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of Ontario



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Thursday
2 November 2023

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43^e législature

Jeudi
2 novembre 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Trevor Day

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 2 November 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 novembre 2023

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers / Prières.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER FOR CONSUMERS,
BETTER FOR BUSINESSES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR MIEUX
SERVIR LES CONSOMMATEURS
ET LES ENTREPRISES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 1, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 142, An Act to enact the Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and to amend or repeal various other Acts / *Projet de loi 142, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2023 sur la protection du consommateur, à modifier la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et à modifier ou abroger diverses autres lois.*

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

MPP Jamie West: Let me just get out my notes.

We're speaking about Bill 142, Better for Consumers, Better for Businesses Act. I was fortunate to be on House duty—

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: There's always something interesting here. It's a pretty good bill. Thank you, Speaker.

The best speeches are the short ones, Speaker.

Interjections.

Miss Monique Taylor: That has been the best speech of the entire session.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Exactly.

Next, we have questions to the member for Sudbury related to his remarks on this matter. Any questions?

Further debate?

Mr. McCarthy has moved second reading of Bill 142, An Act to enact the Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and to amend or repeal various other Acts.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye." All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until the next instance of deferred votes.

Second reading vote deferred.

GREENBELT STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 MODIFIANT
DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA CEINTURE DE VERDURE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 1, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to amend the Greenbelt Act, 2005 and certain other Acts, to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2023, to repeal an Act and to revoke various regulations / *Projet de loi 136, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2005 sur la ceinture de verdure et d'autres lois, édictant la Loi de 2023 sur la Réserve agricole de Duffins-Rouge et abrogeant une loi et divers règlements.*

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: Thank you, Speaker. This might be a longer debate than the previous one I had.

I think this is an important law. This is the Greenbelt Statute Law Amendment Act, and this is touchy for a lot of people in the province. Earlier in debate, it was mentioned that this is a bill that protects the Conservative government from the Conservative government.

I listened to a lot of debate from opposition and government members talking about this bill. There is a different tone and a different lens. I tend to think that the lens that the New Democrats see this through seems to be the one that the people of Ontario see it through. Aside from the developers who were going to benefit a lot from this change, to the tune of \$8.3 billion—and that's based on some pretty old estimates of what the land was worth, I think, five or six years ago—most of Ontario did not want to see the greenbelt carved up, and they were very vocal about it. No matter where I went in the province while this was being discussed, people had lawn signs saying, "Hands off the greenbelt." People were very vocally opposed to this.

For my southern members, as you go from riding to riding, outside of the rural ones, sometimes you're just going through the street light to a new riding, but Sudbury is like an island. You are in Sudbury, and then there is nothing for several kilometres, 15 or 20 kilometres, and then you're in Nickel Belt. When you leave Nickel Belt, you can drive for an hour or more before you hit another city. Farther north, it's even more remote than that. When we think of green space, there is a lot of green space where we are.

So touching the greenbelt itself maybe wouldn't resonate as much in the north as it would in the south, but the idea of people having a hard time making ends meet; people struggling to pay their rent; kids like my own kids saying, "I'm never going to be able to afford a house"—or my son who is graduating next year, I'm not sure if he's going to move out of the house because the only way he will be able to do that is if he has several roommates. When I was his age, wherever you wanted to live in Sudbury, for a decent apartment, an apartment you would be proud to bring your mom or dad to—maybe not super fancy, but a nice, decent starter apartment—it was a difference of 50 bucks or 100 bucks. You more or less chose based on where you wanted to live. Did you want to be near the college? Did you want to be near the university? Did you want to be near downtown or did you want to be near the beach? But you're talking about 50 bucks. It was all affordable. I had a part-time job when I had my own apartment. That reality is gone.

I know through the debate, the Conservative government is saying, "We're really focused on housing. We have to fix this, get kids out of their parents' basements" and stuff, but this greenbelt grab had nothing to do with that. It didn't. There is a weird alternate reality they're living in.

I worked in construction. I did it for a decade, maybe a little bit longer than that. It would take a long time to develop these lands. This had nothing to do with that, and the people of Ontario know that. They are a lot smarter than the government is giving them credit for, the people of Ontario—a lot smarter.

What's interesting though is we're bringing forward a bill to protect the greenbelt land—there are some areas that are quite caught up in it. This is a bill that in the Conservative government's speeches, when they talk about it, they talk about how great the greenbelt is and how it needs protection. But the Premier himself was caught three times. In 2018, before the 2018 election, he promised people he was going to carve up the greenbelt, and then he was all, "Oh, I'll never do that. I'll never do that." Then he was caught again, and he was like, "Ah, I'll never do it. I will never do it." Then the third time he was caught, he didn't apologize immediately, the way that it's being portrayed in question period and the way it's being portrayed in the Conservative debate. He didn't apologize immediately. He ignored the people of Ontario. He ignored them. Then he ignored some more.

As people got riled up and they were having rallies, saying "Don't touch this" and "Hands off the greenbelt," he ignored them some more. He basically hid. Then, when it seemed like the pressure cooker was really on and people were really upset about this, he blamed the chief of staff. The chief of staff, or whoever had worked for the Minister of Housing, eventually resigned, but I saw that a lot like pushing the guy down the stairs.

0910

When I was 16, I worked at Baskin-Robbins. I couldn't have sold that store without the manager knowing. I just don't see it that way. I don't know all the intricacies of

how the ministry works, but I cannot see the development of the greenbelt land happening by just one person behind the backs of the minister and the Premier and them being out of the loop. It doesn't hold water with me.

The chief of staff resigns. The minister, the Premier and the Conservative Party ignore it some more. People are having louder rallies. People are talking to the Premier when he's going to FordFest, and saying, "Stop this. We don't want this to happen." They dragged their feet and ignored it some more. Then, the minister resigns. What the people of Ontario are looking for is some accountability. I think the minister resigning is a good step forward to show, "Hey, we made a mistake." But he resigned in the middle of Labour Day. It was almost like, "We don't really want any news coverage of this." What people wanted was a heartfelt apology: "We made a mistake; we're turning it around." Sneaking out the back door on Labour Day wasn't that.

Then, the Premier ignored it some more, and then he apologized. The reason I'm pointing that out and I'm explaining that in detail and refreshing everyone's memory is because there's this ideology that wants to be expressed within Conservative government that, "We wanted to build housing, and so we went into the greenbelt to build housing. And as we marched along that path, the people of Ontario said, 'No, don't do that.' And we said, 'Oh, we're sorry,' and we stepped back." But that's not what happened.

The people of Ontario shouldn't be up in arms, yelling and screaming and lighting torches to stop the government from doing something that they promised twice already they wouldn't do. They shouldn't be angry and frustrated. They shouldn't be saying, "Don't do this," and waiting months for them to finally say they're not going to do it and waiting for two more months for them to bring in legislation saying, "We're going to bring in a law to protect us from ourselves." We should have never been here.

The ironic thing, or maybe the harmful thing, is that we know the need for housing is strong, but this was not about housing. Their own experts said you don't need to develop there to provide housing. Experts explained that to us. So when the Premier says, "I'm sorry," it's not unreasonable for the people of Ontario to think, "For what?"

What are you sorry for? Because if you're sorry for trying to carve up the greenbelt, if you're sorry for the greenbelt scandal, if you're sorry about the sense of corruption that this brought to the Conservative government, it doesn't feel that way.

I've apologized for things before. We've all made mistakes. We've all made apologies. I try to ensure it's heartfelt. I don't wait. I don't ignore the people I've hurt. I don't delay. I certainly don't let other people fall in front of me and take the fall for me and try to take the heat off of me. So when the Premier says he's sorry, I think that a lot of people think he's sorry he got caught, because he got caught already in 2018, he got caught again, and now he got caught a third time. It has gotten really ugly, and the popularity is starting to fall, and all of these documents start to surface.

This is a weird story. It feels like a Coen brothers' movie. You have the Premier having a stag and doe and developers buying pretty expensive tickets—\$1,000 I think was the price. I can't remember the exact number, but pretty expensive. I've gone to stag and does; it's usually like 40 bucks. I've never seen one for this much, but I don't live in those neighbourhoods. Maybe that's a normal thing.

Then, developers show up at the stag and doe, but as you go along, the Premier doesn't know any of these developers even though they're there. Then, he does know them, and he can't remember he knows them. It's a really twisted story where you're tripping up on things that you said and didn't say.

Then, some of the developers started buying up land. From what I have heard about this, they're buying up land basically with interest rates that are similar to what you would pay through credit card rates, like 20%—really high interest rates. You're basically buying land that cannot be developed. So it's great that you own it, it's great that you have it, but I think, and I think most of the people in Ontario think, maybe there is a reason they're willing to risk a 20% or, whatever it was, a double-digit interest rate for this land. Then, coincidentally—and there are a lot of coincidences in here—that land is now able to be developed in just a magical way by a stroke of luck. I know there's all kinds of strokes of luck. We all buy lottery tickets from time to time, hoping that we're just going to strike our number, but this just feels a little fishy.

Then, we find out afterwards that some of the developers got to go to the wedding, and the Premier didn't know any of these developers—didn't know any of them. They just happened to come, because they're friends or casual acquaintances. What's the big deal if people you kind of know come to your daughter's wedding—and there is no big deal. I'm looking forward to my daughter and my sons getting married one day, having people come and support them. But I think when there is a photo of you and the developers that eventually got wealthy from the greenbelt deal, when there are photos of you at the head table with them, maybe you're friends, maybe you're a little closer, and maybe there are promises that were made. That's, I think, what got the people of Ontario angry.

Then, there's the Vegas trip. Now, if someone told me that their friend went to Vegas twice, I believe, and paid cash for everything, I would want to hear that story. Like, there is a reason *The Hangover* was a really high-rated movie, right? There are some cool stories that happen in Vegas. Now, when somebody says, "It was a minister and a developer," you start to think, "Well, this is like a Johnny Carson joke." You know, a minister and a developer head to Vegas, paying in cash—you are waiting for a punchline, but the punchline is that the joke is on the people of Ontario who have entrusted their faith in the government. I'm telling a story here and it doesn't look good for the Conservative government, but the reality is that that splashes on all of us as MPPs.

The people of Ontario—the people around the world, really—are losing faith in government to do the right

thing. When scandals like this happen, it affects all of us in elected positions who put in a ton of hours, who work really hard to serve the public. It's not fun to do this, but this is the reality. If there isn't accountability, then we don't get to explain to the people of Ontario what went wrong and how important it is that we address this. So it's very improper. I would say, as an MPP, and especially as a minister, as any elected official, to take a trip to Vegas that you paid all in cash, but you can't remember what the day was—he can't remember the details. It's fishy.

As the Leader of the Opposition—the leader of the NDP—Marit Stiles has said several times during question period, "I didn't even know you can pay all cash for a plane ticket. I had no idea." I went through this weird situation. It's hard to explain, but in order to pay my son's tuition, I had to physically move cash from one bank into another bank. I couldn't just e-transfer it. I couldn't move it across. I had to withdraw it all. It was not as much as you would need for a trip to Vegas and a luxury hotel. It was extremely complicated to get all the money out.

I don't believe people have stacks of cash sitting around, like in a rap music video, that they're just going to hand over to an airport. I can only imagine all the machinations that had to happen so that the minister could pay cash for a plane ticket to Vegas and a plane ticket back from Vegas, a luxury hotel, and, then, a visit to a spa. That's the part that fascinates me. I've just never been to a spa. Maybe it would help with the callouses; I don't know. But I think if I'm going for a meeting with a developer to talk about something—one, I wouldn't go to Vegas to do it. I think I would do it in my office because that seems more proper. I definitely wouldn't get a massage with them.

0920

You have to put this in the context of the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario are struggling to pay bills, and we know this. More and more people in the province of Ontario are using food banks, and we know this. The demographic of people using food banks has changed significantly. It used to be that the majority were unemployed single men. Now it's moving—more and more families are coming, more and more mothers are coming, more and more children are coming. Traditionally, it's mothers first, because mothers will go without food so their kids can eat, but now children are going as well. Now high schools are opening food banks to take care of kids who don't have anything to eat, and those kids sometimes take food home to their families.

More and more full-time working people are using food banks. I think we can all agree that if you're working full-time, you should be able to put a roof over your head; you should be able to buy food and pay for your hydro and maybe have a little left over. But people are working full-time and using food banks, not able to make ends meet.

In the backdrop of all this, looking to the Conservative government for hope and help, they find out that the priority for the Conservative government and the Premier is to help developers make \$8.3 billion; their priority is to fly to Vegas, paying in cash and staying in a luxury hotel and getting a massage with a developer. Their priority,

quite frankly, is wrong and insulting, so when the people of Ontario are outraged, they have every right to be.

Every one of us have constituency offices. I cannot believe that in any riding in this province, people haven't phoned you to say that they're suffering. What's interesting for me is that in the last year and a half, people have been phoning me and telling me, "I'm doing okay. I make a decent wage. But I just did groceries, and I don't know how my neighbours can do it. I just don't see it."

We need hope and help, but we're not getting it. The priority seems to always be wealthy, well-connected individuals.

You have the greenbelt scandal that is not going to lead to building houses; it's going to lead to making people land speculators. A minimum of \$8.3 billion—the Auditor General had that number, but she had to use outdated numbers; it's probably higher than that. You have ministers flying to Vegas, paying in cash, not able to account for where the money came from. You have the Premier using—it has been nicknamed a burner phone—a private phone for government calls; his government phone apparently has no calls on it, so all his phones, I guess, are there, and there's no freedom of information with that.

People are feeling isolated and left out through all of this. The whole thing is feeling ugly, feeling corrupt. So people being upset about this makes sense.

The outcome of this, the cherry on the top—and it's an insult for all of us, as elected officials—is that the RCMP is performing a criminal investigation. They have a special investigator, and I didn't even know that existed; it makes sense that it does. But it is not good for any of us when there's a criminal investigation on an elected public official, someone the public puts their faith and their trust in. I'd be worried. I've done police ride-alongs as an elected official, and I think it's a lot calmer and a lot more comfortable in the front seat than it is in the back. I'd be worried, as a Conservative member—if you're connected to this, if you had donations from these developers, I'd be worried about what happens when you get the phone call. I'm not an expert in law, but it just makes me worried. What makes me worried, and I keep going back to it, is the anger of the people of Ontario, because they want justice, and what happened here doesn't feel just.

A lot of people in Ontario, when they heard the RCMP was having a criminal investigation, got really happy because they want to get to the bottom of this. This isn't going to go away because of this bill. This isn't going to be put to bed because we put this bill forward. It's going to get worse, and it's going to get ugly, and the truth is going to come out. When we rise, the press gallery that visits us every day are going to have nothing to do but dig through the 7,000 pages, and they are really good at their jobs. More and more information will come out and that will be shared with the RCMP.

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

Further debate?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. I will be sharing my time with my colleague, who is coming to the chamber.

Well, Speaker, here we are, almost a year to the day that the government announced it would be carving into our precious greenbelt. November 4, 2022: This Saturday will mark one year. What a great anniversary. Now we must debate this, their backtrack cover-up, basically, their we-are-sorry bill.

What I'm saying is that the government has wasted one year, one full year, of taxpayers' dollars paying for their mistake, and we've wasted the time in this House. More importantly, we've wasted the time of Ontarians. How disrespectful is that? This is not "for the people."

And now they will continue to do so while the RCMP conducts a criminal investigation of the Premier's \$8.3-billion backroom deal. It should be deeply disturbing to the people of Ontario that there are grounds to launch a criminal investigation into the Premier's actions, and the ministers'. There's not a lot of faith in a government when things like this happen.

The Auditor General and Integrity Commissioner both found that the process in which land sites were selected was not transparent, it was not fair, nor was it objective or fully informed. There are procedures and practices that government should follow. It was not done here. It was not done, because two ministers resigned because of the greenbelt scandal—two ministers. One of these ministers vacationed with a developer who directly benefited from this deal. Schedule 3 of the bill provides protection from personal liability to those directly involved in this mess.

Let's be clear about this we're-not-sorry bill. The government shot down my motion at the standing committee of heritage, infrastructure and culture to have members of the government testify in front of our legislative committee on this debacle. They shot it down. Nothing to hide, nothing to fear, right? Nothing like transparency and integrity.

I am baffled that the government can stand up and debate this bill as if it weren't their fault that we are here in the first place. We don't have to be here. We shouldn't be here. We have other important things to do. We are in an affordability crisis, a housing crisis, a health care crisis and an education crisis, yet we are playing games with the greenbelt.

It's as if it wasn't their fault for this \$8.3-billion scandal. And what are they calling it? They're just calling it a mistake. I think we all need to get out our dictionaries and look up that word. I could use much harsher language, Madam Speaker—after all, I am Irish and I have a colourful lexicon—but it would be seen as unparliamentary, so I'll save that.

