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Lundi
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 June 2025

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 juin 2025

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Good morning.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECT ONTARIO THROUGH FREE TRADE WITHIN CANADA ACT, 2025 LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN FAVORISANT LE LIBRE-ÉCHANGE AU CANADA

Mr. Fedeli moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to enact the Buy Ontario, Buy Canadian Day Act, 2025 and the Ontario Free Trade and Mobility Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts / Projet de loi 2, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur le Jour « Achetons ontarien, achetons canadien » et la Loi ontarienne de 2025 sur le libre-échange et la mobilité et modifiant diverses autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the minister.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker. Our time will be split with Minister Kerzner and Minister Lecce.

This is an historic piece of legislation, and we're very proud to rise in the House today to speak to it.

Now, I think the best place to start is to try to explain what interprovincial free trade is actually all about. I know all of the members in the House are really interested in listening to this. Let me start with the explanation—I'll give you an example, Speaker, of all that's wrong with interprovincial trade, and I'll start with an example that, over the years, we were actually able to fix.

Now, I know the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane will recall the issue we had with Tembec some years ago. I live in the city of North Bay. It's 45 minutes from the Quebec border, and there was a plant, the Tembec pulp and paper plant. The way interprovincial trade didn't work in the past was that trucks leaving North Bay with lumber or travelling through North Bay with logs would drive all the way—the 45 minutes—into the province of Quebec, stop over the bridge that leads you from Ontario to Quebec, over the river, park, have to uncouple the tractor from the trailer, the tractor would then drive back to Ontario, the trailer would stay there, and a Quebec tractor would back up, link up with the trailer and drive it 60 feet across the road allowance—60 feet; it's the width of the road—onto Tembec's property.

So, if you're driving in from Ontario, you come across the bridge to the border, you normally just turn left and you're into Quebec, but you must stop there, drop your trailer, a Quebec vehicle pick it up and cross the street with it, then uncouple there and drive away, and Tembec's vehicle would come and pick it up and take it right in their parking lot.

So this is all that's wrong. When you hear about why we need to fix interprovincial trade, this is the poster example of why we need to fix interprovincial trade. Now, this particular issue we worked on many years ago and got fixed. So this isn't an issue anymore. I'm using it as an example of all that is wrong with interprovincial trade, the way it stands today across Canada. This is the kind of nonsense that you put up with to protect each other's province. I don't know what the heck that protected—a driver for 60 feet. I don't know how that did anything.

But that's why we're so proud to stand here today and talk about the actions that we've taken to date on interprovincial trade. That's one from a long time ago, but a heck of a great example of the ridiculousness of not having free trade amongst our own provinces.

Since we have taken office, our government has acted to reduce interprovincial trade barriers in several ways. Early in the game—we've been in government here seven years—we actually removed three of what we call party-specific exceptions under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement, and that was related to energy, it was related to hunting and it was related to securities. It was a big deal, getting rid of three of them.

When the Canadian Free Trade Agreement was signed by all 13 provinces and territories and the federal government, everybody ran off and had a whole bunch of exceptions: "You can do that, except we can't do this. You can do that, except we can't do that. You can do this, except we need this tucked over here." So we got rid of three of our exceptions early in the stage.

We've also been very early and strong advocates to advance what we call mutual recognition. What that is, basically, is if you recognize us for a product, we'll recognize you—it's mutually recognizable—including the launch of a pilot program all 13 provinces and territories signed on to in the trucking sector. We agreed in that sector to recognize each other's regulatory requirements even though a difference exists.

What that means is, yes, you do it different than us, but if it's good enough for you, it's good enough for us. Although you do it differently, we will accept it as being equal. So all 13 provinces and territories signed that pilot trucking agreement. It's to do with the length of trucks or

the—some time ago, you could not drive from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast in the same truck without changes.

The requirements in your first aid kit in each province was different—how many Band-Aids you needed, what size they had to be, how much gauze you needed, how thick the gauze had to be; all that nonsense, believe it or not. It needs to be standardized, and so that's done. The tire pressure in each province was different. All that's fixed. So now this trucking pilot says, "Let's actually put this to work now and see." So we were in great shape, all 13 signed on to the trucking pilot, so we were making very good progress.

We brought in here in Ontario an as-of-right rule, and that allows health care professionals to practise in Ontario immediately, and we removed interprovincial exemption limits on alcohol in 2019. There was a historic case, if you remember. We've talked about it here in this Legislature before, where somebody from New Brunswick bought some beer in Quebec, drives over the border, RCMP stops, arrests the guy, confiscates the beer and charges him. He takes it all the way to the Supreme Court and loses. So, in answer to that, here in Ontario and in many other provinces, we just lowered—well, we actually removed—the limit on alcohol so that people can carry a larger volume of alcohol across the borders.

So that's where we were before the threat of the tariffs. Obviously, we need to do more. You can't just fix tire pressure and fix the first aid kit and allow beer and wine to be carried back and forth a little easier, and also, although it was a very good one, the as-of-right rule for health care professionals. It's not enough. We still have a lot of blockages.

0910

Ontario alone still had 23 exceptions. Quebec has 39, to give you some scale. Now, we come to today: the threat of the tariffs. We're facing a once-in-a-generation threat. We've talked about this many times: The threat is coming from south of the border, some illegal, some unjustified tariffs that are put in. This is the closest ally, two closest allies—for 150 years we have been each other's ally, fighting side by side. The Canada-US trade relationship is the largest in the world. This is what we do. We trade with each other. We build things not for each other; we build things with each other. This is what we've done for a hundred years.

In fact, Ontario alone—not Canada, just Ontario alone—does \$500 billion a year of two-way trade between Ontario and the United States. That's what we do. Canada is also the number one purchaser of American goods. If you look it up, you'll find Canada buys more goods from the States—more, and I'm going to go by memory—than Japan, South Korea, the UK, Italy, France and Germany combined, by the way. I might be off by one of those countries. I might be short by one of the countries. The point is we are by far the number one purchaser of goods out of the US. We are their number one customer to 17 states. We are the number 2 customer to 11 more states: 38 states. Nine million Americans wake up every morning

to ship goods to us. This has been a mutually beneficial relationship because it thrived on free trade. Investment, good-paying jobs: They've been created on both sides of the border because of this free trade.

But that's no longer the case. The policy decisions that have been made in the States are made by continued chaos. That's what's happening every day. One day, the tariffs are on. One day, the tariffs are off. One day, they're growing. It changes on a daily basis. One morning, the President wakes up and decides to put a tariff on X. The next day, the tariff is off. The next day, the tariff is back on but bigger. The next day, it's off by a fraction.

We saw the President come out last week after our steel industry again. He announced he would double tariffs on the sector in a bid to protect American jobs. But these measures don't protect any American jobs; they threaten American jobs. First of all, steel becomes more expensive to buy in the States. It's a tax on every American. That's what it is. You build a refrigerator, a car, all of these things that need steel, when we are one of the largest steel-producing exporters into the United States—25% of what they buy comes from us.

So they threaten American industries. They threaten the integrated supply chain. It's going to drive up costs. It's going to jeopardize all the hard-earned savings. We've seen the US stock market is still down by several thousand points thanks to these changes. President Trump, he wants our jobs and he wants our industries. We fought hard here in Ontario to bring \$70 billion worth of industries into Ontario. President Trump wants those industries put in the States and he wants those jobs put in the States. He thinks that these protectionist policies are going to unlock American growth and prosperity.

We disagree. Our government believes in free and fair trade. That's why we need to ensure that here in Canada we have free and fair trade within our own borders. At least we need to start by getting that part right. The crisis we're facing requires us to move faster. We can thank President Trump for one thing: He actually got us to do free trade within our own provinces now as opposed to seven years we've been working on it and moving incrementally. But this all requires Ontario to be the lead nation, showing our boldness and showing our ambition, and that's exactly what this legislation does.

We've talked, also, about the benefits of reducing interprovincial trade. We can't be clearer: Ontario, right now, is the largest player in interprovincial trade. We do \$326 billion of interprovincial trade annually, and that is equivalent to 28.5% of our GDP. That's our economy: 28.5% of our economy is done with other provinces and territories.

Interprovincial trade is up more than \$75 billion since we took office, but we intend to grow it by more. We know the economic benefits that will stem from further growth, not only in Ontario but right across the country. Right now, interprovincial trade barriers are driving up costs and holding back our national economy. Interprovincial trade adds 14.5% to the cost of goods that you buy at stores, that your families buy across Canada. Removing interprovin-

cial trade barriers could see Canada boost our national growth by between 4% and 8% every year. That's a potential gain of \$200 billion every year just by releasing our interprovincial trade, because of the added costs.

Remember I told you about the trucking thing? All that costs money to do those things. Everything along the line that we touch ends up costing money. That's all it does, it costs money, and that money gets added to the price of the goods. It didn't make the trucking any safer to standardize, it didn't make it less safe that we standardized what goes into a first aid kit or the tire pressures, to make these things standard, but it saved a lot of time and a lot of money, and that money is saved by the consumer.

