conservatives want to leave?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you. I will reiterate again that it is incredibly challenging for local leadership to make these decisions, because they want to ensure that there is capacity within the system. The Haliburton Highlands leadership had made a determination that it is safer for the community to have consolidated two emergency departments into one at the Haliburton site.

But the member opposite talks about legacy, and I want to talk about the legacy that we are leaving future Ontarians when we expand two new medical schools in the province of Ontario in Scarborough and in Brampton. I want to talk about a legacy where, for the first time ever, we have worked with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to ensure that individuals who practise medicine in the UK, in Ireland, in Australia and in the US are getting their licences expedited because of the work that we're doing with Bill 60.

I want to talk about—

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: In a statement to local media yesterday, the Minister of Health insisted that the closure of the Minden emergency room is, and I want to quote her here, "not a closure." I was in Minden on Thursday, where the local hospital board has stationed a giant sign that reads, "Emergency department closed on June 1." Let me tell you, the closure of the emergency department is effectively the closure of the hospital. The people of Minden know that, and so does this minister.

The same government statement goes on to say that the Conservative MPP for Minden has been in touch with the local hospital board, but residents and local business owners here yesterday said she hasn't met with them, and when they were here yesterday, she didn't even raise her head to look at them.

Speaker, why is this government trying to play people for fools, instead of taking some responsibility?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The Minister of Health.

1040

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I choose to believe that the leader of the NDP understands that hospitals are more than just an emergency department, that Minden hospital will continue to offer services to their communities. The consolidation of the emergency department, while challenging for that leadership, is part of those determinations that the leadership have made.

Again, I will go back to legacy. We talk about Bill 60 and as of right—the first in Canada that ensures that clinicians who have licences in other Canadian jurisdictions can today begin working in the province of Ontario as they go through that licence process here in Ontario. Those are the legacies that will ensure that we have health care capacity and health human resource capacity in decades and future generations.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: That's cold comfort for the people of Minden. I'll tell you another thing: A diagnostic machine and doctor's office do not a hospital make.

Lanark County, Guelph, Hamilton, Perth, Grand River in Kitchener, Windsor, Alexandria, Wingham, Thessalon, Kemptville, Seaforth, Ottawa, Bowmanville, Clinton, Orangeville, Carleton Place, Essex county, Kingston, Waterloo, Credit Valley, Minden, Smith Falls, London, Chesley, Port Colborne, Fort Erie: all communities that have seen either no ambulances available or the closure of services at some point in the last year because of this government's staffing crisis. Expert after expert has warned the Conservative plan is only going to make it worse; 380,000 Ontarians just made their voices clear in the OHC citizen referendum.

Back to the Premier: Will he listen to experts and Ontarians and keep the hospital open and stop their plan for two-tier health care in this province?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I want to remind the member opposite that the president of the Ontario Hospital Association said, "We're rushing to make up for lost time and the government has implemented a wide range of well-designed and very constructive programs to recruit and retain...."

Some of those programs of course include the 911 models of care that ensure paramedics have the ability to quickly assess and make sure that individuals go to the most appropriate place. The Dedicated Offload Nurses Program that is in hospitals today in emergency rooms to make sure, again, paramedics can release their patients and get back out on the road; the Emergency Department Peer-to-Peer Program; the Emergency Department Locum Program; the extern program; the nurse preceptors program—all of these programs are available to Ontario hospitals. We have worked very closely to ensure that when it is appropriate, we will be there, and we will keep making those programs available.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Ms. Marit Stiles: Ontario is a place that celebrates and draws strength from our diversity. But across the province, a climate of fear is taking hold among 2SLGBTQ+ people as they face increasing threats and hostility from increasingly organized extremist groups. This is manifesting in

local municipalities who are banning Pride flags and events, and in school boards like the York Catholic District School Board, who decided this week to not allow the flag to be flown outside of schools.

Yesterday, when the Premier was asked whether or not he agreed with the board's decision, he said, "I have no comment on that."

Given the very real and growing hate facing Ontario's LGBTQ communities, does this Premier really have nothing to say on this?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, Pride is a special time for us to recognize and celebrate Ontario's LGBTQ+ community. I've proved it by going into the York Pride parade. I'm going to be going again this year.

School boards have a responsibility to ensure each and every school in Ontario is a safe and inclusive space for all children.

I'll always support Ontario's LGBTQ+ community. I look forward again, for my third or fourth year, going down to the York Pride parade. We're going to go down there. We're going to celebrate. We're going to have fun. That's where I stand, and I think the Leader of the Opposition knows that.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Words are important, but only effective when followed by real action. During Pride Month, rainbow flags will be raised across Queen's Park, city halls and many other public buildings, but not at the York Catholic District School Board, as six trustees voted against the rainbow flag.

Yesterday, the Minister of Education offered empty words when asked about how he would keep students safe. Hours later, he issued a memo to school boards without even mentioning the rainbow flag. What will this Conservative government actually do to protect students? I would offer him one suggestion: He can issue a ministerial directive to the school boards to ensure that the rainbow flags are flown at every single publicly funded school in Ontario.

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

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We believe that all children in Ontario, irrespective of their faith or heritage, sexual orientation or gender, or the colour of their skin, deserve to feel safe in a publicly funded school. Yes, we've expressed disappointment with the school board's decision and we have affirmed through a memo just yesterday, setting out a clear expectation that all publicly funded schools—English and French, Catholic and public—will find meaningful, positive ways to celebrate Pride. That is our expectation.

We will, as a government, be led by our Premier, visible, active, present at York's Pride parade, as we have done now for three or four years, standing in solidarity with the community that, yes, has faced disproportionate levels of violence and bullying. We stand with these kids, we know they exist and we are going to ensure their safety in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: The minister talks about marching in one Pride. There are 60 Pride parades happening in Ontario, with the largest one actually in the city of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. The member for Toronto Centre made a statement. It was completely parliamentary.

The member for Toronto Centre has the floor.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you, Speaker. The largest Pride parade in the world is actually in the city of Toronto. This is where we actually see security insurance costs for this organization and Prides across Ontario going up, largely due to the risk of violence and threats from right-wing extremists.

Yet the government is cutting funding to Pride organizations. Pride Toronto received \$250,000 in 2021, \$170,000 less in 2022 and this year they were capped at \$125,000, half the money that they received just two years ago. Ipsos has reported that Pride Toronto contributes \$589 million to Ontario's GDP, and \$37 million in direct provincial tax revenues last year alone. These cuts couldn't have come at a worse time.

If you want to show up to march in the Pride parade, I suggest you show up with a cheque. Will the Premier reinstate their funding this year?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats. And I will remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

To reply for the government, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: As mentioned earlier a number of times, we are proud to support Pride Toronto and work towards that celebration to support the 2SLGBTQ2IA+ community and support what they are attempting to do. This Pride festival is so very important.

We have had two meetings with the organizing committee at the Pride festival about a month ago. This is the first time we've really heard of a problem with financing. I would like to offer: When this event is over, we can settle down and sit down and talk about exactly what the concerns are. If insurance costs have come up and other things are happening, it would be nice if we could know about it, to show how we could show our support, versus a couple of days before the festival is about to start.

We take this seriously and we do show support through Reconnect Festival and Event Program Ontario cultural attraction funds, so it's not as if we've been—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Take your seat.

The government House leader will withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I withdraw.

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

Start the clock. The next question.

1050

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Joel Harden: Speaker, for-profit health care staffing agencies are hurting our hospitals. One of these firms is Canadian Health Labs. This company has convinced hundreds of burnt-out nurses and PSWs to leave their workplaces, offering them double the salaries they normally earn. Their head lobbyist is former Prime Minister Paul Martin. The company made \$154 million from 500 nurses and PSWs they've hired out of our public health care systems and public workplaces. Their plan is to hire as many as 5,000 people.

Can the Minister of Health confirm if she has met with this company and contracted Canadian Health Labs to work in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I just need some confirmation from the member opposite. Is he suggesting that registered nurses in the province of Ontario should not have a choice in where they work, or in which areas they work?

We have, as a government, made a commitment and put money on the table to ensure that we have the largest expansion of nurses in the province of Ontario. It is unprecedented. The Minister of Colleges and Universities and myself visited—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. The member for Kitchener-Conestoga will come to order. The member for Hamilton Mountain will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener-Conestoga is warned.

Start the clock. Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Some 12,000 new nurses are registered to work in the province of Ontario just last year. Why? Because we are making the investment; because we have directed the College of Nurses of Ontario to say, "When those internationally educated practitioners want to work and practise in the province of Ontario, you need to expedite the review and ultimately license when appropriate." We've done that work to ensure that we have removed every red tape barrier. That is ensuring people get to practise and work—

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

Supplementary? The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Let me help the minister. She has met with the staffing agency Canadian Health Labs six times since becoming minister. Fly-by-night staffing agencies are hurting our hospitals. They are hurting the patients in our hospitals. They exist for one reason: to make money for the investor. They take health care workers from our public system and sell them back at huge profits.

How big, Speaker? A whistle-blower showed us: a \$154-million profit off the backs of 500 Ontario health care workers. Let that sink in, Speaker. Let that sink in. This is sickening. Why is this minister letting this happen?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Perhaps it would be helpful for the member opposite to also list the number of hospitals that I have visited since becoming the Minister of Health. We learn from what is happening in the field directly with the people impacted.

I can tell you, when I talk to nurses, when I talk to physicians, when I talk to hospital CEOs, they are very, very happy that we are actually making investments to ensure that we have programs like the Learn and Stay program, a program that actually means if you are ready and wanting to stay in an underserved area, we will cover your tuition and your book costs. In fact, in Owen Sound, when together the Minister of Colleges and Universities and I spoke to that hospital, every single one of those Georgian College nursing students have applied and are part of that program. It is working, Speaker, and we will continue to make those investments.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Ontario holds immense potential for entrepreneurs and businesses in the advanced manufacturing sector. Our province offers a highly skilled workforce and abundant opportunities, making it an ideal location to establish and expand business operations. Yet, to stay ahead of their competition, our businesses and entrepreneurs want to know that our government is committed to helping their businesses invest in the latest technologies and the best talent.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how our government is supporting businesses, particularly manufacturers, in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: By lowering the cost of business by \$8 billion every single year, we have made Ontario the most competitive place to invest and grow. This is the case all across the province, including in our rural and regional communities.

SBS Drivetec in Barrie recently announced a \$2-million investment in their auto parts manufacturing plant. Their facility makes components for both combustion and EVs. With a \$300,000 investment from our government, they will fully automate their manufacturing process on their assembly line and create new jobs. Speaker, SBS Drivetec adds to the over \$1 billion in investments and the 1,800 jobs created through our Regional Development Program, and it builds on the \$25 billion in EV investments we've attracted to Ontario.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: Thank you, Minister, for that response. It's encouraging to hear that our government is not overlooking workers and businesses, unlike the previous Liberal government. Undoubtedly, programs like the Regional Development Program are vital in driving our province's economy by empowering businesses to invest.

However, in addition to attracting international investments, it is crucial that we create favourable conditions for our local businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive within our communities.

Speaker, can the minister please provide further details on how our government is supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs to expand their ventures?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government has reversed decades of economic harm caused by the Liberals and the NDP. Their policies cost the province hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs, and, Speaker, it stifled investment here in Ontario. Instead, we listened to the businesses and to the entrepreneurs, who told us exactly what they needed to succeed: lower hydro costs, lower taxes, less red tape. That's what they needed, Speaker, and that's exactly what we did. It simply changed the trajectory of the previous government, and now our world-class innovation sector is making investments and has created 660,000 jobs since we were elected. Now, more than ever, entrepreneurs are turning their dreams into success stories.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Minister of Labour, Speaker. Earlier this month, the Naujawan Support Network, a worker support network in Brampton, wrote to the minister to highlight how investigations and enforcement of wage theft complaints to the ministry are dramatically down under this government.

They have asked the minister to reply by June 1 to set up a meeting to discuss this important issue. Will the minister agree to meet with the network to learn of their concerns?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Well, Mr. Speaker, the laws are clear in this province, and we expect every employer to abide by those laws. That's why I've been very clear that breaking the law in Ontario can never be the cost of doing business. That's why in our Working for Workers legislation, we've increased health and safety fines for companies that break the rules. We're cracking down on temporary help agencies, Mr. Speaker, to be the first government in the province to set up licensing for companies in the province that use temp help workers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm really proud that we announced last week that for the first time we're recognizing international credentials here in the province of Ontario for those newcomers that come to our province who have been educated elsewhere around the world, that we're moving to recognize those credentials by eliminating the Canadian work experience requirement. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue every single day working for all workers in this province.

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

Ms. Doly Begum: The lack of foresight and enforcement by this ministry is the problem.

This information comes directly from the ministry, the result of a freedom of information request: In 2014, there were 18,000 employment standards investigations. In 2021, that number dropped to 8,000.

1100

Speaker, I want to quote the letter, actually. The workers whose wages are being stolen “regard the ministry as weak and ineffective—an institution that cannot enforce the orders it issues, and that will not prosecute employers who ignore the orders. Some employers are so carefree towards the ministry that they mockingly encourage their workers to file employment standards claims, believing they will never face serious consequences even if those claims are successful.”

Speaker, does the minister think it’s acceptable that millions of dollars—actually, \$9 million—owed to workers in Brampton and elsewhere in the last year has been pocketed by greedy employers?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, again, employers know the laws in this province, and the Ministry of Labour will ensure that those laws are upheld. But it was under a Progressive Conservative government under Premier Ford that we increased the number of inspectors in this province to the highest in Ontario history. We now have over 500 inspectors inspecting thousands of businesses, including 200 employment standards officers. In fact, in the last five years alone, we’ve recuperated over \$110 million in lost wages for workers across this province. We’re going to continue to work every single day for all workers in this province.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. As we approach the summer season, many people are looking forward to visiting some of our province’s top tourism destinations, such as Niagara Falls. However, connecting to the Niagara region by car from other areas in Ontario can be challenging. Traffic congestion and gridlock on highways can lead to delays and frustration. With so much to see, do and enjoy in the Niagara region, there need to be more options for convenient travel to this part of our province. Tourism is vital to Ontario’s economy and our government must do all that we can to encourage more people to visit Niagara.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what steps our government is taking to make it easier to travel to the Niagara region?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member for the question. After over a decade of Liberal inaction, it is our Progressive Conservative government that is investing in the Niagara region to unlock its full potential.

Earlier this month, I joined Premier Ford and my colleagues to announce more GO train service between Union Station and Niagara Falls. The expansion of GO train service will connect more people to jobs, housing and to Canada’s top tourist destination. Families across the GTA now have more options to get to the Niagara region, as GO train service has increased by two daily round trips and an additional round trip on weekends. That’s a total of 21 round trips per week. So whether you’re heading to a winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake or seeing the falls up close,

families have more access to GO Transit to explore the beautiful Niagara region.

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

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that response. The expansion of GO train service between downtown Toronto and the Niagara region not only supports tourism, it also increases travel options for people that live in areas such as Hamilton and Burlington. It is encouraging to see that our government is taking action to increase transit options that will make travel more convenient and will increase opportunities for jobs and economic growth. It is vital that our government continues to focus on measures that will help to advance economic prosperity for Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is expanding public transit across our province?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: My colleague is correct: Ontario’s population is rapidly growing, and unlike the previous Liberal government, we are taking action. By 2055, GO rail will become one of the busiest railways anywhere in North America, with more than 200 million annual riders. That’s why we’re taking steps that will support our future. Speaker, the additional GO train service means trains will also resume service to the St. Catharines Via station.

Our government is also funding four additional week-day express trains during the busiest hours. Trains will travel in both directions on Lakeshore West and offer more express service between Hamilton, Burlington and Toronto.

Speaker, this investment will not only shorten travel times for everyday commuters, but it also supports tourism and economic growth. And with the \$15 weekend travel pass, families can enjoy unlimited travel anywhere on the GO train network. Our government is making it easier to get where you need to go and we will—

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

ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sarah Jama: My question is to the Premier. May 29 marked the start of National AccessAbility Week. The week is ending and there’s little to celebrate by way of accessibility here in the province. Over the last few years, we’ve seen announcements and ideas around accessibility, but no real changes to meet markers around physical infrastructure. On top of this, disabled people can’t find accessible places to live, are excluded from schools, are being kicked off specialized transit services like Wheel-Trans and are disproportionately criminalized. They’re also still living on social assistance rates below the poverty line.

When will the government stop treating disabled people in this province like second-class citizens and get back to making Ontario accessible by 2025?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To respond, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Richmond Hill.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member opposite for asking this very important question. National accessibility awareness week is very important to this government and to me personally. Mr. Speaker, there is no better advocate for accessibility than this Premier and the Minister for Accessibility. They understand accessibility and inclusion require long-term vision. Every dollar on infrastructure is a dollar being invested for people with disabilities.

I would also like to thank the leadership of the Minister of Labour. Just this morning, we announced over \$4 million in the Skills Development Fund. This marvellous fund will support local organizations like the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Geneva autism centre. This makes sure people with disabilities have the right programs and right services to find meaningful training and jobs. When we break down the barriers in our province, we're helping all Ontarians live in a better—

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

Ms. Sarah Jama: Again to the Premier: This government's focus on employment for disabled people ignores the fact that 23% of the province is disabled, and many disabled people will never be able to work.

Speaker, the worth of a person exists outside of their ability to produce, and in this province, disabled people cannot access public transit, free and fully funded health care, accessible housing, or live lives free of discrimination. As a sitting MPP, I also have struggled with getting trapped in places in Toronto due to inaccessible subways.

Enough is enough, and we are people too. When will this government honour the legacy of David Onley and get back to making Ontario accessible by 2025?

Interjections.

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

Member for Richmond Hill.

Mrs. Daisy Wai: As we say, we are working on this and we are having special funds to do the training for them as well. Every dollar of the historic \$60-billion investment into transit is being invested for people with disabilities. Every dollar that the Premier and this government is spending on building Ontario is a dollar spent on making this province more accessible.

Mr. Speaker, project by project, community by community, we are making Ontario more accessible every day.

ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

M^{me} Lucille Collard: This question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Access to health care professionals has become increasingly challenging for many Ontarians, which is also impacting people on the Ontario Disability Support Program. ODSB recipients have been contacting my office consistently, seeking assistance in finding a doctor to fill out essential forms. These forms are necessary for their special diet needs and to review their eligibility for benefits. The

inability to obtain these forms puts them at risk of losing income support and benefits.

Is the minister willing to commit to a temporary pause on medical eligibility reviews and provide extensions to recipients who are unable to find a health care professional to fill out their medical forms until more health professionals become available?

1110

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

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for the question. It is a very important one, to make sure that we have primary care access across Ontario, which is why in our Your Health plan and under Bill 60, we've actually set aside an expansion of 18 new primary care practitioner-led clinics.

Today, right now, of course, as an MPP and an advocate, I would hope that you are also encouraging individuals to seek out those community health centres that are sited in communities across Ontario, to make sure that individuals who need that very important paperwork filled out by their primary care practitioner have that option.

There are a number of investments that we have made, but I would hope that, as an advocate, you would make sure that you talk about and share what is already there and, primarily, community health centres are a perfect example of that service.

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

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I appreciate the answer, but in my riding there's not sufficient access to a health care professional. That's a fact.

The province recently announced that it is investing to help people with disabilities find meaningful jobs with businesses in their communities. That's, undoubtedly, great; however, it is important to consider that many of these individuals will likely need accommodation to successfully integrate into the labour market.

The duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code specifically requires that a person with a disability provide to the employer information about relevant restrictions or limitations, including information from health care professionals. Given this requirement, how are they supposed to meet this obligation without access to a medical professional? What is the minister's plan to effectively remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my honourable colleague for the very important question. My colleague alluded to the investments we're making to make sure that every single Ontarian succeeds and thrives in the province—that means every single person across the province. I can tell you through Journey to Belonging, our long-term vision for a province, where every single person—those with disabilities—have a chance to not just succeed and thrive, but make contributions in their communities. That means access to employment.

Thanks to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker, doing great work to make sure we connect those with disabilities

across the province to employment. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because they belong in their communities. They're contributing members. We want to make sure that not only do they do that, but they help us with the jobs that are not being filled and, as a result, have a higher income across the province.

I urge the member across, and my colleagues in the NDP, to support us in initiatives where we say help us so that not a single person is left behind in this province. That's our vision—

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

The next question.

NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs. The ongoing impact of global high interest rates and inflation continues to create challenges for all Ontarians. Unfortunately, the current economic climate is impacting people of rural, remote and northern communities far greater than other parts of the province.

Communities in northern Ontario are facing unique barriers for job creation and business development. Sadly, the previous Liberal government ignored the economic potential in rural, remote and Indigenous communities and drove many jobs out of the north. It is vitally important that our government takes action to keep the north competitive and improve the quality of life for northern Ontario residents.

Can the minister please explain how our government is supporting prosperity and opportunity in the north?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I want to thank the member for Hastings–Lennox and Addington for his work here in the Legislature on behalf of his constituents.

It was a beautiful, sunny, bright day in northwestern Ontario. Business leaders and Indigenous business leaders gathered to discuss the opportunities. In the morning, we talked about supporting and unlocking communities in transition and surging as a result of resource-based activities and tourism. We also talked about opening northern Ontario for international business. We talked about the need for the province to maintain and stay focused on reducing red tape for businesses, the modernized Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and the northern energy assistance program to make sure we had that competitive advantage to compete globally.

The good news is that we were very well received by these business leaders. We're looking forward to building out the kinds of projects, Mr. Speaker, that can complete an exciting supply chain that very much includes northern Ontario.

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

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the minister. It is encouraging to hear about the programs that are being delivered through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp., and that these are translating into real world results for people and businesses across the north.

While it is clear that many northern communities that were forgotten under the previous Liberal government are now quite optimistic because of the meaningful investments made by our government, our government must continue to do all that we can to work with our northern partners to foster innovation, in order to build stronger and more prosperous communities.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is continuing to support economic development in communities across the north?

Hon. Greg Rickford: The second part of our day evolved around more focused discussion. I was delighted to be joined by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and my very capable parliamentary assistant, the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We talked about forest sector growth, the changing landscape, new owners of some of the major assets, and increasing ownership by Indigenous communities and/or their business in the forest sector.

I mentioned it was a bright sunny day. It turned partly cloudy, Mr. Speaker, because I chaired the discussion on processing and refining of our critical minerals in northern Ontario, and I had to tell the folks at the table about the recent vote here in the Legislature and the lack of support from the NDP for mining, which means processing in northern Ontario, northwestern Ontario. It could only mean one thing, that NDP stands for “Not Doing Processing.” What an incredible opportunity—

Interjections.

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

The next question.

MISSING PERSONS

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is for the Premier. Our communities are searching every day for missing vulnerable loved ones here in Ontario: children, youth, adults and seniors who, when they go missing, do not meet the Amber Alert criteria, including Nathan, a 37-year-old man with Down syndrome who has now been missing for 19 days from Toronto.

Over two months ago, my private member's bill, Bill 74, Missing Persons Amendment Act, was discharged and referred to committee. Speaker, through you, I ask the Premier: Why are you not bringing back Bill 74 and providing another resource for police to use while searching for a missing and vulnerable loved one who may still be close to home?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member, frankly, knows that the bill was discharged directly to committee so that we could make improvements to the bill. The member also knows, because the member was in the House, that we passed a motion earlier this week that authorized committees to do their work over the summer, which would include the member's bill.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Bill 74 fills a gap in our current emergency alert system, a solution that several municipal councils, stakeholders and groups who support vulnerable persons have agreed to, a tool for the police to use that is local and regional. A missing person may be the last person you rode the bus with or passed on the sidewalk. They're scared, confused and not far from home, these same missing persons who, if a local alert was sounded, you may recognize immediately and report.

Speaker, again: Will the Premier do the right thing and bring Bill 74 back to the table?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, the member opposite is a whip in the NDP and knows full well that a motion was brought to this chamber—which was passed unanimously by everybody in the chamber, including the member opposite—which explained that committees would be meeting over the summer, specifically the committee that that bill was referred to, and that it would be dealing with the bill over the summer. The member is aware of that.

In fact, I spoke to the family when they were here. The member is aware of that. We have talked directly about it, that we would be dealing with this bill, because of the importance and because of the flaws that were in the bill.

The member, to my understanding, agrees with that. The whole House agrees with it. I'm uncertain what confusion there is. So again, the whole House voted unanimously to bring back committees over the summer because, as you know, on this side of the House we are constantly working on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario, and we will continue to do that over the summer for our communities.

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AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The agri-food sector in Ontario employs 750,000 people and is vital to our province's economic prosperity. In order for the agri-food sector to continue to grow and expand its markets, there must be a stable workforce to meet both current and future demands for services and products. That's why our government must continue to make investments that will strengthen competitiveness, innovation and resiliency within the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based industries.

Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what actions our government is taking to build up the workforce in the agri-food sector?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the question from the member from Carleton because I'm very proudly standing in this House to say that our government is planning today for the future jobs of tomorrow. That includes our agri-food sector. Through our Grow Ontario Strategy, over the next 10 years, we have set a target to grow employment in our agri-food sector by 10%.

A key to attracting people is pulling them in and making them aware of the amazing jobs our sector has at a young age. That's why the 4-H program in Ontario is so,

so important. I had the pleasure just last week of sharing with people across this province how our government is continuing to invest in agricultural leadership development. One way is through the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership program, whereby we're investing \$2.3 million over the next three years in Ontario 4-H. That is continuity and certainty for this program as they expose young people to the amazing opportunities in careers in the agri-food sector.

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you to the minister for her response. This funding announcement demonstrates our government's commitment to fostering the conditions for continued growth in this vital sector, which is also great news for Ontario's youth and for 4-H Ontario. I've had the pleasure of meeting my local 4-H ambassador, Rhiannah, and learning about the opportunities that 4-H provides to youth across our province in promoting the many aspects of agriculture. Programs through 4-H Ontario are designed to help young people like Rhiannah Gallagher find a place they can be involved, accepted, valued and heard, while developing valuable leadership skills.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on how this investment made by our government will help young people in Ontario prepare for careers in the agri-food sector?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: I remember meeting Rhiannah at the farmers' breakfast in Carleton that the member opposite hosted earlier this year. She's a shining example of how young people graduating through the 4-H program truly learn to do by doing, and they apply their head, heart, health and hands to everything they do. The funding that we announced last week is our renewed commitment to making sure that a youth program that is valued so much—and I know with confidence the Dairy Farmers of Ontario can attest to the quality of people that come through this program. They'll see the return on the investment because we're going to be supporting local initiatives that increase awareness of careers in agriculture.

We're engaging diverse communities through this program. We are ensuring that the four jobs that are waiting for every one individual graduating from agriculture or a food service program will have jobs available to them. This funding will benefit the already 6,000 4-H members and young people wanting to work in the agri-food sector in Ontario.

INJURED WORKERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: A year ago, the Minister of Labour promised to raise WSIB income replacement rates to 90% of pre-injury wages. This increase has not taken place. Then, the WSIB cut the cost-of-living allowance for injured workers by a further 2%. While cutting benefits and creating new red tape for injured workers to wade through, the government then took \$1.2 billion out of the fund and gave it back to their corporate buddies. Now, they've commissioned a report to say that the time to appeal WSIB decisions should be cut to one month.

An injury at work has thrown your life completely upside down, and now the government is telling you that if you want the compensation to which you're entitled and which your family needs, you're going to have a month to appeal a bad WSIB decision.

The Ontario NDP believes that no worker should ever be unjustly denied access to WSIB. Does the minister share that commitment, or will he be cutting the time to appeal WSIB claims?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank all of those hard-working men and women who work for the WSIB, who are there every single day helping those injured workers across the province. They do great work everywhere, in all of our communities.

It was only a decade ago that the WSIB was on the brink of bankruptcy. Under the leadership of Premier Ford and this government, we brought in new leadership, a new board of directors, a new chair of the board—new leadership at the WSIB to build a better system for workers and employers.

I'm proud of the changes that we've made in our recent Working for Workers 3 legislation, truly historic legislation. We're expanding pancreatic and thyroid cancer to presumptive coverage to firefighters across the province. This is going to help every firefighter, whether they're full-time, volunteer, First Nations firefighters. And we're making it retroactive to January 1, 1960.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This government continues to do everything it possibly can to undermine the well-being of injured workers.

Ontario's tribunal system is broken. There are huge delays. It's difficult to navigate, and it's hard to find legal assistance. And yet, when workers make it through the system, a lot of them are finding justice. Claims that have previously been denied are being approved on appeal, and it's completely life-changing. Well, it seems that the government wants to take even that hope away from people by cutting the time for appeals. Workers deserve justice. It's the right thing to do. But when WSIB is not there for workers, guess who pays? The public.

Will the minister do the right thing and commit not to cut the appeal time for WSIB claims?

Hon. Monte McNaughton: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that this year injured workers in Ontario got a historic pay increase, and we're going to continue to build a better system for injured workers and employers. That's why we brought in new leadership at the WSIB to fix the mess that the former Liberal government left. As I said, it wasn't that many years ago that the whole system was on the brink of bankruptcy. We need a system that's going to be there for injured workers.

There is no government in literally a generation that has done more for workers across this province than Premier Ford and the PC government. We brought forward three historic, game-changing pieces of legislation: Working for Workers 1, Working for Workers 2, and Working for Workers 3, and we're not done yet. There's more to come.

ANTI-RACISM AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACTIVITIES

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Ontario's diversity is one of our greatest strengths, with people from all backgrounds, faiths and walks of life. All people in Ontario deserve to be respected, no matter where they come from, what they believe or how they worship.

Unfortunately, we are not immune to the rise of incidents of hate and intolerance that we are witnessing across Canada and indeed around the world.

Acts of discrimination, hatred and violence have no place in our communities. That is why our government must take action to implement measures that will combat hate and protect the people of our province.

Can the minister please explain how our government is building safer, stronger and more inclusive communities?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: I'd like to thank the member from Brantford—Brant for the question, and it is a very important question.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for all of us in this House to be very clear that hate and intolerance have no place here in Ontario. Every Ontarian, no matter their ethnicity or nationality, how they worship, or who they love, deserves to live in safe communities and without fear that they may be targeted because of who they are.

That is why our government, over the last two years, has invested over \$100 million to combat hate and help foster inclusive communities.

Recently, our government has announced \$25.5 million to help protect Ontario's religious, diverse and other marginalized communities. This funding will help ensure that they have safe and secure places to practise their faith, showcase their culture and express who they are.

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Our government will always be a champion for all Ontarians. We will continue working to build a stronger, safer and more inclusive Ontario for all people from all walks of life.

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

Mr. Will Bouma: It's reassuring that our government is taking meaningful action to protect our communities and to combat hate wherever it exists. All Ontarians deserve to feel safe in their communities and should be able to live and worship without fear that they will be targeted.

Communities in my home region of Brantford—Brant are similar to other places across Ontario where there are people from a wide variety of faiths, beliefs and backgrounds.

The people of Ontario expect that our government will continue to put measures in place that will protect their safety and security.

Speaker, can the minister please elaborate on the scope of the Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant and how this will benefit organizations across Ontario?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Again, I'd like to thank the member for the follow-up question. I think building on our

investments combats racism and hate. The new \$25.5-million Anti-Hate Security and Prevention Grant will help create stronger, safer and more inclusive communities, Mr. Speaker. We have expanded eligibility, after much consultation, to include more groups and organizations, because everyone deserves to feel safe in the environment to practise their faith and express their cultures and beliefs. This investment will make a difference in helping thousands of more organizations across the province better protect their facilities from hate-motivated incidents, vandalism and other acts of intolerance. This includes religious organizations such as churches, mosques, synagogues as well as cultural organizations that serve Black, Indigenous, Asian and 2SLGBTQI+ communities, who are all eligible. They can benefit from these funds, how they would like to invest it most—that will have the most—

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This government's plan to build on the greenbelt is very alarming. In a letter I received from the federal Minister of Environment, Minister Guilbeault, concerning your actions on the greenbelt, he writes in part: "There are portions of Ontario's greenbelt that contain critical habitat for species listed under the federal Species at Risk Act. Environment and Climate Change Canada officials have reached out the government of Ontario officials to ensure that the provincial and federal laws designed to support the identification, protection and mitigation of harm to species at risk and their habitats of concern are respected in the provincial approach to housing."

So, my question is very simple, and I ask it on behalf of so many Ontarians who are very concerned with your government's approach to housing: What steps are you actually taking to protect species at risk as you rush to pave over wetlands, agricultural lands and the greenbelt?

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

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing can reply.

Hon. Steve Clark: It appears, Speaker, just like there is in the federal House, there's a bit of Liberal-NDP alliance here in question period this morning provincially.

We've been crystal clear. We took a plan to the people last June under the leadership of Premier Ford that our government would build upon our success with our housing supply action plans and not only have a housing supply action plan each and every year under a re-elected government, under Premier Ford's leadership, but that we would build 1.5 million homes by 2031.

Every measure we've put forward, whether it was More Homes, More Choice in 2019; More Homes for Everyone; More Homes Built Faster, and now we have the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, New Democrats have not supported it.

We've said many times we want to work with the federal government. We've got a great relationship with

Minister Hussen, the housing minister. I don't have a relationship with Mr. Guilbeault, so I can't speak to that. But we want to move forward, and I know at our upcoming provincial-territorial meeting, we'll have more to say about how the federal government can support our government.

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

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The minister may not have a relationship now with Minister Guilbeault but I predict he will shortly, given their actions—because your government is opening up the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve for development. In response to the removal of the protection status in this ecologically sensitive area, the federal government has initiated a Rouge National Urban Park impact study. In an area that the Premier described as a field full of weeds, there are 33 federally listed species at risk, including the much beloved monarch butterfly, 49 bird species listed under the Migratory Birds Convention and 14 streams with fish-bearing species.

With so much at stake, why are you risking federal intervention and why are you further endangering our already vulnerable species, biodiversity and our green spaces in this province?

Hon. Steve Clark: The NDP talk a good game, but as I said in my opening answer to the question, they don't put their voting record alongside it. We're going to continue to stand up for Ontarians.

Earlier today we had a young class group up there. This is what motivates our government, to ensure that those young people who want an opportunity to have housing close to where they grow up or that senior who decides that, at their stage of life, they want to downsize but there's nothing that's available in their price range where they've grown up and where they've raised their family—these are the people that our government, under the leadership of Premier Ford, are standing up for. These are the people for whom we're going to ensure that by 2031 we're going to hit our housing targets. We're going to ensure that we have a plan in place that we build upon.

For the last two years, we've had 30-year highs in terms of housing starts. We've had an all-time high when it comes to rental starts. The one consistent measure is NDP opposition to—

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

The next question.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Graham McGregor: My question is for the Attorney General. Crime doesn't just affect victims immediately following an incident; trauma can negatively impact them for the rest of their lives, often requiring long-term support. The effects of traumatic events can have lifelong implications as well as a possibility of negatively affecting their families and larger communities. It's imperative that our government stand up for victims of crime, not only through promoting public safety but also by providing them with the support that they need.

There are many heroic individuals and organizations throughout Ontario that provide support to those who have been victimized. Their dedication, advocacy and leadership make a positive difference in the lives of those they are helping. Can the Attorney General please share with us how we recognize these individuals and organizations that support people who have faced victimization due to crime?

Hon. Doug Downey: I want to thank my friend and colleague from Brampton North for his support of victims and victim services organizations from around Ontario. We recently had an event and we had colleagues from all parties there to celebrate the individuals and the groups that are supporting victims of crime. People have their own personal experiences, and sometimes that motivates them to increase awareness.

I want to focus on just one today that happens to be in the gallery. I introduced them earlier: the Seasons Centre for Grieving Children. For over 25 years, with no government funding, they have provided services for children between the ages of 5 and 24 who have experienced a death of a parent or a sibling. It's exactly those types of people and those types of organizations that deserve the victims awards they've been bestowed with.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our question period for this morning.

M^{me} France G elinas: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt has informed me she has a point of order.

M^{me} France G elinas: Point of order, Speaker. The Ontario Health Coalition brought the ballots collected by hundreds of volunteers throughout our province from their referendum on privatized health care.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Just a second. It's actually the responsibility of the Speaker to determine whether or not it's a point of order. Thank you very much for your assistance. Until I hear what she says, I can't make that determination.

Member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France G elinas: Thank you—from their referendum on privatized health care to Queen's Park. I ask for unanimous consent for our good pages to deliver the ballots to the Premier in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Nickel Belt is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow the ballots that she described to be delivered to the Premier in the House. Agreed? I heard some noes.

RECEPTION

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Dairy Farmers of Ontario are hosting their advocacy day today in Queen's Park and, on behalf of them, I would like to remind everyone to please join them after 4:30 this evening in the legislative dining room.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We now have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 15 relating to go the allocation of time on Bill 112.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Williams has moved government notice of motion number 15 relating to the allocation of time on Bill 112, An Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be acknowledged by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra
Begum, Doly	G�elinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Jama, Sarah	Stiles, Marit
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutila	Tabuns, Peter
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Vaugeois, Lise
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 72; the nays are 33.

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

Motion agreed to.

STOPPING HARASSMENT AND ABUSE
BY LOCAL LEADERS ACT, 2023
LOI DE 2023 VISANT À METTRE FIN
AU HARCÈLEMENT ET AUX ABUS
COMMIS PAR LES DIRIGEANTS LOCAUX

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

Bill 5, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to workplace violence and harassment policies in codes of conduct for councillors and members of local boards / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne les politiques en matière de violence et de harcèlement au travail prévues dans les codes de déontologie des conseillers et des membres des conseils locaux.

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

The division bells rang from 1149 to 1150.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On May 30, 2023, Mr. Blais moved second reading of Bill 5, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to workplace violence and harassment policies in codes of conduct for councillors and members of local boards.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Jama, Sarah	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutula	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	

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	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Mike	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Byers, Rick	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Stan	Kanapathi, Logan	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna
Crawford, Stephen	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David
Dixon, Jess	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon
Dowie, Andrew	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Jill	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Fedeli, Victor	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Flack, Rob	McNaughton, Monte	Thanigasalam, Vijay

Ford, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Ford, Michael D.	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 34; the nays are 72.

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

Second reading negatived.