Beautiful Beaches-East Yorkers and I have been fighting the government on this decision since day one. I want to take the time to thank residents of my riding and all Ontarians.

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They've stood up against the destruction of the greenbelt tirelessly. Every day a new newspaper article comes out—a big headline with the greenbelt, yet another scandal—and they wake up, they pick themselves up, they dust themselves off and they get back in the fight and they

get back out to protest and they get back out to rally. You are all my heroes, and it just shows that people power works. Always, always, people power wins. We may do the governing in here, but we are representing you out there.

And the things we did—I hosted a greenbelt rally in November last year at East Lynn Park in Beaches–East York. We had more than 300 people come out: the media came out, babies came out, children came out, teenagers, seniors—everyone came out. And they spoke. The youth spoke passionately. Environmental groups spoke passionately. They have done the lion's share of the work, rallying the troops to get out there and preserve what is so sacred to Ontarians: the greenbelt.

We had local politicians, Environmental Defence and many other groups. Even our own Green East group in Beaches–East York has been working tirelessly, writing letters, writing opinion pieces in the newspapers, speaking to their neighbours. People were exasperated. People were frustrated. People completely lost faith in this government.

Then we were distributing lawn signs all over. Basically, it was busier than election campaigns. We couldn't keep enough "save the greenbelt" lawn signs in stock. We were scrambling to bike around to deliver them, to walk around, to drive around to deliver them. People wanted to have their voices heard and have that statement on their lawns, how much it matters to them.

I did member's statements, multiple questions, debates on Bills 23 and 39, amendments, more rallies with ROMA at Queen's Park—it was endless. It was such a colossal amount of work. It was a full-time job, preserving the greenbelt, but we did it. But we didn't have to. We didn't have to. We should have been working on important things that matter to Ontarians, not distractions.

Speaker, the Premier has broken the public trust, and it's clear that those close to him were able to benefit and were given the opportunity to make billions of dollars. It's time that there's clarity and a real criminal investigation. The Ford government should not spend one dime of taxpayers' dollars on lawyers for anyone implicated in this scandal—for staff or elected officials. And do you know what? We can stop hiding under the guise that the greenbelt was about the housing crisis, because it was not. You can stop with the distractions, the debauchery and the dynamics and get the bloody shovels in the ground and actually build housing.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: We're sharing our time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Unfortunately, at the beginning of your comments you did not identify the name of the member you would be sharing time with. Therefore, that member does not get recognized.

Questions? Questions? Further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's always a pleasure to stand up in the House and speak to the greenbelt bill, one that is very interesting to me. We have a bill before us that Conservatives put forward to protect themselves from the greenbelt—because we all know what happened here.

I'm going to talk about the Premier quickly. The Premier, prior to the last election, met with a bunch of developers, which we all know about, and he told them that he would develop on the greenbelt. But what he didn't know was somebody was taping it. Then it got out into the community, it got out to Ontarians, and then the public outcry started. And I can tell you, it was led by Niagara. Niagara led that public outcry. Do you know why, Madam Speaker? Because of what we have in Niagara and how important the environment is to our communities, whether that be in Niagara-on-the-Lake, whether that be in Fort Erie or whether it be in Niagara Falls. But quite frankly, the member from Niagara West, who belongs to that party, has a very, very important part of the greenbelt in his own riding. He has 50 small and medium-sized wineries yet he never once stood up and said, "What you are doing is wrong."

So what happened is, people across the province, a few months before the election, went after the Premier and said, "You are not going to develop on the greenbelt." So what did the Premier do? He went in front of the TV cameras, very clearly, and said, "I'm not going to be like those Liberals that were there for 15 years and misled Ontarians for 15 years. I'm going to be up front with the residents and everybody in the province of Ontario." You know what he said? "I'm not touching the greenbelt. I'm listening to people. I'm different."

And people believed him. That's obvious, because they got a majority government. And that was one of the biggest issues in the election, bar none. Yes, we've got issues with affordability and all those other things—rents and all those things that go with it—but the number one issue people cared about was the environment, because if we can't have clean drinking water and we can't breathe the air, we are not going to be on this planet very long.

The environment became a big issue, and the Premier saw that. So every one of those MPPs over there and the Premier said, "I'm not touching the greenbelt." They knocked on doors, and Mrs. Gates would answer that door—that happened to be my wife; they came to my house, knocking on my door, thinking they could sway my wife's vote, but it didn't work. They said it to her: "We're not touching the greenbelt." When I came home from my office, my wife said, "Oh, the PCs came by today"—the candidate who was running against me. I said, "Oh yes, what happened?" She said, "They're not touching the greenbelt." I said, "Well, that's good. I'm glad they're not." We left it at that.

Then guess what happened after they won the election? We found out they were having secret meetings. We found that through those documents. I think I've got 700 pages of documents, now that they're being charged by the RCMP. And guess what? They were already planning to touch our greenbelt. That was wrong.

It went on for months—actually, it went on for a year—and they hid behind the fact that they said they wanted to build housing. I want to be clear, because every one of my colleagues who is here today and all the ones who aren't here today all said one thing: We support building 1.5

million homes. We want homes for our kids and our grandkids. We want to make sure they've got a future. We want to make sure that they don't have to live in our basements for the next 20 years. There are a lot of reasons around that but one was they deserve to have a home, they deserve to have family, they deserve to raise their family in our communities.

But what happened? The Premier said, "I'm going to develop on the greenbelt because we need to build homes." Then his own task force—his own task force—said, "We can build 1.5 million homes without touching the greenbelt." What did they do? "Oh, no, we need to build those homes on the greenbelt."

We all know that wasn't accurate because their own task force told them and made 17 recommendations—that they now think are good recommendations, but which we said they should have followed in the first place—that they didn't have to develop on the greenbelt. But they were going down the greenbelt. They were going to take over our greenbelt.

Then they went a step further with MZO's. I'll talk real quick about long-term care. They put an MZO so they could build long-term care, even though that council in Pickering said, "No, Orchard Villa has a terrible record. They had over 40 people die in their long-term-care facility. We do not want this company to continue to have a contract here and take care of our seniors." This government said, "Well, that's too bad, because we've got to build and we're going to do it, no matter what."

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And that was wrong. You're wrong on MZO's when you go against elected officials in the community that they represent.

We're getting back to the Premier. He got off the greenbelt. He stood up here and he said, "Oh, I'm sorry. We made a bad decision." But guess what happened? They lost two ministers and two, kind of, chief of staffs because of what happened, but the big issue is—and you can't say it in here. For people that are listening at home or people that are here listening, you can't say that they lied. You can't say that in the House because then the Speaker will stand up and tell me I have to retract. I think that's wrong, by the way. I've said that to not only you as a Speaker but to all of our Speakers. I believe if somebody stands up in this House and doesn't tell us the truth and they know it's not the truth, I should be able to stand up here and say, "You know you lied to the residents of the province of Ontario." I think we should be able to do that. If I stand up and do that, then that member over here should call me out and say, "Gates, you're not being truthful here." But I can't do that here. I can do it in Ottawa. Think about that. You can do it in Ottawa; you can't do it here.

I can't say the Premier lied. I can't say that. But follow the balls. He said he was going to develop on the greenbelt. And then, because of all the public outcry, because the environment is really so important—I know my member right here from Toronto would tell you that—he said, "I'm listening to Ontarians. I'm not going to be like the Liberals. I'm going to listen. We're not touching the

greenbelt." The minute they get elected, guess what happens? They're touching the greenbelt.

Follow the balls. First, he says to the developers, "I'm going to develop on the greenbelt." Then, the second step is, he says to the residents, so he can get some votes, so he can come to my door and say, "I'm not touching the greenbelt." The minute they get a majority, what do they do? They hide behind building 1.5 million homes, even though his own task force—this is important during this discussion, for the amount of time that I have—made 17 recommendations, and guess what they said? "We have lots of land. We can build those homes, all different types of homes, all the homes that people and young families need in our communities. You don't have to touch the greenbelt."

Guess what happened? They made a deal with developers that were going to get \$8.2 billion in profit the minute that they're allowed to develop on the greenbelt. That's what it was about. It was about taking care of 10 or 12—whatever the number of developers is. That will come out, obviously, in the RCMP investigation. That's all going to come out. Guess what happened? They got caught. Then, the Premier, even though he knew exactly what he was doing, because the balls were very clear: "I'm going to develop." "I'm not going to develop." "I'm going to develop." "I'm sorry. I'm not going to develop." Now, they bring a bill forward to protect themselves from the greenbelt.

It really upsets me that this is what we're standing up here talking about when I know, because I watched the news last night—we saw our new Canadians sleeping outside in Toronto. We saw young families going to food banks in record numbers. That's what we should be discussing, finding those types of solutions. Instead, we have all of this corruption around us. I hope the RCMP gets to the bottom of it. If they did what everybody thinks they've done, they deserve to have the RCMP probably charge them.

I want to talk quickly about Niagara, because I don't think I can do my whole time. I'm not sure how it works on the timing part of this. In my area—let me get back to Niagara. It is by far one of the most important areas in all of the province of Ontario. We have some of the best area in Ontario by far: our tender fruit, where we grow our apples and our peaches. Why would we ever want to destroy that? Why would we want to take away our food source? I'm having struggles right now, today, with our grapes that are rotting on the grapevines because we have laws in place and policies in place by your government that are not protecting the grape industry and are allowing, if you can imagine, other countries to ship their grapes into Ontario as our grapes that are freshly on the vines and that could be used in our wine are going to end up rotting on the vines. It doesn't make any sense. That's what we should be discussing today.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay, I'm just getting directions here, sorry. I'm looking right at the Speaker, so I'm kind of looking over John's head. When you're only five foot nothing like I am, it's tough to see over people's heads.

Anyway, it's so important to me, in Niagara—the wine industry, the tender fruit industry. What are we doing? Why would we ever want to destroy that? Why would we ever want to destroy our food source? We thought we should have learned something.

I know during this time some people don't listen, and I understand that they're playing on whatever they're doing, but this is important. It's important that we understand that we learn from our mistakes.

And what was our mistake? Our mistake was that we were relying on other countries to provide our PPE when COVID hit; when people started dying, started getting sick, started being in our hospitals, and we didn't have any PPE, we didn't have any masks, we didn't have any aprons, we didn't have any gloves. Guess where they were being made? In China, and some in the southern states. And what did they say to us? “No, we need those for ourselves. We need those to take care of our own residents. We're not sending them to you”—including the United States of America. And then what did we have to do? We scrambled. We had to have companies start to make gloves and masks and change their whole companies over to try to provide it.

But what will happen—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Somebody is chirping over there, so at least somebody is listening to me. I like when they chirp cause then at least I know I've got their attention. They're even putting their hands up, so that's kind of good.

At the end of the day, what should we have learned? We should have learned that we can't rely on other countries to provide important things to us. And what's more important to us than our food and our water and our environment?

If you think that we can continue today, Madam Speaker—because I know you always listen; I appreciate that. We're losing 319 acres of prime farmland every single day in the province of Ontario. And what I'm saying to my colleagues is, why would we do that? Why would we destroy our food source? In Niagara—I've given you examples of our grapes, our peaches, all the things. Our local farmers' markets are incredible, and there are lots of them. If you go down a little ways, there are some on this corner. They're everywhere. Why would we want to destroy that? That makes no sense to me. I'm trying to say to this government, why would we ever try to do that? We need to protect our farmers. We need to protect our food source.

What they were trying to do with the greenbelt was awful. I can use different words than that, but you'd have to stand up and call me out. It was one of the worst decisions ever made by a government, and I said, just like I said to Premier Wynne when she fell in the same footsteps as the Conservative government under Mike Harris, when they privatized Hydro and when they sold off Hydro One—I went right to the Premier then, and I said, “This the biggest mistake you've ever made, and if you don't back down on that mistake”—and my good friend

Jim Bradley, who I still go to hockey games and Blue Jays games with. He's still a good friend of mine. He's a Liberal, and I know some people think you don't talk to the opposite side, but Jim is a good friend of mine. I said to Jim, “You're going to lose your election if you can't convince Premier Wynne to back down on hydro.” I know that he went to their caucus meeting—we all have caucus meetings—and he went to his cabinet, and he tried to convince her not to do it.

Guess what happened to Premier Wynne? Not only did she lose, but what have they got? They've got a van and a quarter there—and there's nothing wrong with a minivan, by the way. They're made in Windsor by good auto workers, so that's not the issue. But it's a good thing we make those vans, so they can take themselves around. And why did that happen? It happened because she decided to sell off Hydro One. That was the number one issue as we watched our bills go from \$50 to \$300, and people said that was wrong and they didn't vote for her.

I'm telling you, the greenbelt will have the same effect on this government—that if they continued to go down the path of the greenbelt, they were all going to be defeated; they would have been the new minivan party, because people care with passion about the environment and they care about our heritage.

And there's no bigger place in my riding—and quite frankly, I'm being honest with the member from Niagara West. His riding is the same as ours. A little bit in the Welland riding, as well, with my member; not as much in St. Catharines, but they also have it—but the Niagara area. I can ask my colleagues—they probably won't put their hands up—how many have been to Niagara? Everyone goes to Niagara-on-the-Lake, I think, at some point in time. As a matter of fact, if I'm not mistaken—it just hit me—I think the entire PC caucus was in my riding when the Premier stood right beside the casino in Niagara Falls and apologized and said they're not going to touch the greenbelt.

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Now, we've still got lots of problems with it, obviously, because the RCMP investigation and all that is going to go on; it's going to go on for a while. They're going to interview people. That's going to continue to happen.

So that's how I know that the entire PC Party loves my riding. They were down there, and I was a little surprised—I'll say this: Usually, when you come into somebody's riding, you at least say that you're there. Nobody called me up to go for dinner or go out and show the riding, maybe drive them around. I was so shocked at that; I couldn't believe it. I'm thinking to myself, “They've got to be calling,” you know? I checked my cellphone to see if it was still working. Actually, I thought maybe the House leader for the other team might have called me and said, “Hey, do you want to go and watch the Niagara IceDogs play some hockey?” Nothing. You guys didn't call me at all.

But the important part of that is that you have backed down on the greenbelt. That's the important part. How you got there, other people than me, that are a lot smarter than

me, are going to do that investigation. You've already lost a couple of your ministers. You've already lost a couple of your chiefs of staff. My concern is who's next. Who's next? Who's the next one that's going to end up under the bus on this issue?

The bigger issue for me, I'm going to say as I finish up, the most important part of all this for me is protecting our food source, protecting our environment, protecting our water. I want to be clear—because I know they stand up every day and say, “Well, that's the party over there that's hook, line and sinker with the Liberals, that didn't want to build housing.” I want to be very clear: I have stood up in this House many, many times—you can check Hansard all you want—and said how important it is to build housing in the province of Ontario, the 1.5 million. Your task force said it was doable without touching the greenbelt. I'm going to continue to say, on behalf of my colleagues—because I know every one of these colleagues that are here today and knows that we'll be here for question period have said the same thing—we want to build homes.

I want to be very clear. I know you're all sitting out there thinking that, you know, I'm probably 35, 37 years old. Well, I'm a little older than that. I have three daughters and I have five grandchildren. My oldest grandchild is 19. You think about it. I want a future for my three daughters. I want to make sure that they can afford a house. My youngest daughter just bought a house a year ago; she's struggling a bit with the cost of it, with interest rates, but she has had the opportunity to buy—guess what it was—a little starter home, something like a wartime house, but at least she got into the market. I want that for my kids. I want that for my three daughters. I want that for my grandkids. So when you stand up and say that we don't want to build homes for our kids, that's absolutely not accurate.

We love our kids just like the Conservatives love their kids, just like the Liberals and the Greens love their kids, and we want the best for them. You know what's best for them? That we make sure that we have an environment so they have clean air, they have clean drinking water, and make sure they can afford to buy a house, that they have a good-paying job.

As a lot of you should know, I came out of the labour movement. I was a union president; I've done all that. I joined a union. I was lucky; I got paid fair wages. I made a good, fair wage. I got benefits. I have a pension. And guess what? I was able to raise those three daughters. I was able to provide for them, to play some baseball; I coached baseball for close to 20 years. They figure-skated. They got an education. They went to university. One's a teacher, one works in special needs today, and the other one is in public health. How could I do that? Because I had a good-paying job. I had a house that I bought.

I want the same thing for my kids. So please don't stand up here and say I don't want to build 1.5 million houses, that I don't really care about young people having a place to live, that I don't care about students, that I don't care about this—

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

Mr. Adil Shamji: We all know why we're here. This government is trying to make their loss look like a win because the RCMP has a criminal investigation against them. They're trying to distract from that.

Now, they're proposing to return lands that were just taken out by themselves. They're going to add in a few more lands that are, frankly, already protected. And though they're codifying the boundaries of the greenbelt, in this majority government situation, they can still shuffle lands in and out of the greenbelt before the next election, the same way they shuffle ministers in and out of cabinet.