So, it's \$200 billion a year across the country. Ontario's share, you would think, would be 40%, because we're 40% of the size of the country, but we're already doing so much in interprovincial trade, we're already leaders, we've already accepted so much, that our share would be about \$23 billion. You know what it takes to land \$23 billion worth of business? This would be done almost instantly. That is phenomenal—phenomenal—growth just by releasing these tools.

Trevor Tombe is one of the leaders in this area. His new research that came out last week shows a reciprocal, mutual recognition, which we'll talk about, between Ontario and Nova Scotia could boost GDP by \$4.1 billion every year; Ontario and New Brunswick, \$5.9 billion; Quebec and Ontario, \$32 billion, if we unleash all of these things. We've got to knock down these barriers that are locking our provinces down. We've got to unlock them and release our country's full potential. It has never been more important now, with this threat.

So, if you look at us as a country, we're stuck in the past. Think about the EU: 27 countries. It's easy to do business across those borders. You don't even need a passport getting back and forth. Goods travel at the speed of light almost. That's how easy it is for goods to travel in the EU—27 different countries.

You look at the States: 50 US states. They don't throw up barriers to each other's workers and the products the way we do here in Canada. Some Canadian businesses face more red tape moving goods from Ontario to Alberta than from Toronto to Texas. That's just an absolute reality. That's what has to change. If we want to compete globally, we need to start acting as a modern economy right here at home. That's why Ontario is stepping up to lead where others are. We want to push Canada into the 21st century.

We've had a tremendous amount of support from our stakeholders. We've heard from small manufacturers, wine growers, regional chambers. They all agree this legislation will make it easier to do business. As the Canadian Federation of Independent Business put it, "The [Ontario] government has turned the US-Canada trade war into positive action—encouraging Ontario and other provinces to unite in removing internal barriers" and growing our opportunity.

There are lots of other examples, Speaker, but the real issue is that this is not a partisan issue; it's a productivity issue. No matter what your political stripe is, you want

more jobs, less red tape and a stronger economy. That's what we're all looking for and that's what we're seeing at the first ministers' meeting. The urgency of reducing interprovincial trade barriers has united parties. They don't always agree, but because the evidence is so overwhelming, the benefits are national in scope. This bill reflects what Canadians expect from their governments: collaboration across jurisdictions and political divides that are taken apart so that we can have real results.

0920

Let's tell you a little bit about what we did. We have removed those PSEs, those exceptions that we talked about, the 23 that we have. Ontario just removed them. They're gone already. If you go in the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and look up the exceptions, you'll see Quebec at 39, other provinces have many. Ontario, it will actually say, "None." That was done. That was done before—didn't need legislation to do. We've removed those. We are now exposed. We expect all of the other provinces and the federal government, who has promised to remove all of their exceptions by July 1—we expect that to be delivered on. We're taking them at their word. Our 23 exceptions are gone. We went a step further than jurisdictions like Nova Scotia. We are lowering our costs, allowing greater market access and working towards expanding the GDP to \$200 billion by our first step.

But there's a couple more—there's three more. One is mutual recognition. What do we mean by that? As I said earlier, there's way too many rules and regulations because we have slight differences. This mutual recognition that's in the bill will allow for us to mutually recognize another province's goods if they recognize our goods. We know that every province already has strong health and safety standards, and we can trust that the goods coming from one province are safe for use in another and vice versa. Our Canadian laws protect us. Our provincial laws protect us. If a product is safe in Saskatchewan, it's certainly safe to use here in Ontario. If a trades person is certified in Nova Scotia, they should be able to work here, too. That's all common sense.

We'll use the pizza example. Premier Tim Houston of Nova Scotia uses the pizza. He says that we make a pizza here, it's packaged in a certain box, it's labelled a certain way, it's covered in a certain thickness of plastic. That's their pizza. They want to ship that? Well, we may have a different thickness of plastic that we need allowed in Ontario or a different grade of cardboard or a different size. For whatever reason, our regulations have shown that. What we're saying is, yes, there may be a slight difference in the packaging standards, but for heaven's sake, if it's been passed and through all the regulations of one province. We should understand that it's different but treat it as equivalent.

That's what mutual recognition is. That's how we get goods flowing back and forth. They don't want to ship the pizza here because they would have to repackage it with a slightly different shrink wrap, so we don't get their pizza here. We stop that trade. And if they do make all those changes, it would be more expensive here. That's what

we're talking about. That's the kind of nonsense that gets in the way of trading freely amongst ourselves—never mind the States or Europe or Asia—just amongst ourselves, 13 provinces and territories. That's what mutual recognition is.

The trucking sector is also the other one, and I'll tell you a little bit about that. Again, we have different rules in the trucking sector—this pilot that I talked about. Trucking is \$40 billion a year, 63 million shipments a year. We cannot afford to have different rules in every province. So there's a lot of redundancies that this legislation will get rid of. Our bilateral deals are already creating momentum. We've signed MOUs with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba—yesterday, the Premier was in Saskatchewan signing a deal with them—with PEI and Alberta. We've got six down and six to go. That's where we are. Those agreements by all of us, the seven of us now, send a very clear message: The time has come to tear down all unnecessary barriers that are costing all our families more money and more business.

Labour mobility: We need to ensure there is efficient and productive labour mobility across the country as well. Workers who are trained and registered in one province should not be held back from working in another just because of bureaucracy. Our legislation will work with provinces on, again, a reciprocal basis to ensure our workers can practise in other jurisdictions immediately and out-of-province certified workers can do the same here. We are going to expand our as-of-right entry more broadly so we can get more workers here faster. So, a worker will be deemed registered with the regulators as soon as their registration documents are submitted. That means an architect in Manitoba can come to Ontario and start working and have six months to get their paperwork in order. It's a little bit of flip the order. They can come now, get their paperwork in order and then go to work, or they can, under our new rules, come now, go to work on Monday morning and get their paperwork done. They still have to register with the regulatory body, but this will allow them to be working as they're completing their registration. There's going to be time limits on the regulators to ensure they're processing applicants as fast and effectively as they can, because this is what it's all about: It's speeding up all of this.

We'll also go to the third item, the direct-to-consumer sales. Again, you remember I told you the story about the guy in New Brunswick who brought beer over from Quebec, got charged, Supreme Court, turned down. We've fixed that so that you can now be in Quebec, come to Ontario, pick up a couple of cases of beer and take it back over the border—there's no problem, there's no issue, there's no limit. But if you're in another place and you like the case of wine that you bought in Ontario, well, now you can order it and have it shipped directly to your home. That's what direct-to-consumer sales are. And this legislation moves us closer to a full DTC, direct-to-consumer model, right across Canada.

We'll begin, once again, by negotiating MOUs with other interested provinces. It will allow consumers in those

reciprocal provinces to buy alcohol directly from the Ontario producers and for Ontario consumers to buy directly from producers in other provinces. So a guy in BC might want to buy a nice case of Niagara ice wine and somebody in Niagara might want to buy a case of wine from Quebec. This is what the direct-to-consumer is all about. Think about this example that we heard from Wine Growers Ontario at committee last week. This is their words: Oftentimes families and couples will come from out of province to visit Ontario wineries in the Niagara county. They try the wonderful made-in-Ontario wine and they want to order some to their house. Well, oftentimes they want to purchase more than one bottle. They want a case of 12 bottles. If they're from Saskatchewan, they'll ask the winery if they can have it shipped to their house. And as you know, the wineries are not allowed to ship directly to their house. So they have to take the box of wine from the winery.

Now, you can imagine the enormous revenue that we lose when they say, "Well, I can't carry that; I can't take that home in my luggage." That's why we have a direct-to-consumer model. It will increase the sales. This is what Wine Growers Ontario told us at committee last week. The increased competition will broaden the choice and drive down costs. This is a massive opportunity for Ontario producers, giving them direct access to the entire country now.

So, there's a window of opportunity right now for provinces to remove these barriers. We are rightfully criticizing the US for unjustified tariffs on Canadian goods. It's hard to continue saying that while we uphold measures here in Canada to put our own tariffs on each other. It doesn't matter the political stripe; we're seeing right now an unprecedented consensus around this issue.

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We saw, as I mentioned, that Premier Doug Ford has signed six MOUs already. Parties of all stripes have signed the MOUs. We have everything in this country to be an economic powerhouse. In Saskatchewan, potash, uranium; in Alberta, a wealth of oil and gas and natural resources; in Ontario, our critical minerals, a manufacturing hub that's like no other in the world. Countries around the world would love to have what we have here in Canada. We have something of everything. So, the provinces need to start relying on each other, trading with each other more easily, and that's what the six MOUs we signed do. They move us closer to ensuring that the free trade and labour mobility exist within our country.