LESS RED TAPE, STRONGER ECONOMY
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RÉDUIRE
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
POUR UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

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

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 Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is another five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1154 to 1155.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On May 29, 2023, Mr. Gill moved third reading of Bill 91, An Act to enact two Acts, amend various Acts and revoke various regulations.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Glover, Chris	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Jama, Sarah	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutla	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	Mamakwa, Sol	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Mantha, Michael	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 73; the nays are 34.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1159 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to welcome to the House Nathan Zhu, Sharon Ho, Pixie George-Benjamin and Jennifer Volk, along with a number of others here today to defend education.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I have two visitors to introduce today. I have lexicon legend Lynn Murphy, who was the first women editor hired by CBC Radio news. Woohoo! Her husband was, many of you may know, Bill Murphy. He was a reporter in the press gallery at Queen's Park in the 1960s for CBC Radio news. And then I have lovely Louise Cass; she's a globally acclaimed artist and a former archaeologist. It's their first time—well, it's Louise's first time to the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTH PROTECTION
AND PROMOTION AMENDMENT
ACT (SODIUM CONTENT), 2023

LOI DE 2023 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
ET LA PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ
(TENEUR EN SODIUM)

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 116, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act with respect to sodium content in food / Projet de loi 116, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection et la promotion de la santé en ce qui concerne la teneur en sodium des aliments.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: First, I would like to thank the OLIP intern in my office, Sophie Williams, who has done all of the hard work on this bill.

The bill is simple. It amends the Health Protection and Promotion Act to prohibit the selling or offering for sale of any food whose sodium content exceeds the maximum amount prescribed by the regulations. When prescribing the maximum amount for a food or class of food, the Lieutenant Governor in Council must not prescribe an amount that exceeds the applicable global sodium benchmark established by the World Health Organization.

SKILLED TRADES WEEK ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA SEMAINE
DES MÉTIERS SPÉCIALISÉS

Ms. Khanjin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to proclaim Skilled Trades Week / Projet de loi 117, Loi proclamant la Semaine des métiers spécialisés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: The bill proclaims the first full week in November each year as Skilled Trades Week.

I proudly co-sponsor this bill, as well, with my colleague from Scarborough.

INJURED WORKERS DAY ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DES TRAVAILLEURS BLESSÉS

MPP West moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 118, An Act to proclaim Injured Workers Day / Projet de loi 118, Loi proclamant la Journée des travailleurs blessés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

MPP Jamie West: The bill would proclaim June 1 as Injured Workers Day. Most of my colleagues, I think, are already aware that June 1 is Injured Workers Day—recognized across the province in multiple cities, and has been, and tomorrow will be the 40th anniversary. Unfortunately, we haven't officially recognized it in the Legislature, so I want to thank the members of ONIWG and injured workers groups for bringing that to my attention so we can officially recognize it and give it the credit that it's due.

PROVINCIAL DAY
AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE
IN ONTARIO ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023
SUR LA JOURNÉE PROVINCIALE
CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ARMÉE
EN ONTARIO

Mr. Glover moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to Proclaim the Provincial Day Against Gun Violence in Ontario / Projet de loi 119, Loi proclamant la Journée provinciale contre la violence armée en Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Chris Glover: From 2011 to 2021, over 31,000 Ontarians were the victims of gun-related violence. In 2021, there were 114 firearm-related homicides in Ontario, the highest of any province in Canada.

Promoting prevention, intervention and healing is necessary to reduce and ultimately eliminate gun violence. Awareness of this problem of gun violence is a first step in this process, and therefore, this bill proclaims the first Friday in June in each year as the Provincial Day Against Gun Violence in Ontario.

PETITIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good afternoon. I am very pleased today to be joined by representatives from schools in my riding, parent councils and students in the members' gallery. They're coming here from schools: Dovercourt Public School, Jean Lumb, Rawlinson Community School, Pauline, Clinton, Regal Road and other parent councils. I'm presenting this petition on their behalf. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it has been widely acknowledged that the learning, mental health, safety and well-being needs of Ontario children, including the provision of a 'normal, stable, enjoyable school year' are a priority of the Ontario government;

"Whereas we are parents, guardians, education staff and community members concerned about the learning and well-being supports children in Ontario schools are receiving;

"Whereas we continue to experience negative repercussions related to and stemming from the ongoing global pandemic;

"Whereas Toronto, along with Peel region, was most frequently the epicentre of the COVID pandemic (prevalence of the disease on a per-capita basis) in Canada from

March 2020 through the Spring of 2022 and, as a such, the TDSB worked closely with Toronto Public Health to make modifications to practice in order to keep staff and students as safe as possible;

1510

"Whereas these modifications were associated with significant financial costs to the TDSB and likely to school boards across Ontario;

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

"—that the Ontario government" is "to reimburse school boards for the COVID-related expenses they paid out of pocket; and

"—that the Ontario government continue to provide pandemic funding for the 2023-24 school year, which will prevent the elimination of hundreds of staff positions within Ontario schools."

Speaker, this has been signed by 1,211 Ontarians. I am very proud to affix my signature. I'll pass it along to page Aananya to table with the Clerks.

POLICE FUNDING

Mrs. Robin Martin: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas police provide protection to some of the most vulnerable members of our society; and

"The provincial government has launched the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy; and

"The 2023-2024 budget commits an additional \$13.4 million to this strategy;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reject the defund the police position and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy."

I fully support this petition. I'll affix my signature hereto and give it to page Pierre.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to thank Milan Slavic and a group of concerned Peel residents for the following petition:

"Petition to stop the dissolution of the Peel region.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop and abandon the Act to provide for the dissolution of The Regional Municipality of Peel, also known as the Hazel McCallion Act, and adopt a plan to realize Deloitte's findings to render the region of Peel more efficient and find cost savings for taxpayers of the region of Peel in the long run."

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: This is a petition created and signed by residents of Don Valley West, including, I am

pleased to say, our local city councillor, Jaye Robinson, concerning the lack of planning and support for infrastructure improvements in tandem with provincially imposed targets for development. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas people want to live in a community with good access to services and amenities;

“Whereas the city of Toronto adopted the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan (2018) with predominantly mid-rise density for the Bayview focus area, which was supported by the community following extensive consultation, but was overridden by the government of Ontario, permitting high-rises in 2019 without further consideration or consultation;

“Whereas the scale of the high-rise development applications proposed in the Bayview focus area creates needs for public infrastructure, such as schools, medical services, daycares and parks, which exceed those provided for in city (and provincial) planning;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately restore the Bayview focus area plan as approved by the city of Toronto in the Yonge Eglinton Secondary Plan (2018).”

I wholeheartedly endorse this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Silas to bring it to the Clerk.

POLICE FUNDING

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas police provide protection to some of the most vulnerable members of our society; and

“The provincial government has launched the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy; and

“The 2023-2024 budget commits an additional \$13.4 million to this strategy;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reject the defund the police position and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy.”

I am more than honoured to sign my name to this petition, and I’ll provide it to Cyndi.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I’m very pleased that the people who gathered these names are here with us today in the Legislature.

“Whereas it has been widely acknowledged that the learning, mental health, safety and well-being needs of Ontario children, including the provision of a ‘normal, stable, enjoyable school year’ are a priority of the Ontario government;...

“Whereas Toronto, along with Peel region, was most frequently the epicentre of the COVID pandemic ... in

Canada from March 2020 through the spring of 2022 and, as such, the TDSB worked closely with Toronto Public Health to make modifications to practice in order to keep staff and students as safe as possible;

“Whereas these modifications were associated with significant financial costs to the TDSB and likely to school boards across Ontario;

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

“—that the” government of Ontario “reimburse school boards for the COVID-related expenses they paid out of pocket;

“—that the Ontario government continue to provide pandemic funding for the 2023-24 school year, which will prevent the elimination of hundreds of staff positions within Ontario schools.”

I agree with this petition. I sign it and I give it to page Aananya for presentation.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: I have a petition.

“To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

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

I am honoured to submit this. I will sign it myself and submit it with page Milan.

POLICE FUNDING

Ms. Natalie Pierre: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas police provide protection to some of the most vulnerable members of our society; and

“The provincial government has launched the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy; and

“The 2023-2024 budget commits an additional \$13.4 million to this strategy;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario reject the defund the police position and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy.”

Speaker, I support this petition. I will sign my name to it and ask page Sally to take it to the Clerks.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a petition that reads, “Fund Ontario’s Public Schools.”

“Whereas the TDSB has a deficit of \$63.2 million for the 2023-24 school year due to continuous underfunding by the Ministry of Education;

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has not reimbursed the \$70.1-million TDSB reserve used to cover pandemic expenditures;

“Whereas the deficit and pandemic costs combined result in forcing schools to reduce special-needs assistants, educational assistants, clerical staff, teachers and vice-principal positions at TDSB schools;...

1520

“Whereas continued underfunding means that students receive less one-on-one time with educators;

“We, the undersigned parents, guardians, caregivers, students, staff and community members, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) To adequately fund and strengthen public education in Ontario so students and education workers get the support they need;

“(2) To reimburse schools and the TDSB for the costs of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Many students and parents in my local school of Clinton have signed this petition. We did lose a vice-principal last year. It’s common, and it’s concerning. I fully support this petition and will be assigning my signature to it and giving it to the page.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I think it is perhaps necessary to remind members that we would encourage them to just read the petition. Thank you.

Petitions?

POLICE SERVICES

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: “Petition in Support of Ontario Getting More Boots on the Ground by Making It Easier to Recruit and Train Police Officers.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 of Ontario as follows:

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

“(1) To 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, otherwise known as OPC, and immediately expand the number of recruits that can 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, otherwise known as CSPA; if passed, the act would amend the Community Safety and Policing Act, otherwise known as 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 proudly affix my signature and give it to page Dina.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HELPING HOMEBUYERS,
PROTECTING TENANTS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023
VISANT À AIDER LES ACHETEURS
ET À PROTÉGER LES LOCATAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to housing and development / Projet de loi 97, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne le logement et l’aménagement.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Member for University–Rosedale.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues. Today, I’m going to be getting up to speak on Bill 97. It is the bill that is now at third reading, which means my primary job is to talk about what I heard in committee as well as what I heard and what I read—speaking to stakeholders and listening to and reading the comments that people and organizations submitted through the committee process.

Overall, in terms of the structure of this one-hour chat today, I will be giving a little bit of a response to what I

heard the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the associate minister say in their lead. Then, I'm going to provide an overview of the bill. And then, I'm going to go through the amendments and then conclude.

Overall, there are a few comments that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing said in his opening remarks that I think are worth drawing attention to. One is that the minister congratulated the Attorney General's work to improve the Landlord and Tenant Board. Let's be very clear: The Ombudsman has done a deep dive into the Landlord and Tenant Board and has concluded, after a very lengthy investigation, that the Landlord and Tenant Board is "moribund." It is broken. It is not fulfilling its basic duty of providing fast and fair access to tenants and landlords in order for them to get their day in court and their issue resolved—maybe it's a tenant who is not paying their rent; maybe it's because a landlord is trying to illegally evict them. It is a tribunal that is not working. It is also Ontario's busiest tribunal. Over the five years that this government has been in power, the wait-list has not decreased; it has increased. And the wait-list after the worst of the pandemic has subsided has also increased, so that excuse can't be used anymore.

What is also very interesting is that the Ombudsman pointed out that the number of adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board is actually higher than it used to be. So I don't know what is happening with that at LTB right now, but it is not working. I am calling on the Attorney General to get control of the LTB again and fix it, because it's important for many people.

The second thing I wanted to just briefly respond to was the minister and the associate minister's insistence that they're very concerned about first-time homebuyers. I'm concerned about first-time homebuyers too. But the challenge I have with what this government is doing, when they focus on supply and nothing else, is that they're ignoring the reality that it's less and less first-time homebuyers who are buying these homes. It's less and less that the type of homes that are being built are being built for first-time homebuyers. Increasingly, they're being built for investors to make maximum profit, and they're being bought by investors to then rent out to an individual who would prefer to be paying off their own mortgage instead of someone else's third mortgage. I don't hear this government talk about the need to make it easier for first-time homebuyers to get that home. That's what we really need in Ontario today.

So there are the two comments I had from the presentations that I heard.

Now I want to give an overview of Bill 97. We've been debating Bill 97 for a little while. In short, it's a bill that has some modest improvements to renter protections. It makes it easier for developers to pave over farmland with expensive sprawl. That's the essence of Bill 97. The reality, also, is that this bill is not going to solve our housing affordability crisis or our housing supply crisis. They're two issues we have right now—and this bill doesn't effectively do either.

When I think about the Conservatives' track record with solving our housing affordability crisis, the thing that

constantly comes to mind for me is, I look at how expensive it is to rent a home in Ontario—and it has never been more expensive. And I look at how expensive it is to buy a home in Ontario—and it has never been more expensive. That's the Conservatives' legacy. Until housing gets more affordable, the housing affordability crisis has not been fixed.

In committee, we introduced many amendments in order to improve the bill. Our focus was multi-pronged. We wanted to bring in amendments to really clamp down on the big increase in illegal evictions that we're seeing. Because as housing prices go up, as mortgages go up, as interest rates go up and as rent prices go up, the incentive for a landlord to illegally evict and move in a tenant who can pay more than what a long-term rent-controlled tenant can pay—that incentive goes up too.

1530

There's a reason why the number of evictions that are taking place in Ontario today is on the rise. Some of them are bad-faith evictions. Some of them are genuine—a landlord wants to move in because they just bought a home; they are a new, first-time homebuyer—but some of them aren't. Unfortunately, the laws in Ontario today don't protect tenants who are facing an illegal eviction.

We also are looking at bringing in better measures to build more affordable housing, to end exclusionary zoning, to protect our farmland, and to increase density and intensification so that we build homes in areas already zoned for development. We increase density in these areas in municipalities in order to build right, in order to build in a sustainable way, and also to build in a more efficient way, because it is far more cost-effective for a municipality to service a new home if it's in an area already zoned for development than it is to pave over farmland and service a whole new area; it's far more efficient.

I'm going to be going through these amendments in turn. What we found, overall, is that the Conservatives are not very interested at this point to really tackle the issues that we're seeing in the housing sector. Unfortunately, the amendments that we introduced were turned down. That is unfortunate, because we're not going to give up and we're going to keep organizing on these issues.

That's the overview of the bill.

Now I'm going to turn to what actually happened in committee itself.

I want to thank the many individuals and organizations who came to committee to share their expertise and discuss how this bill would affect them. Those people include the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario; Megan Kee, who works at the Niagara Community Legal Clinic; Rebecca Murray, who also works at the Niagara Community Legal Clinic; Dania Majid from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. They also gave an excellent submission, which I'm going to dive into a little bit during my presentation.

We also had the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Peggy Brekveld. I do hear in the letter that Minister Clark just sent to the OFA that it does seem that there has been some movement. This government has recognized that

protecting farmland is important and that it is time to slow down and pause and make sure they get things right.

The Building Industry and Land Development Association, BILD—thank you. Kevin Love; AMO—the president, Colin Best, and Lindsay Jones came in. Rescon, the Residential Construction Council of Ontario—thank you for attending. The Toronto Region Board of Trade came and they had some very interesting remarks about Bill 97's move to change how employment lands are protected. Don Valley Community Legal Services, Mortgage Professionals Canada, and the Ontario Home Builders' Association came in and spoke. We also had many submissions.

Thank you for taking the time to make these bills as good as they can be.

Now I want to talk a little bit about the amendments that we introduced—and we did introduce a few. The first one that we introduced was around the rental replacement bylaws. This is an issue that came up in Bill 23. The government made a decision to bring in some laws that would allow them to weaken or eliminate municipal rental replacement bylaws. It was very concerning for many residents in Toronto, because we have a fairly strong residential replacement bylaw. It made a lot of people very scared.

Essentially, what the municipal residential replacement bylaw means is, if you are a tenant and you live in purpose-built rental and a developer comes forward and says they want to turn your purpose-built rental into a condo, you have some protections in that scenario where your building is going to be demolished. Municipalities monitor that process. They ensure a renter gets compensation as they're waiting for that building to be built. Sometimes it takes a few years for these buildings to be built. They also ensure that the renter can return to the building and return to their home at about the same rent once the construction of that new, bigger building is complete.

In most cases, these purpose-built rentals are turned into condos. Usually, the final building consists of a percentage of rental units that are managed by the property manager; then there's a percentage of units that are sold off as a condo—so it's a mix of a building. It's fairly common in Toronto.

The challenge with Bill 97 is that you've reintroduced this power to gut municipal rental replacement bylaws. You've put in a little hopeful spark because you're also giving yourselves the power to strengthen them, which is good. I hope you expand on that. But it has made a lot of tenants very, very worried.

We introduced an amendment—we introduced a few. The first one was to create a strong provincial standard for all tenants who are facing a demolition of their building. It doesn't matter where they live—Hamilton, Ajax, Sudbury, Peterborough, Ottawa, Toronto—this strong provincial standard would guarantee the right of return to that tenant into the new building and also ensure that there's compensation for the tenant so that they can still afford to live in the neighbourhood that they call home while the construction of that building is complete. I think that makes a lot of sense because it's a compromise; it's a balance. It allows new supply to be built, especially if it's

near transit stations. But it ensures that we preserve our affordable private-market rental stock. It doesn't hold up renters as being victims and sacrificial lambs—we just toss them out in order to meet the demand for new housing. I don't believe renters should be sacrificed in order to meet the demand for new housing. We can do both, and we should do both. Our proposal to create a provincial standard would allow us to do both. The government chose to reject that amendment. My hope is that when I see the final regulations that come out, they are strong, because there are a lot of people who really care about this issue.

I think about an individual I work with right now called Pat. She's in her early eighties. She lives in the Annex, a very expensive area. She wouldn't be able to afford to live in that area if she had to move. When she found out her building was being demolished, her instant response was, "I have no idea where I'm going to go. There's nowhere for me to go. I'm a senior. I'm on a fixed income. I have some pension. I can afford the rent. But if I have to move, my rent is going to go up from about \$1,500 a month to \$2,500 or more a month, and I can't afford that." So she's terrified. I think Ontario has a place for Pat. Bill 97 and the regulations you introduce can either help Pat or they could evict Pat. My hope is that you help Pat. We introduced those amendments; they got rejected. Let's see what the government does with the regulations.

The second move we did was around removing the provision requiring the city to provide a refund for a non-decision of a site-controlled application. Let me explain. With Bill 23, the Conservatives decided it would be a really good idea to continue to not look within themselves but to blame municipalities for the housing crisis. They said, "We're going to make it so that if you don't approve a building permit or a site plan application or a zoning application within a set period of time"—very truncated periods of time, especially for big buildings that require provincial and municipal approval, multiple-department approval, public consultation, stakeholder input, traffic studies—these are valid. If they don't meet these very short time frames for approval, then the city has to give the development fee application funding back. The challenge with that is that sometimes, it's not the municipality's fault if the application is delayed. Sometimes a developer hands in an application that's half done, so the city has to turn around and say, "In order for the clock to start ticking, we actually want a completed application, because the reason there's a delay is because of you, not us."

The other thing we heard in committee is that sometimes it's the provincial government or another department or another issue that's outside the municipality's control that's holding up this application for a zoning change or for a site plan application change. So we said, "Okay, there shouldn't be any refunds at all. Let's treat the municipalities like the partners that they are. Let's do something like what the federal government is doing to provide additional funding to municipalities to hire the staff they need to speed up application processes. But let's not punish municipalities; let's help them." The government didn't like that.

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I do want to acknowledge that in Bill 97, you've chosen to delay when the refunds come in, because you heard from municipalities across Ontario that the draconian and drastic measures you're taking to change how planning works and how buildings are approved are putting municipalities into chaos; they're having difficulty keeping up. We actually heard from municipalities that said, "All these changes that you're doing, especially around the refund piece and the reduction in development fee charges, are slowing down our ability to approve applications, and slowing down our ability to provide the necessary infrastructure to get new homes online," so that they've got the sewage, they've got the electricity, they've got the roads, they've got the daycares—all the services they need for the new residents who are moving in. They can't keep up, and some applications to build, like in Waterloo region, are being delayed. It's having unintended consequences. So we brought in amendments around that; the government rejected them. It's a pity. But let's see—maybe in a future bill. Sometimes I'm pleasantly surprised by some of the amendments we see in future bills.