So my question to the member from Niagara Falls is, do you think, despite all of this, that your constituents will still forgive the government?

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's a really good question, because I know that, for four terms, they have tried to beat me, so they haven't been very successful. I know what they do appreciate is that you want to be honest; you want to tell them the truth. And the truth is that we don't need—we never needed—to develop on the greenbelt. That's really, really the truth. So I'm a firm believer that if you're honest with your constituents, if you're out front of your constituents and telling them what you think, they will always support you.

Will they forgive the Conservatives going forward? I'm going to leave that up to the voters. Am I going to forgive them? The answer is no, because I always want to be told the truth, and we weren't told the truth on this particular greenbelt fiasco that we've gone through.

I appreciate the question. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Thank you very much for your heartfelt and eloquent and passionate speech, to the member from Niagara.

My question is, do you think that there are other important things that the government, all of us, should be addressing and dealing with besides playing games with the greenbelt?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Premier said the greenbelt was a scam—it's not. It's one of the most important things that we have, and we're very lucky to live in this part of the world, quite frankly, and that we have the greenbelt, that we have some protection for our environment and for our water. I want to be very clear: I don't think the greenbelt was ever a scam.

As far as other things, yes. I don't know if you were here when I started my speech and I talked about the fact that it's heartbreaking to watch, in one of the richest provinces in the country, where we have people sleeping on the streets last night in Toronto—new Canadians. That's the first thing they're seeing from Ontario, that they're sleeping with their suitcase and their little kids on the streets of Toronto. So we should be making sure that people have a place to live. We should be making sure they can afford to buy their groceries. We should make sure that builds after, I think, 2018 have rent controls on those so that they can get housing.

So there are lots of issues. Affordability is probably the biggest issue in this province. I knock on the doors almost every weekend. Affordability: “I can’t afford my rent.” “I can’t afford my mortgage.” “I can’t buy food.” “I can’t buy the gas.” So what we should be discussing is affordability when we—

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

Mr. Rick Byers: I appreciate very much and thank the member for his remarks on this important piece of legislation. I know the member talks a lot about his labour background, and I admire that. Earlier in my life, I was a rebar bender and a crane operator, so I have worked in a labour environment for a little while. And obviously, the member had a great success, because he talks a lot about his Maple Leafs tickets—and I don’t know whether they’re gold tickets or platinum tickets, but obviously, he did very well. I saw him going to a Leafs game once.

But my real question is, aside from the fact that—the most important thing, in my view, that this bill is doing, is any changes to the greenbelt in the future require a legislative change. That’s a very significant change and a much more open process. Isn’t that something that the member can support, this important change to the process in the future?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I think it’s very clear that you brought the bill forward to protect yourselves from the greenbelt.

But I’ll be honest with you, your shot about me going to sporting events and how I might be in the golds—let me tell you, I pay for every one of my tickets that I go to a ballgame with, and I’m very proud of the fact that I’ve worked hard, that I can afford to buy a ticket. But when I go to Blue Jays game, I sit in the 500 level; I don’t sit in the box. When I go to a Leafs game, I sit up in the end blues and I buy my tickets off Jim Bradley.

I don’t think that was a very good shot. There is nothing wrong with people buying sporting tickets so they have entertainment, so they can get away. And a lot of times, I take my grandkids to the baseball game. I take my grandkids over to the Bisons games or to a Sabres game. I’ve worked very hard to be able to afford tickets up in the red, in section 5 for ball games. I’ve worked very hard to sit in the end blues in the Toronto Maple Leaf games. I don’t think I have to apologize for being able to afford to go to a sporting event in the province of Ontario because of the—

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

Mr. Calandra has moved second reading of Bill 136, An Act to amend the Greenbelt Act, 2005 and certain other Acts, to enact the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve Act, 2023, to repeal an Act and to revoke various regulations. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion has carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Please refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure And Cultural Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The deputy government House leader has referred the bill to heritage, infrastructure and cultural policy. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day? I recognize the deputy government House leader.

Mr. Trevor Jones: Thank you, Speaker. No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Seeing there is no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:15.

The House recessed from 1002 to 1015.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS

ONTARIO FILM INDUSTRY

Mr. Deepak Anand: Film production in Ontario contributes over \$3 billion in economic activity and supports over 45,000 jobs. Film production and festivals support and provide cultural bridges, connecting diverse communities and fostering dialogue and understanding.

With Mississauga–Malton serving as a central hub for several of its major activities, the International Film Festival of South Asia, IFFSA, celebrated their 12th film festival as a shining beacon of cultural celebration, artistic exploration and economic vitality for Ontario. IFFSA Toronto made a significant economic impact. By attracting local and international participation, it enhanced Ontario’s reputation as a global cultural hub. IFFSA is actively working to strengthen the South Asian film production and distribution industry in Ontario by promoting the various credits and supports provided by the government of Ontario and fostering wider international connections.

Through the IFFSA Talent Fund, the festival fosters homegrown talent and extends its impact throughout the year with a comprehensive learning series and various year-round activities.

My best wishes for IFFSA Toronto to continue being a cultural and economic catalyst in Ontario as it evolves and expands as a symbol of Ontario’s commitment to cultural diversity and creativity.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yesterday, on November 1, an unprecedented 12 Waterloo region ambulances were on off-load delay for up to 15 hours; St. Mary’s Hospital—same day—10 ambulances waiting to off-load. Paramedics say that they are facing a crisis that can no longer be ignored. This is dangerous. It’s happening across Ontario, with no cure offered by the Ford government.

Off-load delays occur when paramedics cannot transfer the care of the patient over to the hospital due to a lack of space or staffing, so they are stuck waiting, instead of

responding to calls, usually waiting in a hall in a hospital or a parking lot.

When people call 911, it's because they need an ambulance, they need a paramedic, they need medical assistance. It's not one of the calls that you make and you're saying, "Well, I can stay on hold for an hour."

Code reds occur when there are no ambulances available to respond to calls. In Waterloo region, there were 87 code reds over the first nine months of 2022, a major jump from 21 in the past year. John Riches, chief of paramedics, calls this deeply concerning. Paramedic services is currently losing the equivalent of three 12-hour ambulance shifts per day to off-load delay.

Waterloo is resilient. They have brought in their own local solutions, but let's be honest: The province needs to acknowledge that this is a real issue affecting Ontarians. Code reds should not be the new normal in the province of Ontario.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Aris Babikian: The Ministry of Transportation has given the green light to start early planning work for the Sheppard subway extension, which will examine connecting the current terminus of Line 4 at Don Mills station with the future Scarborough subway extension.

As part of this work, Metrolinx has also been tasked with investigating a possible western extension from Sheppard-Yonge station to Sheppard West station at Allen Road. Accordingly, Metrolinx is launching three community consultation meetings this November to seek the input of the community to extend the TTC's current Line 4 along Sheppard Avenue. Input and feedback received from community members during the consultation is an important component of the initial business case recommendation.

Finally, after years of failed promises, endless debates and redundant votes, the Sheppard extension is one step closer to realization. Commuters in Scarborough deserve the same access to reliable public transit as people living in downtown Toronto. Delivering safer, faster and more convenient travel options to our commuters is my ultimate goal.

1020

It is my honour and privilege to serve the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt.

Promise made, promise kept.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I want to pay tribute this morning to the many non-profit organizations that operate on inadequate budgets while providing essential services to our communities. Non-profits provide supports in times of crisis, and they are also the cultural and recreational lifeblood of our communities. Demand for non-profit services is through the roof, yet the sector is running on fumes.

In Thunder Bay, we have lost the important Street Outreach Service, known as SOS, and we have also lost the sexual assault clinic in Victoriaville mall. These losses are devastating for my community.

The Ontario Nonprofit Network is warning that many more vital services will collapse without significant changes in how the government supports this sector. Organizations struggle to attract and keep staff because one-off, project-based funding means that all jobs are short-term and precarious. Organizations need stable and long-term funding that reflects the true cost of delivering services and programs. Without a significant change in how governments deal with the non-profit sector, it will disappear, and with it, our social cohesion.

Government members need to look carefully at the recommendations of the Ontario Nonprofit Network and do what is necessary to support the critical work of these vital community organizations.

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Ric Bresee: November is Diabetes Awareness Month. As noted by the member from Simcoe–Grey, this year marks 100 years since Dr. Banting and Dr. Macleod received their Nobel Prize for their discovery of insulin to help people with diabetes. Before that discovery, people with diabetes were people dying of diabetes—and now they are people living with diabetes.

Speaker, did you know that 30% of Ontarians live with diabetes but only 11% are actually diagnosed?

Living with diabetes can be a full-time job. Those with diabetes need to be pharmacists, dietitians, doctors and mathematicians in their everyday lives. This is why our government continues to support Ontarians living with diabetes. In March 2022, we added the life-saving, real-time glucose monitoring systems to the ADP program, leading to better self-management, leading to healthier lives. And then in April of this year, our government passed a motion made by the amazing MPP for Eglinton–Lawrence for the Ministry of Health to develop a framework on chronic diseases, including diabetes.

What started as Banting's research project to save the life of a 13-year-old boy on the brink of death has now become an entire life-saving medical sector.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to be part of a government that continues to work towards improving the lives of Ontarians living with diabetes.

GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Premier said the greenbelt is a scam, but we know that it's important for the environment and that it's the heart of our agricultural industry in Niagara. It's an important part of our local economy, through the wine and grape-growing industry.

My riding and the riding of Niagara West account for nearly 90% of all grapes grown in Ontario. Local farmers are suffering due to a lack of support, an unfair tax structure on 100% Ontario wine, and limited shelf space

for local wines at the LCBO. Farmers watch their grapes rot on the vine while the government ignores their struggles. It's not right that the Conservatives prioritize wine from other countries over local wines. We need a level playing field and support for our local industry, our grape growers, and the land they work on.

The LCBO must step up and provide more shelf space for Ontario wines. Our local wineries create jobs, boost tourism and drive our economy. They deserve better.

It's time we come together to protect our greenbelt and support our Niagara wine and grape-growing industry. We must ensure our farmers can thrive, not just survive. The time is now to stand up for our local economy and the environment we hold dear. Let's make Ontario's greenbelt and wine industry stronger than ever.

VETERANS

Mr. Rick Byers: Last Sunday, it was my pleasure to be at Royal Canadian Legion Branch 6 in Owen Sound for a great event put on by the Billy Bishop Museum honouring nine local veterans in our Grey-Bruce community.

Colleagues, as you may know, Billy Bishop was a Canadian flying ace in the First World War. He was officially credited with 72 victories, making him the top Canadian and British ace of the war. He also received a Victoria Cross. What you may not know about Billy Bishop was that he was born and grew up in the great community of Owen Sound. Billy Bishop's home on 3rd Avenue West is now a wonderful museum where visitors can learn more of the history of this great Canadian hero.

Last Sunday, the Billy Bishop Museum and Owen Sound Legion again hosted a wonderful event to honour nine local veterans. The event was attended by many family members and friends of the honourees because, as we know, when veterans serve, their families also serve. We heard about the amazing service of these veterans, their perseverance, their dedication and their commitment to our country.

Sergeant Terry Bates, Private Alvin Cameron, Leading Seaman William Cutting, Lieutenant Luella Denton, Private John Des Jardine, Lieutenant-Colonel James Gale, Ordinary Seaman John Garvey, Sergeant Leonard Smith and Sergeant Wallace Sprung: Thank you to all these nine great Grey-Bruce veterans. Your actions have given us the way of life we are so lucky to enjoy today.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ted Hsu: Mr. Speaker, time is money. The time wasted in the Conservative government's shady greenbelt deals, digging a hole and filling it in, getting it done and then getting it undone, has delayed the building of housing.

Time is money. A minister resigned and staff were replaced. The new minister, after he took the time to get up to speed, even had to compensate municipalities. Pickering and Grimsby spent \$442,000 for time spent working on greenbelt removals. Others will have to be

compensated for the time wasted on shady, undone urban boundary expansions.

Time is money. Now, interest rates have gone up. Housing projects are stalled. Why didn't the Conservative government follow their own task force, or any of the task forces from cities across Canada, since rents started taking off in 2018? Why didn't they eliminate exclusionary zoning and make it legal to build the medium density and mixed neighbourhoods we need, instead of waiting for the federal government to hold their hand and show the way?

Time is money. Now, the Conservative government is following the federal lead and cutting the HST on purpose-built rentals. That's great, but why wait to have their hand held by the federal government? Why couldn't they have done this much earlier? This government has wasted the time of Ontarians, wasted their money and wasted this province's opportunity to prosper and thrive.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Stephen Crawford: As Remembrance Day draws near, it becomes even more important for us to honour the brave Canadian heroes who have sacrificed so much to defend our freedom, rights and democracy. During times of war, every Canadian in every province, regardless of age, came together in their own way, all aiming for a common goal, which was peace. Our brave men and women gave their lives for freedom and peace, not just for us, but for future generations.

Remembering their sacrifice is vital. We must never forget the courage and commitment they showed. We must never forget the likes of an Oakville resident whose name stands etched on the Bronte Cenotaph. This cenotaph, located in the centre of Bronte Village by the lake, honours those individuals from World Wars I and II and Korea.

It stands in Chris Vokes Memorial Park, dedicated to Major-General Christopher Vokes, an Oakville resident and distinguished World War II veteran. Major-General Vokes exemplified courage. He led the 1st Canadian Infantry Division through several battles in Italy and Germany; the most famous, of course, which many know, was the capture of Ortona.

While the park recognizes Major-General Vokes, the Bronte Cenotaph is a tribute to everyone who served. It tells us we must always remember, and I hope that everybody in Ontario will take time this November 11 to remember the brave individuals who gave their lives for our country. Lest we forget.

1030

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Matthew Rae: It's a privilege to rise here today to speak about one of the most important days of the year: Remembrance Day. It's the day when we all take pause to remember the immense sacrifices that Canadian men and women made in World War I, World War II, Korea, Afghanistan and countless peacekeeping operations around the globe.

It is truly hard to imagine what our veterans have done and continue to do to fight for the freedoms that we all so enjoy in Ontario and Canada.

In my riding of Perth–Wellington, we are fortunate to have a great sense of patriotism and pride in our veterans. In my own family, Speaker, my great-uncles helped liberate Rome in World War II.

The town of Arthur is known as Canada's most patriotic village because of its extraordinary effort in the Second World War. It holds a series of beautiful murals and monuments in the downtown core to honour those who have fought.

Earlier this year, the city of Stratford lost an amazing World War II veteran: Art Boon. He was a veteran of the Normandy invasion on D-Day, a tank crew member, someone who shared his stories with the next generation countless times and was the long-time MC of the Stratford Remembrance Day ceremony. This will be the first year without Art's presence.

Speaker, I know all of us in this place are truly grateful for Canada's men and women who don the uniform day in and day out. Lest we forget.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us a former member in the Legislature again today, the member for Kitchener Centre in the 38th, 39th and 40th provincial Parliaments, John Milloy. Welcome back.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Today in the members' gallery we are joined by a delegation of Ontarians who have lost family recently in Israel or had family members who have been taken hostage. I want to welcome them to their House and tell you: We see you, and we thank you for being here.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to welcome to the Ontario Legislature regional councillor Chris Leahy and regional councillor Steve Yamada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, with your indulgence, I'd like to introduce two groups. Today, it's my honour to introduce legislative page captain Clara Brunet's mother, Beth Belanszky; father, Jean-Pierre Brunet; as well as Clara's brother Oliver. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to welcome members of the Canadian Alopecia Areata Foundation. Alopecia areata is an autoimmune disease that causes unpredictable hair loss, which can affect anyone at any age. I'd like to welcome CanAAF president, Carolynne Harrison; CanAAF board member and fundraising chair Lauryn Harrison; Richard Harrison; and Stewart MacPhee. I hope you enjoy your time at the people's House.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I, too, have the honour of introducing the consul general of the democratic State of Israel, Idit Shamir, who is joined by a delegation of Canadian families whose relatives have been abducted or taken hostage or, worse, murdered by Hamas. It is an honour to welcome you to our House of democracy.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to welcome the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences, including Greg Toffner, Kati Tuomi, Erin Arps, Anna Gasior, Stephanie Shiplo, Hema Merai and Derek Brown. Welcome to your House.

Mr. John Fraser: I, too, would like to join the Solicitor General in welcoming the consul general here to the Legislature today. To the families who have family who have been abducted or have lost lives, we stand with you and thank you for being here today. Our hearts go out to you.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Good morning. I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Burlington, Lauryn Harrison, Carolynne Harrison and Richard Harrison.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome representatives from the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association and the Ontario Association of Pathologists, and a particular shout-out to London West constituent Alan Stuart, who is manager of the molecular diagnostics program at London Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Health Care London. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. It's beautiful to see you all again. I'm here to introduce some amazing residents from beautiful Beaches–East York: Carolina Reis and son, Adam, here to support page Clara.