So, Speaker, this legislation, along with our action that we've already taken to remove the 23 party-specific exemptions, is the most ambitious provincial action on interprovincial trade in Canadian history. That's what we have done here. Canada's founders envisioned an economic union without barriers between provinces. But here we are, more than 150 years later, and that vision of our founders is still not finished. This bill will bring us much closer. This legislation will help a carpenter in Windsor work on a project in New Brunswick, a winery in Niagara sell to consumers in Nova Scotia, and a nurse in Thunder

Bay continue to practise right here in Ontario. Now is the time for us to be bold and ambitious. Now is the time for Ontario to continue to lead the way and answer this call. We're already seeing the benefits. We know the benefits of free trade, which is why we need to ensure that it exists within our own borders and unlock Ontario's true potential. It starts by tearing down interprovincial trade barriers.

Speaker, I will now pass the time to Minister Kerzner.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the Solicitor General.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's a privilege to speak today on Bill 2, the Protect Ontario through the Free Trade within Canada Act, 2025, and to congratulate my colleague the member from Nipissing, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Madam Speaker, I want to take the Legislature on a bit of a journey, because I feel that when the minister introduced this bill, he recognized and unleashed something within us that we should be proud of, and that's our Ontario pride, that's our Canadian pride. When we see our Canadian flag flying, our Ontario flag flying, I think Ontario, in response to President Trump's unjustified tariffs, feels protective and defensive and proud about who we are as Ontarians and Canadians. And that's why I'm so proud to follow my colleague the Member from Nipissing and the Minister and speak on this bill.

I want to say that on my desk, in my office, I'm privileged to have—because it's a great privilege to become both a member of this Legislature, because less than 2,000 of us have been elected to serve in this place. I think right now the number is around 1,985. One day, somebody will actually have a number that corresponds to their birthday. So we're getting close to that. On my desk sits a picture of my late uncle Joseph Kerzner and President Ronald Reagan. In the mid-1980s, my uncle was privileged, together with a delegation from Yeshiva University in New York City, to meet President Reagan, and my uncle told me for decades about why that visit was important. They talked about the umbilical ties between Canadians and Americans that go back a very long time. In fact, it was indistinguishable for many world wars when a Canadian and an American would fight along one another in defence of democracy, understanding that there must be a point in time when we must stand up and protect that which was given to us: our own freedoms and our own democracies.

I think about, seamlessly, as I became a father and my wife and I raised our three children, and we would travel to the States many times, people would talk about the bond between Canada and the US. And I think Premier Ford is a thousand per cent correct when he says, when you go to talk to an American, just like we always have, that bond and respect from one another has remained as important as it always has been—and, I might add, very respectful.

We look at the leadership of President Trump from his first term and as he began his second term, and actually, I looked at it with cautious optimism, that in terms of the

world order and protecting democracy and standing up for the values that are inherently ours, I was cautiously optimistic that we would look at the relationship and enhance it from where we left off when President Trump left being the 45th president. I was optimistic even when President Trump reminded us what we have to do to fight crime and to fight crime that was going between the two borders. And as the minister responsible for public safety called "the Solicitor General," I went to these borders in Ontario to see for myself. And I worked with our incredible municipal police services—our First Nations police services and our OPP—to do everything that we could to be innovative and imaginative and take the threat of cross-border criminality seriously. And you know what, Madam Speaker? That's exactly what we've done. As the minister responsible for the OPP, as Solicitor General, I can tell you how proud I am of our men and women who put on the OPP uniform every day. I'm proud of our men and women that put on our municipal police services every day, and I'm proud of our men and women that serve in our First Nations police services in Ontario.

But something changed. President Trump felt that adopting a protectionist-style plan was beneficial to the world order. It may in theory be beneficial to the US, although I'm not convinced of that, and I don't think the minister is either. But what it did is it allowed us to peel back the onion, to understand what exists locally in our own country, from the shores of Victoria to the shores of St. John's. And if you travel—and I haven't travelled that route yet—it's about seven or eight hours. It reminds us that our country is large and however insular we feel in our one of hundreds of communities here in Ontario, that we are protective of our community. That's okay. It's okay to love our community and to champion our community and to support our community and as MPPs to attend our local events and our local fairs, as I did even in my riding of York Centre. I had the privilege of going to the Faywood school fair yesterday—that's a fair; it may not be a country fair, but it's a fair—and to say, how lucky are we?

So when the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, together with a bold Premier and a bold cabinet and a bold caucus—and I hope the opposition will support us in Bill 2, because it does exactly what the Premier ran on a third mandate for, those two words: "Protect Ontario." And I've said it, if I'm speaking to our stakeholders in public safety, I say protect Ontario means yes. It means yes from a public safety point of view, but it also means protecting Ontario economically. We say that each one of us has an incredible opportunity to make a difference in the lives of our community every day.

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Madame la Présidente, la raison de leur survie, c'est pour faire une différence dans la vie des gens lorsqu'ils ne s'y attendent pas. Parce que nous croyons en notre province et en notre avenir, et ensemble nous bâtissons L'Ontario.

Of course, we believe in our province, and we believe in our ability to build something for everyone. What Bill 2 does—and I might add, so innovatively—is looking at

our country so we can experience the best that Canada has. I've spoken many times about being very young, as some of the members who were from the class that I was born in, 1963, although some won't admit that they were born in that year—I know the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, the member from Haliburton–Brock, our former Speaker of the House and other members, we were young. We were young in 1967. Think back: When was there an opportunity for Canada to be galvanized by an unleashing of incredible pride in reaching a milestone of a hundred years? You have to go back in our generation, now in my children's generation, that we can't pick one moment, as important as it was for my parents—thank God they're still alive—and my late grandparents, to have witnessed 1967, “A Place to Grow.” There was a song written. In fact, the person that wrote that song also wrote the hockey theme song, which many of us will remember more prominently today.

We look at the times that we're in, in 2025, understanding that sometimes you have to leave home to become a hero and make a difference. But the truth is that no one of the 124 people who are here in this place need to be called a hero. I'll tell you why: Because everything we do here is something that we are intrinsically responsible to do. We don't need any thanks. We don't need a medal. We don't need anything other than having the privilege of serving here and to bring everything who we are on this incredible journey: our own commitment to serve, our own life's experiences, our own courage to face everything that life throws at you when you're an elected official. And to tell you the truth, Madam Speaker, there's no place I would rather be than being right here.

Some of us have been elected for quite a long time. I think of my friend from Sarnia–Lambton. And getting to know the member from Sarnia–Lambton reminds me why he has served so many elections and decided—and I want to thank my friend; he's a great friend—to put his name on the ballot again, so he's continuing to serve. I'll tell you why: He loves his community. Go down and spend a day with him in Sarnia–Lambton, and you will see how much everybody loves the member there.

So we look at Bill 2 and we look at the difference it will make. It will allow us, on an interprovincial basis, to firstly sell our goods to other Canadians who live elsewhere in our country. The Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade spoke of the six incredible agreements that were signed already with six provinces. I want to thank Premier Ford for not stopping. When others told him and the government, “Just cool it a bit; give it a break,” he said, “There's no way. We're going to go full tilt and we're going to lead.” And do you know what, Madam Speaker? If nothing else, having the title of Premier for Premier Ford is a high honour; to have the respect of being an MPP from his riding in Etobicoke, another high honour; to say that his brother was the mayor of Toronto, a high honour; that his father was a member of this Legislature, a high honour. But what's incredible: The Premier, to me, is Captain Canada. Everyone knows it, everyone should celebrate it and the Premier will continue to inspire all of us.

I want to thank the Premier for also working productively with Prime Minister Carney and the government in Ottawa, understanding that when we work together on the federal level and when we work together on the municipal level—the Premier and I were together last week with mayors from northern Ontario; I see what it means to work together. The Premier brings in consensus by being a good listener, by looking at an opportunity and saying, “We can get it done.” It's not just a slogan; it's absolutely true.

So, when we look at Bill 2, we look at what we can do so that we can sell goods to other provinces and we can buy their goods too, seamlessly, without barriers that would otherwise prevent somebody in British Columbia or in Alberta or in Saskatchewan from enjoying the Niagara wines. I know the minister spoke about it.

When we look today at how the agri-food business has changed so dramatically, the minister and member from Chatham–Kent–Leamington himself is an expert in understanding that we can produce the best berries and the best fruits and vegetables right here, and we should be able to send them across country.

We have some emerging technologies that could benefit people in other provinces, but there are also workers who could lend an expertise by going to another province or coming to this province so that not only can we build the best Ontario, but we can unleash something, as the minister spoke of, increasing our GDP here in Canada by selling to ourselves. It sounds so basic, but it's true. In spite of what the US is doing, we look to our alternative marketplace to sell our goods and to provide our services—and you know where that is? That's right here. It's in Canada. It could be in our own backyard; it could be in our own community. I am so proud that one of the first bills that this government decided to undertake—just look at the number; Bill 2. It says how serious this government, led by Premier Ford, takes the protection of our province.