I'm going to move on with that one.

Ms. Catherine Fife: So many amendments.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So many. If you open up an act, I'm going to try to introduce an amendment to change it. That's how it works. That's my job. There are a lot of things I would like to change with how this government approaches housing and the real estate sector to ensure that our housing sector provides homes to people first. That's the goal. And they should be affordable homes that meet their needs.

Another measure we introduced was around "use it or lose it."

Ms. Catherine Fife: Use it or lose it.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, use it or lose it. I like "use it or lose it" policies. It is something that was introduced and proposed by municipalities, who wisely said, "We're actually approving a whole lot of zoning changes and building permits." In the city of Toronto, it's about double what is built, and we're concerned that there are some developers and investors who are doing what's called land banking. They get all the approvals lined up, and then they sit on it and wait for a good time to build—maybe when it's cheaper to build a home. Or maybe they sit on it so they can find a good time to sell, because they want to make a lot of profit. The challenge is that we have a housing affordability crisis and a housing supply crisis. So when we're looking at encouraging the supply that we need, municipalities recommended that we bring in "use it or lose it" policies.

This is how it works: If a developer gets all the approvals that they need to build and they don't build within a fair and reasonable period of time, and they don't have a good reason for not building, then there should be penalties imposed, because that will stimulate the construction of homes so we have enough homes for current residents to move out of their parents' basements and for newcomers who are moving in who want to call Ontario

home. Maybe they're studying at the University of Toronto or the University of Waterloo and they need a home. It makes a lot of sense to me, and it's something that municipalities are recommending. Unfortunately, the government chose to reject that amendment, which is interesting, because you're A-okay with targeting municipalities, fining them, but you're not okay with looking at developers who are choosing to sit on properties and sit on building permits for no good reason. I can imagine that if a municipality was going to move forward with this kind of amendment, there would be some reasonable conditions that we'd set up. Maybe it's an affordable housing project; maybe it's a project that's in the public interest; maybe the developer had a really good reason and they've come into financial difficulty and they can't get the financing that they originally thought they could. That's a reason not to impose a penalty. But then there are some who sit on permits and they don't build. This could be a very effective way, and a very cheap way, to increase supply. That was rejected.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Sometimes for years.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Sometimes for years, yes.

This was an interesting amendment—I would say of all the schedules in Bill 97, schedule 4 is a complete and total mystery to me. It seems to be a mystery for the Conservative members, as well, because I've asked numerous questions in committee to the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Housing, to the committee members present, even to people who came in and spoke. I asked, "What does this actually mean?" People couldn't really give a straight answer. I'll explain it for the people listening. Essentially, schedule 4 of Bill 97 allows the minister to appoint a facilitator to give advice and recommendations "to the minister in respect of growth, land use and other matters," and to "perform ... other functions"—not specified—"as the minister may specify." So we don't even know what they are. They can sign agreements with landowners. We don't know what they are. Are they transparent? There's no requirement here. Where's the accountability? I have no idea. Could a facilitator, through the ministry, sign an agreement and bypass elected officials? Maybe. I don't know. Does this apply to the divorce that's happening between Brampton and Caledon and Mississauga? I don't know. No one knows. So we thought, "Let's introduce an amendment. Let's keep it real simple. We'll say that if the facilitator is making an agreement with a landowner or giving advice to the minister about growth and planning, then that needs to be transparent. Put it on a website, all the decisions and recommendations, so we all know what's going on." That makes a lot of sense, but you rejected that. I thought Conservatives were for transparency and accountability, but I guess not.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Only when they're in opposition.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Right. Only when they're in opposition. Yes.

So that was a pity. The thing that disappointed me most about that is that no one really could answer questions about what that actually means. That's really what surprises me about that one.

These are amendments all about helping renters who are in buildings that are facing demolition. We introduced a bunch of amendments—because we had the City of Toronto Act we needed to introduce amendments to, and then also the Municipal Act. So we got busy there.

Then, we introduced an amendment that really looks at the issue of renovictions. This amendment is focused on making sure that if a landlord is going to evict, they have a good reason to evict; that the renovation that is needed actually requires a tenant to leave. Right now, with Bill 97, you can get any kind of report, and you can say, “Oh, the tenant needs to leave. These renovations are significant.” And that’s it.

I looked at what other municipalities have done that have really effectively clamped down on illegal evictions. The example I’d like to use is New Westminster, BC. They brought in this interesting new law that says that if a landlord is going to renovict a tenant, they need to show that they have got the building permits necessary to prove that they’re actually going to do the renovation. It makes a lot of sense, because if a landlord is going to do the renovation, they have to get the building permits anyway. So why not make sure they do their due diligence so that we stop illegal renovictions, where some landlords say they’re going to renovate, but really, they have no intention of doing so; they just want to move in another tenant who’s going to pay the higher rent. This is simple. Landlords are doing it already. Get a permit, show us that you got a permit, put it in your application to the Landlord and Tenant Board in your application to evict. Conservatives didn’t like that, so that was a no, which is a real pity. But hopefully we’ll see that in future bills.

Then we had 4.2—we’re in schedule 6 now; this is the Planning Act. With the Planning Act, with Bill 23 and also with Bill 97, the Conservatives have brought in a whole lot of measures to really transform how we plan and build. One issue that’s particularly concerning to me is that Bill 23 changed the definition of what affordable housing is, which is really concerning. Bill 23 changed the definition of affordable housing so that it’s based on the market: A house is affordable if you can rent it for about 80% of average market rent, and a home is considered affordable if it sells for 80% of the sale price. That’s the new definition of affordable housing for the Ontario government. It’s different than what it used to be. It’s different than what the federal government has. It’s different from what the city of Toronto is looking at doing. The Conservatives decided to create their own. And why that’s so messed up is because they’re looking at giving upwards of \$100,000 in development fee discounts to any developer that meets this new, completely unaffordable definition of affordable housing. So you could build a home in Brampton, sell it for \$800,000, and you still get that affordable housing development fee exemption, and it’s taxpayers who are going to have to make up the difference. I don’t know how on earth that is fair for anyone, because \$800,000 for a home in Brampton is not affordable for a middle-income person, for a moderate-income person, for a low-income person.

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As a result of those development fee discounts, municipalities all across the GTHA have imposed a Ford tax, a property tax increase, to pay for the infrastructure that we need to build—because if we’re going to give developers a discount, someone else has to pay for it, and it’s Ontarians. I’m just going to review this again: Durham region, 5% tax hike; Pickering, 6% to 8%; Clarington, 4%; Waterloo region, 8.55%; Burlington, 7.5%; Niagara region, 7.58%—I had a wonderful co-op student help me gather this information, and I’m very grateful for them—York region, 3.9%; Newmarket, 7.67%. It goes on and on and on. And what’s hard to stomach with these property tax increases is that residents are not going to see improvements in their services. Most regions are going to see cuts in their services, and they’re going to see a delay in the rollout of infrastructure and the improvement of infrastructure because of these tax hikes. It’s a shame.

So we proposed to bring in an affordable housing amendment that goes back to the original definition that Ontario has for affordable housing. And the definition of affordable housing that we are proposing is that it’s based on what the resident can pay—not what the ever-increasing market is, but what the resident can pay, and that is 30% of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households; they shouldn’t pay any more than that on rent or the carrying costs of a mortgage for it to be affordable. And for a home to be bought, it’s essentially the same thing: They shouldn’t be spending more than 30% of their income. It’s standard. It’s what all levels of government are aiming towards. It’s what we had, and the government rejected it. I think that’s a shame.

I am waiting for this government to release what the actual affordable housing definitions are going to be—I know you’ve put 80%, but we’re actually waiting for the release of how much the rent will be and how much the home prices will be in each region, because the Conservatives said they’d release that every year. I am eagerly waiting for that to come out, because that’s really going to show how unaffordable this government’s definition is. I can’t wait for that template to come out.

So then we move to 5.1; this was a government amendment. There’s nothing I look forward to like seeing the amendments that the government makes to bills, because that’s when we realize what you’re going to change and what you’re not. I found this really interesting.

With Bill 97, the government is moving forward with making changes to converting lands that are zoned for employment into housing, and it’s being done very quickly. We had some stakeholders come in to express their enthusiasm and their concern for opening up employment lands to housing—their enthusiasm and some concern. I want to read out a few, because this is a big deal.

We had the Toronto Board of Trade express some concern. They asked the Conservatives to press “pause.” They liked the idea in principle, as do I, but they asked the government to press “pause” and think carefully before proceeding, because right now we have a housing supply crisis, but in 10 years’ time we could have an employment lands crisis.

How we've designed all our employment lands is that that's where all the transit nodes are. If we're going to turn downtown Toronto and much of that area into housing instead of commercial, then how is that going to affect employment trends and commuting patterns? Does that mean we're going to have to change our transit systems? What's it going to look like, exactly? People have some genuine concerns.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture also had some concerns. They said to reconsider this amendment: "The resulting impacts of reduced protections for employment lands could result in increased pressure to utilize ... prime agricultural lands and specialty crop areas for employment uses in the future."

You've introduced some amendments—I'm interested to see what this is going to look like. My request to you, and what I heard from stakeholders, is to just tread carefully. If we're going to convert employment lands, do it carefully.

That was a government amendment, so you passed that one.

Oh, this is one of my favourites—we're also in the Planning Act now, and we introduced an amendment to really improve the Conservatives' position on allowing missing-middle housing. We introduced an amendment that would allow townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes in areas zoned for development, in neighbourhoods people want to live in, in order to increase housing supply and also to increase a more affordable housing supply.

When you look at how much homes cost, a semi-detached home is usually half a million dollars cheaper than a single detached home, and a townhome is cheaper than a semi-detached home. If you've got a duplex and you sever it, those two homes are cheaper. So when you're a family who wants to start out or you're a couple who wants to start out—and you want to increase the supply of more affordable homes, there's a real benefit in gently increasing density in municipal areas. It makes a lot of sense to me. It's about the missing middle.

So we introduced this motion and, surprisingly, the government chose to vote that down, which is a pity. It's a pity, because Bill 23 makes some modest improvements to missing-middle housing but not enough. We gave the Conservatives the opportunity to do the right thing, to walk and talk, and instead the Conservatives just chose to focus on talking. That's a pity. You voted it down.

The next amendment we introduced was really about moving forward with density and intensification, and the reason we introduced this amendment is because in the new provincial planning statement, the Conservatives are looking at getting rid of all mandatory density requirements for municipalities, and the Conservatives are looking at getting rid of all mandatory density requirements for new subdivisions. What that means is that if a developer wants to come along—maybe they bought some greenbelt land or some farm-belt land—they're not required to build for density so that we can efficiently provide services, provide transit and schools and daycares and roads in an

efficient way. They can build single-family homes on quarter-acre lots and then have the municipality pay for that servicing. It is incredibly unsustainable, it is incredibly expensive, and it really jeopardizes our precious farmland.

You heard from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture that we only have so much farmland in Canada, and Ontario is so unique. We have some of the most productive and precious farmland in the world. We should be doing everything we can to protect it, but we're not. Once it's paved, it is gone. Eliminating density requirements and intensification requirements makes it even easier for land to be paved over, and it will make it harder for us to meet our housing supply targets, because we're building less homes per acre than we could and we should.

We called for an amendment to go back to the 2018 density targets and intensification targets—pretty standard, part of the growth plan. The government chose to vote that down, which says a lot about this government's interest in building expensive sprawl and this government's disinterest in protecting farmland and building homes for Ontarians to meet supply. It's a real concern.

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We introduced an amendment that would allow inclusionary zoning in municipalities that want it. This is a really important amendment. The reason why this is important is because other cities have brought in inclusionary zoning. In the case of Montreal, for example, they have built thousands of affordable housing units at minimal cost to government since 2005. Municipalities in Ontario also want that right to move forward on inclusionary zoning. Inclusionary zoning is this: If there's a new development that's going to be built, then there's a requirement that a percentage of those homes are affordable.

The city of Toronto spent years and years studying, listening to people, developing bylaws. They came up with a compromise: a fair inclusionary zoning law. The inclusionary zoning law said we're going to exempt purpose-built rentals for a while. We're going to focus on condos. For any new condo that is 100 homes or more—so these are the big buildings—we are going to require developers to have a percentage of them be affordable. It would be phased in over time. They looked at how much profit developers make. They looked at it very closely. They concluded that developers could continue to make the profit that they need to make it viable and build these affordable housing units. The law is on the books. It's ready to go. However, the Ontario government, the Conservative government, is refusing to allow the city of Toronto to move forward with this new law. You're refusing to allow them—they've made dozens and dozens and dozens of requests to the government, and you refuse to allow them—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Why?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Great question: Why?

I recently read an article on this—it was a representative of BILD from the development industry. They actually said that developers are sneaking in applications as quickly as they can now because they want to be exempt

from the inclusionary zoning law. There's this big rush for development to sneak in so they don't have to pay their fair share. I think that's a real concern. I think it should be stopped.

Developers need to pay their fair share and help contribute to solving our housing affordability crisis. Inclusionary zoning is a tried and tested way to do it. It has worked in other municipalities. The city of Toronto wants it. The Conservatives should get out of the way and allow it to happen. We introduced an amendment to allow that to move forward, and the Conservatives rejected it. Honestly, that's a real shame.

Then, we introduced measures to ensure—this is all about protecting farmland. We introduced some motions that were developed by the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane to put in an additional layer of protection when a piece of farmland was being proposed to be taken off and developed. The motion is this: It would require an agricultural impact assessment which calls for—the council of a local municipality should not pass a zoning bylaw under this section that proposes to change the uses on land that was zoned for agriculture unless they do an agricultural impact assessment, which essentially means that before you convert agricultural land into another purpose, you need to do an assessment to ensure our overall farming sector is not negatively impacted. We know that our farming sector, our agricultural sector, is one of our biggest economic drivers for the province. It's one of our biggest job creators for the province. It feeds us. So we should be doing everything we can to protect it. The government voted that down, which is a real pity.

Just moving through here, we introduced another “use it or lose it” permit process so that municipalities—not just the city of Toronto, but Ontario-wide—would have the option to bring in “use it or lose it” policies to incentivize developers to use the building permits that they have already secured in order to increase supply, unless they had a really good reason not to. That amendment got rejected.

We also introduced an amendment in order to protect some of our precious areas within the greenbelt plan, the Oak Ridges moraine plan, the Niagara Escarpment plan and the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan—areas that are protected by these plans. We introduced an amendment giving municipalities the right to do site plan control—to manage the exterior of the building—with projects of 10 or fewer residential units. The reason this is important is because allowing municipalities to manage site plan control really helps in protecting our precious green spaces, including the greenbelt. It was a request that was made, and we thought we would introduce it because our greenbelt is unique and special; so is our Niagara Escarpment; so is Lake Simcoe. However, the government chose to reject that amendment too, which is a real pity.

This was an amendment brought forward by the MPP for Beaches–East York—I really like this one. This was an amendment that looked at the Conservatives' move, in Bill 97, to give the ministerial zoning order process some extra oomph by allowing MZOs to be exempt from provincial

laws as well, including official plans and policy statements, which essentially means that—I'm just imagining—a developer could call up the minister and say, “I have this factory I want to build, or this warehouse on some farmland I want to build, or this subdivision I want to build, and there are these pesky provincial and city laws that I really don't like. I don't want to wait in the long queue like everyone else. I really want to be fast-tracked, so can you just write that MZO for me so I can get going?” A two-tier planning system process—one for your friends, one for everyone else. The MPP for Beaches–East York said, “Hold on. We should introduce an amendment that would ensure you can't introduce an MZO that would jeopardize life or safety or accessibility, that would increase the likelihood of flood hazards”—because you don't want to build on wetlands unnecessarily. It's just putting some checks and balances on this MZO process. I thought it was pretty reasonable. I voted for it. The Conservatives voted it down, which is a real shame.

Now we get to my favourite, which is the Residential Tenancies Act. I like the Planning Act too, but I really like the Residential Tenancies Act. Bill 97 proposes a bunch of changes to the Residential Tenancies Act; some of them I like. There were some modest improvements there. But I thought we could do better. We introduced some amendments in order to improve and strengthen the Residential Tenancies Act so that the 1.7 million households in Ontario who rent can live in safe, affordable and well-maintained homes. That's the goal. They deserve to live in Ontario too. Renters are not second-class citizens. It's the Residential Tenancies Act which is really that law that should be providing good protections for renters. So we introduced some amendments on this. The first one we introduced was an amendment to ensure that there was rent control on all units, including units that were first occupied after 2018.

When I think about the laws that we can introduce in Ontario that would really directly make Ontario more affordable and address the housing crisis, I cannot think of any two stronger or better pieces of legislation than ensuring that there is rent control on all new homes and that we bring in vacancy control so there is a cap on how much the rent can be raised if a tenant leaves and a new tenant comes in. There's no more effective way to solve a housing affordability crisis than that.

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When I think about the value of those laws, I think about the latest reports that came out by rentals.ca and Urbanation. These are big macro studies that look at how expensive rent is, and every month they come out with a report showing that rent for available apartments is going up and up and up and up. The numbers are scary: It now costs more than \$3,000 to rent an average rental home in Toronto today for available units—\$3,000. You need to earn well over \$100,000 a year to afford that, and there are people who can't afford it. They're living two people to a bedroom; they're spending \$1,500 just to rent one room in a shared house—or two families in a unit. They're maxing out their credit cards. It's not working for a lot of people,

and we're starting to see that with a rise in delinquencies; we're starting to see that with an increase in the number of small businesses that are going under. People are struggling. We're seeing that in the increase in the lines at the food banks. People are struggling, and it's really rent that's people's biggest expense.

I think about Nikki. She came and spoke at a press conference that we did recently. She pays \$600 for a 600-square-foot basement apartment. She earns six figures. She works in the finance sector. But that's all she can afford, as a single person. Because her basement is new, she just got a \$250 rent increase, and she's like, "I live in a basement." And that's typical.

I think about Kara. We raised Kara's story in question period. She moved into a townhome in St. Catharines, paying about \$2,000 a month. She didn't realize that her unit wasn't protected by rent control, because even the government's own pamphlets don't talk about how new units are exempt. She was slapped with a 17% rent hike. How on earth can you afford a 17% rent hike just like that? People can't.

That's why we introduced amendments to bring in strong rent control, in order to clamp down on the escalating rent hikes we're seeing in Ontario—and the government voted that down. That is very concerning.

It's not just about supply; it's about affordability too, and there's no one who's hurting more in Ontario than renters when we're talking about the housing affordability crisis—no one. Renters are not rich.

Then we really addressed the issue; we brought in a bunch of amendments to provide some clarity around the government's decision to listen to the Human Rights Tribunal and make it a right that tenants can have an air conditioning window unit in their home, provided they meet certain conditions. We see this as a good move. We've been advocating for tenants to have the right to have an air conditioning window unit for some time. We've been working with tenants who have received an eviction notice from their landlord saying, "Either take out your AC unit or we're going to try to evict you." Can you imagine the fear of that? Just because you want to stay safe in summer—we don't want to be miserable in summer—and you put an air conditioning unit in. So we've been advocating for that. The Human Rights Tribunal ruled and they said that access to an air conditioning unit is a right. And the government has done the right thing with Bill 97 and has introduced that right into the Residential Tenancies Act.