Mr. Kevin Holland: It's my honour to welcome two residents from my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan. From Thunder Bay, we have Kati Tuomi, and from the beautiful Kakabeka Falls, my good friend and neighbour, Erin Arps. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: I'd like to welcome Kimberely Fernandes to the House today. Kimberely is a wonderful resident of Ajax and a part of my family. Thank you for coming out, Kimberely.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd like to continue with introductions unless there's an objection.

Go ahead.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: I wanted to welcome the mother and sister of my page, Simran, today. Thank you for being here. She has been awesome.

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I'd like to acknowledge that it's World Fertility Day. I want to welcome guests we have here from Conceivable Dreams. We have Zane Colt and Baden Colt here with their baby, Scottie, up in the gallery. Congratulations.

We also have Tara Wood, Cassandra Johnston, Heather Douglas as well as clinician adviser Dr. Kimberly Liu. Welcome.

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: I would like to welcome representatives from the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Regional Laboratory Association and the Ontario Association of Pathologists and the professionals who work in medical laboratories across Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Robin Martin: On behalf of the Minister of Health, I wanted to welcome three groups today: the

Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences, the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Pathologists, and the group from Conceivable Dreams, who had a breakfast this morning. I didn't get to meet many when I was there because I had to go quickly, but I met the most important people, which were the babies.

Hon. Nina Tangri: They're on their way up, but I do want to welcome Keith Fleming, Saroj Gandhi and Kam Sandhu, my constituency staff. I just wanted to say—on behalf of all members of this House, I'd like to thank all of our constituency staff who serve our constituents with kindness, compassion and very often having to deal with very difficult situations. Thank you to all of our staff for everything you do to support MPPs. Thank you.

1040

Ms. Jess Dixon: It is my great pleasure today to introduce and welcome the parents of our page captain today. Our page is Ananya Joshi from Kitchener South-Hespeler, and we're joined today by her mother, Prerana Joshi, and her father, Bakulesh Joshi. I'll also bring greetings to her brother Arnav who couldn't be here, as he's in his studies at the Royal Canadian Military Institute. Thank you so much for coming.

Mr. Adil Shamji: Good morning, Speaker. Thank you for acknowledging me. I'd like to welcome to the chamber today the Medical Laboratory Professionals' Association of Ontario, as well as the Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Sciences, and thank them all for their incredible services to patients and health care in our province

REMEMBRANCE DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask for the attention of the House.

As provided for by the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, the assembly will now pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and peacekeeping efforts.

This will be followed by an opportunity for members to make speeches, with five minutes allotted to the official opposition, five minutes allotted to the government, and five minutes allotted to the independent members as a group.

I will ask members to please rise.

The House observed two minutes' silence.

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

I recognize the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you very much, Speaker. As you know, next week is Remembrance Week here in Ontario, which was made law by the efforts of MPP Jim Wilson. I was proud, with Cheri DiNovo, to co-sponsor that bill and for Jim to ask us.

All of us next week will be back in our communities at cenotaphs, Legions, churches and long-term-care homes, and we'll all be remembering the sacrifices of people past and present for our freedom, for our democracy.

I got up this morning to iron my shirt and I found this little note that was written by my mother-in-law—not appropriate to today, but it was my mother-in-law and I always like to talk about her today, so it was a bit unusual. You see, my mother-in-law, Yvonne, had four brothers. They all fought in World War II. Three of them, Bill, Neil and Jim, all came home. Her brother Ansley didn't. She was closest to him in age. She loved him, not just like a brother but a friend. He died at Dieppe in August 1942, on the beaches—actually, in the water.

My mother-in-law is such a great example of not forgetting, because for more than 70 years, she kept his picture. She kept his picture on her dresser. Every day, she looked at that picture—every day for more than 70 years. I guess this morning was a reminder not to forget that. Thankfully, she left that for me.

That's what we have to try to do, even if we don't have a picture: every day, remember the sacrifices of people who gave up everything—everything—so we can be here actually doing what we're doing today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm honoured to rise today to pay tribute to veterans and first responders who have sacrificed so much to defend democracy and to keep us safe. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we gather to remember and honour those who selflessly serve our country.

The memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice continues to remind us of the stark reality of defending freedom and democracy. It is difficult to fathom the degree of courage demonstrated by those young Canadians who served in the World Wars, Korea, Afghanistan, peacekeeping and other missions.

Today, I recall the words of Guelph's Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae that remind us that we must not break faith with those who fought and died for our freedoms. That is why we must not only pay tribute to veterans and their families, but we also must take the steps and the actions to provide them with the care and support they need and deserve.

So I say to veterans, first responders and their families, thank you, thank you, thank you for your service. We will continue to honour your sacrifice and the sacrifice of your comrades who did not come home. Speaker, on this day and every day, lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Haldimand-Norfolk.

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak ahead of Remembrance Day.

There are now a few communities across my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk who have raised banners in memory of those who have served. This is to ensure year-long remembrance—a commitment we should all make.

Recently, I attended the unveiling of 94 banners for the town of Hagersville. It was a moving ceremony, with a slideshow of the 94 bright-eyed young men in uniform, sporting beautiful smiles—faces lit with hopes, prayers and aspirations.

As a mom, my mind wandered to my own young man, Carter, who is now 18, much the same age as many of those sent overseas. As a mother—as a parent—that is not a young man; that is your boy. The heaviness that must have been felt in the hearts of families as they kissed their boys goodbye must have been immense, especially given the fact that that kiss may be the last.

Even the wildest imaginations could not have conceived what those young men saw and endured. Our freedoms were given to us by heartbroken families, nurses and doctors who tended to the wounded and by those young boys and men, many who were denied the chance to carry out their dreams. And here we sit, having personally done nothing for the freedoms we enjoy.

The very least we can do is make it our responsibility to never forget the service and sacrifices of more than one and a half million Canadian soldiers, sailors, air crew and merchant seamen. We can all begin our year-long commitment starting next week by lending a hand to our local Legions and army, navy and air force units as they continue the annual poppy campaign. We will remember them.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member from St. Catharines.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Each year, it's a privilege to stand to participate in representing my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in this Legislature as we collectively lead an important moment of reflection and commemoration during Veterans' Week and leading up to Remembrance Day.

As November 11 draws near, it is by walking through the rich historical halls of this Legislature that we are reminded, together, what we all represent. Canadians across our country will join with our province; they will stand in silence, united, honouring the names on our community war memorials, our cenotaphs—the names of the brave men and women who sacrificed so that we could stand together today. These brave souls were our nation's sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. They were the best of us, who packed up to traverse far from home to fields and cities across the world, to safeguard the Canadian way of life and to ensure that the liberties we cherish remain intact.

In each of our own ways, we honour those who have defended our freedoms and made the ultimate sacrifice.

Just this year, my colleague from Ottawa Centre visited Juno Beach. He visited a stretch of the coastline where his grandfather had fought and where many Canadians fought. He sent me a postcard illustrating the stark coastline of Juno Beach, from Gold to Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer. It was a reminder to me that I, too, had relatives who left for Juno Beach and never returned home; one of these was my grandfather's brother John Griffin from Prince Edward Island. He was not alone—340 of the soldiers who left for Juno Beach did not return home. The picture on the postcard was also a reminder to me that while Remembrance Day means something different to each and every one of us, it is a uniting force and an opportunity for

personal reflection. I want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for sharing his experience with me.

As I look across and around this chamber, I am heartened to see the sea of poppies on all of our lapels. The poppies are not coloured to denote any political party, but instead they denote a common force that unites us all: a force of freedom.

Speaker, Remembrance Day carries a special meaning for myself and my family. I not only wear my poppy over my heart, but I wear my pride on my sleeve, as a proud mother of an active service member: my son, Jonathan Lindal, petty officer first class, a serving member of our Royal Canadian Navy. Jonathan follows in the footsteps of his grandfather and his great-grandfathers, who both served our country. Jonathan has successfully completed three six-month tours of duty. Each tour took him and his fellow sailors away from their families, away from their wives, away from their children—which would be my two grandchildren.

This underscores an often understated reality for our military men and women. The reality is that freedom comes at a cost. That cost is too often a loss of a limb, PTSD, loss of life, and, of course, the difficulties of the families left behind to manage without them. When we honour those who served, it should be with full recognition of those costs.

In our respective communities, I know each of us in this chamber will attend ceremonies that lay witness to veterans and members of the public adorned with medals—each medal a symbol of courage, leadership and sacrifice. These symbols serve as powerful reminders of our debt of gratitude, not only to those immortalized on cenotaphs and memorial walls, but also to the men and women in uniform today, who continue to defend all of us for our freedom.

In this moment of reflection, we are reminded of the profound sacrifices made by the Canadian Armed Forces throughout our history—we must ensure we recognize the sacrifices of those made by the soldiers, sailors and airmen who guarded and continue to guard our freedom through peacemaking missions, through NATO and the UN against terrorism and piracy. Speaker, we are reminded of those men and women who served during the First and Second World Wars, but also the 158 men and women who gave their lives for us in Afghanistan. Afghanistan was a military commitment I'm sure each and every one of us here can recall.

In my own community, we lost a hero and a dedicated community member in Afghanistan: Warrant Officer Denis Brown. He is deeply missed by his three boys, Zach, Owen and Ben. He is deeply missed by his community, and I deeply miss him. Denis was my good friend.

Just as we must remember the fallen from the World Wars, Korean War and Afghanistan, we must also remember the decisive role played by the Haudenosaunee, the Six Nations Confederacy and their Indigenous allies during the War of 1812, particularly at the pivotal Battle of Queenston Heights which is honoured in the Niagara area each and every year. While not often acknowledged sufficiently, the military service of our First Nations, Inuit

and Métis in Canada has deep roots. It is so important that we recognize, commemorate and remember their sacrifices.

I'm proud to represent a community with such a rich diverse military heritage, one that has given real representative form to our collective memory and gratitude. St. Catharines, like many of our communities across Ontario, is home to Royal Canadian Legions and veterans' clubs that serve as a bastion of remembrance and support for our veterans and their families. These organizations play a crucial role in perpetuating the legacy of remembrance through ceremonies and initiatives aimed at bettering the lives of local veterans.

While symbols are vital, as we remember, let us also act, ensuring that the values and sacrifices of our veterans and service members are honoured not in words, but in deed. Speaker, I know each and every member in this chamber supports the intention. As we go about our business of our busy lives, as we debate motions, as we deal with realities in our own lives, forgetting that our freedoms were hard-fought can happen. We often may take them for granted, but we must never forget how we got them. We must all commit, like I myself commit, to honour the sacrifices, not only with words and ceremonies, however; reflect on what those sacrifices have meant to each and every one of us.

Their actions in the pursuit of freedom spoke for us. Now we must honour and appreciate their sacrifices. Lest we forget. We will remember them.

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Before I begin, to my member from St. Catharines: I hear the passion every single year when you speak. We all want to thank you from the House here—everyone. Please thank your son for his service, and thank you for your passion and dedication to our service members who are serving overseas.

Applause.

Hon. Doug Ford: Remembrance Day is such an important time for all of us to reflect and remember those who have served and continue to serve in our Armed Forces. Speaker, I want to encourage everyone in the province to hold a moment of silence on November 11 to honour our veterans. Our government will always stand by our service members.

And it makes me so glad to see MPPs from our party and from all sides of the House wearing a poppy this morning. Wearing a poppy may not seem like a big thing for some people, but Mr. Speaker, it's a massive thing, showing respect for people who sacrificed their lives to give us freedom and democracy. But it's also a reminder to each of us every time we see it again, the sacrifices our veterans have made and continue to make every single day, like our member from St. Catharines's son. It's a sign to our men and women in uniform that we see their sacrifice and honour them for it.

1100

We know the hardship service members and their families go through, especially those men and women who are currently deployed overseas or away from home. We

know that their service requires them to spend time away from their loved ones, face danger and difficulties every single day, and make sacrifices so many of us will never have to, and we thank them for it. We also honour those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for Canada, defending our freedoms on the front lines. For that, we owe them a debt that we can never repay.

Let me wrap up by saying this one more time: To my friends here on both sides of the House and to everyone across Ontario, on November 11, please take part in your local Remembrance Day ceremonies, no matter if it's at the Legion or down at your town hall or city hall, and please, wear a poppy.

Speaker, I encourage everyone here to remember and reflect throughout the year—not just on Remembrance Day, but every day. Thank you, and may God bless our women and men in uniform, and may God bless the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to thank the members for their eloquent tributes. We will remember them.

Point of order, the member for Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I am seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond during statements by the ministry and responses today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Madame Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond during statements by the ministry and responses today. Agreed? I heard a no.

It is now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is for the Premier. The Premier told the Integrity Commissioner that he does not recall speaking with Sergio Manchia about changes to government land use policies, and yet new documents revealed this week show that the Premier met with Mr. Manchia on at least two occasions before announcing changes to the greenbelt—changes that benefited Mr. Manchia. One was a fundraiser for a fellow caucus member, the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook.

So to the Premier: How many other government members have had fundraisers with people who are looking for preferential treatment from this government?

Hon. Doug Ford: Like any party, including the NDP over there and the Liberals and the Greens and ourselves for decades, you go to fundraisers. You meet hundreds of people. They chat with you.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what the people of Ontario are concerned about right now. They aren't concerned about what the leader of the NDP is

saying. They're concerned about the carbon tax. They're concerned about their mortgage when they're about to lose their house next year or the year after, when they have to renew. They're concerned about groceries and gas bills.

I just went to an opening over at Costco, met hundreds and hundreds of people, and every single one of them said, "Just keep going. Make sure you protect our backs. Make sure you lower the costs and the burden on the backs of the taxpayers." And that's what we're doing. We're making sure that we're lowering the gas tax by 10 cents. We got rid of those tolls on the 412 and 418. We're making sure that we're giving 1.1 million low-income folks in Ontario a tax break. We're going to continue doing that.

We're going to focus on making sure we're fiscally prudent with taxpayers' money, and we're going to be cutting taxes, not worrying about—

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, I think the people of Ontario are very concerned that their government is under criminal investigation by the RCMP.

Speaker, this government's questionable fundraising is very well known to the people of Ontario. They've been warned and even cautioned on multiple occasions by officers of the Legislature and even Elections Ontario about their fundraising practices. The Integrity Commissioner revealed that the Premier's fundraiser-in-chief was selling tickets to the infamous Ford family stag and doe to developers with business before the government. Those developers at the event succeeded in getting their properties removed.

So to the Premier: Was the Premier aware that his top fundraiser was peddling stag and doe tickets to developers who were lobbying the government?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Actually, I think it was the member for Kitchener who was actually singled out as having used government resources to raise funds. But, having said that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to continue—

Interjection: Member for Waterloo.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Waterloo, excuse me—Waterloo.

I think, Mr. Speaker, what matters is exactly what the Premier said, that we continue to double down on ensuring that we build 1.5 million homes across the province of Ontario.

The Leader of the Opposition, of course, talks about fundraising. I guess I could ask her the same thing: When Silvio De Gasperis gave you \$1,000, to the NDP, what did you promise him?

Interjections.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, I can tell you, I didn't give him a chunk of land in the—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We've stopped the clock. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to take her seat.

I believe the standing orders indicate that questions go to the government, not the reverse. But at the same time, I

would encourage all members to make their comments through the Chair.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: From official plans to the greenbelt grab to MZOs, we have a chaotic and speculator-friendly government driven by this Premier. We're hearing of hidden phone records, deleted emails, secret USB keys, brown envelopes, backroom deals and even cash-for-access events hosted by sketchy speculators—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Back to the Premier: Is this how business is done in his government?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Well, Speaker, one of the people that she accuses of being a sketchy speculator are the De Gasperises. Now, having said that, they've built a lot of homes across the province of Ontario, and hopefully they will continue to do so.

I wonder if she thinks that Carlo De Gasperis, who also made a \$1,000 donation to the NDP, is sketchy as well, Mr. Speaker. I wonder what the Leader of the Opposition promised both Silvio De Gasperis and Carlo De Gasperis for the now \$2,000 donations that we have found that went to that party.

What we're going to continue to do is ensure that we continue to build 1.5 million homes, working with people like the De Gasperis family, who are building homes across Ontario, and other home builders who want to do so, Mr. Speaker.

But then, again, I asked the Leader of the Opposition—the NDP has accepted \$2,000 in donations from the very same people she now calls sketchy, and if she has a third question, I might highlight some of the additional donations.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, just two days ago, we asked about two Nobleton properties in the greenbelt—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. I can't hear the Leader of the Opposition, who duly has the floor and has the right to ask her question. I must hear the member who has the floor.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga will come to order.

If you ignore my requests to come to order, I will warn you.

Start the clock. The Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Just two days ago, we asked about two Nobleton properties in the greenbelt that the Premier's friend Shakir Rehmatullah wants to develop. The Minister

of Municipal Affairs replied, and he said, “No changes were made to these lands...” Only, it turns out there were changes made to these lands, Speaker: The former minister changed York region’s official plan to allow private servicing to these greenbelt lands so they could be developed, just as the Premier’s friend wanted. And new evidence shows ministry staff assuring Ryan Amato that that’s exactly what the changes to the official plan were for. They say, “It’s our understanding of the solution they were seeking.”