We will, as part of this bill, look at the goods and services and certified workers from other Canadian provinces to meet local standards, which will automatically be accepted in Ontario when we have a reciprocal agreement. We have, thanks to the minister and the Premier, number six and counting, and I bet when the Premier comes back from his meeting with the first ministers and the Prime Minister he'll say, “We've got a few others that are going to go next.” That will happen.

And by amending the Ontario Labour Mobility Act to allow certified professionals from other provinces to work immediately in Ontario while completing a simplified registration will allow, as the minister said, especially in our Ontario communities that border other provinces, which include Quebec and Manitoba—it will be more seamless.

People think that I don't have any roots in the north. But those who know me know, and the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane knows, that's not true. My wife's family was from South Porcupine and my wife's family was also from Sudbury. My wife's late grandfather said that the distance to the Quebec border from Monteith and from Matheson and from South Porcupine and Timmins is not that far; from Cochrane it's not that far.

We need to make these changes so that we can have the functionality of serving across. This whole epic ethos of protectionism was something of another time, and I think when we look at history's most serious moments, that can be the tipping point for change. I don't want to thank the 47th President for helping us unleash this incredible moment of patriotism and moment of understanding that it's okay to be proud. It's not even okay; it's great to be proud.

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Madam Speaker, I spoke last week at the Police Association of Ontario's annual meeting in Ottawa. I happened to have the privilege of meeting the daughter of Prime Minister Joe Clark. I said to her, "When you look back here, you're a daughter of a Prime Minister, the President of the Treasury Board is a daughter of a Prime Minister, and in their leadership on the federal level, they helped bind a country together. But neither of them was able to tackle this particular issue of interprovincial trade."

Great challenges I think are great opportunities and each generation has a responsibility to meet these challenges and to do it with energy and urgency. This is our government led by Premier Ford. Every generation has an opportunity to see light over dark and to let that light in so that we can flourish. This is our government led by Premier Ford. In each generation, we can unlock something that was there, but we didn't know was there. That's our pride and that's our optimism in our future, because we believe in Ontario. We believe everything that this stands for, that this province stands for. That's our government led by Premier Ford. So it's a privilege, Madam Speaker.

I'll end where it started. Our friendship with the US is unbreakable. We're going through a challenge, but it should never be personal to those that live there. I know that what they have taught us in these last few months is everything good about who we are. It doesn't matter where we came from or how we got here. It does not matter our faith. It does not matter our specialness. It does not matter our DNA. It matters that we're Canadian and we're Ontarian, and we should be incredibly proud of it.

It has been a pleasure for me to speak on Bill 2. Thank you. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Honourable members, good morning to you all. It's an honour to rise today in support of this historic piece of legislation, the signal of our Premier and government fulfilling our word to the people of Ontario after the last election, where we sought a mandate explicitly on building a self-reliant economy, where we sought a mandate specifically on eradicating the barriers to the prosperity of Canada. We also sought a mandate on doing the big things as a government, confronting the status quo, challenging the systems, the agencies, the lack of imagination of some public servants who choose not to see our country as stronger, more united and more self-reliant, independent of our relationships with our allies north or south.

Bill 2, although the first bill we introduced in this parliamentary session, expresses clear intent of this government to confront the challenges that impede our economic growth, the first one of which is the level of protectionism that exists within our country. We often speak as Canadians about the perilous nature of protectionism in the American left and American right, both manifest in the Democratic Party and then later in the Republican Party, and the rise of economic nationalism. And yet, we see it in the left and right in the US. We see it alive and well in every province and territory.

I am proud with the recognition that our Premier is trying to apply the role Ontario has historically played within our Confederation, a unifying role to bring people together. In that leadership, he has brought forth a challenge function to other provincial Premiers and to territorial leaders that they, like Ontario, will take action to eradicate those barriers, to lean in to free trade as a driver of growth, to add \$200 billion of economic gain for the next generation of Canada. It is a beautiful legacy we can deliver together. It does not require a monetary investment. It requires the courage of government to do the big things.

And \$200 billion of GDP gain is a significant value-added, keeping in mind that Ontario, with all the trade we export, \$148 billion, we benefit. We stand to disproportionately benefit from this type of economic arrangement because we have a trade surplus with our provinces of \$41 billion. Our workers benefit from this agreement. It benefits from the fact that people, ideas, intellectual property and innovations can move unimpeded east and west, north and south. That is what one strong nation is about.

But for too long, we've had 13 subnational jurisdictions that coexist without a cogent economic lens that brings us all together. While the Minister of Economic Development and Trade was being facetious when he thanked President Trump, of course, the unintended consequence of the attacks, the threats against our sovereignty and our economy is that it actually is enabling governments to have courage to confront the public policy challenges that few had the capacity to confront in the past.

That manifests, yes, on free trade, it manifests on energy corridors, it manifests on resource development. It's talking about actually getting on with building our province. The benchmarks, I believe, are alarming for many of us who desire prosperity, who desire economic independence from America. That's why we're here, because just 24 hours ago, our Premier again led by example, signing agreements in place with the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, east and west, unifying Canadians ahead of the First Minister's meeting today, where we're talking about two-way trade with Alberta of over \$60 billion with Ontario, with Saskatchewan north of \$15 billion and nearly \$2 billion for Prince Edward Island. This unlocks capacity for the province to create jobs. And so we are initiating this.

The first action we took was to eradicate interprovincial trade, the second of which was to deal with our resource challenges when it comes to the responsible development

of resources. Together, these types of initiatives actually are nation-building investments. They allow us to seize our moment because there is a change in the new world order. I mean, our assumption, for my lifetime and our lifetime collectively, is that we can rely on America as a beacon of meaningful alliance, in shared democratic values, the fact that we fought in the same wars, that our history is so integrated and yet so different. Yet President Trump has imposed unnecessary and frankly illegal tariffs—attacks on Canadian steel and aluminum, auto and so many other critical industries of Canada. It reminds us, it motivates governments to decouple. It means we need to be intentional in what we do, how we procure, the policies we drive, the desire to get Canadian resources and products to the market. Because it actually is existential for Canada if we don't get on with doing the big things.

I've learned in this Legislature, through successive ministerial appointments, that or some there is a virtue in really the expression of "going along to get along," right? Maybe it's easier just to let the status quo to prevail. That is certainly the public policy position of many members of this House, manifested by their opposition to every bill to get a resource project done before the House. There's one constant: It is the opposition of the New Democrats and Liberals. And that's regrettable.

Now, pre-Trump, one could argue we disagreed ideologically. It was a different world; allow parties to have different perspectives. That's fair game, I guess; I would disagree—but perhaps more empathy or a sense of sympathy for their opposition then. In a post-Trump world, it is highly irresponsible to take a position that we should landlock resources, we should permit interprovincial trade barriers to remain erect, when we know the greatest threat against our federation and our economy and our future prosperity really resides with those who lack the courage to do the big things, who actually want to use the talking points of self-reliance but not actually vote for or initiate an action that decouples from America to build up onshore and repatriate jobs here back home. That's the intellectually honest acceptance of where we're at amongst the political parties before us.

We know that trade barriers could add. When it comes to doing the big things, one of the big challenges we face, the mandate we saw from the people of Ontario, was a desire to reduce fees and make life more affordable. Acting upon this legislation, the first legislative product we brought forward to the people of Ontario, has the capacity to reduce costs by 14.5%, a 14.5% reduction in products that will really make a difference for families, seniors and young adults trying to build their lives. Removing these barriers has the potential to boost our economy by 4% to 8%, a significant increase that translates to \$200 billion of gain. That's \$23 billion specifically for Ontario alone. We think this is the right public policy.

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It is very motivating to see other provinces follow our Premier's lead. British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and most recently Quebec: That's

the list who have historically opposed—particularly the latter, in Quebec—interprovincial trade harmonization, but they too are tearing down these walls, tearing down these barriers. That is a sign of unity of spirit, that at least governments of different political persuasions are united to tackle; not the case, perhaps, for opposition parties within those Parliaments.

But for the governments of the day, the duly elected governments from the NDP of BC to the Liberals in Newfoundland and Labrador to the federal government, which does not share our political party, the federal Liberals—all of us are united on two fundamentals: self-reliance is achieved by removing interprovincial trade and self-reliance is achieved by unlocking our resources for global exports, both of which are really central to the future success of Ontario, of Canada and the prosperity for generations to come.

That's why we're here, to bring forth legislation that enables people and goods to move east and west without the barriers that only government can conceive. That's why we believe in this nation-building investment. We believe in securing our position as a leader in Confederation, and we also recognize that the sovereignty of Canada will depend on our ability to tackle the obstacles, the barriers and the philosophies that underpin the desire to defend the status quo.