But there's something that the government didn't do, and that is, the government chose not to set a maximum temperature. Just like we have a minimum temperature in winter for units, the Human Rights Tribunal and we, also, have been calling for a maximum temperature to be set in summer as well. It's something that many municipalities already have on their books. Ajax, Mississauga, Toronto—it's 26 degrees. It was established in consultation with public health. Many states and cities in the US have this too—especially in the southern states and the southwestern states, because it gets so hot. So we called for that too. The Conservatives have not introduced that into Bill 97.

But one thing they did introduce into Bill 97 which I have a lot of concerns about is that they're allowing a landlord to bill a tenant for the increase in electricity. I think this opens up a slippery slope—that the Residential Tenancies Act already bans. The Residential Tenancies Act says that seasonal fees are not allowed. This opens up this door which allows seasonal fees. It's very concerning.

Rent has gone up over 30% over the last 10 years. It is more than enough to cover electricity costs and maintenance costs already. And it's concerning when a choice was made to bill tenants when there are two choices that could have been made there. There are some tenants who will pay it, and then there are some tenants who won't. These are the tenants on a fixed income who can't afford an air conditioning unit and can't afford an increase in their electricity. My guess is, they're the ones who are most vulnerable to suffering from heatstroke, or even death, if we face a heat wave, which we inevitably will.

I was on the phone to some people that reported on the heat waves in BC last year, when over 600 people died. The vast majority of them lived alone; they were old. Some of them had mental health conditions. Almost all of them lived in apartments that didn't have an air conditioning unit or any air conditioning at all. They're going to be hit first and worst by the climate crisis.

This is about keeping people safe. I fear that these changes in this bill are not going to be able to help those people.

So we introduced some amendments to bring in a maximum temperature bylaw, to provide some clarity around ensuring that tenants don't have to pay extra in order to install an air conditioning unit, and the government chose to vote them down. That's very concerning.

It's already hot. It's May—it's 30 degrees this weekend. We're already starting to get calls from homeowners who live in condos, because their property manager hasn't turned on the cooling yet, and from tenants who are worried, because they know it's going to get hotter and they don't know what they're going to do. Unfortunately, Bill 97 doesn't help them.

We introduced an amendment requiring a landlord to get a building permit into the Residential Tenancies Act, to see if we could get it in that way. You rejected it, which is a pity.

We also introduced some amendments around the issue of illegal eviction. I want to spend a bit of time talking about this as I near the end of my presentation.

The government—this is twice now, with Bill 184 and now with Bill 97—has said, "Illegal evictions are a problem, and we're going to fix it by massively increasing the fine that an individual or corporation would pay if they illegally evicted a tenant or break any section of the Residential Tenancies Act." No question, these are big fines—it's going up over \$100,000 for a fine. The challenge, however, is that the Landlord and Tenant Board doesn't fine bad-actor landlords who illegally evict a tenant the maximum amount of money. What we've also found is that a tenant, if they're illegally evicted, never gets the right to return to their apartment; it's unheard of. We've talked to legal clinics. Legal clinics came in—ACTO; Don

Valley; FMTA, the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations; ACORN. None of us could think of an example where a tenant actually gets into their home if they've been illegally evicted. It doesn't happen. What's also concerning is that landlords really don't get fined very much and very few of them get fined.

I asked the Attorney General to share some statistics. Because you're doubling the fines, you might want to provide some evidence into whether they work or not. The Attorney General refused to do it.

So ACTO did a bit of a deep dive, and they looked at Landlord and Tenant Board decisions to see how much fine landlords are getting if they illegally evict a tenant and how many are getting fined—and it's pretty low. I'm going to read this out so we are all aware of how the Residential Tenancies Act is not protecting tenants. They did a deep dive and they found that there were just 74 applications that tenants made for illegal eviction, and the reason why is because most tenants know the Landlord and Tenant Board is not a place for them. It takes more than two years just to get a hearing; they don't get their unit back, so why bother? So many of them don't, but 74 of them did. And what they found is that of the times when the board issued a fine, the average fine was between \$500 to \$3,000—that's it. Even though back then they could issue a fine of up to \$100,000, they don't. So a landlord knows that if they want to illegally evict, the odds are a tenant is not going to take them to the Landlord and Tenant Board; the odds are a tenant is never going to get back in; and the odds are they're just going to get a small fine, if any at all, so they may as well illegally evict, because there's every reason to do so—they're going to make a whole lot of profit—and there's very little reason not to. That's what is happening in Ontario today.

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So we introduced some amendments to strengthen the eviction protection process. We introduced some amendments allowing the Landlord and Tenant Board to ask a landlord, "Do you have another vacant unit in your building? If so, the tenant should be able to go there." It's pretty simple; there are lots of big buildings where there are multiple vacant units, so there's one available fairly quickly. No, you rejected that.

We also introduced an amendment to increase the amount of money that a tenant actually gets. If a bad-actor landlord is fined—let's say they're fined \$100,000 in this imaginary world—it's the government that gets the money; it's not the tenant, so the tenant has no incentive to spend up to two years volunteering their time. They're never going to get their home back, and they get barely any compensation. So we introduced some amendments to say that if a tenant is going to do all that work, they should get some of that compensation; we are proposing \$35,000. The government rejected that too, and that's a shame.

We are also calling for the government to get serious about illegal eviction activity by strengthening the Rental Housing Enforcement Unit. It's a department that already exists. A tenant should be able to call them up and say, "I fear I have been illegally evicted. Can you help me?" and

there should be a bylaw officer available to help them to ensure they get back into their unit or the landlord, if they are breaking the law, is properly fined. If we started enforcing the laws we have, the number of illegal evictions would decrease. We introduced these amendments, and the government voted them down. It's very concerning.

We introduced a lot of amendments to improve Bill 97. We heard from a lot of stakeholders who had a lot of very good and useful feedback to the government on how to address some of the issues that we face in the housing sector. By and large, the Conservatives think they know best.

What is very clear, though, and I urge you to consider this, is that this government—you've had five years to fix our housing crisis. You can't blame the Liberals anymore. While housing supply starts have gone up, the cost of buying a home has gone up too, and the cost of renting a home has reached levels that we have never seen before. It's at record highs. So it can't just be about supply—it's got to be about supply, but it also has to be about bringing in strong protections for renters so that they can live in this province, but based on evidence.

This government also needs to get serious about clamping down on investor-led speculation—because investors are the number one purchasers of homes right now—so that first-time homebuyers can get that home, so they can have the home that they love, that they can raise pets and kids in, and garden in, and send their kids to the local school in, and retire in. That's what people want. And this government knows—you know what you can do, provincially, to clamp down on speculation, and you should be doing that. I don't see that in this bill.

Finally, this government needs to get serious about building and buying affordable housing because the private market is not equipped, is not able, to build homes that are affordable for people on low income, on fixed income; for seniors who are on fixed income. They're not going to do it. It doesn't pencil; it doesn't work. It's going to require government investment, and we've presented many ideas to this government on how to move forward on that: build homes on public land at cost, invest in co-ops, invest in affordable housing, build affordable private-market rental and buy it. There's a lot you can do, and my hope is that in future bills you do it, because Ontario should be affordable for everyone.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you for the hour leadoff from the official opposition. I first want to welcome—although they have already had to leave for more exciting things, I think—the grade 8 students from McNab Public School in my riding who are here on a school trip. Welcome to the Legislature of Ontario.

I have to point out to the member, it is really hard to sit here and listen to the fantasy that goes on for an hour—dreaming that somehow homes are going to just magically fall from the sky here in the province of Ontario, or the tooth fairy is going to build them as she whistles by, or Peter Pan is coming to Ontario.

I'm not sure what they are thinking over there. We're doing all of the things that are required and everybody understands are necessary.

She says it's not about supply; it is absolutely about supply, because supply is what will bring down the price. But, no, they want to artificially invent a housing system in the province of Ontario that simply won't get it done.

I will ask the member one more time—four different bills that will bring that supply up by 1.5 million homes by 2031. Why won't you support it?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you very much for that question.

We have been very clear that we are very much in support of increasing housing supply and meeting our 1.5 million housing target by 2031. But what we are also very clear about is that it is not just about increasing supply; it's also about addressing affordability. They're related, but one doesn't automatically solve the other, which is why we are proposing a comprehensive approach where we build homes for Ontarians first and not investors; we clamp down on investor-led speculation; we make renting safe and affordable so people can save up enough for a down payment to buy a home—I don't know anyone who can save up a down payment, paying \$3,000 a month in rent—and we get serious about building affordable housing.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: When we talk about affordable housing, I think that means different things to different people. When I hear from folks who are renting a room, which is not covered or protected by anyone, for \$800 and they get there and find out that the other half has been rented to a stranger and that's just how it is; when we have folks who are survivors of human trafficking, and I find out from victim services and from the different support agencies that there isn't safe housing for them to go to, which, of course, puts them in danger of having to return to that world—transitional housing, supportive housing really does have to take the shape of its community; they are such different specific needs, and people are at different stages of recovery or healing. What is this bill going to do to reassure communities that that type of housing, that supportive wraparound service, will be there for them?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member from Oshawa for the question.

There's very little in this bill that looks at creating housing and meeting the housing needs for people who are in a really tough spot. Maybe they are on a fixed income. Maybe they are fleeing an abusive relationship. Maybe they've just moved to Canada and they don't know the laws and they moved into a housing situation that's really not good. There's very little in this bill for that.

The Conservatives have done a few things that concern me, around making housing affordable for people who are struggling. The government has decided to cut funding to municipalities and housing, which means there's less funding available for shelters. The government also decided to cut funding to the rent top-up program. So if

someone wants to find a rental home and get a top-up from the government so that they can afford the rent, rebuild their lives, have a home, move into the private market, get that little bit of help—that's also being cut. It's those kinds of programs that we need to really help people who are struggling.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

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M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like to thank the member from University–Rosedale for her presentation. I did take note that during her presentation, she did speak about the need for strengthening protections for tenants.

In fact, in the past, our government has brought in measures to strengthen protections for tenants. For example, we increased fines for bad landlords, and we also took action to prevent evictions. The opposition did choose to vote against those measures, which is truly unfortunate.

But this time, we do have an opportunity to work together and support measures that will once again provide better protections for tenants in this province. So my question to the member is, will you join us in supporting these enhanced protections, or will you continue to oppose them?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

In committee, we did vote in support of measures to require a landlord to get a report in order to justify an eviction of a tenant in the case of a renoeviction. We also voted in support of the increase in fines for people or corporations that violate the Residential Tenancies Act; in fact, we proposed higher fines.

The challenge is that the moves that this government is making to address the renoeviction crisis and the illegal eviction crisis—evidence is clearly showing us that they are too weak to work.

I urge this government to look at the evidence, do evidence-based decision-making, and move forward with measures that are actually going to stop the illegal eviction crisis that we have, because what we have right now is not working.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the member from University–Rosedale for her effective analysis of Bill 97.

Really, what we see with Bill 97 is something like closing the barn door after the horses run free.

I want to thank the member for bringing forward positive and proactive solutions such as Bill 25, Bill 58, and all the amendments that the NDP brought forward to strengthen this legislation.

Despite having these proactive protections on the table, we see a government that continually says no to tenants. They continue to put forward reactive legislation and fines that won't work to address the issues that renters face.

My question to the member is, why does proactive NDP legislation make far better sense than reactive Conservative legislation?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member from London North Centre for your question.

We did introduce amendments into Bill 97 in order to strengthen renter protections. Every affordable private-market home that we have, we should be keeping. There is nothing more important and there's nothing more wise that we can do right now to make housing affordable than bring in vacancy control and real rent control. When we're talking about being proactive, those kinds of rent control measures, those kinds of rent protection measures are really going to make Ontario a desirable place to live. It means we're going to stop the net migration out of this province to other more affordable provinces, which is a real concern. Those people take all their talents with them. It means we become a more affordable and desirable place. It's a pity the government chose not to accept those amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to make a comment and ask a question—but I want to congratulate the question that was asked by my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

The times find us, and that means that the times, the economy of the day, dictate what's happening in our province.

We have hundreds of thousands of people coming to our province each year. They need to have a place to live. If we plant the seeds today, if we work hard today, then we will have the ability to have places for people to live.

You have to remember something—and I'm sure the member will agree: Not everybody who is a small home builder is a large corporation. They're trying to build a house. That one house can be sold or rented to somebody else.

Would the member agree that we need to plant the seeds now to accommodate these hundreds of thousands of people coming in each year?

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you to the member for York Centre for that question.

We very much support and agree with the target of building 1.5 million homes to meet the needs of Ontarians today and to meet our immigration targets in the future. Many more people want to call Ontario home. It's why we introduced an amendment—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I'll be sharing my time with the awesome member from Newmarket–Aurora.

During my brief speaking time on this particular topic, I'm going to be doing some contrasting and comparing, and that will be my contribution to this debate. With that in mind, I'll start by referring to what the NDP refer to as their housing plan, and I'm going to contrast and compare that with the government's housing plan, which we are now in our fourth stage of. The reason I use the words "fourth stage" is because we've already introduced three bills, this is the fourth, and we intend to continue introducing more.

With reference to the NDP plan, this comes from page 18 of the NDP plan, and it says this: The NDP will "establish a new public agency, Housing Ontario, to finance and build 250,000 new affordable and non-market rental homes." That's the first thing I want to refer to in this practice of contrasting and comparing, and I'd like to take an opportunity to unpack that. I'm going to concentrate on this word "finance." The NDP say that they are going to finance 250,000 homes. Let's keep that in mind. Financing means somehow they're going to get the money for 250,000 homes, and that means, I presume—I don't want to put words into the members' mouths, but they'll have an opportunity to give their interpretation of their own policy. I presume that means they're going to try to find that money from taxpayers somewhere, because they want to set up something called Housing Ontario, an agency of the government, and they say they're going to finance 250,000 homes.

I'm just going to use an example. I'm going to use the example of a very modest home, a \$500,000 home—\$500,000 is different in the riding of Essex, it's different in the riding of Toronto Centre, but I will unilaterally just choose the number \$500,000. The NDP want to build 250,000 homes at \$500,000 apiece. That is \$500,000 times 250,000 homes, which is \$125 billion—that's billion with a B. That's 125 followed by nine zeros. That is essentially 62% of the entire annual provincial budget, which the NDP say they're going to finance to build 250,000 homes. Remember, that number of 250,000 homes comes not from the government's plan; that comes from the NDP proposal, and they say they're going to finance 250,000 homes in their own proposal.

Well, let's imagine that. You can't build a home for \$500,000 in many of those ridings, but, like I said, I'm going to be generous and I'm going to give them that number. Now, they don't offer any other explanation as to where they are going to get the \$125 billion. I'm making a supposition. I admit, I'm making a supposition. I am assuming they are going to get it out of Ontario taxpayers. I don't know how they would do that, because, as I said, it's 62% of the annual budget, but I will graciously give them an opportunity to explain how they propose to do that. I have asked this question of NDP members before; I have not received an explanation—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What did Taras Natyshak say?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Well, you know, he didn't talk about that either.

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So the Ontario housing agency proposed by the NDP, I presume that it's going to be a government-run agency. I have asked this question of several NDP members in the House, just like I'm asking it now: What does your agency look like and how is it going to be run? I did not get any answers to that. What I anticipated what the NDP would say was this—

Hon. Greg Rickford: Chairman Mao would have the agency.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Well, I don't know if that would happen, but I anticipated the answer would be some kind

of provincially owned corporation, the shares of which would be owned by the taxpayers of Ontario and represented by perhaps a minister of the government, who would hold the shares in trust for the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. That's the answer I was anticipating, but I didn't get that answer. I didn't get any answers.

So, I openly invite the NDP to once again explain to this House: What is their agency going to look like and how will it operate? Now I'm going to add a third question: How will that housing agency, proposed by the NDP, raise \$125 billion to build the houses they propose? Those are questions that are legitimately asked. I invite them to answer those questions.

Interjection: How will it be staffed? Property expenses—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: That's another good question that my colleague to the left here has raised. You want to create—that is to say, the NDP wants to create—a housing agency that theoretically is going to finance and build 250,000 homes. I know a lot of great home builders in my riding: Jones Group, Nor-Built Construction, Valente—great people. They know how to build homes. They don't need taxpayer money to build homes. They need what this government is offering to make sure that they can do what they already know how to do, and do it faster, do it better and do it cheaper, so that we can get to 1.5 million homes for the province of Ontario. They know how to do it.

The question that my colleague put was: How is NDP plan going to do that? Are they going to hire carpenters, framers? Are they going to pour concrete? Where are they going to acquire these resources? Are they going to compete against the Jones Group? Are they going to compete against Nor-Built Construction? Where is the Ontario housing agency, as proposed by the NDP, going to acquire any of this? How are you going to finance your agency? How are you going to raise \$125 billion? Those are good questions.

Now the contrast—the contrast and compare, as I spoke about before: What this government is doing is changing legislation to do exactly what I said previously. We're going to let people like Jones Group, Nor-Built Construction and Valente do what they already know how to do, but they're going to do it faster and they're going to do it without taxpayers' money. They're going to do it because we're going to change things like the definition of area of employment. That's pretty technical. That's pretty—I don't know—legal, pretty academic. A lot of people haven't spoken about that. I'm going to speak about it because it's in this bill.

So “area of employment”: that's a definition that's in the provincial legislation. If your land falls within “area of employment,” that definition, then there's certain restrictions on it, and it cannot easily be converted into residential land. That's very hard to do. In fact, in some cases, it may not be converted into residential land.

Let's imagine—and I don't have to imagine because I can give you lots of examples in my area of land which is zoned with the definition “area of employment” that is no longer useful for that purpose. It's either not commercially viable or not industrially viable, and that designation should be removed and a different designation should be

put on that land. I would say residential. If you can remove that designation from the land and convert it to residential land, then you can do what you need to do with that land: Give it its highest and best use, which is build residences on that land. That's how we can get to 1.5 million homes. That's not the only way, of course, but that's one of the ways we can get there.

I go back to the proposal by the NDP. Remember, their proposal only wants to build 250,000 homes at \$125 billion. That only gets us one sixth of the way to the target 1.5 million.

That is what I have to offer and contribute to this debate today. I have been very specific about two very specific points.

And on that, Madam Speaker, I thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: I'd like thank my colleague from Essex for his dynamic presentation.

I'm honoured to rise today in this chamber, representing the amazing constituents of Newmarket–Aurora, to speak to actions our government is taking to help more and more Ontarians realize their dream of home ownership. The Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, 2023, is the latest in a series of steps our government is taking to increase housing supply and help more Ontarians find a home they can afford.

I'm going to tell you about some of the housing challenges that I have heard from a variety of people in my riding and beyond. Afterwards, I'm going to address how our plan will help each of those challenges.

First off, and I think we've heard this: The cost of homes is a challenge for young people to enter into the market—even for a young couple. Example: both living at home, not paying rent, but earning good salaries of well over 80K, but holding off getting married until they can afford a home. Let's look at the implications of this scenario. Young couples staying home longer—this delays parents' consideration of downsizing. Young couples waiting longer to start a family, which then means family planning is delayed—delay of getting into the market means a delay for young people to start building their own personal development and self-reliance.

Secondly: seniors—people retiring—who would like to downsize and stay in their community, but there are no homes applicable to their age. Thus, where are the age-friendly communities that meet the needs of people of all ages?

Thirdly: retired people living in their home and who have an apartment suite, who are landlords, yet having challenges with their tenants. I have heard of this situation far too often—retired, house is paid for, and they turn an in-law suite into a rental to generate income for their retirement, and then all of a sudden it becomes a nightmare.

Fourthly: seniors and retirees who are purchasing new-build homes for retirement purposes and then are faced with a situation where the builder is not building within the agreed-upon time frame. This puts the buyer in a precarious situation, as they need to sell their home but

have no home to go to due to challenges faced by the builder.