1110

To the Premier: Will his minister correct the record?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: There were no changes made to that official plan, and the Leader of the Opposition will know that we revoked the greenbelt changes to the provincial plan. That is a bill that is in fact in front of this House, and actually collapsed earlier today when the NDP did not want to carry on debate.

I will correct my record that it is not just donations from developers that she calls sketchy. That’s the difference between them and us, right? We want to build homes. We don’t call the people that build homes sketchy, because the people that build homes are the same people that came to this country, worked really hard, came here with absolutely nothing in their pocket and have grown and done something for themselves and remarkable things for this community.

So while they call them sketchy, I don’t think a person like Giancarlo DeGasperis, who gave \$1,000 to the NDP, is sketchy. I think he’s a person who works hard. We’re going to continue to support those who are building homes for the province of Ontario and thank them for doing so.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: It’s pretty clear the only thing this government is sorry for is the fact that they got caught.

The FOI documents show that the Premier or a member of his staff wanted to make sure that the Premier’s friend, Mr. Rehmatullah, could develop these greenbelt lands in Nobleton. On November 4, Mr. Amato wrote, “Premier’s office has asked me for a picture to make sure it’s captured.”

Back to the Premier: Who in the Premier’s office was so interested in these Nobleton greenbelt lands, and why?

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

Hon. Doug Ford: Like the minister said, everything was rescinded.

But what I am concerned about is how deep they’re involved with the public sector unions—like Fred Hahn, who’s an anti-Semite, by the way, who’s donating money to you to the maximum amount. What do you owe Fred Hahn? That’s my question. Extra deals? Backroom deals? Giving you more money?

Again, I’ll tell you one thing: He supports Hamas. You know he does. He said it publicly. He’s disgusting, as far as I’m concerned, and he’s a supporter—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Speaker, you can tell they’re running scared, eh? The Integrity Commissioner—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Ms. Marit Stiles: This is a government that is under criminal investigation by the RCMP and they won’t even take these questions seriously.

The Integrity Commissioner reported that Mr. Rehmatullah’s request for changes to these greenbelt lands in Nobleton caused quite a stir among the minister’s political staff. I think this is actually the first time I’ve ever seen the F-word written in a report tabled by an independent officer of the Legislature. The report does not explain why the minister’s political staff would give so much attention to a request from Mr. Rehmatullah.

Back to the Premier: Did he or any of his staff direct the ministry to make these changes that benefited his close friend? The people of Ontario deserve an answer.

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Rehmatullah is building homes in Stouffville—homes that are supported by the town of Stouffville, by the city of Markham, homes for seniors, homes that are so important in our community.

The Leader of the Opposition called Mr. Rehmatullah a sketchy developer. I wonder if she felt that way when he was giving a \$2,000 donation to the NDP. Was he sketchy then, because I don’t think he is. I think he’s a hard-working home builder—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. I apologize to the Minister of Municipal Affairs—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I can’t hear you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I’m going to ask the members to allow the minister to make his response so that I can hear him.

Start the clock. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: You have the leader of the Liberal Party chiming in, right? See, here’s the difference, Speaker. We’re not calling the people who build homes for the people of the province of Ontario sketchy. The NDP and the Liberals are. They’re pleased to take money from them, but, in the very same breath, call them sketchy. If they believe that, then stand in your place and return the money you received.

We think that the people who build homes are the people we should be supporting, and we aren’t going to

stop because we need them to build 1.5 million homes for the people of the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Start the clock. The next question.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Premier: After a decade of Liberal scandals, this Conservative government came in promising transparency, but, since then, we have seen the most egregious displays of preferential treatment from a government in Ontario's history. Apologies ring hollow when every day new details trickle out that show we don't yet have the full truth about the Premier's involvement in these donor deals.

Can the Premier please tell us how he will increase the powers of the Integrity Commissioner and the Auditor General to bring an end to Conservative and Liberal scandals?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again to the member opposite, it's actually not the Premier who makes that decision, it's Parliament that makes that decision and it is parliamentarians that will decide the powers of the Integrity Commissioner and Auditor General.

But, at the same time, I wonder if Julian De Gasperis is sketchy because the opposition NDP, of course, accepted a \$1,000 donation from him as well. I don't think so, Mr. Speaker, because unlike the opposition who call the people that build homes, build infrastructure for the people of the province of Ontario, I don't think they're sketchy.

You know what I'm proud of? I'm proud of people who have come to this country with literally nothing and have built something for themselves and then have turned that passion into building for other people. Generations of Italians, like this family and other families, came here, have started with nothing and have done amazing things. We'll support them because we need 1.5 million homes.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The supplementary question.

Mr. Chris Glover: To the Premier: The government House leader says that it's Parliament that decides on the rules for the Integrity Commissioner. This Conservative government already voted down a motion to strengthen the powers of the Integrity Commissioner that the NDP brought forward.

This afternoon, the NDP will be tabling a bill that will make some vital reforms to our democratic system, the most important of which will be to finally ban preferential treatment under the Members' Integrity Act. This will mean no more billion-dollar greenbelt grabs for Conservative donors, no more shady bidding processes leading to a 100-year giveaway of public parkland at Ontario Place.

This government has to work for everyone, not just the Premier's insider friends. If you agree, will this government support the NDP's motion?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Motions, Mr. Speaker? That's what the NDP do, right? They bring motions, while what this side does is bring bills to the House and we debate bills that can actually make change for the people of the province of Ontario.

I wonder if his motion will include the unions that support him and that are anti-Semitic—probably not. They'll continue to take money from those very same unions, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if it will include people like Michael De Gasperis who also gave \$1,000 to the NDP.

Let's get this straight: The people that they call sketchy, the very same people who probably build the roads and the houses that they're living in and driving on—they're sketchy. You build in Ontario, the NDP think they're sketchy. If you worked hard to build wealth for yourself, they think you're sketchy. If you came to this province with nothing and are contributing back to your community, they think you're sketchy. But they'll hold their hand out, take a cheque, and then call you sketchy here.

Interjections.

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

1120

We're just 15 minutes into this. We have 45 minutes to go.

We are doing the public's business. People are watching. People are in the visitors' galleries. The pages are here.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): A number of members have repeatedly ignored my requests to come to order. I'm going to start warning them if it persists.

Start the clock. The next question.

TAXATION

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Ever since this government was elected, we've been working to make life more affordable for people in Ontario. To this end, we even fought the carbon tax all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Now, the federal government has finally admitted that the carbon tax, which we knew all along, hurts people in the province of Ontario. Unfortunately, the federal government has only taken steps to exempt a small number of people in Atlantic Canada from the carbon tax. However, what about us in Ontario? What are we, second-class citizens?

I want to ask the Minister of Energy: Would he share his views on the federal government's decision to exempt only a small number of people from the carbon tax, and not the province of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Like the member from Essex, I can't understand why the federal government is leaving

Ontario out in the cold. It just doesn't make sense, especially when half of the federal Liberal caucus comes from the province of Ontario. It's quite shocking.

The Prime Minister, though, this time last week, did finally admit what everybody in this House should know: that the carbon tax is making life more unaffordable for the people of Ontario and more unaffordable for people from coast to coast to coast across this country. As the Premier said in the House on Monday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated that it's costing significantly more for the people of Ontario and the people of Canada, and it's only going to get worse as the carbon tax goes up and up and up.

So despite having all of this information and that knowledge that the carbon tax is making life more unaffordable, why does the current Ontario Liberal caucus of nine continue to vote against motions calling on the removal of carbon tax from grocery—

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

The supplementary question.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the Minister of Energy for that answer. You know, it's truly shameful that the Liberals and the NDP in this House continue to work against us and won't work with us to make life more affordable for people in Ontario. We've tried time and time again to raise awareness about the carbon tax and its harmful impact on things like groceries and gasoline, but the Liberals and the NDP continue to fight against us and disrespect those concerns. They do nothing to help us bring more affordability to the province of Ontario and continue to add additional financial burden to people who work hard.

Speaker, please, I'm asking the minister to share his views on the harmful impacts that the carbon tax has on hard-working people here in the province of Ontario.

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member from Essex again. Like you, I hope the Ontario Liberals, who are now down to nine members in this House, can see the harm being caused to Ontario because of the carbon tax, something that they've supported every step of the way.

Fortunately for them, the Liberals have a cherished history of saying one thing and doing another. The Prime Minister once told us that families would get more back from the carbon tax than they would pay. We now know, thanks to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that that's not true. Liberal cabinet minister Steven Guilbeault once said it wouldn't be fair for the rest of the federation if we started carving out exceptions for provinces, but that's the direction that the federal Liberals have gone.

My question for the members of the Ontario Liberal caucus and the federal Liberal government is, why are they so opposed to making life more affordable for the people of Ontario?

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

Once again, I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair—and questions normally go to the provincial government from other members.

Start the clock. The member for Nickel Belt.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé.

On Monday, Toronto's paramedic union issued a code red to indicate that no ambulance was available to respond to emergency calls. That was their second code red in October. During that period, a 98-year-old woman waited unconscious for over 28 minutes for an ambulance to end up being dispatched from Peel.

Can the minister tell us if an elderly woman, unconscious, waiting for 28 minutes for an ambulance is quality care?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Of course, the member opposite knows I cannot speak to specific cases. I was not in the dispatch centre, nor was she, and she was not there on the scene. What I will say, and she knows it full well, is that ambulance dispatch in the province of Ontario is a seamless system, which means wherever you are in the province of Ontario, the closest ambulance to you will assist you.

Now, having said that, we have ensured, through working directly with our ambulance and paramedic experts, to make sure that we have put in additional programs and supports, always there as a 50-50 partner with municipalities as they expand their ambulance services, whether that is personnel or vehicles.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yesterday, it was Kitchener-Waterloo facing a paramedic code red, when 10 ambulances were waiting at St. Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener to off-load their patients. Some patients had to wait up to eight hours for an ambulance from a surrounding region to come help.

Minister, is this the level of care that the good people of Waterloo can expect from Doug Ford's Ontario?

Interjections.

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

I'll once again remind members to refer to each other by their riding name or their ministerial title, as applicable.

I recognize the Minister of Health to reply.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm proud to say that under the leadership of our Premier and our government, we have been able to expand not only the number of paramedics who are actually being trained in the province of Ontario, through our Learn and Stay program that ensures that as we train additional paramedics in our college and university post-secondary system, we are covering their tuition and their books in exchange for practising in other under-covered areas, but we also expanded 911 models of care. This actually ensures that that paramedic can make an assessment, work with the patient and make sure that they have options other than the emergency department.

Look, I know that the NDP have categorically stated that they don't want to see any change in our health care system, but the truth is, we are making changes that are impacting people's lives and making sure that services are available closer to home.

TAXATION

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. The independent Liberals and the opposition NDP members in this House support increasing the federally imposed carbon tax. They know that increasing the carbon tax will result in a significant spike in fuel prices, setting off a chain reaction of increased costs across our economy. For instance, the cost of manufacturing raw materials will increase dramatically. Businesses, particularly those in rural, remote and northern communities, are already struggling to keep prices affordable for their customers. We must do everything we can to reduce taxes for all Ontarians during this period of economic uncertainty.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how the carbon tax is negatively impacting Ontario's natural resources sector?

1130

Hon. Graydon Smith: Yesterday, I had a chance to talk about how negative the carbon tax was on the forestry sector and how the cost of the carbon tax is now getting built into every home in Ontario. That means every bolt, screw, two-by-four, fence board—it's got carbon tax in it. It doesn't need to be that way. It can be a lot simpler than this. Our Premier and our finance minister showed the way again this week of how easy it is to reduce taxes and reduce that burden, so the federal government needs to step up and do the same thing.

We heard yesterday from the OFIA, our forestry industry association, how damaging the carbon tax was for them. Here's what they had to say about the fuel cut: "This has a significant impact on small businesses and their employees operating in northern, rural and Indigenous communities in Ontario." It's easy to do it, and our friends across the way here, they can pick up the phone, they can send an email, even pick up some carrier pigeons—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

The minister will take his seat. I'll remind the members that when the Speaker stands, you sit.

Supplementary question?

Mr. Will Bouma: The carbon tax raises the price of everything. I simply cannot understand why the opposition would support such a regressive carbon tax that makes building anything so much more expensive. It causes prices to rise across the board, which puts a heavy burden on our businesses. Because of the carbon tax, businesses are left with a tough choice: either absorb the extra costs themselves or pass them on to their customers.

While the independent Liberals and the opposition NDP have no problem with a regressive carbon tax, it is not fair or right that Ontario families, workers and seniors are being punished.

Can the minister please explain what impact the carbon tax has on our economy and our businesses?

Hon. Graydon Smith: Yesterday, the other thing I spoke about was the aggregate sector and how every time we load up a truck with aggregates and take it to a project,

there's carbon tax embedded in that load of aggregates. This has got to stop.

Let's think about how many loads of aggregates go into projects: for one kilometre of subway-building, 4,500 loads; to build a hospital, 3,700 loads of aggregates. I left off the great Minister of Education and the schools that he wants to build in Ontario yesterday. What's in those now? Carbon tax.

We could do more if we had more here in Ontario, but the federal Liberal government insists on charging a carbon tax on every single thing we do. It's insidious, but it has to stop. We are doing such a great job in building Ontario. Municipalities are impacted as well, by the way, in the work that they do. This tax is easy to stop; it just takes a phone call from our friends here in Ontario. Let's scrap the tax, get it done, help Ontarians—

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

The next question.

LICENCE PLATES

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the minister. Raised by veteran organizations and residents alike, there's a gap in how the Ministry of Transportation honours our veterans: the exclusion of RVs and green electric vehicles from the Veterans' Licence Plate program. Today, I will be tabling a clear solution: expand the program to all vehicles.

Our veterans' service is invaluable, and our gratitude shouldn't be limited by their choice of vehicle. Minister, let's close this gap together. Will you work with me to ensure all veterans can display the veterans' poppy licence plate, guaranteeing equal recognition for their service to our nation and our country?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Absolutely, I'll work with the member.

The member from Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill has had this conversation with me earlier, a couple of weeks ago, as well.

I'm committed to working with all members of this House to ensure that that is something that we can work towards. It is of utmost importance to myself, and thank you for raising it, but also to my colleague who has been working with me on this for the past couple of weeks as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Interjections.

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

The member for Ottawa Centre: supplementary.

Mr. Joel Harden: Back to the minister: It's nice to hear good news in this House, I have to admit, because Sam Ludmer, a veteran, who is watching—hi, Sam—back home in Ottawa Centre was the first person who raised this matter with me. He's frustrated that as he has made the shift to an electric vehicle, he can't display his pride in being a veteran on its licence plate. So, Minister, it's good

to hear that we've got an opportunity to work together on this.

And Sam, I want to thank you for taking the time to push politicians to do the right thing, because look what you just did: You've created unanimity in this place.

Can we get once more for the record, Minister, a commitment in this House as Remembrance Week approaches to work with the opposition, to do the right thing and make all vehicle licence plates available to be proudly displayed with veterans' licence plates today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Once again, members may take their seats.

I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

To reply, the Minister for Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I thank my colleagues from Ottawa Centre as well as St. Catharines for their question and for bringing this important point and question to the Minister of Transportation.

I want to thank the Minister of Transportation for meeting with me earlier to hear my suggestion on this.

To the member for St. Catharines, as the Premier said, I want to thank you very much, to you and Jonathan. Please convey our gratitude for the service that he's providing to us.

Mr. Speaker, every man and woman in uniform to date, past and present, has sacrificed and continues to sacrifice for us. We will not forget them, which is why we expanded the Soldiers' Aid Commission by 600% to put \$1.55 million to include, past and present, those who served and continue to serve our country, which is why we removed the property tax for all Legion halls. Those who have served us, under the leadership of Premier Ford and our government will not be forgotten, and we will continue to have their back today and in the future.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} Lucille Collard: This question is for the Minister of Health. A good portion of the most vulnerable residents in Ottawa live in my riding, especially in the Vanier and Overbrook neighbourhoods, but access to primary health care is cruelly lacking.

The good news is that there are solutions. A group of nurse practitioners has submitted an efficient plan for a nurse practitioner-led clinic that would provide primary care to 10,000 residents. In order to make this a reality, however, they need this government to do their part and provide the necessary funding.

If the government is willing to pay \$8.3 billion of taxpayer money to pave over the greenbelt that led to a criminal investigation, can the government find enough money to provide primary care to those in need? Unless this is not a priority for the government.