It is promising, as a Canadian first—before my hyphenation as a Progressive Conservative, just a Canadian—to see governments at all levels do difficult things that are necessary to secure our future. That is a good thing for Canada. It is a good thing for our workers. It is a good thing for the world that desires stable, ethical, environmentally responsible resources and products. It's a good thing for all.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

MPP Wayne Gates: I just want to let my colleagues know that I've been fighting for interprovincial trade since 2002. I've known for a long time. And in Niagara, in the wine industry, we've known for a long time because we couldn't ship bottles of wine to BC as BC was importing grapes from Washington and from the States. So we know in Niagara how important it is to have interprovincial trade. Like I said, I raised this issue a number of times because in a number of summers, we had to have our grapes rotting on the ground because they couldn't get in bottles to sell to BC and supply to BC. So interprovincial trade in Niagara is very, very important. The wine industry is extremely happy.

My only question here is, as we open up our markets in Ontario, what framework are we going to put in place to make sure that our medium and small wineries are going to open up their markets and make sure that as we open up our big market, they keep theirs open? I'd like to get the framework around that.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: You're absolutely correct about the industry needing this so desperately. This is a reciprocal deal, sort of "We will open to you if you open to us."

It is not universal; it needs to be negotiated separately with each province to make sure that they do exactly what you're saying. If we open up Ontario to British Columbia wines, they must be open completely for our wines to be able to transfer back and forth. It shouldn't be easier for BC to ship a case of wine to California or Florida than it is for BC to ship to Ontario. So that's the goal.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Question?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: This is for the honourable member from Nipissing. Will the government keep the LCBO public?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I will keep my comments in the context of Bill 2, as we should, when we're debating Bill 2.

The whole idea with direct-to-consumer is the fact that—the example that I used here: When a family is here at a Niagara winery and enjoys a Niagara wine, if they want to take a bottle or two, it's easy; taking a case with them is impossible, so they ask for it to be shipped. Today we can't ship it. That's the whole idea. This will open the opportunity now for these wineries to be able to ship their product directly to the consumer. That's the whole purpose of this direct-to-consumer portion of the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. We heard at the committee of infrastructure and heritage from many delegates about the importance of breaking down interprovincial trade barriers, and I'm wondering if the minister can speak to the House about the stakeholder engagement he had and about feedback he was hearing from Ontario businesses about this critical issue.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I did read a quote earlier from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Now I'll add one from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters: This bill "is a historic step towards making the movement of goods and people freer across Canada. It is also a call to action for other governments across the country. As we face the threat of American tariffs across a range of sectors, enabling governments and individuals to help manufacturers by buying more goods made right here in Canada is timely and important. We encourage all provinces to follow Ontario's lead to build our country's strength, to completely remove all internal barriers, and support industry-led initiatives that support local jobs, such as" the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters "Ontario Made program."

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Spadina—Fort York.

Mr. Chris Glover: I'll address my question to the Minister of Economic Development.

I heard either you or one of your colleagues talking about, in the wake of the Trump tariffs, the importance of selling to ourselves and stopping being dependent upon the US market. But the words of this government are not matched by action. During the election, the Premier cancelled the Starlink deal then reinstated it. Just before

the election, they closed small local businesses and gave ServiceOntario contracts to Staples and Walmart. They've also given Fedcap, a US company, charge over running Employment Ontario services. And the biggest one of all, the biggest procurement that they've given to others is the \$2.2-billion taxpayer subsidy at Ontario Place, which was designed—Ontario Place was originally designed to showcase Ontario innovation.

So the government says that they want to support Ontario businesses with procurement, but they're doing the exact opposite. Why do you have so little faith and why do you provide so little support to Ontario businesses?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Since the illegal and horrific tariffs that have been placed on Canada from President Trump, we as a province of Ontario have reacted very swiftly, very boldly: \$11 billion immediately put in place for business supports, \$9 billion to be able to waive taxes for a half a year, \$2 billion in cheques being issued back from WSIB. That's not the first time, that's not the second time, it's the third set of cheques. Not only have we reduced WSIB payments—without touching benefits—by 50%, we've issued a check for \$1.3 billion, we've issued a cheque for \$2 billion, we've issued now a second cheque for \$2 billion. That's the kind of support they can expect.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, as we know, President Trump's tariff has undermined the long-standing relationship between Canada and the United States. To reduce our dependency on the US, Canada must take bold actions. With the Protect Ontario Through Free Trade Within Canada Act, that's what we're doing. We are improving interprovincial trade barriers up to 14.5% to reduce the costs.

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My question is to the minister. When we say the tough time is the test time, Minister, in your opinion, what is the impact of leadership during this tough time, and how are we protecting it?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We have reacted boldly to these tariffs and boldly through interprovincial trade. The instructions from the Premier, the leadership from the Premier, is: Let us be the ones on the pointy end of the spear working with the other provinces. We began immediately by removing all 23 of our party exemptions. No other province in the history of the country has ever done that. We are open for trade, and we've shown that with our exemptions.

Premier Ford has done a memorandum of understanding with Nova Scotia, with New Brunswick, with Manitoba; now yesterday with Alberta, with Saskatchewan, with PEI. That is the kind of leadership that you're going to continue to see from Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Questions?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It was interesting to hear the debate this morning on Bill 2. I will say everyone agrees that we should be removing these trade barriers, and there was uniform acceptance of this at committee.

In fact, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce all agreed. They were all on the same panel together. They all found consensus particularly on one issue, and that was around worker safety. The minister and I have talked about this. We want the bar to be raised because Ontario's health and safety standards are our strength. We want workers to go to work in the morning and come home at night.

To the minister: How are we going to guarantee that health and safety standards, that are the top level in Ontario, are maintained?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Canada has some of the best labour and safety standards in the world, and those are what we will continue to protect.

The member talked about the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I will quote from what they had to say at committee: "Breaking down interprovincial trade barriers isn't just good policy, it's smart business. We can't call for freer international trade while maintaining outdated barriers at home. By removing these obstacles, Ontario is sending a strong signal that it values economic co-operation"—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): That is all the time we have for questions and answers. We're now moving on to members' statements.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VETERANS

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: This past weekend, I had the opportunity to attend the Fergus Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 275, to celebrate their 90th anniversary. It was a wonderful evening of socializing and celebrating.

For the last 90 years, Legions across this country have been celebrating and helping our incredible veterans. Over 100 years ago, hundreds of thousands of young men and women went to war to defend the freedoms we enjoy today. Since then, many, many more have answered the call and chosen to serve their country. It is so important for future generations to continue to remember their sacrifice and the sacrifice of all of those individuals who serve and protect us. In this time of global uncertainty, we have so much to be proud of as a nation and it is important to be reminded of that.

I'd also like to thank the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for his work in recognizing and celebrating our veterans. I encourage our Legion branches to nominate a veteran in their branch to receive the Ontario Veterans Award for Community Service Excellence. We can never fully repay those who have served our country, but this award will help strengthen our province by recognizing the legacy of our veterans and their contributions to building a stronger Ontario.

So again, to the Fergus Legion: Congratulations on 90 years.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Ms. Jessica Bell: Workers at the Canadian Hearing Services have been on strike since April 28. Last week, I visited the picket line to show my support and learn about the organization and why CHS's 200 workers are on strike.

What I learned is that CHS is special. It provides essential services to tens of thousands of deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing Ontarians. They conduct hearing tests. They provide interpretation for health care visits, for counselling, for schooling and access to government services.

CHS is also special because it was founded in 1940 by the deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing community to hire, serve and be accountable to that same community.

The CHS model is now in jeopardy. It is more difficult for clients to get access to some of their OHIP-covered services or, in some cases, even access the building. Workers' pay is well below inflation, staff are over-worked, and morale is low. Staffing levels have also been cut in half from 450 to 200 people, yet at the same time, the pay for their CEO, Julia Dumanian, has nearly tripled. At the same time, management is no longer from or familiar with the needs of the deaf community. This doesn't sit well with workers, and it doesn't sit well with me.

On the picket line, I was struck by the underlying message of CHS workers. They want to return to work to serve their community. That is what they want. And for the health of the organization and for the deaf, deaf-blind and hard-of-hearing community, CHS leadership, it is time to make a—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

RIDING OF ETOBICOKE–LAKESHORE

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I rise today to recognize the start of Pride Month and to celebrate the remarkable contributions of those who count themselves among the 2SLGBTQI+ community in our province and in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Tomorrow, the Pride flag will be raised here at Queen's Park and at the historic Montgomery's Inn in Etobicoke–Lakeshore on Wednesday. The flag is an important and powerful symbol that everyone belongs, and that in Ontario, people can live authentically and love freely, and that diversity is our strength.

In Etobicoke–Lakeshore this month, we will also celebrate over 1,000 graduating students from our four high schools: Lakeshore Collegiate Institute, Father John Redmond, Etobicoke School of the Arts and Bishop Allen Academy. Congratulations, and I wish them all the best in their future pursuits.

I would also like to mention the upcoming summer events in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. From this weekend's Lakeshore Village Grilled Cheese Challenge to the Taste of the Kingsway in early fall and the weekly Montgomery's Inn and Humber Bay Shores farmers' markets, it's a time to really enjoy connecting in our community. Events like Lemonade for Love, the Lake Shore West Garden Tour and the Franklin Horner Community Centre Extravaganza bring in the crowds, so join us. It's a great time of year to explore the bike trails, walk by the lake or enjoy time in our local businesses.