I note all of these challenges—as it has been explained to me—as these are real challenges that residents of our communities are facing.

So what is the role of government? It is to ensure that we create an environment that addresses this housing crisis by making certain we propose changes that react to market conditions and encourage development of all types of housing and significantly increase our housing supply. We have already introduced a range of measures to increase housing supply, and we can see their growing and positive impact.

A Statistics Canada study revealed that from 2011 to 2021 Ontario had the fourth-largest decline in home ownership rates amongst provinces and territories in Canada. What does that tell us? Well, it reveals that there were decades of inaction, burdensome red tape, and the “not in my backyard” ideology—that all-so-unfortunate opposition by residents to proposed developments in their local areas—as well as support for strict land use regulations.

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I am proud that we are a government who want to provide housing for people of this province—for all the people in this province. With the steps taken to date, housing starts in Ontario reached a level not seen in more than 30 years. Just last year, rental housing starts in our province reached an all-time high. These trends have continued into 2023. For the first quarter of this year, we have had an 11% rise in housing starts compared with this time last year, and purpose-built rental housing starts are currently more than double compared to the same period since last year.

I want to address the four points that I raised from listening to real resident challenges. How does our plan make housing more affordable? Well, we're streamlining land use planning policies, making policies for land use planning in Ontario easier to follow; providing the tools to support growth in large and fast-growing municipalities near transit stations and other strategic areas; allowing more homes to be built in rural areas; giving municipalities the flexibility to expand settlement area boundaries at any time; and making planning policies simpler and more flexible while balancing the need to protect employment lands, agriculture and the environment.

The second item that I had addressed, the various types of homes required for the various type of Ontarians: Here, I am speaking to age-friendly communities. Our proposed changes would help refocus by maintaining a mix of housing types. This is critical, as all municipalities would be required to provide a range and mix of housing options, such as low- and mid-rise apartments or multi-generational housing, and work with service managers to address the full range of housing options, including housing affordability needs, increasing housing supply and includes building up near transit.

Currently, 29 of Ontario's largest and fastest-growing municipalities would be required to plan for growth in major transit station areas and other strategic growth areas—for example, downtowns. We're also addressing

minimum density targets that would apply to major transit station areas and strategic growth areas in the large and fastest-growing municipalities.

In addition, we are looking at attainable housing programs, specifically modular housing construction and other innovative options to reduce the cost of building attainable housing and speed up the creation of housing. As part of this work, the government will engage with the housing sector, municipalities and Indigenous communities to consider different opportunities to build housing using modular and other technologies. This is just another step for the development of the attainable housing program, which will leverage crown lands and seek partnerships for development lands across the province.

Now to helping vulnerable Ontarians, funding for homelessness: Starting in 2023-24, Ontario is investing an additional \$202 million each year in the Homelessness Prevention Program and the Indigenous Supportive Housing Program. This is an increase of over 40% from 2022-23. These are truly historic investments in homelessness prevention and respond directly to the requests of the municipalities and Indigenous partners.

I was so proud to announce a 76% increase compared to the previous year to the municipality of York region's HPP. This program gives local supportive housing service managers the flexibility to allocate funding where it is most needed—for example, to capital projects—as well as to make better use of existing resources. It reduces the red tape that service managers encounter and ensures the focus is on delivering support that our most vulnerable rely on every day instead of spending time on administrative tasks and reporting.

Thirdly—and I've got to speed up—helping tenants and landlords: To address the concerns raised around tenants who are in arrears of rent, this bill proposes a rent arrears repayment agreement. A tenant enters into agreement with their landlord to pay the rent they owe and avoid eviction. To make it easier for both tenants and landlords, the government is proposing to require use of the Landlord and Tenant Board's plain language repayment agreement form. This would help ensure all parties better understand their rights and responsibilities and the rental rules that apply should the agreement be breached.

I'm running out of time, Madam Speaker, so I'm going to get to the point here that, in conclusion, the measures outlined in this latest plan will continue laying the groundwork for increased housing supply as market conditions improve. But more needs to be—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Essex referenced our former member, MPP Natyshak, and asked where he's been. He's spent some time on the Windsor Salt picket line of late, supporting those workers, and I think that that's a good place for him to put energy.

But he asked a financing question, and financing and budgets are about priorities. We learned in public accounts just this week that this government has been subsidizing the building of private casinos in Ontario to the tune of

\$3.3 billion. By the end of this fiscal year, it will be up to \$5 billion.

What we would do—instead of financing the capital costs of casinos in a housing crisis, we would be investing directly and partnering with not-for-profits, the co-op housing movement, municipalities who are ready and willing to come to the table. That funding, that \$3.3 billion, would be going into housing—affordable, attainable housing, which are words that your government doesn't seem to be able to say.

Do you think it's appropriate to be financing private casinos in a housing crisis?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, I generously invited the NDP to demonstrate how they were going to get to \$125 billion. The member from Waterloo has demonstrated how she would get to \$3 billion. Okay, you've got \$122 billion to go, and that gets you one sixth of the way to 1.5 million homes. Great—she did a great job and demonstrated how she would get to \$3 billion.

Interjection.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Well, okay. I'm going to be generous. I think she did a great job in showing how she would get to \$3 billion. Show us how you're going to get to \$125 billion. That's your plan. They put the plan together, Madam Speaker. It's their plan. I'm inviting them to explain it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Madam Speaker, we don't need the member from Essex's generosity. What the people of this province need the government to do is stop bringing in legislation which allows people to be evicted, which actually creates more tension between tenants and landlords. This province is seeing record evictions. Where is the housing policy that actually recognizes that renters exist and have rights and are not second-class citizens? That's what we're looking at.

In 2022, housing starts were at 96,000; in 2023, at 80,300; in 2024, by your own budget, your housing starts are down to 82,700. So you are going in the wrong direction. Maybe you should stop focusing on our plan and actually bring forward a plan that actually will work for the people of this province.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The member from Waterloo brings up a question regarding the Landlord and Tenant Board. As a lawyer who has represented clients both as landlords and as tenants at the Landlord and Tenant Board, I can assure you that the Landlord and Tenant Board properly makes decisions not only for landlords but for tenants also.

What this legislation does is that it requires an application being made by a landlord to be supported by evidence, which evidence has to be delivered to the tenant at the time the notice of termination is delivered. That's very useful for tenants. In fact, I can tell you that when I represented tenants at the Landlord and Tenant Board, I routinely represented good tenants and good landlords and routinely defeated applications of termination, on a routine basis. So the assertion made by the NDP that somehow this legislation isn't working for tenants is flatly wrong.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the member from Essex. We have heard the Leader of the Opposition say she shares our goal of building 1.5 million new homes by 2031. I'm curious if the member from Essex has done the math from the NDP plan to build 1.5 million homes, instead of only 250,000 homes?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: If I understand the question correctly, the question was about what calculations will bring us to 250,000 homes under the NDP plan and what calculation will bring us to 1.5 million homes under the NDP plan. Of course, it depends on what price you put the home at. I, admittedly, unilaterally selected the number \$500,000, so if I took \$500,000 and multiplied it by 1.5 million homes, which is the proposal, it is something in the neighbourhood of \$750 billion, which is probably a number that none of us can even conceive and probably exceeds all of the combined provincial budgets of all of the Canadian provinces and territories, and a few states in the United States thrown in, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's interesting that the member from Essex comes at this position as a lawyer. Let me be clear: The lawyers in Ontario are doing very well these days. I mean, you're in so many court cases as a government for violation of human rights, including housing rights, that the lawyers are doing okay.

But I do want to just touch on some of the issues that the member from Newmarket–Aurora had referenced. I want to ask her a question around air conditioning, because when the minister was in the media studio, he was asked by one of the reporters, “You know, people can't stay in their rental housing situation. They can't afford the rent. How are they going to afford paying for the hydro of an air conditioner?”

If the member could please address that other financial burden of the cost of high hydro as it relates to air conditioning, I would be really appreciative.

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the member from Waterloo for the question. Well, definitely air conditioning is almost a necessity anymore given the heat, so what I would say there is: What are we doing to help renters? Number one, we have to ensure that we're building a suite of rental buildings so that they have places to rent. That's part of our bill, is that we are striving to ensure that there's more rentals available.

As I noted in my speech, in fact, we have record numbers of rental buildings in these past 30-plus years. The more rentals that we have available, back to the point from one of my colleagues, the more supply that we have with rentals, the lower the price for the renters. Unfortunately, we have been in a situation where we haven't been building rentals. We are now, and we're getting it done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Nepean.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I do appreciate the conversation today. I agree with the member from Newmarket: Really, this is about supply, and it is about building more supply in order to drive prices down. I live in a constituency where there is one of the highest growths of new homes in all of Canada, as has been evidenced by the fact that I have had four different ridings in the past 18 years.

I would like to speak to both the members who spoke on our behalf to talk about those housing starts, because I heard—and I think my ears may be a bit clogged—the member from Kitchener-Waterloo mention that the housing starts were down. Now, if she would drive in Nepean, if she would drive anywhere in Peel, if she would drive anywhere in Vaughan, if she would drive anywhere in the GTA or in the greater Ottawa area, she would see that people from around the world are choosing Ontario as their home, because we are competitive and, as a result of that, prices are going up because we don't have the supply for housing. But the housing is starting to occur because of this government, because this government has the critical decisions that are required—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Quick response, the member from Newmarket—Aurora

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Actually, I'd like to talk about two items. I took a trip to Brampton. It's outside of my riding, but the builder plans on building a rental across Upper Canada Mall in my riding, so it was my opportunity to go to see this building that they're building in Brampton. It's actually already built. It is already half-way rented, a gorgeous building right next to the transit, right next to the GO train. It's an amazing building. This is what is happening when we're able to build up more rental buildings, and I can't wait for that to come to my riding of Newmarket—Aurora.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Well, so many things have come up, it's hard to know where to start. I've heard from the member from Essex that things are grand in the landlord-tenant tribunals, but that's of course in direct contrast to the Ombudsman's report, which says, "The Ombudsman received more than 4,000 complaints from people on both sides of the landlord-tenant relationship. Many described the financial and mental harm they suffered while 'trapped in the queue,' waiting for their applications to be heard."

There's quite a lot here: "a shortage of qualified adjudicators ... compounded by a lengthy, cumbersome appointment and training process".

I'd like to say, the problems at the Landlord and Tenant Board fall squarely on the shoulders of this government, because when they came to power in 2018, they decided not to renew any contracts. They had to put their own stamp and their own people in regardless of the fact that they were not trained, and so they left those positions empty for years. We are finally seeing some of those adjudicating positions filled, but it takes a long time to actually acquire the insight to be a good adjudicator. So instead, what we're seeing is that—everything is online

now. Even though, on paper, it might still say, yes, you can get in-person hearing, you can't.

I know of a case in Thunder Bay where, with the support of, actually, one of the legal clinics—so this person wasn't necessarily on their own. But the technology failed. Well, the adjudicator decided that was that. That was the end of the hearing. That person is out of luck. They've been waiting for years and years to have the opportunity to have their hearing before the Landlord and Tenant Board, and because of the technology and the refusal to have any in-person hearings, it was a bust. That person is out of luck. That is not unusual, and frankly, I'm surprised that the member from Essex was really singing the praises of how things were going for people, both small landowners and also tenants. It's harming both. I've certainly gotten letters from both tenants and landlords saying that they are in crisis because they're waiting eight months to 12 months to longer to get a hearing.

But I will go back to my original plan here, because there are a few things in the bill that I like. I do like that there's some movement towards mandating air conditioning. I think it could be stronger. I think that you need to set an upper limit on temperature, and I think you've got to get rid of all the wiggle room for getting out of it.

Now, I see that there are guidelines being set for long-term care, with a maximum of 25 degrees Celsius, but really, that needs to apply to tenants everywhere, whether in free-standing apartment buildings, units within people's homes or in seniors' residences. For example, my mother lives in a retirement home owned by Revera. Her unit has been over 30 degrees Celsius for weeks. There's air conditioning there, but it's not the right date to turn it on, apparently. It was, "So sad, you're out of luck. Go buy a fan."

1710

People pay a great deal of money to live in those seniors' residences. I would like to see it mandated that the air conditioning be turned on the moment it is above 25 degrees in any single unit in the building.

Fines for violations: Well, it's interesting to see the fines increased, but I would love to do a freedom-of-information inquiry to see how many times landlords have actually had a fine imposed on them for evicting somebody in order to move themselves or a member of their family into the unit, because the fines have not stopped illegal renovictions—far from it.

Part of this is that Bill 97 leaves the entire burden on renters to protest and to bring charges, and frankly, they don't have the means to do that. In fact, once they've been evicted, they have the overwhelming problem of finding a new place to live in an extremely tight market where there is little to no affordable housing available. So they don't exactly have time on their hands to launch a legal battle with a landlord outside the tribunal system. Of course, we know within the tribunal system, they're going to be waiting for over half a year at least, so where do they go in the meantime?

The need for meaningful rent control: In 2018, the government basically gave landlords a get-out-of-jail-free

card by not including buildings from that period under rent control, so we're seeing increases of up to 57%. It's absurd. It's really hard to fathom that that makes sense in anybody's world.

Then I looked at something else in here, this mysterious office, the Provincial Land and Development Facilitator, that addresses undisclosed projects requiring undisclosed payments to provide for other undisclosed things. There will be four deputy facilitators added to this office at a cost of just shy of \$1 million. That's \$234,000 a year. That's a lot of money to work in an office that very few people know anything about. The minister will also have new powers over this office of undisclosed purpose, something I think the people of Ontario would love to learn more about. Unfortunately, there is no information about that.

Bill 97, once again, relies almost entirely on deregulation and tax cuts to incentivize the for-profit private market to deliver 1.5 million homes over a decade. This narrow-minded approach is evidently failing, with the recent budget revealing that projected housing starts in Ontario are actually going down instead of up. In contrast, the NDP has called for a strong public sector role to deliver new affordable and non-market housing that the for-profit private sector can't or won't deliver. There is no provision in Bill 97 to facilitate new non-market housing.

We know that the Liberals had 15 years to help. By the way, it was preceding that that we had wonderful development of co-op housing. We have two really solid co-op housing developments in Thunder Bay. They continue to have affordable rent. They also have rent-geared-to-income, but even for the people who are not getting a subsidized rent, it's affordable. It's a very nice place to live and it's been a very successful model.

The Liberals, yes, had 15 years after that to do something; they chose not to. For 14 of 15 years in power—supported by the Conservatives, I might add—the Liberal rent control policy was the same as the Harris PC rent control policy before it, shifting enormous power to private landlords and away from tenants, while failing to deliver new purpose-built rental housing.

I have been trying since August, really, to deliver—I have two fantastic housing projects in Thunder Bay that would provide 104 new affordable units. One of them, called Suomi Koti, is for seniors. I actually had the pleasure of touring Suomi Koti when the leader of the official opposition was in Thunder Bay. It's a 30-year-old facility. You would never know it was 30 years old. It's been kept immaculately. People love living there. You can even have your own garden. It's a beautiful, beautiful space. All of this was put together by a volunteer board. Now, for 30 years, they have intended to build a second building. There is a seven-year wait-list to get into Suomi Koti, as there is to get into any of the reasonably priced seniors' residences. So they've been trying. They have done all kinds of things to raise money. They've used their own money to hire accountants, to get the designs done. Everything has been done, but unfortunately there is no support available from this government to support what I'm going to call non-market housing. So 20% of that

building would be rent-geared-to-income, but the other 80% would be still below commercial rental rates. It's a very desirable place to live, but there's no support for this middle-level housing, and if people were able to move into this space—for example, my mother looked at this—it's impossible. This would have been affordable. Instead, she, like many other people, are using up their life savings, hoping they don't live too long and run out of money.

Another housing project, also a beautiful one, sponsored by a Biigtigong Nishnaabeg First Nation, is called Giwaa on Court. It involves actually using a historical building, so it would be recovering, repurposing a historical building in the middle of downtown Port Arthur. It's the old post office. Their plan, again, is affordable housing, 20% rent-geared-to-income, the remaining below commercial, at 80% of commercial rates.

Both of these projects have been ready to go. To me, they're a gift on a platter to the Conservative government to show that they're prepared to support mid-level housing, non-profit housing, but there is nothing there. They may in a pinch qualify. I do want to acknowledge that the government has given my region a considerable amount of money to alleviate the homelessness crisis. Okay, but that is a very specific kind of housing, and whether either of these projects will qualify under the terms of that agreement, I don't know. They don't know either at this point. When we talk about all of this housing that you're going to build, and we have two projects that have been ready to go, shovel-ready for months, and there's no support—and they don't need a lot of support, but they need enough support in order to qualify for CMHC grants—so, nothing, nada.

Now, I like to think about what is actually going to bring rents down, and I really want to question this whole thing about supply and demand. Supply and demand is really a simplistic, narrow doctrine that we can hear continually about from the government side of the House, and frankly—and I've heard this from the Minister of Housing. I know the minister is a smart person, so I'm pretty confident that he knows full well that the vast majority of supply is actually in very few hands and they will control the prices no matter how much unmet demand there is. This doctrine also masks the role of housing speculation and housing financialization that continues to drive up the cost of housing beyond the reach of ordinary Canadians.

1720

Imagine this: If we actually had enough housing that was affordable, so there's more housing available, guess what? We're going to see the costs come down, but they're not going to come down when the supply is at this upper, upper level that so many people can't afford. And frankly, it's controlled by far too few people, and then there is also all the speculation that goes into it.

I'm even seeing this in small communities. Where mines are going in, I'm seeing people going in and buying up all the potential rental housing. It's going to be owned by one person and that person is going to set the rates in that community. That is not that much different from what is happening in other places.

I think it's time that this myth of supply and demand without context, without depth—

Interjections.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I would say that if we're going to talk about examinations, I would send you both back to school, but hey. Because frankly, to simply parrot “supply and demand” without any understanding of the rest of the market is to show a lack of understanding of what people are actually dealing with.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Wow.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: You bet, wow. So I noted also—
Interjection.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Well, that's a good question for you too. But never mind; never mind.

I noticed that the bill did correct some drafting errors—reminding us, frankly, of Bill 23's draconian elimination of planning appeal rights for conservation authorities and upper-tier municipalities, a reminder also of the broken promises about the greenbelt and certainly the appearance of widespread corruption in regard to the greenbelt—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: On a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Point of order?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Rule 25(k): A member shall not use “abusive or insulting language of a nature likely to create disorder.” Making accusations of corruption fits that rule, in my submission.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Point noted. Thank you.

The member from Thunder Bay—Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: So we have a government that is really bent on using farmland to build homes. Now, in what world does that make sense? We need food; we have growing populations. And yet there is talk—and not just talk, but action—of taking over the greenbelt, in spite of promises not to do this.

The questions about who is benefiting certainly haven't come from me alone. Those questions are widespread in the media and amongst people throughout the province who are very, very concerned at how easy it is to say one thing one day, and the next day say something completely different and do something completely different.

In terms of the greenbelt, in order to put luxury homes on conservation land—it certainly doesn't make sense. And then, of course, this idea of taking even more farmland and subdividing it—well, we know that the farming community has organized itself and spoken against this, and it sounds like the government may be listening. I hope that's the case, because we need that farmland. We need that food.

I am coming to the end of what I wanted to talk about. Again, I think that we have such an incredible problem with people being kicked out, with rents made completely unaffordable, and there is so little here to help. The problems keep getting worse and worse and worse, and then even when solutions are offered, there's no support for those solutions.