I'll give the minister a chance to explain where the ministry is in the process of approving these critical projects so that Ontarians can have access to primary health care.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: In the member's own question, she talks about how we have in fact made an investment. We have asked for expression of interest. We have had literally hundreds of applications come in. We are making those assessments. So, on one hand, she acknowledges that through our Your Health plan we've made an investment and a commitment to expand primary care across Ontario. Yet now she is suggesting that we are not doing that. Which is it? Because we've made the investment. We are assessing those applications as we speak—as I said, the largest expansion in multidisciplinary primary care teams in the province's history. We're doing that work.

Were you there? Were you supporting it when we put that in our Your Health plan in the budget? The short answer is no.

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

The supplementary question?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: The need for primary care in my riding of Ottawa–Vanier is huge. It's a huge priority. It's been the number one issue ever since I was elected. Currently, there are no community clinics in Vanier or Overbrook to provide primary care. The only option for people is to go to wait indefinitely in an emergency room or pay for health care with their credit card.

When the Ministry of Health put out a call for proposals, people started to hope. Several groups submitted proposals to create clinics to provide much-needed access to care. However, it's been months and months of waiting, and none of them have yet been approved. In the meantime, this situation keeps getting worse. When will the minister start approving the proposals for primary care practitioners so that residents can get access to the primary care that they need now?

1140

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The expression of interest came in mid-June. We are making those assessments with literally hundreds of applications. A member who is representing a party that, for 15 years, did nothing to expand primary care in the province of Ontario and, in fact, Speaker, actually cut the number of residency positions that were available for new docs and new physicians who were wanting to practise and train in the province of Ontario—I will take no lessons from that member on how to improve health care in the province of Ontario.

TAXATION

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy.

The carbon tax is hurting our farmers, hurting our families and hurting our businesses. Unlike the independent Liberal members and opposition NDP, our government has always known that the carbon tax drives up energy prices across the province. That is why it is unfair that the federal government is choosing to exempt certain parts of the country from the carbon tax, while punishing others. During this time of economic uncertainty, Ontarians deserve respect and fairness when it comes to affordability.

Speaker, can the minister please explain why the federal government is only taking action to help a small number of Canadians regarding the carbon tax exemption and ignoring Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, to the member from Carleton: It's pretty obvious the federal Liberals have looked at the polls and they didn't like what they saw, and that's why they acted. After years of saying that it would return more in benefit to those across the country, they're now realizing that that's simply not the case; that the carbon tax is driving up the price of everything, as the member mentioned.

But to exclude only home-heating oil, which affects a vast majority of residents in Atlantic Canada and only 2.5% of those who use home-heating fuel in Ontario, while ignoring the 70% who use natural gas or propane, is just unforgivable. It's an open admission, first of all, that the federal government wasn't telling us the whole cold truth for years.

And for all those years, our government's been standing up, time and time again, fighting the federal carbon tax all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada. We've been making life more affordable for the people of Ontario by driving down heating costs, by driving down the price of gasoline, by making electricity more affordable. When will the opposition parties stand with us?

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. The people of Ontario deserve to have their concerns about the harmful impact of the carbon tax heard and raised. As you said, our government has known for years that the carbon tax was raising the cost of everything. Our government has consistently communicated this information. However, the independent Liberals and opposition NDP were content to sit back and see Ontarians slapped with another tax. This is wrong, unfair and unacceptable to the hard-working individuals, families and businesses in our province.

The carbon tax makes life more expensive for everyone in every part of Ontario, especially in the north. Speaker, through you: Can the minister please share his views on how devastating this regressive tax is for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: Speaker, the chickens are coming home to roost for the federal Liberals. It happened to the provincial Liberals a number of years ago, and I know that people across the province are looking at these two opposition parties and are as disappointed as I am that they continue to support a carbon tax that's driving up the price and cost of living in Ontario. We've stood in this House over and over again fighting the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, and over and over again they've been saying that we were fearmongering. Well, the price of everything is going up.

We're not done fighting for the people of Ontario. The good member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston is going to be presenting a motion a little bit later on this month to give the opposition parties another chance to stand up for the people of Ontario. He's bringing forward a motion to

eliminate the carbon tax on fuels and inputs for home heating for people across Ontario. I want to know—they've got time to think about it: Will they be supporting the member of the PC caucus's motion to eliminate the federal carbon tax?

TRUCKING SAFETY

MPP Jamie West: My question is for the Premier.

Speaker, MELT stands for mandatory entry-level training. It's Ontario's standard for transport truck driver schools. The goal is to replace licence mills with excellent training for drivers.

Unfortunately, there are still some dodgy companies not meeting the MELT standards. And how do they get away with it? Well, the ministry only has eight inspectors monitoring 582 vocational schools, and 260 of these schools provide transport truck driver training. Basically, these eight inspectors are set up to fail.

Speaker, we all know that putting untrained drivers on the road is dangerous.

My question is, will the Conservative government commit to hiring enough inspectors to ensure full compliance with transport truck driver training schools?

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

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Safety in the transport industry and across all of our roads is the utmost priority for this government. That is why, when it comes to commercial licensing, we have some of the most robust processes and licensing and training in the entire country and, in fact, across North America. It includes a minimum of 103 hours of instruction and covers a variety of issues, from entry-level knowledge skills to those practical skills needed to operate large trucks on Ontario's roads.

Our MTO enforcement officers run across this province ensuring that our roads remain safe, and I appreciate all the work that they do, day in and day out, supporting the safety of our highway and transportation networks across this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question. The member for Thunder Bay–Superior North.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Drivers are travelling across the entire province without seeing a single inspection station that is open. While MTO and OPP blitzes have led to charges being laid, drivers need to be stopped earlier and more frequently. The lack of proper training and lax enforcement of truck safety is resulting in horrific crashes and constant highway closures.

We know there is a new super-station opening up on Highway 11/17 in Shuniah, but on other major routes, inspection stations remain closed, as they have been for years.

Will the government finally commit to staffing inspection stations across the province so that the highest possible standard of safety is enforced on our highways?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Mr. Speaker, Ontario does have the highest standards of safety when it comes to not only the transportation sector, but our roads across

Ontario. We lead North America and this country by example, and we'll continue to ensure that we have not only a rigorous training process for commercial vehicles, but also to ensure that our inspectors who are out on the road have the resources to be able to continue carrying out those inspections. The truckers carry a lot of weight during this time, and we want to make sure that our roads are safe and that we support our trucking industry through this as well. Over 103 hours are required in the comprehensive training before a truck driver is licensed. Inspections happen all across this province every single day across Ontario.

We will continue to ensure that we work together with all members of this House to improve safety on our roads.

TAXATION

Ms. Laura Smith: My question is for the Associate Minister of Small Business. As a small business owner herself, the minister knows personally that starting and operating a business takes immense effort. Entrepreneurs are constantly balancing costs, and any additional burden can have a massive impact.

Sadly, the businesses in my riding are telling me that they are facing unprecedented economic challenges due to the carbon tax and high interest rates. While the independent Liberals and opposition NDP are willing to support this regressive carbon tax, our government believes that penalizing businesses in this way is unacceptable.

Can the minister please explain why the negative effects of the carbon tax on small businesses in Ontario are having such a negative impact on the people?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you to the great member from Thornhill for the great work and advocacy she does for Ontario's constituents and job creators.

Speaker, small businesses are the heart of our province, sending vital goods and performing essential services throughout all of our neighbourhoods. That's why our government is steadfastly opposed to the federal carbon tax, a policy that disproportionately hurts small businesses and the families that they feed and support. Whether it's a mom-and-pop shop struggling with higher fuel delivery costs or a manufacturer seeing production expenses rise, this carbon tax amounts to an unfair penalty on Ontario's job creators.

1150

The NDP and Liberals talk about affordability, but time and time again, they side with a carbon tax proven to damage our economy, eliminate jobs and weaken communities right across Ontario. If they truly stood with entrepreneurs, they would join us in calling on the Prime Minister to remove this job-killing tax.

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

Ms. Laura Smith: Thank you to the minister for being such a progressive advocate for the small businesses and entrepreneurs in Ontario.

This regressive carbon tax hurts the very people that any government should be helping. The carbon tax hurts

the farmers who grow the food, the truckers who move the food, the restaurants who serve the food and the consumers who buy the food. Even worse, it is Ontario entrepreneurs and our small businesses that are forced to shoulder increased costs because of this regressive tax and rising interest rates.

At a time when concern for economic security and cost of living is so high, the last thing Ontarians need is higher taxes. Speaker, can the minister please explain why removing harmful taxes like the carbon tax is so vital to helping support our small businesses?

Hon. Nina Tangri: Thank you again to the member for the question. I know first-hand the sacrifices entrepreneurs make and the challenges that they face each and every day. That is why I was proud to see the Premier and the Minister of Finance stand up for both businesses and consumers by extending the gas tax cut until June 2024.

For small businesses and families, every dollar counts. By keeping an extra \$260 in people's pockets, this tax cut will allow residents greater ability to support local small businesses, whether buying goods or supporting a local restaurant. For businesses themselves, cheaper fuel means lower transportation expenses, allowing them to save elsewhere, whether it's delivering products to stores and customers, commuting employees or other necessities.

Speaker, small businesses, including businesses in all of their ridings, shouldn't be paying Ottawa more just to get less. We call on the NDP and Liberals to join us and tell their federal counterparts that hard-working Ontarians desperately need more money now in their pockets. Axe the tax now.

LANDFILL

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Residents of Flamorough-Glanbrook are calling on the government to shut down the Stoney Creek dump. The industrial dump has wreaked havoc on their neighbourhood. The lingering stink has caused health issues, ruined outdoor play and forced residents to keep their windows closed.

A local mom wants the Premier to know her kids cannot play outside because the putrid smell is so awful, and now, a plan for a much-needed elementary school is paused. Residents have had enough. They feel they've been misled by developers while purchasing million-dollar homes. GFL is a lucrative business who have moved their own business offices off-site.

When will the Premier look out for this thriving community and shut down the dump?

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

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Certainly, I share the concern of those families, and my heart does go out to them. I know they haven't been able to have a summer like many other families have had because of this issue. As soon as I learned about the issue from the member for Flamorough-Glanbrook—she has had huge leadership on this front. We've been talking to GFL almost every day on this

issue, talking with officials on the ground to take action to ensure that this issue is resolved.

And I will say that the Premier very much has his attention on this file as well. I've spoken to the mayor of Hamilton. Let's be clear, Speaker, we want to get to the bottom of this issue and ensure that we're taking every action necessary. An order has been issued for this landfill to take serious action, to take swift action to resolve the matter. I'm happy to share a copy of the order with the member opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The Ministry of the Environment approved the expansion of the landfill in 2019, against the wishes of the community and the city, who voted against the expansion. At that time, the ministry said that the environmental impacts would be appropriately managed; quite obviously, this dump is not being properly managed.

Now the ministry says the foul odour residents are experiencing is unacceptable. They've received over 900 complaints in six months. The city is exasperated and has called for a veto on any future expansions. One area councillor said, "If the landfill odours can't be contained, the dump must be closed." That's what the residents are asking for.

Premier, why do the profits of a private conglomerate like GFL matter more than the health and well-being of Stoney Creek residents?

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: Let's be clear: This government takes the health and safety of all Ontarians, no matter where they live—and again, I want to thank the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook for bringing this very important issue to my attention. We've been taking action every day. We'll continue to be on top of this until it's resolved.

We take it very seriously, and I do have a copy of the order in front of me right here, where we have taken serious action. We'll take whatever is necessary to get the issue resolved for these residents, who do deserve a resolution. I've been working with the mayor, who's very up to speed with what we're trying to do to ensure that this action is taken, so that residents can get back to their day-to-day lives. I will be passing on a copy of this order with a page to the members opposite.

TAXATION

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the member for Bay of Quinte, also the Minister of Energy. We've spent much of this week talking about how the carbon tax is raising the cost of everything. In fact, my father, who lives in the Bay of Quinte riding, called me and said that he has heard that the Bank of Canada and the federal government have now acknowledged what we've been saying for years: The carbon tax is harmful to the people of Ontario.

In response to my father: That's what our government has been working diligently to find practical solutions for, to make Ontario's electric grid not just more affordable, but also cleaner and more reliable.

Speaker, can the minister please share information so that my father knows about what actions our government is taking to reduce energy and reduce costs for everyone in Ontario?

Hon. Todd Smith: All right, so this one is for Ron this morning, down in Prince Edward county. Listen, I'm pleased to talk about all of the initiatives that our government has undertaken, not only to make life more affordable, but also to drive down emissions across our province. You don't have to do what the Liberals did and are doing, in making life more affordable, to drive down emissions.

We've introduced the Clean Home Heating Initiative, which makes hybrid heat pumps available to natural gas customers in various locations across the province, something we think the federal Liberals should support us on as well. We've introduced the ultra-low overnight rate for those who have and are considering buying an electric vehicle, so they can charge at off-peak times in the overnight period, saving themselves money. We've introduced the Green Button standard right across the province at local distribution companies, giving customers the opportunity to reduce their bills, by having the data they need, by up to 18%.

What else have we done? We've reduced the electricity rate through the Ontario Electricity Rebate for customers, between 15% and 17%, and of course taken 10 cents off a litre at the gas pumps, too—

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

Mr. Dave Smith: I want to thank the minister for that. My father is going to thank him, as well, when he sees him. It's great to see that there are better ways to fight climate change, while ensuring that all household budgets are also respected. It seems obvious that the federal carbon tax was always short-sighted and simply was wrong.

Our government knows that making life more affordable needs to be a top priority, but that doesn't mean that we can't also reduce emissions at the same time. These initiatives prove that it's possible to oppose a carbon tax while continuing to fight climate change. Taking money out of your pocket doesn't fight climate change.

Ontario deserves both a healthy environment and a healthy economy. Speaker, can the minister please speak to the benefits of implementing energy solutions that help reduce costs for Ontario taxpayers?

Hon. Todd Smith: Thanks to the member opposite for the question. The rationale behind the federal carbon tax was really to make life more expensive for those who use fossil fuels, so therefore it's driving up the cost of everything. But we've taken substantive actions here in the province to make sure that we're reducing emissions and making life more affordable at the same time.

1200

Interjection.

Hon. Todd Smith: It's a bit like Groundhog Day, listening to the member from Ottawa South talking about the things that we can do to reduce the cost of living, when he votes against every single thing that we bring forward.

The member from Ottawa South was a part of the caucus that introduced the Green Energy Act, one of the most harmful pieces of legislation in this province's history. Their energy minister told us, at the time, that it was going to cost a dollar more a month on electricity bills. We know that drove people from every part of our province into energy poverty and reduced his caucus to a minivan caucus—

Interjections.

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

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

MPP Jill Andrew: My question is to the Premier. Sault Ste. Marie declared gender-based violence an epidemic, adding to more than 63 municipalities across Ontario that have formally declared this truth. To date, 2023 has seen more than 50 femicides, more than one per week, all while this Conservative government continually fails to mobilize the resources—from affordable housing, to pay equity, to community crisis and response funding—needed to reverse this tragic course that Ontario is on.

To the Premier: Will he take the first step to ending gender-based violence by declaring it an epidemic, one requiring real action from this Conservative government?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: I want to thank the member opposite. Let me be clear: There is no excuse for violent crimes. There is no excuse for intimate partner violence. We take this matter very, very seriously. As I said prior, we are engaging all partners to act, and we're doing so with a very broad lens. That's why we have invested over \$55 million in various grants, including supporting 45 victim services grants to help communities throughout Ontario. We will also hold offenders accountable. And we are taking further action at the Ontario Police College by having mandatory training for our cadets there to learn about intimate partner violence.

At the end of the day, intimate partner violence is completely unacceptable.

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

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Councillor Angela Caputo, who moved the unanimously adopted Sault Ste. Marie motion, has a message for this House after their recent and heartbreaking mass murder-suicide: "I ask Premier Ford to reconsider the stance"—of his government. "Angie Sweeney deserved better. Those three innocent children deserved better. Women in this province deserve better."

Speaker, on Monday, we were absolutely shocked to hear the Solicitor General dismiss the top recommendation from the Renfrew inquest as an empty gesture of symbolism.

My question to the Premier is, will he join the 63 municipalities that have already adopted similar motions by substantially declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic and committing the necessary resources to keep women and children safe in Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: It's not exactly what I said. What I said was very clear: that declaring something a medical term is not, by itself, action. That's why our government takes it very seriously.

Our thoughts are with the families in Sault Ste. Marie for this heinous crime that was committed on them. It is undeniably tragic.

Mr. Speaker, \$55 million is being invested in programs that will have tangible benefits. Training at the Ontario Police College will have tangible benefits. Supporting 45 projects through victim services grants will have tangible benefits. Holding the people to account will.

Tous ont le droit de se sentir en sécurité chez eux et dans leurs collectivités. Et, monsieur le Président, rien pour moi n'est plus important que la sécurité de notre province.