BRANT COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Mr. Will Bouma: I am pleased to rise today to speak about the landmark \$12.5-million investment into the Brant Community Healthcare System to advance the project planning to build a new acute care tower and non-acute ambulatory care building to address capacity issues, aging infrastructure and increase the number of in-patient rooms.

In 1885, 12 physicians opened the doors to the Brantford General Hospital. In 1922, the Willett Hospital began serving the community in Paris, Ontario. In 1999, these two hospitals became the founding partners of the Brant Community Healthcare System.

Since then, the BCHS has been a pillar of the Brantford–Brant community. BCHS is home to a wide range of cutting-edge technology and is supported by more than 2,100 employees, nearly 400 professional staff and over 300 volunteers.

I am so proud to represent a government that understands the importance of quality, people-first health care. I would like to thank the community for coming together to help secure this planning grant, which is a major milestone on the road to a new hospital. Much still needs to be done on this critical project. I look forward to supporting the Brant Community Healthcare System's board, management, medical professionals and support staff in the years to come. It is an honour to work with the community to ensure that Brantford–Brant is the best place to live, work, play and raise a family.

FOREST FIREFIGHTING

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Ontario is facing a growing wildfire crisis. According to the last briefing from the aviation, forest fire and emergency services branch on May 27, there has been a total of 103 forest fires in Ontario since the season began on April 1. We currently have 14 active fires at the moment. They are reporting that they are seeing very dry conditions, creating hazardous situations across the province.

In the northwest, there are 10 active fires burning, including the major blaze near Kenora that expanded over 34,000 hectares and is affecting a lot of First Nations. In the northeast, we are up to four active fires, with some

threatening the James Bay coast, putting more communities at risk.

1020

Despite this escalating danger, the government's 2024 budget reduced the emergency firefighting fund from \$177 million to \$135 million. This follows previous cuts, raising concerns about their preparedness and response capability.

Madam Speaker, rain is not a firefighting strategy. We need more boots on the ground, more equipment and a comprehensive plan to protect our communities. Fire season is off to a dire start, and it's only the beginning.

To those risking their lives on the front lines, our firefighters, emergency personnel, and volunteers, please be safe and vigilant. Your dedication is invaluable, and we owe you our greatest gratitude. It is imperative that we act now to ensure the safety of our province and its people.

WASAGA BEACH

Mr. Brian Sanderson: It is a pleasure to rise in this House this morning to speak on behalf of the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey. In early May, I was proud to welcome Premier Ford and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming to Simcoe–Grey to announce a landmark investment of approximately \$38 million to build Destination Wasaga. This premier tourism initiative will include revitalized beaches, a dynamic new downtown area and the preservation of a very important historic site developed in close partnership with the town of Wasaga Beach.

Home to the longest freshwater beach in the world, tourism has long been a key economic driver for Wasaga Beach, and as the temperatures climb, the town is preparing to roll out the welcome mat as families return to enjoy the sun, sand and surf.

Our government is committing \$25 million to support the redevelopment and revitalization of Nancy Island Historic Site, widely regarded as one of the most significant War of 1812 locations in Simcoe County and the Georgian Bay region. It commemorates a defining moment in Canadian history. The battle involving the HMS Nancy played a critical role in shaping the Canadian borders as we know and love today. As part of this revitalization, stewardship of the site will be transferred from the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, ensuring that Nancy Island's historic legacy continues to be preserved and promoted.

I want to congratulate and thank Wasaga Beach mayor Brian Smith, the council, the dedicated team of staff and the tenacious volunteers with Friends of Nancy Island. Their tireless advocacy and passion for their community has helped bring this vision to life.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mme France Gélinas: I want to share with this House what happens when environment protections do not apply to mining. Nickel Belt is full of nickel and copper and critical minerals needed now more than ever. But let me

tell you, in about 2009, residents of Long Lake started noticing dead fish, plants and animals in areas of Long Lake. Arsenic, a by-product of gold production at the Long Lake gold mine, had started to leach into Long Lake, a long shadow lake a few minutes from downtown Sudbury. In 2012, Sudbury's public health unit issued a drinking advisory because the level of arsenic was so high. Some 1,000 residents who take their water from the lakes are affected. Boating, fishing, swimming are also affected.

Many of us, including the residents' association, petitioned the government for a cleanup. The government took it seriously. They made it their number one priority for abandoned mine cleanup. That was 13 years ago.

For the last 13 years, the Long Lake gold mine leaching arsenic has continued. It continues to be the number one priority of the government, but no mediation work has started yet. This is unacceptable.

As this government promises to speed up development by letting mining companies skirt around the rules in special economic zones, I wonder if they understand the cost of cleanups versus the cost of doing things right the first time.

LAINE SCHUBERT

Mr. Dave Smith: Thursday, May 29, was retirement day for a friend of mine. Staff Sergeant Laine Schubert began his career with the Peterborough Lakefield Police on July 31, 1995. When you look back at the pictures of him in uniform from that first year, he was so young-looking, it's hard to believe that anyone could have taken him seriously.

Throughout his career, Staff Sergeant Schubert has worked on the front line. He was a member of the emergency response team and was part of the intelligence unit.

His last assignment was to be in charge of the Community F.I.R.S.T unit. It was a new approach to dealing with some of the backlog in calls, but more importantly, it was a way for Peterborough police to have meaningful outreach and communication with the community. It was a perfect fit for Staff Sergeant Schubert.

Throughout his career, his collaborative approach meant he was seen as a mentor by many officers in the service. It's inherent in his personality to look for ways to build relationships, build trust and build a better team. Those relationships, for him, are not just confined to the hours that he works; they're actually part of who he is. And he frequently visits many of the other retired police officers.

It has been said that you enter a brotherhood when you become a police officer, and Laine lived those words.

Congratulations on your retirement. You'll be missed around the station, but I know with your dedication to the community, we'll be seeing lots of you as you volunteer in the community.

RURAL ROAD SAFETY

MPP Paul Vickers: Madam Speaker, spring is here, and there's no better place to enjoy warm weather than

beautiful Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. If you are a water sport enthusiast, our inland lakes provide a cottager's haven. If you enjoy breathtaking views, Georgian Bay and the Bruce Peninsula are the places for you. And if you want to get some steps in, consider hiking the world-renowned Bruce Trail. However you wish to spend your summer, Bruce and Grey counties have you covered. But getting to these landmarks involves driving on rural roads and highways, where safety precautions are so necessary.

Therefore, I encourage all drivers to exercise caution when driving on rural roads. Never pass on a solid yellow line or when the way is not clear. Obey speed limits, and be extra careful around slow-moving farm equipment. Remember, people live here too.

I would also like to thank those who have drawn attention to rural road safety, including Grey Bruce Public Health, the United Way of Grey Bruce, the community members behind "Let's Fix Highway 6," and a predecessor of mine, the famous Bill Walker.

Madam Speaker, we have lost far too many lives on Ontario roads lately.

I encourage every Ontarian to drive safely this summer and to get out and see what Ontario has to offer.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore the afternoon routine on Wednesday, June 4, 2025, shall commence at 1 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a cohort of interns participating in the British Columbia legislative internship program. Please join me in warmly welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Mr. Joseph Racinsky: I'm happy to welcome mayors and senior staff from the county of Wellington who are here to meet with members of the government.

I'd also like to welcome my constituency office staff: Karen, Ashton and Sandi.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's my pleasure to announce that today's page captain is Taylor Doyle. I'd also like to welcome her mother and father, Jenn and Reid Doyle; grandmother Brenda; sister Kenzie; and brother Patrick to Queen's Park.

I hope you enjoy your visit.

Hon. Nina Tangri: I would like to warmly welcome Sapna and Sohal Goyal, the proud parents of Shreyas Goyal, who is serving as page captain today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MPP Paul Vickers: I would like to introduce Dr. Todd Webster and his wife, Christie Webster, both from Owen

Sound. They are here to bring awareness to eating disorders on this World Eating Disorders Action Day.

Mr. Chris Glover: I want to welcome an exemplary community leader, Joan Prowse, from my riding, and her partner, who's a wonderful musician, songwriter and music producer, Chris Birkett.

I also want to welcome a young champion in the community, Xavier Baldwin.

Thank you all for being here.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Today, I'd like to welcome Vince Accardi, Eric Forrest and Ray DeNure from the Ontario Motor Coach Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1030

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to welcome my executive assistant, Amanda Stratton, who is here from London West, and my new legislative assistant, Michelle Wodchis-Johnson, formerly of OUSA, who has joined my office here at Queen's Park. Welcome.

MPP Billy Denault: I'd like to introduce the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming communications team, who are seated in the gallery today.