Honestly, it boggles my mind that there is nothing there to support Suomi Koti or Giiwa on Court. Suomi Koti

could even be coming out of a seniors' fund for housing. Do we not have any funding available to support more seniors' housing? Supportive housing? It doesn't have to be fully staffed with PSWs. It might have one PSW. There's a whole range of different levels that seniors are looking for when they can no longer—and no longer want to—manage a home and everything that goes with a home. What is the plan for that? Because I can tell you again, in my region—seven-year waiting lists. Well, in my mother's case, she probably will be dead by then, I imagine.

So there are very, very clear problems that are not addressed in the bill. And there is so much more that the government could be doing to support housing so that everybody can afford to get into the market to get a place, to rent a place, to keep a roof over their heads.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to the member from Thunder Bay.

I can understand that you say the two projects in Thunder Bay have not been able to work, because we understand that the status quo cannot give us the solution for the crisis we're facing right now. That's why this is the fourth time we're putting together all these actions to help us against this housing crisis. I would hope that, if you go through each and every one of them slowly, then you will really understand the solutions that we're going to bring.

I also want to point out one thing and see if you can see this through and be able to support us in this bill. As part of our plan, we are consulting on having a cooling-off or cancellation period for new freehold home purchases. First-time homebuyers deserve peace of mind when making what is likely the biggest purchase of their life in their new home. Does the member of the opposition not support consumer-friendly solutions such as this?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: If I understand the question correctly, the point is that there's a cooling-off period before a deal is finalized for a first-time homebuyer. Is that correct? I don't have a problem with that.

Again, you point out that this is the fourth bill, and yet there's no help for renters and there's no help for seniors, for example. So I hope that the government will do more.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I know that the member has an area with a lot of need, and as she had mentioned, there is lots of opportunity and need for investment with struggling populations.

Not too long ago, I visited the Back Door Mission in Oshawa, which does important outreach to street-involved and unsheltered communities. One of the things that I heard—and the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions heard—is that there are housing units available, but there isn't subsidy available. The government isn't keeping up with the need, and the cost is going through the roof.

So we have agencies that could house people across Durham region, but they don't have the subsidy and they can't afford to. That's a failure of government, whether

that's a matter of emails getting lost in the chain or whatever.

What is in this bill that would help the folks who are really desperately needing housing—especially with help from agencies?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I'm not sure that there is anything, actually, in the bill that would assist agencies in providing that housing—there may be in other places, other aspects, but not in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: During my remarks, I made some remarks about the landlord and tenant tribunal, and I said that in my experience with the tribunal, I found the adjudicators to be impartial, treating tenants and landlords without any bias. I think I was quite accurate about that. I understand, from this member's comments, that she finds the adjudicators of the board not to be so. I would like a clarification of her comments. Was she saying that she thought the adjudicators at the Landlord and Tenant Board were biased, or was she agreeing with me when I said they were impartial?

1730

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I was saying neither one nor the other. What I was saying is that there is a two-year wait, and that the reason there is such a long wait is because the Conservative government removed many of the people who were there and then took years and years to appoint new adjudicators.

What the Ombudsman's report says clearly is that it takes time for adjudicators to be trained, and that is part of why there are so many delays in getting hearings at the Landlord and Tenant Board.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The member and I both represent ridings from the north. We know that the situation with the opioid epidemic is deadly. We also know that we have a huge problem with people who are homeless, who are not housed. Those are the realities of the north. We have four times more opioid deaths in northern Ontario—in her riding, in my riding—than we do in the rest of Ontario. Lots of it is directly linked to people being unhoused.

Did you see anything in the bill that speaks directly to the hardship that people are facing in trying to find housing in northern Ontario?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: No, I did not.

What we have is many, many people coming into our region who are hoping to find a place to live, who are hoping to find work, but often they are coming with nothing, with no supports at all, so it is very difficult.

I have some optimism toward the government's plan—which is not yet a part of this bill—to support housing for our homeless population. I do have some optimism there, but I don't see anything in this bill itself that contributes to solving that problem.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Following up on my previous question about the Landlord and Tenant Board: This government has taken steps to clear up the backlog. We've put \$6.5 million into the board, and we're hiring 40 more adjudicators, essentially doubling the number of adjudicators, to clear up the backlog, because we recognize that needs to be done. My question to the member is this: Number one, does she recognize that that needs to be done? And the second part of my question is, while that member and myself disagree on what created the backlog—I say the backlog was created by the pandemic and the inability of people to meet in person, because that's the way that those adjudications were done, so we had to introduce a new system and that took time. Although she and I might disagree on that, now that we've introduced the 40 extra adjudicators—does the member support that specific measure?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes. I support the addition of 40 new adjudicators. However, I do want to note that it is crucial that the task is not simply getting rid of the backlog; the task is delivering justice to people who present at the Landlord and Tenant Board. Unfortunately, what I have seen is that when the technology fails, people are not getting their hearings.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I would like to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North for her presentation.

Has the member seen the number of emails from people who have been subject to above-normal rent increases because of this government's deliberate removal of rent control?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes. It's also a combination. We know that there are no limits on what people are charging for rent. There is a lot of abuse of the system, and there are a lot of loopholes. But I'm going to add to that, too, that people on social assistance don't have enough money to put a roof over their head in the first place. I am also hearing from people who are desperate—people who, frankly, are considering suicide because they can't afford to live.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

Mr. Kevin Holland: I'm listening to the member opposite, my colleague from Thunder Bay, speaking with regard to this bill not having any funding in it for affordable housing. We addressed that in our budget document. We increased the Homelessness Prevention Program funding and the Indigenous affairs funding by \$202 million.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Per year.

Mr. Kevin Holland: Per year.

We saw in Thunder Bay that the amount of money has increased by over \$10 million—almost tripling the money for affordable housing and assisted housing in Thunder Bay. I just wanted to point out that you do recognize that that investment has been made, although it's not in this bill.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I have all due respect for my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan. You might have missed what I said. I've actually acknowledged that several times today—that that money is there and that it's important and that it's appreciated—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Joel Harden: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Point of order.

Mr. Joel Harden: Thank you, Speaker. Just briefly—sorry to interrupt my friend opposite. On a point of order in the House, I just want to acknowledge that we have a guest: Bruce McKenna, who's one of our highest-efficiency canvassers from Ottawa Centre, a good friend, a former staff colleague. He worked in the constituency office.

Bruce, it's great to see you in the people's House. Thank you for everything you've done for Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Algoma—Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege and a honour to take my seat on behalf of the good people of Algoma—Manitoulin, I'm going to try to bring a little bit more of a positive outlook, particularly from the lens of northern Ontario and the approach that I've received from individuals across my riding.

I like to always give credit where credit is due, and I want to start by giving credit to Bill Orford and Mike Johnston, who are both from the Manitoulin-North Shore federation of agriculture. They approached me in regard to Bill 97, which is a comprehensive bill with seven particular schedules. I'm going to be focusing my discussions today on one or two of these particular schedules. When they approached me, there was some grave concern in regard to some of the changes that this government was looking at and the impacts it was going to have on the agricultural sector. Their major concerns were the severance of the farm parcels that will increase conflicts with non-farming neighbours and limit future farm business growth and expansion. They also had some concerns with loss of protection of specialty crop lands, particularly with livestock, and also urban boundary expansion without community demonstrating needs. These were very well highlighted. And I want to give credit to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, National Farmers Union of Ontario, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Ontario Broiler Hatching Egg and Chick Commission, Beef Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Pork, Egg Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Sheep Farmers, Veal Farmers of Ontario, Chicken Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Farmland Trust, Turkey Farmers of Ontario, Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance. These are the individuals who deserve a lot of the credit as to why certain changes that we hope—that we hear the government is going to be bringing forward.

Again, I'm one who likes to look at things in a positive way, and I've heard on a couple of occasions over the course of this week that the Premier is prepared to listen

to these organizations and move in a direction that will start answering some of their questions and really addressing their concerns. It's one thing saying it; it's another thing doing it. So I will, as well as these organizations, watch what the government will be doing over the course of the next few days or weeks to make sure that these changes actually happen so that there is no negative impacts on the farming community.

1740

At the same time, when I met with Bill and Mike on Manitoulin Island—and I think it's important that you here in the House understand the contributions that come directly from Manitoulin Island and that snapshot, and along the North Shore. On the island and on the North Shore, there are 189 farms; there's 112,315 acres of farmland—they are over 280 acres, which is an average-sized farm. They provide, as far as local farm sales—24% sell farm products directly to the consumer. Three farms operate with community-supported agriculture. Eight farms sell at farmers' markets, and 38 farms sell directly from their farms at stands or pick-your-own. As far as their contribution, based on numbers, to the economy in 2021, the local agri-food sector employed 650 people through 178 local agri-food business establishments, with \$20 million in farm cash receipts, and they were placed top three in cattle, dairy, and grain and oilseed.

Across the province, you are looking at farm cash receipts generated by local farms—supported by \$44 million in the GDP and 655 employees in the agri-food sector, from farm to fork across Ontario. Just in my riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—and this was just the North Shore in Manitoulin Island—they are providing some significant contributions to the GDP of this province. So when they come to the table—again, I am one who likes to look at the positives and hope that the government is actually listening to them—it begs me to ask a different question. I am happy that they listened to the farming and agricultural sector, but there are many other occasions when this government should have been listening to people from this province. There were many other opportunities and many other pieces of legislation that weren't given the same attention as this group was.

It's important for the farming community to know that, banding together, doing the efforts that they have done, they have caught the ear of this government. It sets a very good example for other organizations and affected individuals across this province of how to approach issues that affect them negatively.

The one thing I do want to say is, based on this—the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force said that there were plenty of lands that were already existing, to build up areas on undeveloped land outside of the greenbelt. The government recently approved more than 14,000 hectares of land for urban development and municipalities in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area that are not farmland and protected lands. We heard from students who came to the committee and actually demonstrated to this government that there were plenty of available lands ready to develop.

I am looking at this government. There are plenty of opportunities for development across this province. Do not touch the greenbelt. Do not put our food security for this province—because not only are we being affected by this, but the global world, people across this country are looking at what Ontario is doing. They are really looking at the decisions we are making with this pristine basket of land that we have in this province, because if we tamper with it, if we build on it, that land is gone forever. It's not just housing that is going to go there. There is going to be some further development that is going to be there. We're going to lose more lands to roads. These are things that will really hinder our food security, going forward, in this province.

Again, on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin, it is always an honour and a privilege to stand here and voice their concerns on the floor of the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Questions?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for his address today.

This morning, Minister Clark, in his very, very good opening remarks, talked about housing starts being at a 30-year high and rental starts being at an all-time high. Last year, more rental starts—and this year, we're on target to even exceed that. This year we're doubling—double, already ahead, from the trend of last year. So our plan is working.

I ask the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, when a plan is working and the most important thing right now that people talk about all the time is building more homes, as the population of our province is up to 15 million people—400,000-and-some came here last year. It's absolutely paramount that we build more homes.

Are you telling me today that you can't support our housing supply action plans, when you speak today in this Legislature, or can you support them because it is of paramount importance that we build those 1.5 million homes?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Speaker, I have tons of respect for the member who just asked the question. We get along. If we would be alone in a room, we'd probably resolve a lot of the things that are debated on the floor of this Legislature.

The comment that I was making is, this government's own Housing Affordability Task Force that was implemented actually told this government that the lands that are required in order to build additional homes are already available. We don't need to go onto the greenbelt. That was the point that I was stressing through a lot of my presentation today—there's already available lands, plenty of room to build on. Let's use those lands before we go anywhere else or we consider anything else, because putting the greenbelt in harm's way is going to be a loss forever.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further questions?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The member from Algoma–Manitoulin talked quite a bit at the beginning of his speech

about farms and farmland. The dairy farmers are here at Queen's Park today; I encourage you to go and visit them. He has a big dairy operation in Algoma–Manitoulin, Farquhar's Dairy. They need land to have pastures for those cows that give us the milk, that feed the people of northern Ontario, including in my riding. Farquhar's is a very well-loved milk producer.

I was wondering if the member could share with us the importance of listening to farmers. They are the ones who feed our communities, who feed our cities. They were not listened to. I would be curious to see what the member has to say about that.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I think something that—and I don't mean to go back in a negative way, but when we went through the entire pandemic that we've gone through, there are a few things that were really highlighted for us. One is the front-line workers we had, who are our heroes. The second one that was really noticeable was our farming communities and the farming families we have through our riding—about how important their job is and the tasks that they do from sunrise to sunset. They just continuously work and provide us with the safe and reliable foods that we need across this province. Listening to them is really imperative, because that's where we get our food security from.

So when the farming community is coming out to the government and saying, "Hey, you should reconsider these actions because they're going to negatively impact not only me, but the future of the farming community and those who are coming in behind me, like my children who are looking at building their own farms or coming into the field"—and the changes that this government was proposing were going to increase costs on them immensely.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise this afternoon for the third reading of Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act. I want to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the associate minister and the parliamentary assistant and their team for all their work on this bill.

Speaker, before I begin, I should note that I will be sharing my time today with my friend the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

As the minister said, this is another bill that will help support our government's goal to build 1.5 million homes by 2031, including 120,000 in Mississauga. It will continue to lay the foundation for growth to build the housing that we desperately need.

Speaker, I've said this before, but it's worth repeating that Canada has the least housing per capita in the G7, as Scotiabank reported in 2021: There were an average of 471 homes per thousand people across the G7; in Canada, there were 424; in Ontario, it was under 400; and in the GTA, we had only 360 homes per 1,000 people. At the same time, Ontario grew by 445,000 people in 2022—more than every US state, including faster-growing states like Florida and Texas. Just to stay at 400 homes per 1,000 people, Ontario would need 178,000 more homes for their

445,000 new residents in 2022. And this growth will only continue with the new federal immigration targets to bring 500,000 people to Canada each year. Of course, we know that most of them will come to Ontario and the GTA.

1750

Many years of neglect under the previous government and many years of mayors and councillors pandering to NIMBYism and BANANAism—far too many Ontario families and new Canadians are being priced out of the housing market, through no fault of their own. I spoke about some of them on Monday who have given up hope and are looking for housing outside Ontario.

But we are making progress. As the minister said, in 2021, there were over 100,000 housing starts in Ontario, which is the highest level since David Peterson was the Premier in 1987; last year, there were almost as many: 96,000 housing starts, 30% higher than the average over the last 20 years. There were also 15,000 rental housing starts last year, which is the highest level in Ontario's history. As the minister said, there are more cranes in Toronto right now than there are in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Seattle, and San Francisco combined. Still, we recognize that there is much more to do.

If passed, Bill 97 would help to speed up the approval process for new housing by updating the provincial policy statement and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, to create a single province-wide land use planning policy document with a special focus on housing. The public consultation on this began on April 6, and I want to thank the minister for extending the comment period from 60 to 120 days. I urge everyone to read the policy. It is available online at the Environmental Registry, and you can submit your comments until August 4. Michael Collins-Williams, the CEO of the West End Home Builders' Association, said this proposal "will help get shovels in the ground faster." He said, "These policy changes will move us towards more of the only thing that really matters"—building more homes.

As I said on Monday, Mississauga is Ontario's third-largest city, but over the last 10 years, the city approved an average of 2,100 new homes each year, far below the 12,000 we need. Mississauga was the only major city in Canada to actually shrink in the last census—from 722,000 in the 2016 census to 718,000 in the 2021 census. We were the sixth-largest city in Canada, but we have fallen to the seventh, behind Winnipeg, which grew from 705,000 to 750,000, or about 9,000 each year. On Monday, I said that's the growth we need to see in Mississauga. Mayor Hazel McCallion understood this. Our city grew by about 12,000 people each year for 36 years under her leadership, but we have lost almost 1,000 people every year under Mayor Crombie. In the *Globe and Mail*, Oliver Moore wrote that the city is "shrinking because of deliberate municipal policies." He said that the hollowing out of our neighbourhoods makes it harder to run businesses, fill schools or justify spending on city priorities. This week, we're granting the city's request for independence with Bill 112.

But as I said on Monday, we need all levels of government, including our municipal partners, to do their part and allow more homes to be built where it makes sense, where there are existing services, infrastructure and transit. We expect the city of Mississauga to keep their pledge of at least 120,000 new homes over the next 10 years. But this message might not have been received, because later on Monday night, the Mississauga planning and development committee rejected more applications for new housing, including 530 new units and a daycare centre in a shiny tower on a transit corridor, just south of the Port Credit GO station, just west of the Port Credit LRT station and just east of the Mississauga Transit bus terminal. There would be three transit lines about 30 to 40 metres away from this building. The councillors were actually concerned that the building might be too close to the Lakeshore West rail corridor. Mayor Crombie said last night that she's not opposed to building height and density "in the right locations," but it's hard to think of a better location.

As the minister said, many years of NIMBYism and BANANAism have created Ontario's housing supply crisis. Our government is fighting back, and we will continue to use every available tool to support the construction of new homes that Ontario families need and deserve.

Speaker, we also recognize that renters need help, and I'd like to take a moment now to speak about schedule 7 of Bill 97, which would strengthen the protections against renovations and also clarify the right of tenants to install air conditioning.

As Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario president Tony Irwin said, "From protecting tenants' ability to use air conditioning as we approach the summer season to enhancing right-of-first-refusal protections after renovations, to doubling fines for bad apple operators, the NDP should have no reason to vote against this bill."

Bill 97 and the changes to the regulations the minister has proposed in regulation 332/12 would also freeze 74 provincial fees to help reduce the cost of housing. This includes fees related to new developments like land use planning and building fees, including fees related to the building code and Ontario Land Tribunal and fees paid to renters and landlords at Tribunals Ontario. Again, this is only one of many steps this government is taking.

In closing, again, I want to thank the minister and his team for all their work on another important bill to help increase the supply of housing to provide more affordable options for Ontario families. I hope that all members will support this bill going forward.

In my own riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore, there is a lot of NIMBYism and BANANAism going on there—that we cannot be building buildings at a GO train station. That's where we should be building more density, but there are a lot of community groups that are against that, and I really do not know why.

We're going to continue building the homes for our children and our future immigrants who are coming to this country.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I know there's not much time left, Speaker, and I've got to figure these things out better—where I put myself into the timing and the lineup—but I did want to comment on a couple of things before you shut me down.

I heard the member for Thunder Bay–Superior North talk about—she says supply and demand is a myth. Well, I'm going to put this to you: If it's a myth—and I want you to sleep on this tonight. If you've got 10 shovels and 50 people want to buy a shovel, are those shovels going to cost more than if you have 50 shovels and 10 people want to buy the shovels? The reason I'm asking about shovels is because what they're trying to spread over there—there aren't enough shovels in that store to do it.

Speaker, tomorrow I'll be able to elaborate a little bit more about the fantasy that's going on over there, when they think that homes can be built by snapping fingers or putting water on a chia home and all of a sudden, they appear. This party over there has really lost it when it comes to reality.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Thank you, sir.

The House will come to order. Order. Order. Thank you.

It is now time for private members' public business.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

POLICE FUNDING

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government should reject the “defund the police” position and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy.

1800

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for their presentation.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: As I have the tendency to do, I am going to commence my remarks with a very brief story, which will be directly related to the topic of debate for this evening. But, as usual, the full relevance of the story might not be entirely revealed until the very end of this speech.

I live in the town of Amherstburg, as I've said many times. Amherstburg is on the west side of the county of Essex. Then, there's a town called Leamington, and that's on the east side of the county of Essex. In order to get from Amherstburg to Leamington, you have to drive across the whole county of Essex, end to end. That, at this time of year, is a remarkable drive because of the great canola

fields in Essex county. If you're not familiar with canola, it's a beautiful plant. It's golden yellow. When it's in bloom and you're standing in a canola field, you feel like you are standing in Elysium.