TAXATION

Mr. Will Bouma: My question is for the Minister of Finance. A month ago, the Bank of Canada reported that the federal carbon tax was responsible for a mere 0.15% increase in inflation. Researchers sought an explanation, only to discover that these calculations were not accurate. Now, the figures have changed. The governor of the Bank of Canada now says that the original number did not account for the years of tax increases and revealed that the correct impact of the carbon tax is actually four times higher, at 0.6%.

It is clear that the federal Liberals and the Bank of Canada are out of touch when it comes to understanding the harmful impact of the carbon tax. Speaker, can the minister please explain how this regressive tax is creating economic hardship for Ontario?

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

Mr. Stephen Crawford: Thank you to the member from Brantford—Brant. I'm very happy that you're bringing this topic up because nobody else in the House seems to bring it up. The opposition Liberals and NDP don't want to go here.

Our government has led the charge, starting in 2018, to fight against this harmful carbon tax. We are proud that we have fought against this tax, Speaker, which we know would lead to poorer outcomes for the people in this province. The carbon tax is, sadly, contributing to the overall inflation rate, which is growing rapidly in this province. That, in turn, is causing interest rates to go up, and that, in turn, is causing Ontarians who have a hard time paying off their mortgages more money to pay every single month.

If we can eliminate this tax, we can untangle our economy from the grip of inflation and make it easier for the people of Ontario to buy the goods and services they require. This is why our government continues to urge the

federal government, and we would love our opposition members right here in this House to join us and fight this punitive tax.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am now going to ask our pages to assemble.

It is my privilege to say a word of thanks to our legislative pages. Our pages are smart, trustworthy and hard-working. They are indispensable to the effective functioning of the chamber, and we are indeed fortunate to have had them here.

To our pages: You depart having made many new friends, with a greater understanding of parliamentary democracy and memories that will last a lifetime. Each of you will now go home and continue your studies and no doubt will contribute to your communities, your province and your country in important ways. We expect great things from all of you. Who knows? Maybe some of you will some day take your seats in this House as members or work here as staff. No matter where your path leads you, we wish you well.

Please join me in thanking this group of legislative pages.

Applause.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Two members have informed me that they have points of order that they would wish to raise.

I'll start with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: A point of order: On May 18, 2023, I tabled a written question to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. The 24 sessional day response deadline was this past Monday, October 30, 2023. Could the minister please fulfill his procedural obligation and provide a response to my inquiry?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member has indeed raised a valid point of order, and it's my duty to remind the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services that he is required, under standing order 101(d), to file a response within 24 sessional days and his response is now overdue.

I would ask the minister to give the House some indication as to when the response is likely forthcoming.

Hon. Michael Parsa: If the member hasn't received it, he will receive it today.

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

VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE IN ISRAEL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: This morning, the Solicitor General and I introduced a delegation that was here: our families, families who live in our communities, who lost family on

October 7 or whose family is being held hostage right now. I just want to read their names into the record—that didn't happen this morning; I think it's important that we do that: Harel Lapidot and Galit Goren; Meirav Raviv; Aharon Brodutch; Aviv Cohen and Alexandra Fridman.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That is not a valid point of order, but I appreciate the information.

DEFERRED VOTES

TEMPORARY NURSING AGENCY LICENSING AND REGULATION ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA DÉLIVRANCE DE PERMIS AUX AGENCES DE SOINS INFIRMIERS TEMPORAIRES ET LA RÉGLEMENTATION DE CES AGENCES

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

Bill 67, An Act respecting the licensing and regulation of temporary nursing agencies / Projet de loi 67, Loi concernant la délivrance de permis aux agences de soins infirmiers temporaires et la réglementation de ces agences.

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

The division bells rang from 1211 to 1216.

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

On November 1, 2023, Mr. Shamji moved second reading of Bill 67, An Act respecting the licensing and regulation of temporary nursing agencies.

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

Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Harden, Joel	Shamji, Adil
Begum, Doly	Hazell, Andrea	Shaw, Sandy
Bell, Jessica	Hsu, Ted	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Karpoche, Bhutila	Stiles, Marit
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fraser, John	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugois, Lise
Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Gélinas, France	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Glover, Chris	Sattler, Peggy	
Gretzky, Lisa	Schreiner, Mike	

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

Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross
Barnes, Patrice	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bouma, Will	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot

Bresee, Ric	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh	Byers, Rick	Ke, Vincent	Shaw, Sandy
Byers, Rick	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane	Calandra, Paul	Kernaghan, Terence	Skelly, Donna
Calandra, Paul	Ke, Vincent	Saunderson, Brian	Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, Dave
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Scott, Laurie	Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, David
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Skelly, Donna	Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Smith, Dave	Collard, Lucille	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, Laura
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Smith, David	Crawford, Stephen	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Todd
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Graydon	Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lumsden, Neil	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Dixon, Jess	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Laura	Dixon, Jess	Mamakwa, Sol	Stiles, Marit
Downey, Doug	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd	Downey, Doug	Mantha, Michael	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga	Dunlop, Jill	Martin, Robin	Tabuns, Peter
Flack, Rob	Mulroney, Caroline	Tangri, Nina	Flack, Rob	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Thanigasalam, Vijay	Ford, Doug	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Taylor, Monique
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Tibollo, Michael A.	Ford, Michael D.	Mulroney, Caroline	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.	Fraser, John	Pang, Billy	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Parsa, Michael	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.	Gates, Wayne	Pasma, Chandra	Vanthof, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Quinn, Nolan	Yakabuski, John	Gélinas, France	Piccini, David	Vaugeois, Lise
Harris, Mike	Rae, Matthew		Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
			Gill, Parm	Pirie, George	West, Jamie
			Glover, Chris	Quinn, Nolan	Williams, Charmaine A.
			Gretzky, Lisa	Rae, Matthew	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
			Hardeman, Ernie	Rakocevic, Tom	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 34; the nays are 68.

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

Second reading negated.

BETTER FOR CONSUMERS,
BETTER FOR BUSINESSES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 POUR MIEUX
SERVIR LES CONSOMMATEURS
ET LES ENTREPRISES

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

Bill 142, An Act to enact the Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and to amend or repeal various other Acts / Projet de loi 142, Loi visant à édicter la Loi de 2023 sur la protection du consommateur, à modifier la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et à modifier ou abroger diverses autres lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1220 to 1221.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): On October 30, 2023, Mr. McCarthy moved second reading of Bill 142, An Act to enact the Consumer Protection Act, 2023, to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and to amend or repeal various other Acts.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Harden, Joel	Rickford, Greg
Andrew, Jill	Harris, Mike	Romano, Ross
Babikian, Aris	Hazell, Andrea	Sabawy, Sheref
Barnes, Patrice	Hogarth, Christine	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bell, Jessica	Hsu, Ted	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sattler, Peggy
Bowman, Stephanie	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jordan, John	Schreiner, Mike
Bresee, Ric	Kanapathi, Logan	Scott, Laurie
Burch, Jeff	Karpoche, Bhutla	Shamji, Adil

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 102; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? I recognize the Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I respectfully request that Bill 142 be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1225 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Kevin Holland: I want to give a warm welcome to the president and CEO of Ontario Forest Industries Association, Mr. Ian Dunn. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Speaker, this afternoon I'd like to welcome representatives of Together We Stand: Richard Seymour and Eleanor Millar.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: Speaker, I just wanted to introduce my page's—her mom and sister's names into the record. It's Niti Bhatt and Shriya Bhatt.

Mr. Stephen Crawford: I have the great pleasure to introduce a great friend of mine from Ottawa-Carleton, Richard Stone.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 2, 2023, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 110(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

BUILDING A STRONG ONTARIO TOGETHER ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2023 LOI DE 2023 VISANT À BÂTIR UN ONTARIO FORT ENSEMBLE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Bethlenfalvy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 146, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 146, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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 minister like to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Speaker, I will elaborate in a ministerial statement shortly.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING OUR CROWNS (TRAINING REQUIREMENTS WITH RESPECT TO BLACK, INDIGENOUS, RACIALIZED, NATURAL AND TEXTURED HAIR TYPES) ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À PROTÉGER NOS COURONNES (EXIGENCES EN MATIÈRE DE FORMATION RELATIVEMENT AUX TYPES DE CHEVEUX DES PERSONNES NOIRES, AUTOCHTONES ET RACISÉES, ET AUX TYPES DE CHEVEUX NATURELS ET TEXTURÉS)

MPP Andrew moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to provide for updates to training requirements with respect to Black, Indigenous, racialized, natural and textured hair styles in the film and television and live entertainment industries / Projet de loi 147, Loi prévoyant la mise à jour des exigences en matière de formation relativement aux types de cheveux des personnes noires, autochtones et racisées, et aux types de cheveux naturels et texturés dans l'industrie du film et de la télévision et l'industrie du spectacle vivant.

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 Toronto–St. Paul's like to briefly explain her bill?

MPP Jill Andrew: The bill enacts the Protecting our Crowns (Training Requirements with respect to Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Natural and Textured Hair Types) Act, 2023, which requires the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to update training requirements respecting Black, Indigenous, racialized, natural and textured hair types for hairstylists who work in the film and television industry and the live entertainment industry.

This would make training on how to style and care for Black, Indigenous and racialized people's natural and textured hair types mandatory for all practising hairstylists within the sector, to protect the health and safety of performers, boost Ontario's economy and work toward addressing racism in the province of Ontario.

In short, this bill would prevent the inequity of Black and other racialized performers, already underpaid, having to pay for their own hairstyles on set and backstage. I want to thank union leaders, I want to thank my constituency and I want to thank community members, hairstylists, performers, allies, store owners and all of those who have made it possible to work with me on this piece of legislation.

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

I'll remind members it's best just to read the explanatory note when you explain your bill.

CLEANING UP CORRUPTION ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 CONCERNANT LA LUTTE CONTRE LA CORRUPTION

Mr. Glover moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Auditor General Act and Members' Integrity Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur général et la Loi de 1994 sur l'intégrité des députés.

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 Spadina–Fort York like to briefly explain his bill now?

Mr. Chris Glover: I certainly will. The bill amends the Auditor General Act. Subsection 10(1) of the act is re-

enacted to provide that the duty to furnish information applies to documents and information that are otherwise confidential or subject to certain privilege rights.

Subsection 10(2) of the act is also re-enacted to provide that the Auditor General's right to access information applies despite other rights of privacy, confidentiality and privilege.

The bill also amends the Members' Integrity Act, 1994. Clause (a) of the definition of "family" in section 1 of the act is amended to include adult children, siblings and parents.

Section 2 is re-enacted to provide that a member of the assembly shall not make a decision or participate in making a decision that would lead to the reasonable perception that there is an opportunity to further the member's private interests or improperly to further another person's private interests.

The bill adds section 6.1, which provides that no member of the assembly shall in the exercise of an official power, duty or function give preferential treatment to any person or organization based on the identity of the person or organization.

Section 31 of the act is amended to allow the commissioner to conduct an inquiry if the commissioner determines it appropriate to do so, even in the absence of a referral from a member of the assembly or the executive council. At any time before the conclusion of the inquiry, the commissioner may expand the scope of the inquiry if the commissioner determines it is appropriate to do.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Before I begin, if you can indulge me for a second: This might be a little bit tough to get through, but I just want to give a shout-out to my mother, who came here in 1944, left Budapest with her family—war-torn Europe—and made her way to Canada at such a young age with her family. She's battling pancreatic cancer. She will be watching right now. Get better, Mom.

Applause.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, colleagues.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today on behalf of the Premier and our government to deliver our 2023 fall economic statement, Building a Stronger Ontario Together.

1310

J'ai l'immense plaisir de prendre la parole aujourd'hui, au nom du premier ministre et de notre gouvernement, afin de présenter notre exposé économique de l'automne 2023 : Bâtir un Ontario fort ensemble.

Ontario is growing rapidly.

Last year alone, 500,000 more people chose Ontario as home.

There are 4,400 more businesses operating in our province today than there were last year, representing over half the new businesses that opened in the entire country.

And these new businesses mean new jobs ... in fact, 170,000 net new jobs since January.

While this is good news for Ontario, we cannot take this growth for granted.

As I have said many times before, Ontario is not immune to the risks of an economic slowdown.

High inflation and the Bank of Canada's rapid interest rate increases are weighing on Ontario's outlook for the remainder of this year, and into next year.

Russia's war on the Ukraine and the recent horrific terrorist attack against Israel means continued heightened geopolitical uncertainty.

With these economic and geopolitical challenges, there comes a choice: We can go back to a time when manufacturing jobs left the province in droves; when gridlock brought our communities and our economy to a standstill; when workers worked harder and harder but life became tougher and tougher. Or we could continue on our path, a path that involves creating better jobs and bigger paycheques, a path that is building infrastructure we need to serve a growing population that is fiscally responsible.

And that includes a path to balance the budget.

Mr. Speaker, our path and our road ahead is clear.

We must continue with our government's responsible, targeted approach.

We must continue with our plan to build a strong Ontario.

Nous devons poursuivre notre plan pour bâtir un Ontario fort. Et nous devons le faire ensemble. And we must do it together.

Mr. Speaker, we are attracting new jobs and new investments.

We are building the critical infrastructure needed to support our growing communities.

We are training workers to fill the jobs needed in key sectors like health care and the skilled trades.

We are putting money back into the pockets of the people of Ontario, during a time of high interest rates and inflation.

And we are providing better public services as well as supporting our most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, due to a slowing economy impacting revenue and increasing our flexibility to respond to risks, our government is now projecting a \$5.6-billion deficit in 2023-24.

In 2024-25, we are forecasting a deficit of \$5.3 billion, followed by a balanced budget in 2025-26.

And as we deal with the uncertainty ahead, Mr. Speaker, our government will never hesitate to do what is necessary to support the people and businesses of Ontario.

Face à l'incertitude qui nous guette, monsieur le Président, notre gouvernement ne manquera pas de faire ce qu'il faut pour soutenir la population et les entreprises de l'Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, our government is building Ontario.

It starts in the north, where we are unlocking the incredible potential of critical minerals and finally building the roads to the Ring of Fire, in partnership with Indigenous communities.

Critical minerals are key to positioning Ontario as a global economic powerhouse, ready to seize the electric vehicle revolution and energy transition and be a serious player amidst geopolitical change.

That's why I'm pleased to announce that we are proposing to enhance the Ontario Focused Flow-Through Share Tax Credit to encourage more critical mineral exploration.

Mr. Speaker, our story starts in the north, but it leads to the south, where we are connecting these critical minerals to our province's leading electric vehicle manufacturing sector. It's no secret that the previous government decimated manufacturing in Ontario. Jobs left the province in droves. Well, under this government and this Premier, manufacturing is back in Ontario and it's stronger than ever.

Over the last three years, our government has attracted more than \$26 billion in transformative auto and electric vehicle battery-related investments to Ontario.

From Algoma to Windsor—

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: That's our member from Windsor there—Ontario is becoming the heartland of the electric vehicle and clean steel manufacturing revolution.

D'Algoma à Windsor, l'Ontario est au coeur de la révolution qui s'opère actuellement dans la fabrication des véhicules électriques et d'acier propre.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is just the beginning.

Our Ontario Made Manufacturing Investment Tax Credit is helping manufacturers lower costs, innovate and maintain a competitive edge.

And to keep up the momentum, today, our government is providing \$100 million in new funding to Invest Ontario.

To attract more investments and more jobs, right here at home in Ontario.

And we are supporting all of this by continuing to invest in Ontario's clean energy advantage.

Mr. Speaker, all this growth means we need more infrastructure.

We need more highways to transport the goods we are producing.

We need more transit to get people to where they are going.

We need more hospitals and we need more schools to serve our growing population.

But a growing economy and population is not the only reason we need to build. After decades of previous governments saying no, we inherited an infrastructure deficit in this province, and that's why we are building Ontario.

We are building more highways, like Highway 413 and the Bradford Bypass.

We are investing in more transit, like the Ontario Line and the Northlander.

Across the province, we are building hospitals, long-term-care homes, schools and child care spaces.

But as hundreds of thousands of people move to Ontario each year, existing infrastructure is becoming more and more strained.

Despite our historic and unprecedented \$185-billion capital plan, Ontario must build even more.

And Ontario taxpayers can't shoulder the costs alone.

That's why I am pleased to announce that today, our government is launching the Ontario Infrastructure Bank.

Monsieur le Président, je suis heureux d'annoncer qu'aujourd'hui notre gouvernement lance la Banque de l'infrastructure de l'Ontario.

Following in the steps of many other jurisdictions around the world with similar entities, the bank will attract trusted institutional investors to help finance essential infrastructure that would otherwise not get built.

A new, arm's-length agency, the bank will leverage investments by public sector pension plans and other trusted institutional investors to help fund large-scale infrastructure projects right across the province.

At the outset, the projects financed through this new agency will be focused on long-term-care homes, energy infrastructure, affordable housing, municipal and community infrastructure and, yes, Mr. Speaker, transportation.