Thank you for all you do, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Vijay Thanigasalam: I'd like to welcome Sandra Palmaro, Kim Duffy, Dr. Debra Katzman, and all of the folks present for today's eating disorders advocacy day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Todd J. McCarthy: I'd like to welcome to the House today, from my riding of Durham, strong champions and advocates for seniors, housing and long-term care: Larry Corrigan and Don Farquharson. Also joining them is Paul Woodcroft, former trustee of the Durham Catholic District School Board, a champion for Community Living in Durham and a pillar of Immaculate Conception Catholic church.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to welcome visitors from the Ontario Motor Coach Association. Caroline Ravazzolo, Brian Denny and Ray Cherrey are here at Queen's Park today. Welcome to your House.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: I'd like to welcome my friend Konstantinos Sardelis, a student at De La Salle school, along with his grandfather Konstantinos Sardelis.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of welcoming four young staff who are here today who are leaders in their field: Siobhan Noble-Poland, Samuel Van Geest, Mantoj Grewal, Adam Sa-Di Meo.

Thank you for joining us this summer. I know you're all going to accomplish great things while you're here.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Today I'd like to recognize and welcome three individuals whose work and insight continue to shape critical conversations in mental health and the law: Dr. Karandeep Gaiind, chief psychiatrist at Sunnybrook; Trudo Lemmens from University of Toronto law school; and Dr. Ramona Coelho, a family physician.

I'd also like to say—today is June 2—happy Festa della Repubblica, 79th anniversary of Italy.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'm happy to rise in the chamber today to welcome and recognize some special guests who are with us today from Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities.

I'd like to welcome Marco, Stuart, Lindsey, Mariam and Meghann to the Legislature.

Hon. Stephen Crawford: I have the pleasure of welcoming Yesenia Morillo, who is my constituency manager in the Oakville Youth Council. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mme France Gélinas: I would like to introduce Sandra Palmaro from the Waterstone Foundation; Todd and Christie Webster, who shared their story about their son facing an eating disorder—sorry, it was a very moving story; and Dr. Debra Katzman, who is a Hospital for Sick Children pediatric lead for eating disorders. Today is eating disorder action day.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I'd like to introduce today's page captain from the great riding of Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill, David Turcan. He's joined by his sister Sofia and his proud parents, Elena and Veacelav Turcan.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Congratulations on—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize; we are out of time for introduction of guests. We do introduction of guests at 1 o'clock this afternoon.

I recognize the member for London North Centre on a point of order.

WEARING OF JERSEYS

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm seeking unanimous consent for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and I to wear London Knights jerseys in recognition of their massive Memorial Cup victory last night.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member is seeking unanimous consent to wear the jerseys. Agreed? Agreed.

This being the first sitting Monday of the month, I ask everyone to join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem, followed by the royal anthem. And because we are such proud Canadians, let's sing with vigour.

Singing of the national anthem / Chant de l'hymne national.

Singing of the royal anthem / Chant de l'hymne royal.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): You may be seated.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, everybody. Happy Pride.

This question is for the Deputy Premier. Bill 5 has been an unmitigated disaster. The Premier made a promise to protect Ontario from the chaos of Trump's tariffs, but his solution is to create no-law zones and then shut down any opportunities for criticism. He limited public input, and he has now refused to let us debate this bill.

Back to the Deputy Premier: Is the government so ashamed of the mess that he has made with this bill that they want to shut down consultations and feedback?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Premier Ford, as you know, is in Saskatoon today for the first-ministers' meeting. Now, one of the major items they will discuss is how we can work together to fast-track major projects. Every Premier and the federal government agree that projects take too long to get approved and get built in this country. There is a political consensus that we need to move faster, and it doesn't matter the party stripe. The NDP in BC, the NDP in Manitoba, the federal Liberals, the Conservatives here in Ontario—we all agree, and Canadians agree with us.

The Liberals and NDP continue to use a backward ideology, but our government is going to keep delivering on our promise to protect and grow Ontario's economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Reminder: We do not reference whether members are in the House.

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, despite the comments about backward ideology, we all want Ontario to succeed—every one of us. We want to strengthen our economy. We want to create those jobs. We want to actually protect the jobs that are leaving the province of Ontario right now.

But this bill is not about any of that, and Ontarians see through this. It is about the Premier using this moment for a massive power grab, and we see through it. No one wants to see all laws suspended or let this government do whatever they want, especially a government that is under RCMP criminal investigation.

Back to the Deputy Premier: Why is the government engaging in this absolutely shameless power grab?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: In the words of BC's NDP Premier, David Eby, who passed legislation to fast-track approvals, "Now, we cannot allow slow permitting processes and bureaucratic processes to delay what we know has to happen. That will cost us" when we can least afford it.

Speaker, the stakes are higher than ever. We are facing a once-in-a-lifetime threat. That is why you are seeing political parties from across all spectrums rallying together and saying we need to do things faster. Unfortunately, the NDP and the Liberals in Ontario did not support us cutting red tape and ending bureaucracy. They don't recognize the situation we find ourselves in; this is a once-in-a-generation crisis.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Treaty rights are not red tape—they are not red tape—and you can't simply bulldoze over them. It is important for people to know what this Premier and his government are doing with this bill. They are creating no-law zones. They are overriding the authority of local governments, of First Nations rights holders. They are giving themselves a blank cheque to do whatever they want.

1040

And I want to tell you, as unemployment reaches 10% in places like Windsor right now, one in 10 people unemployed in Windsor, this government is not helping anyone but themselves—not workers, not families, just themselves.

Will the Premier do the right thing and scrap Bill 5?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I just want to give a shout-out to all of the firefighters who are busy in northern Ontario, particularly northwestern Ontario, protecting our communities and especially our Far North First Nations communities.

Madam Speaker, in no way does Bill 5 infringe on treaty rights or compromise the duty to consult, and in no way, shape or form do we consider the duty to consult red tape. She's actually right about that. We know, because over the past six years, we've moved major resource projects, particularly mines, across important starting lines, because we've had the full co-operation of First Nations most proximate to those resource development projects, including and especially the Watay Power line, which I know the member from Kiiwetinoong was particularly happy about on several occasions, with his big infectious smile, taking credit for the work this government is doing to put good legacy infrastructure in isolated, remote First Nations communities.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I want to go back to the Deputy Premier with this question, because this government's decisions time and time again have actually set us back on development, particularly in northern Ontario. This is going to send us to the courts. That's where this is headed.

The government never seems to learn. Free, prior and informed consent is necessary for projects to be delivered. Mining companies know that; everybody seems to understand that except for this government. And I want to say, failure to consult is going to put everything at risk, Speaker. There's no question.

So, back to the government: How will getting caught up in legal battles with First Nations speed up any projects?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Madam Speaker, if there's been anything legal going on in northern Ontario with respect to this government and First Nations communities, it's been co-proponency, agreements, community partnership agreements, that help build out the kind of legacy infrastructure that's actually required to support modern critical mineral infrastructure for mining. These are common interests and common goals.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition supports the Matawa communities actually having hydro transmission. They're the only ones in the province—through you—colleagues, who don't have it. I wonder if they stand for better access to help social and economic programs. Their populations are shrinking. Their youth have high unemployment rates, and we see a future where, working together, that prosperity will be the kind of prosperity that

we think is something that we all think they should have access to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Well, Speaker, there are First Nations rights holders here today. No one wants to have to fight, to protest or to go to the courts, but this government proposing to pass a law and then go around and consult shows such deep disrespect, a lack of understanding. The limiting of debate that we have seen here, the way this government has just shoved this legislation through, ended consultations, stoked the fires of frustration that are out there not just among First Nations right holders but across this entire province—we know what this is about. The Premier isn't even hiding it anymore. He's talking about shoving through his tunnel to nowhere—please. We know what this is about.

I do not know how this government can face anyone right now knowing how you are trampling on the rights of Ontarians, so I would like to know how creating more chaos and more conflict is going bring economic security to this province.

Hon. Greg Rickford: The Leader of the Opposition, of course, once again footloose and fancy-free with the Supreme Court of Canada decisions, which set out in the clearest of terms that the duty to consult First Nations arises when the legislative process is completed, and then the government has an automatic responsibility for consultation.

Now, I've seen the Leader of the Opposition use court decisions to their advantage in debate here. Maybe she'd like to step outside there and make a direct criticism of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision. I won't. We'll be looking forward to the passage of this bill, moving out and talking to First Nations who, including this weekend, approached me with innovative ideas, including a special economic zone for different parts of northern Ontario. We're looking forward to those conversations, and we need to get to the duty to consult in order to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question? I recognize the member for Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, First Nations in Ontario do not want Bill 5. I say no to Bill 5.

Last week, the government said that they respect First Nations, that they respect treaty rights. Speaker, we know the Premier is telling untruths to First Nations about—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We'll ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: But that's the truth.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: That is the truth.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Speaker, the Premier is telling the untruths. That's the truth.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will warn the member. Please withdraw.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Our rights are not being respected.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Withdraw the comment.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: I will not withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Sol Mamakwa, you have been named.