I drove from Amherstburg to Leamington on a regular basis because, at a certain point in my legal career, I had a part-time contract—it was very part-time; it was only once every two weeks—to prosecute federal offences in the town of Leamington. So I would drive from Amherstburg to Leamington on a biweekly basis. The drive was beautiful. I would pass the canola fields, I would pass the wheat fields, I would pass the cornfields, I would pass the soybean fields—you get the picture. When I got to Leamington, I would go downtown, because that's where the courthouse was and that's where I got to work. I met a lot of great people when I was at that courthouse. For example, I met Mark Loop, who was a detective constable at that time. His nickname was Looper. Looper had grown up in the town of Leamington. He knew everybody very well. When he was on the witness stand and we asked him questions, he could tell you practically the entire life story of some of the people who he had arrested.

I also got to work with another awesome police officer. His name is Wayne Parsons. Wayne had a very particular laugh. It made him sound like the cartoon character Muttley, and so his nickname was Muttley.

I also got to work with another excellent officer. His name was Chhieu Seng, and his nickname was Chewy. It was Chewy who pulled me out of a fantastic car wreck one day. You see, I was travelling from Amherstburg to Leamington, it was the wintertime, and I hit a patch of black ice. My car spun out and crashed directly into oncoming traffic. It was a spectacular accident. I was rendered unconscious. When I regained consciousness, it was Chewy pulling me out of my car wreck. The first words that came out of my mouth were, “Chewy, call the courthouse. Tell the judge I'm going to be late for court today.” And Chewy said to me, “Anthony, you are not going to the courthouse today, my friend.”

That was the first day when I started thinking about how the job of a police officer is remarkably different than what we did as lawyers. You see, as a lawyer, our world was the courthouse, and it was the world of rules and procedure and evidence and examination and cross-examination. That was a particular world that had its particular rules. But Chewy's world, the world of policing—that was a different world. That was a world of car accidents and facial lacerations and confrontation and tension, and these factors made policing more of a life-and-death kind of world to live in, because those are the kinds of decisions they had to make.

That's why police have to be properly funded. That's why this PC government has a strategy; we call that strategy the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy. We've already put many millions of dollars into that strategy, and this budget puts another \$13.4 million into that strategy. We think that's good funding and we think that's good policy—to continue funding police. Because when you properly fund police—let me give you some examples of what they can do.

In March 2023, three handguns and over 300 rounds of ammunition and a kilogram of crystal meth were seized by police of the guns and drugs unit of the city of Windsor. Inspector David DeLuca said, “This is just an example of the results of a really good investigation.” That’s three handguns and over \$60,000 worth of drugs that will not be around to harm the citizens of Ontario.

Example number two: In April 2023, a multi-jurisdictional investigation involving police forces from Toronto, York, Durham, the OPP and the Canada Border Services Agency seized a total of 86 firearms, 75 of which were handguns, and these were seized in the GTA. Toronto Police Superintendent Steve Watts said, “A seizure of this size is definitely going to save lives on the streets of the GTA and elsewhere.”

Another example: In May 2023, a police drug raid netted a suspect who had escaped while he was on bail awaiting sentencing. He managed to remove his ankle monitor and disappeared. The drugs and guns unit of Windsor picked him up.

As you can see, properly funding the police renders results. Our policy is getting guns off the streets. Our policy is getting drugs off the streets. Our policy is saving lives. And I’m happy to say that Mark Baxter, the president of the Ontario police association, has written a communication of support for this motion and has signed the petition.

That’s our policy in the PC caucus, and that stands in contrast to the policy put forward by the NDP, which I have dubbed the “defund the police” policy. I call it that because “defund the police” is what they say on page number one of their policy. You don’t have to read too far into that policy to find out where the NDP stand. On the cover of that policy, they call it a “call to action”; I say that it is a call to inaction.

My seatmate, the member from Mississauga—Erin Mills, also read the NDP policy. He calls it the “support your local gang” policy. Michael Gendron, the spokesperson for the Ontario police association, said this with regard to the “defund the police” policy of the NDP: “It was never a conceivable idea. It never had widespread support (outside of op ed pages), was rejected by the public in virtually every election where policing was an issue, and set back real opportunities for reform that could have had buy-in from all stakeholders.”

1810

So this is the challenge. We put forward a budget; that budget had a certain amount of money in it, \$13.4 million, to continue funding the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy. The NDP have the same response to many of the things that we talk about in this House. They say, “Well, that specific number or thing in this bill, we don’t like it, so we’re going to vote against the whole bill.” We’ve heard the NDP say that so many times. They might agree with 99.9% of what’s in a bill, but if they find 0.1% something they don’t agree with, they vote against it. Well, now I’m giving them an opportunity, because I’ve isolated just one thing—which is in contrast to the PC policy—which is continue funding the police through the

Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy or, alternatively, the NDP policy, which is the “defund the police” policy. I’m asking this House to vote on that one thing. I have liberated the NDP from having to decide on 99.9% of all the other things. They only have to decide one thing. They can choose to continue promoting their policy—the “defund the police” policy—or they can choose the PC policy, which is the “fund the police” policy.

That brings me back to Highway 3 and the car crash. Chewy pulled me out of the car crash. I was taken to Leamington hospital. I was treated and released, and eventually I took a taxi back to my law office. I completed my workday and then got a ride back to my home. And I walked in the door and my wife Jackie saw me, and she saw the lacerations on my face and said, “What happened to you?” I told her what had happened, and then she said, “Why didn’t you come home? Why did you go to work after that car accident?” And I never really thought about it until today, but I guess it was probably because I had an obligation, a sense of duty, to make sure that my clients were well-served. I didn’t want to skip that day and let down my clients, and I call that a sense of duty. Even though I worked in a different world than the police worked, I think that’s what I have in common with the police: a sense of duty. That’s why I’m promoting this motion and asking all members of this House to vote for it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s always an honour to speak in the House, and I would like to thank the member from Essex for bringing this issue forward. Actually, I listened intently to his remarks, and I would like to thank him for the life experiences he shared. I always love that about private members’ motions and bills—sometimes they’re partisan, but he spoke from the heart, and I respect that.

I would like to start by respectfully paying the respects of the official opposition to the family of Detective Constable Steven Tourangeau, who recently lost his life in East Zorra township. I lived there for a little while. Police officers not only risk their own lives, but their families also share that risk. On behalf of, I believe, all members of the House, we would like to express our condolences.

I come from an area where, in my riding—and the member from Essex talked about his riding. I appreciated that—I like it when people bring things personally. I’ve just lost, in Timiskaming—Cochrane, in Matheson, the OPP detachment—closed. French River OPP detachment—people in that area are signing petitions, which I have signed as well, to try to keep it open. We know—I don’t pretend to know a lot about cities, but I know what canola looks like; I know what canola smells like. We’re fighting to keep OPP officers. In northern Ontario, we wonder who’s trying to defund the police. I’m not trying to be facetious. We’re doing everything we can to keep our police officers.

Do we believe that to try to solve societal problems we have, we need to look beyond the police? Yes. This is a nuanced debate; it should be.

I've spent a long time talking to—and I've mentioned him in the House before—Martin Thibault, an officer in the Temiskaming detachment. One of the things that frustrates Martin is when he deals with people with mental health issues. He's their first point of contact, and he has to deal with them over and over and over again because there's no one else in our part of the world to help. Just in that instance, two Martins isn't going to make that any better. He needs to be part of a team, a circle of care. We have to look at that, as well.

Do we recognize that police officers play a vital role in our society? Absolutely. Do we believe that everyone in our society should feel safe, including police officers? Absolutely.

I appreciate the member's tone. This is a nuanced debate, and it should be. We need well-funded, well-trained police.

I think everyone in this House knows that—I believe the number is 35% of our police officers are off on PTSD. We need to look at that too. We need to support them.

Do we need to recruit more police officers? Absolutely. But if you want to keep a well-trained police force, you also have to support the people who are already trained, who are already working and who face incredible challenges, as your police officer friend did when he pulled you out of that car wreck. There are so many things that police face. They need to be supported. Do we want that support to be there? Absolutely, we want that support for them. We want that support for the people they have to deal with on a daily basis. They deal with more trauma than the rest of us. And when they are overworked, when they lack support—they're human. Sometimes they make mistakes. We all make mistakes. Let the first perfect person throw the first stone.

Do we need to properly fund police? Yes, 100%. Do we need to look further to see what else is breaking down in society that is causing the increased risks that we all face, that we all feel and that police feel times 10? At the end of the day, when something goes wrong, we call 911—well, I'm going to divert. In some areas, we call 911—because the whole province doesn't have 911 either. But we call the police. The police are trained, and they can suffer incredible trauma.

I've talked to Mark Baxter a fair bit. I have a pretty good relationship with Mark, I think. I helped him out on a bill a little while ago. I like talking to Mark Baxter. I actually learn a lot talking to police. But actually, the defund-the-police concept—which I've never used and which isn't a party position—they never bring that up. They bring up the supports that they need, the supports that the community needs. That's what they bring up, and that's what they should bring up, because when people become—what's the word I'm looking for?—marginalized, destitute, sometimes they do things that they shouldn't, and the police end up dealing with them. But there's no place for them to go, so we need to look at that.

There are a lot of things we need to look at, but let's get over the issue that any of us here want to have less trained police or don't believe that we need policing in a civil

society; you need policing in a civil society. But you need to give the police, also, the support that everyone else should have in a civil society.

1820

When Martin Thibault—and I'm going to tell you exactly: There was a Crime Stoppers barbecue in front of the OPP, and Martin came up to me and talked to me. We talked about how he was an officer for 21 years. He knew exactly when he could retire, because it wasn't the same; the last five years, it's not the same. We talked about how he didn't feel safe—and police officer is a risky job; it is. There's an inherent risk in taking the risk for others. There's an inherent risk. But Martin pointed to the highway, and there was a homeless person sitting on the side of the highway in front of the OPP detachment in Temiskaming Shores. And he said, "He's part of our issue. Not himself, but we'll likely have to deal with him three times today. There's nowhere for him to go."

You have a police officer with 21 years' experience, very well trained. Everyone in Timiskaming—or at least our part of Timiskaming—knows Martin Thibault. Martin Thibault used to sell John Deere equipment, and then he became a police officer—highly regarded, well trained, the kind of police officer that we all know and respect. Martin wanted to find services to help the homeless guy. That's what Martin wanted.

So I thank the member from Essex for bringing this issue forward, because I think he brought it from his heart.

Miss Monique Taylor: I don't know.

Mr. John Vanthof: I do. The way he started his remarks, I really appreciate it—

Miss Monique Taylor: You have more faith in the world than we do.

Mr. John Vanthof: I hope that the people here realize that we're speaking from the heart as well. We need to look at our society. We need to look at the issues that police are facing and that society is facing, because there are changes, and we have to recognize that. There are massive lines at food banks. Food banks used to be an emergency thing; now, food banks are a part of our society. There's something going wrong, and the police are having to bear the brunt of it in many cases.

So I'm glad you brought this issue forward. Of course we want to adequately fund police; of course we do. I look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Flamborough—Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I rise today to voice my support for this motion and for our province's outstanding police officers. While some seek to vilify our police, this government is committed to investing in police to tackle violent crime and to create safer communities across Ontario.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to participate in a ride along with the Hamilton Police Service and saw first-hand the compassion that their officers have for all members of our community, including marginalized people. Every day, thousands of brave men and women across the province put on the uniform to serve and protect their communities. They have an incredibly difficult job that requires strength and sacrifice. Over the last year, our

province has witnessed the tragic deaths of far too many officers in the line of duty. Now more than ever, police deserve our support, our respect and our gratitude.

Our government's Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy outlines the actions that we are taking to help our police stop crime and to get dangerous offenders of our streets. This strategy includes investments in a provincial gun and gang support unit to aid investigations and prosecutions of gun and gang crimes. It also includes funding to support major investigations into organized crime and drug and human trafficking. This strategy directs more resources towards community policing programs to help address concerns around mental health, addictions and hate-motivated crimes at the local level. Our government is also eliminating tuition fees for the basic constable training program at the Ontario Police College and increasing the number of police recruits per cohort from 480 to 550. These measures will deter criminals by increasing the number of police officers in our communities.

Some of the most heinous crimes that we have seen in our province recently were committed by offenders who were on bail. Our government is doing its part to prevent more of this senseless violence from occurring by investing \$112 million to reinforce the bail system by supporting local police services in creating bail compliance teams and creating a province-wide bail compliance unit within the OPP to arrest high-risk offenders in violation of their bail conditions.

While our government takes concrete action to support our officers, radical activists and, unfortunately, some politicians have denigrated the sacrifice and bravery of police with calls to defund them. This kind of rhetoric is insulting. It is insulting to our police officers and it is insulting to victims of crime and Ontarians, who rely on police each and every day for their safety. Instead of condemning this rhetoric and supporting our government's plan to reduce crime and invest in policing, the NDP has proposed taking away some of the tools that police rely on to do their jobs. Our government has unequivocally rejected defund-the-police rhetoric and has instead embraced policies that are serious and effective.

Sadly, the NDP has not just refused to join us in rejecting this rhetoric, they have endorsed it. Their policy commitment on policing said that calls to defund the police should not be dismissed, and that a conversation about defunding police is long overdue. I hope the member from Hamilton Centre takes the opportunity tonight to speak to this motion to explain why she tweeted, "Police in Ontario have a record of arbitrarily killing babies, Black, Indigenous, racialized, disabled civilians ... & those who are in crisis." Shame.

I will be supporting this motion because we all must stand steadfast in our rejection of this kind of anti-police rhetoric, and we must continue to fund policing to support our officers and protect our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Nothing is more important than the safety of Ontarians, and through this government's support, we're helping to build safer communities as well as

ensuring Ontario's police services have the resources they need to address the issues that matter most in communities like the region of Durham to do their jobs effectively.

Unlike the official opposition, this government is committed to reducing illegal gun and gang violence by providing resources to local police services, like the Durham Regional Police Service, prosecutors and community partners across the province. This investment also includes supporting mental health programs for the Ontario Provincial Police and other police services like York through their association with Wounded Warriors Canada, who were here at Queen's Park earlier today, and \$9 million for the first responders centre here in Ontario to serve first responders, including police services overall.

1830

As part of our strategy, we're investing in initiatives including funding programs across Ontario to support major investigations that involve multiple police services to target organized crime areas that fuel gang operations, such as drug, gun and human trafficking, and also more supports for survivors of human trafficking, including dedicated prosecution resources and future enhancements to the Safer and Vital Communities Grant.

Speaker, as MPPs, one of our most fundamental responsibilities is to preserve law and order in our society. It's obvious, as I've said many times, all over the region of Durham, that when we have a safe community, we have absolutely everything: We have a place to work, we have a place to play, we have a place to raise our families, we have a place to shop and we have a place to pray. Without safe communities, we have nothing. Safety is the springboard for all we have.

Our government's support for police officers is absolute and constant. Speaker, I'm proud as a Progressive Conservative to stand up and ensure law-abiding, hard-working, tax-paying citizens, young people and seniors are able to live a life in this province of freedom and security. It's for that reason I'm voting for this motion, and I encourage every member in this Legislative Assembly to do the same this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore.

Ms. Christine Hogarth: I rise in support of a motion tabled by my colleague the member of Essex. I, too, want to thank our men and women in uniform for the work they do every day by keeping our communities safe.

Speaker, as we've heard tonight, Ontarians from all walks of life and all across this province, from Etobicoke-Lakeshore and Essex to Flamborough-Glanbrook and Whitby and everywhere in between, have earned and deserve the right to safe streets and safe communities. But it seems that everywhere you turn now, especially through social media, you come across pockets of people who say law enforcement isn't part of the solution but part of the problem. They want to spend less on policing in the face of rising crime, random violence, gang shootouts and other forms of mayhem now gripping many of our cities and towns.

In fact, as mentioned earlier, a policy paper issued not long ago by the official opposition puts it plainly, right

there on page 1: “We cannot and should not ... dismiss the call to defund police.” Well, Speaker, I can say with some confidence that the response to this statement from this side of the House is: Oh, yes, we can, and yes, we will.

So I rise to declare my view on this matter as reflected in tonight’s motion put forward by the member of Essex: “In the opinion of this House, the government should reject the ‘defund the police’ position and continue funding police, seizing illegal guns, suppressing gangs and supporting victims of violence through the Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy”—hear, hear, Speaker—because the reality is that the city of Toronto, for example, currently has fewer police on our streets than we did 10 years ago. That’s despite significant population growth and the fact that many forms of violent crimes have skyrocketed in the decade since. Would the members opposite not concede that there might just be a cause-and-effect relationship at work here, do you think?

Speaker, I say it again: The people of Ontario deserve safe communities. That is why, since 2018, our government has allocated approximately \$203 million to combatting gun and gang violence. Through the government’s Guns, Gangs and Violence Reduction Strategy launched in 2020, we are taking action to support measures that dismantle crime activity. We are enhancing investigative supports, increasing collaboration throughout the justice sector and stopping the flow of illegal guns across the border, and it’s working.

Just last April 11, the Windsor Star reported the seizure by police of 173 guns and the arrest of 42 people resulting from a cross-border trafficking investigation. Congratulations to the Windsor police. The story quotes Toronto Police Service Superintendent Steve Watts as saying, “A seizure of this size is definitely going to save lives on the streets of the GTA and elsewhere.” But then I suppose the official opposition might not dismiss the call to defund that program, too.

I just want to say a couple more words. I want to thank the member from Essex for this motion. Once again, I want to thank our servicemen and women. I want to thank them for what they do every day. A special shout-out to 22 Division in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore and of course our OPP officers. They’ve gone through some hardship over the last couple of months and our hearts go out to them and their families.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The member from Essex has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: First, I want to thank the gentleman member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his comments. He expressed the concerns he had about

policing in his riding, and I draw from his comments that he would like to see more policing commitment in his riding, and based on those comments, I would invite him to vote in favour of this motion because if we continue to fund police, then we might be able to provide more policing for his riding, which is clearly what he would like.

I would like to thank the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook for her comments on this motion. She spoke about the sad reality that there are pockets of our community here in Ontario where people are calling to defund the police, and they’re denigrating our police forces. I’ve said this often in this House, and I’ll say it again, because it’s true in almost every situation: Regardless of how many good people you have, there are always a few bad apples in the barrel, and those bad apples have to be rooted out and dealt with, but that should not cause you to paint everybody with the same brush. We’re very proud of our police forces, and we should continue to speak well of them, promote them and thank them.

I thank the member from Whitby for his comments. He spoke about all of the excellent programs that are available for police officers in the province of Ontario and how this government is making extra investments to promote mental health for police officers and to assist police officers in what sometimes is a very difficult job. As I described in my comments, the world of police officers is a world of confrontation and tragic events, because that’s what police officers have to deal with.

Finally, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore: I thank that member for her comments. She spoke very strongly in favour of her police forces and police forces across the province of Ontario. She indicated quite well the importance of continuing with the funding of these programs. In particular, we should note that she’s the parliamentary assistant for the Solicitor General, and she’s doing a great job in that role.

So I thank you, Madam Speaker, for this debate tonight and encourage all members to vote in favour of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): The time provided for private members’ public business has expired.

Mr. Leardi has moved private members’ notice of motion number 54. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion carries.

Motion agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes): All matters relating to private members’ public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow, June 1.

The House adjourned at 1839.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
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Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjini, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaled (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kanata—Carleton	
Vacant	Scarborough—Guildwood	