Canada is renowned for one of the strongest pension systems in the world, including what we call the Maple Eight, the largest funds in Canada and some of the most influential investors in the world. We've heard from these funds that they are looking for more opportunities to invest workers' savings in Canada and right here in Ontario. With the Ontario Infrastructure Bank, we're creating opportunities for these Canadian pension funds to seize our home field advantage and invest right here at home.

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The federal government also has to do its part.

We are calling on Ottawa to invest in a new, next generation infrastructure program that provides adequate funding to address the critical infrastructure needs of provinces and municipalities.

In the meantime—

Interjections.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Yes, I heard a clap.

In the meantime, I'm announcing a new investment of \$200 million over three years in a new Housing-Enabling Water Systems Fund.

This fund is another step in helping to unlock new housing opportunities by ensuring water infrastructure that is necessary for new housing developments gets built.

To the people of Ontario listening today, I want you to know that building a strong Ontario together means your government is working for you.

Bâtir un Ontario fort ensemble signifie que votre gouvernement oeuvre pour vous.

It means more training for workers to fill in-demand job, better public services for more people, and keeping costs down for your and your family.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken a lot about building the economy and infrastructure, as has the Premier, as has

everyone of my colleagues, and it is workers who are getting it done.

We are working for workers.

We have invested over \$1 billion so more people can get a head start.

We are partnering with private sector unions to train people for in-demand careers.

And we are also helping workers plan for their retirement.

Target benefit pension plans are offered by a union or association to ensure their members have a secure retirement.

They are common for workers in the skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government overlooked and undervalued target benefit pension plans by refusing to put a permanent regulatory framework in place for these plans. Our government is changing that.

We are proposing a much-needed new permanent framework for target benefit pension plans.

The new framework would help to protect the retirement security of workers, while making a career in the skilled trades even more attractive.

While we are working to safeguard the retirement security of workers in the long run, we also acknowledge the significant impact of inflation on people today.

When inflation began to rise globally, we acted quickly and early to put money back in people's pockets.

We eliminated licence plate renewal fees and stickers, saving the average family \$600 thus far.

We increased the minimum wage.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, we temporarily cut the gas and fuel tax rates.

Inflation remains elevated. People and businesses continue to feel the pinch, particularly as the federal carbon tax makes everyday life more expensive. That is why today we are proposing that the gas tax cut be extended through to June 30, 2024.

That way we can put more money back in people's pockets, where it belongs.

Mr. Speaker, growing communities need housing.

Since last fall, we have been calling on the federal government to remove the HST builders pay on new purpose-built rental housing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to inform the House that the federal government answered Ontario's call and as we committed, our government is removing the provincial portion of the HST on these projects.

By encouraging builders to build more rental units, our government is helping people in Ontario find and afford a place to live.

Mr. Speaker, as we help keep costs down for people, we are also providing more convenient and better services.

Like in health care.

Through our actions, pharmacists can now prescribe treatment for 19 common minor ailments.

And, Mr. Speaker, through the leadership of the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, the wait-list for surgeries has been reduced by more than 25,000 from the peak in March 2022.

And beginning in fall 2024, women age 40 to 49 will be able to self-refer for a mammogram to screen for breast cancer.

Our government continues to build a more connected and convenient health care system for the people of Ontario.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker—and to the people of Ontario—the road ahead will not be easy.

The economic challenges on the horizon underscore the need to remain fiscally disciplined and responsible.

And by maintaining our path to balance, that is what our government is doing.

We have seen what the people of Ontario can accomplish when we come together.

Nous avons été témoins de ce que les Ontariennes et Ontariens peuvent accomplir lorsqu'ils s'unissent.

Together, we can overcome any obstacle.

Together, we can face this economic uncertainty.

Together, we can build the critical infrastructure we need to support our growing communities.

Mr. Speaker, we can build a strong Ontario, together.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Ms. Catherine Fife: First, I'd like to offer our genuine hope that your mom has a full recovery. I think that that's very important.

But I will say this government continues to deliver one disappointment after another. The people of this province are facing extremely tough times, Speaker, and it seems to me everyone but this government understands that these are extraordinary times. Cost of living is through the roof. The cost of living has been going up and up and up, and rent and housing prices are simply out of control.

Ontarians are fed up. They're stressed, and they're worried. And this government just doesn't seem to get that. They're so preoccupied with making their insider land-speculator friends richer, they're simply not able to see how hard people have it right now.

Just last week in this House, Theresa, 92 years old—being renovicted, considering medical assistance in dying. Those are real people with real issues, and this government is making a choice not to make her life easier. They're making it harder.

During economically harsh times like these, we wanted to see more from today's fall economic statement, but it delivered absolutely nothing to shift away from the status quo. All the people of this province got today was ordinary and bland. Nothing in today's statement met people where they're at. Nothing spoke to the struggles of the people of this province—ultimately, nothing meaningful to allay their concerns and win back the trust this government has eroded over the past five years.

While we managed our expectations, people thought that this government would recognize that keeping people housed in rental units during a housing crisis should be prioritized. Did this government listen to that? No, they did not. We've been calling on this government to reverse the rent control that they removed. That decision has hurt so many people in this province. Housing costs continue

to be the biggest drivers of affordability in this province—more than ever, in fact. Rent control is a step they can take right now, today, to help Ontarians. But no, this government did not choose to do that.

People are struggling with high grocery costs and, while CEOs rake in billions, this government is not doing a thing to tackle price gouging. In fact, we have a bill before us which misses the mark entirely.

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I mean, housing and food costs are the cost drivers for Ontarians right now and this government couldn't even mention the word "farmer" in the entire nearly 200-page report. Farmers are an important part of the economy in the province of Ontario.

This is certainly not a government that's making life easier. In fact, it's really shocking—it is really shocking, Speaker, that the government has made a choice to not invest in critical services, but they are bloating up their contingency fund to the tune of \$5.7 billion in the face of emergency room closures, in the face of a child care crisis, autism—I mean, you name it—emergency off-loads for ambulances.

A fiscally responsible government would not hoard billions of dollars while cities across the province are seeing days without any ambulances. We see historically long wait times at emergency rooms, child care, students—four to five students in a one-bedroom apartment because they can't afford the rent. This is a big issue in Kitchener-Waterloo.

The people of Ontario know that this government has been in the driver's seat for five years and, for five years, they have actively chosen to help their insider friends over the people that we're elected to serve. The contingency fund is downright irresponsible, hoarding money instead of investing in key critical services people rely on like health care, nurses, PSWs, child care, child care workers.

One quick example: 2.1 Ontarians do not have a doctor. The Ontario Medical Association has requested an investment in reducing administrative burden that would free up 2,000 more doctors—19 hours a week they spend on administrative duties instead of seeing patients. This is a solution right before you.

So, Speaker, this government clearly is completely and utterly out of touch with the people of this province, and this is what we are faced with even while an RCMP investigation is criminally investigating this government. Today's fall economic statement was an opportunity to win back trust, to see their struggles and see people that we serve. This government made a choice not to do that, but don't fear: The Ontario NDP is on your side. We see you and we're going to keep fighting for you.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa South has a point of order.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, Speaker: a bank? Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That's not a valid point of order.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, if you seek it, you'll find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice concerning the appointment of the next Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow him to move a motion without notice with respect to the appointment of the next Financial Accountability Officer of the province of Ontario. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I move that, in accordance with subsection 2(2) of the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, S.O. 2013, c. 4, Jeffrey Novak be appointed Financial Accountability Officer for a term of five years, as set out in subsection 3(1) of the act, commencing on November 3, 2023.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Calandra has moved that, in accordance with subsection 2(2) of the Financial Accountability Officer Act, 2013, S.O. 2013, c. 4, Jeffrey Novak be appointed Financial Accountability Officer for a term of five years, as set out in subsection 3(1) of the act, commencing on November 3, 2023.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: This petition is entitled "Support the Port Colborne Urgent Care.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Niagara Health System reduced overnight service hours at urgent care centres in Fort Erie and Port Colborne starting July 5, 2023;

"Whereas the current Niagara Health System restructuring plan approved by the Ontario Ministry of Health does not include Port Colborne urgent care centre, creating inequity of health care services in south Niagara;

"Whereas the NHS is already experiencing a 911 crisis in EMS, a shortage of beds and unacceptable off-loading delays in its emergency departments across the region;

"Whereas the population in the Port Colborne urgent care catchment area is both aging and growing;

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature passed motion 47 from the 42nd Parliament by Niagara Centre MPP Jeff Burch on April 13, 2022, to provide a firm funding commitment and clear timeline for capital and operational support of the Niagara Health System as part of an overall effort to serve the growing population of the region,

increase hospital capacity, create jobs and offer the important, high-level front-line service” the people of Niagara need;

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

“To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Niagara Health System to ensure 24-hour services are maintained at the Port Colborne urgent care centre.”

I affix my signature and send it to the Clerk.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is titled “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 \$1,308 for ODSP;

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

“Whereas small increases to ODSP have still left these citizens below the poverty line. Both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation;

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

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

I thank all of those in St. Paul’s for signing this. I’ll affix my signature and hand it over to Clara.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Burch: My petition is entitled “Save the Welland Hospital.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Niagara Health System restructuring plan approved by the Ontario Ministry of Health includes removal of the emergency department, emergency surgical services and associated beds and ambulances service from the Welland hospital site once the Niagara Falls site is complete, creating inequity of hospital and emergency service in the Niagara region and a significant negative impact on hospital and emergency outcomes for the citizens of Welland, Port Colborne and all Niagara;

“Whereas the NHS is already experiencing a 911 crisis in EMS, a shortage of beds and unacceptable off-loading delays in its emergency departments across the region;

“Whereas the population in the Welland hospital catchment area is both aging and growing;

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature passed a motion by Niagara Centre MPP Jeff Burch on April 13, 2022, to include a full emergency department and associated beds in the rebuild of the Welland hospital;

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

“To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Niagara Health System to implement motion 47 from the 42nd Parliament to maintain the Welland hospital emergency department and adjust its hospital plan accordingly.”

I’ll affix my signature and send it to the Clerk.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche: On behalf of my constituents in Parkdale–High Park and citizens across Toronto and Ontario, I would like to table this petition titled “No More Gas Plant Expansion.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our planet is undergoing significant warming with adverse consequences for health, for agriculture, for infrastructure and for our children’s future;

“Whereas the costs of inaction are severe, such as extreme weather events causing flooding and drought;

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“Whereas successive governments over the last two decades have expanded gas plants despite public push-back;

“Whereas Ontario must reduce our province’s reliance on fossil fuels and instead invest in new renewable energy projects to ensure we meet our provincial climate targets;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop expanding Ontario’s gas plants and reliance on fossil fuels, and invest rapidly in lower-cost, proven renewable energy and conservation technologies.”

I couldn’t agree more. I will affix my signature. I also want to give a special shout-out to my constituent and climate activist Rita Bijons, who’s watching. Thank you.

INJURED WORKERS

MPP Lise Vaugeois: This petition is entitled “Fix WSIB Now...;

“Whereas the purpose of workers’ compensation is to provide income replacement and other benefits to workers or their survivors when workplace accidents and occupational diseases harm or kill workers; and

“Whereas section 43(4) of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, operates to deny benefits to permanently injured workers, even when they do not actually have any new jobs and income; and

“Whereas this statutory provision has caused unjust and irrational financial loss, hardship and ruin to persons suffering from permanent disabilities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, call upon the Legislature of Ontario to support injured workers by adopting Bill 57, Respecting Injured Workers Act (Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment), 2022,

introduced December 7, 2022, by Wayne Gates, NDP (MPP—Niagara Falls).”

I'd like to thank the citizens of Thunder Bay for supporting this petition. I fully support it and will give it to Saniyah to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to present this petition on behalf of the good people of Toronto Centre.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this government knew exactly what was coming with the Omicron wave—we all did. But they marched us right into it without preparing hospitals and long-term-care homes;

“Whereas hospitals are so understaffed and overrun that people are left to worry if they can get the care they need;

“Whereas front-line health care heroes are exhausted, run off their feet on every shift, getting sick at an alarming rate, and doing it all while being disrespected by the government;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“—scrap Bill 124 and increase health care workers' wages;

“—increase hospital funding that matches inflation, population and the community's needs;

“—give all workers 10 permanent paid sick days;

“—expedite recognition of nursing credentials of 15,000 internationally trained nurses;

“—create new jobs for late-career and recently retired nurses in supervisory roles and mentorship roles;

“—implement a funded return-to-nursing program to bring back the over 4,000 nurses who have left the profession.”

Sorry, Speaker, I'm just not feeling well. I proudly affix my signature to this petition and send it back to the Clerks' desk. Thank you very much.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have this petition here titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates,” and it's been signed by constituents in many Conservative ridings: Burlington, Hamilton, Mississauga, Binbrook, Lynden and so many different areas—a lot of Conservative ridings. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and woefully inadequate to cover the basic costs of food and rent;

“Whereas individuals on the Ontario Works program receive just \$733 per month and individuals on the Ontario Disability Support Program receive just \$1,169 per month, only 41% and 65% of the poverty line;

“Whereas the Ontario government has not increased social assistance rates since 2018, and Canada's inflation rate in January 2022 was 5.1%, the highest rate in 30 years;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized through the 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 increase social assistance rates to a base of \$2,000 per month for those on Ontario Works and to increase other programs accordingly.”

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm proud to present this petition to the House on behalf of the residents of Toronto Centre.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas health care and support services are increasingly understaffed workplaces; and

“Whereas health and care services rank second highest for lost-time injuries (LTIs) among all sectors in Ontario; and

“Whereas complex care is increasingly prevalent with a growing and aging population; and

“Whereas recipients of care prefer services outside of large institutions and close to or inside their homes, whether group homes, retirement homes, or other residential care facilities; and

“Whereas personal support workers (PSWs) are the backbone of retirement homes and home and community care settings that deliver care for seniors; and

“Whereas developmental support workers (DSWs) are the backbone of group homes and similar residential care facilities that deliver care for people with exceptionalities; and

“Whereas bites, cuts, broken bones are all-too-common injuries when doing this work; and

“Whereas all group home and residential care workers deserve workplace protections as we ask them to care for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities; and

“Whereas it is not currently mandatory for employers to provide WSIB protections to PSWs and DSWs, particularly in retirement homes and group homes where a majority of workers like them provide care; and

“Whereas approximately 25% of health and care workers have no WSIB protections under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; and

“Whereas efforts to expand WSIB coverage to PSWs and DSWs and all workers like them have received yes votes from members of all political parties represented in the Legislature in the past; and

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

“Legislate or regulate an expansion of mandatory WSIB coverage to all health and care service workers in Ontario by categorizing all those who operate a group home or residential care facilities or home/community care, including retirement homes, rest homes and senior citizens' residences a schedule 1 employer.”

I want to thank the good people of SEIU for canvassing and collecting the signatures for this petition.

EHLERS-DANLOS SYNDROME

MPP Jill Andrew: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: ...

“Whereas a growing number of people in Ontario suffering from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) have to seek out-of-country treatment at their own expense because doctors in Ontario don’t have the knowledge or skills to understand EDS symptoms and perform the required delicate and complicated surgeries; and

“Whereas those EDS victims who can’t afford the expensive treatment outside of Ontario are forced to suffer a deteriorating existence and risk irreversible tissue and nerve damage...; and

“Whereas despite Ontario Ministry of Health claims that there are neurosurgeon doctors in Ontario who can perform surgeries on EDS patients when surgery is recommended, the Ontario referring physicians fail to identify any Ontario neurosurgeon willing or able to see and treat the patient;

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

“Require the Minister of Health to provide funding to hire”—at least—“one neurosurgeon who can and will perform neurosurgeries on EDS patients with equivalent or identical skills to the international EDS neurosurgeon specialists, including funding for a state-of-the-art operating room with diagnostic equipment for treatments for EDS patients; and meet the Canada Health Act’s requirement to afford equal access to medical treatment for patients, regardless of their ability to pay for out-of-country services.”

I support the petition. I thank my St. Paul’s community for signing and will hand it over to Ananya for tabling.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I have this petition here titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates,” and it is signed by constituents of Perth–Wellington, Oakville and Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. It reads:

“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 well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in 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 couldn’t agree more. I will affix my signature to it.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I just wanted to correct my record: During my response to the fall economic statement, I said 2.1 Ontarians don’t have a doctor; it’s 2.1 million Ontarians who don’t have a doctor.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): Orders of the day? I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): The government House leader is seeking consent to move the clock to 6 o’clock. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day?

The Deputy Clerk (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Ballot item number 69, private member’s notice of motion number 67: Ms. Jama.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly): No private members’ public business having been moved, the House stands adjourned until Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 3 p.m.

The House adjourned at 1351.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Julia Douglas, Meghan Stenson,

Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Tim McGough

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
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 Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
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	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
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, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
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	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (IND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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 législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kemaghan, 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
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs 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
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, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
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 Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
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, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
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	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	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 Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vaugcois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
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	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Vacant	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	