Mr. Mamakwa was escorted from the chamber.

FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

Mr. John Fraser: This afternoon—you know, what we just saw here was really a clear indication of what the problems are with Bill 5. That's how serious it is.

This afternoon, Chiefs of Ontario and many others will be on the lawn protesting Bill 5. What they're protesting is what we just saw here, but also Bill 5 giving to the Premier king-like Trumpian powers to suspend laws wherever he wants in this province. It's a serious issue. My colleague was asking a serious question. He spoke the truth.

So, Speaker, will the Premier kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board, and get it right?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response? I recognize the Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I wonder, Madam Speaker, if the member opposite has not just visited symbolically, but actually lived or worked in an isolated First Nations community for any amount of time.

Mr. Adil Shamji: I have—many of them.

Hon. Greg Rickford: I know one of the members there has visited in his professional capacity, but I'm talking about a long time, a month in, year out time there. I know I have, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that the level of poverty there is something that we should all be ashamed of. That young people have the education authority, the health authority or the North West Company to look forward to as their employment opportunities has got to fundamentally change. That's why this government has put in place the foundational elements of access to capital, training to engage in things like the duty to consult, capacity on the ground to help support legacy infrastructure projects and resource projects, and give First Nations youth something to look forward to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: Respectfully, you can't partner with someone if you don't listen to them and you don't consult with them. It's not the way it works. First Nation leaders have been sounding the alarm about Bill 5 for some time now, and what they've told us, Speaker—and maybe the other side doesn't want to hear it—is that they have been hearing the words, “Idle No More,” again and again, something that they hadn't heard in a long time. They're not threatening us with that; they're saying that's what they're hearing, but the government's not listening.

1050

Why is the government breaking what little trust it has with First Nations and why will the Premier not just kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and just get it right?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I think, with respect to Idle No More—I was involved in that extensively in my federal capacity—and I think the way we thought about is that we agreed with the idea that we don't want young First Nations to be idle anymore. Far too often, legacy projects right in their own community, or proximal to them, or resource development projects, extraction activities were occurring 10, 20, 30, 40 kilometres away—those communities were still living in poverty, under impact benefit agreements and very few resources to appreciate what was going on there.

This government has proposed a new path forward. It put access to capital in play. It puts scholarships in play for young First Nations to university or college, to get an education to participate in these extraordinary opportunities and fundamentally change the prospects for prosperity moving forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: The Premier's message to First Nations—and indeed, all Ontarians—with this bill is, “I'm going to do whatever I want with whoever I want wherever I want. I'm going to suspend the laws.” That's Trump-like, “I'm going to do whatever I want to do and you can't do anything about it, because I just created the law.”

I said something to the ministers last week: Be afraid, be very afraid, because you're going to be left holding the bag when you're told to do something you don't want to do. That's the problem with this bill—too much power conferred on the Premier and his ministers. To the ministers over there: It's putting you in jeopardy. You may not know it right now or think it right now, but it is.

Will the Premier do the right thing, kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

Hon. Greg Rickford: Today's rally, as it's been communicated to me from some very reasonable First Nations leadership, is about ensuring that First Nations have a place, not just in consultation, but moving forward, to be involved in those projects, be they legacy infrastructure or resource projects.

In fact, over the weekend, I spoke to a number of First Nations leaders who put proposals on the table, borne out of submissions that we heard at committee, which is not a process for consultation—that commences when the legislation passes—but these are exciting opportunities where, once again, the First Nations communities are aligning their priorities for things like electricity transmission and road access, with the prospect of forestry and mining activity in their region. We think those common interests and the potential for co-proponency is the kind of modern, economic project that makes sense for us all and that's the way we'd like to proceed. So far, it's—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. John Fraser: Let's take a look at Bill 5 and the first economic zone, and that's the dormant dump in Dresden that's been dormant for 30 years. The Premier's

suspending the rules, right? This is the first special economic zone: It's a dump. It's a dump. Suspending all the rules to benefit, as we know, wealthy, well-connected insiders and friends, and breaking his promise to the people of Dresden. If this is the first thing the Premier's doing out of the gate, is it any wonder that people are suspicious of Bill 5?

Will the Premier kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We have seen unprecedented levels of investment flow into the province since we took office. Between last year and the year before, 184 international companies landed here, bringing \$30 billion worth of investment and hiring 18,000 people. This is what happens when you cut red tape and lower the cost of doing business in Ontario.

We're going to build on this progress, but we have to recognize we need to move faster. The competition for investments is going to be unlike anything we've ever seen. If companies are going to have to wait 15 years to get shovels in the ground, they will invest in other jurisdictions. We need to get rid of unnecessary red tape and make it easier for companies to invest, hire and grow, and that is exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: Every time this government gets in a rush, it ends up in a steaming pile.

Let's look at the second special economic zone, Ontario Place. What is it? A foreign-owned spa—no money, no real experience—gets about \$2.2 billion from the Ontario taxpayer. That's not working out too well, is it? Actually, every Ontarian—I think my colleagues here figured it out to about \$400 a person. That's quite the tax to have a foreign company benefit from.

I've got to go back on this. This is the second thing the Premier is doing that's a special economic zone, and it sounds like more scandal coming up. But if this is the second thing that he's doing, how does he expect anybody to support Bill 5? Will he kill Bill 5, go back to the drawing board and get it right?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The Liberals and the NDP continue to oppose every single measure that cuts red tape, lowers costs and makes it easier for companies to create new jobs.

The situation we are in could not be clearer. We are facing a once-in-a-generation crisis. Coming out of this, the competition for land investments is going to be unlike any challenge we've ever had in front of us. We face two very distinct choices: act boldly, to ensure we can keep landing the \$70 billion in job-creating investments that we've landed, or sit on our hands, do nothing and watch as our economy gets crushed. The Liberals and the NDP want us to do the latter, but we refuse. We are going to do everything to ensure Ontario is the place where those companies land.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The leader of the third party.

Mr. John Fraser: We just heard how immediate the crisis is and how important it is, and the Premier's latest nation-building thing that's being touted as a special economic zone is—wait for it—a tunnel under the 401. I don't know about you, but I think I will be long underground before anybody sticks a shovel in. It makes it hard for me to believe these things are a crisis. It makes it hard for all of us to believe.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: I don't know about you; I'm speaking for myself. I don't want to create any bad karma here.

I mean, literally, this thing is just another hole for the Premier to dig to toss money into, and the question will be who's down there collecting the money as he's tossing it in. I'll leave it at this, Speaker: I am totally flummoxed as to how this government doesn't understand that nobody trusts them on Bill 5, just simply because the things that they're proposing are preposterous.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The member opposite asked rhetorically, "Who benefits?" Some 250,000 Canadians will get a job in the resource sector if we actually unlock our critical minerals—250,000 Canadians, which the member may dismiss as inconsequential, but in a time when we're in economic war, speed is a strength. Over the weekend, President Trump actually approved a uranium mine in two weeks. Think about that. He approved a mine, that historically took 18 years in the US to approve, in two weeks.

Now is the time for governments to rally. The NDP of BC, the Liberals of our country, have accepted a premise which clearly Liberals in this province cannot, which is: If we don't move with speed in this critical minerals race, we're going to be left behind. For the 250,000 Canadians that want a job, the dignity of a job, we're going to fight for them every single day.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Chandra Pasma: On top of trying to create special law-free zones and shutting down parliamentary debate on seven different bills, this government has tabled a bill that will allow the Minister of Education to take over school boards whenever he wants, with no limits or oversight. Our kids don't need more centralized control in the hands of a government that has already taken \$6.35 billion out of the education system. They need teachers, books, and safe and healthy schools.

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Will the Premier withdraw this Trumpian bill and instead make the investments that our kids need to succeed?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response? The Minister of Education.

Hon. Paul Calandra: The short answer is, no, I won't withdraw the bill. because it's a good bill, Madam Speaker. Colleagues, do you think it's a good bill?

Interjections.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I think it's a good bill. I think the people of the province of Ontario, starting with students, parents and teachers, want the government to assume responsibility for the issues that are their responsibility, mainly making sure that funding that is supposed to go for kids in the classroom goes to—go figure—kids in the classroom.

Who here would ever believe that the government shouldn't take responsibility for an investment of over \$30.5 billion in education? When school boards aren't going to do the things that they're supposed to do; namely, put money into the classroom—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I apologize to the member.

I would ask the member to put the newspaper down. Put the newspaper down.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Order. Back to the Minister of Education.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I'll just leave it at that, Madam Speaker. We're not going to withdraw the bill. It is a good bill. It puts power back into the hands of the people of the province of Ontario as opposed to those school boards which have really gone off the tracks, off the rails. I don't apologize for that. We're doing what is right for the students, parents and teachers of the province of Ontario.

Ms. Chandra Pasma: You know what the people of the province of Ontario want to see, Speaker? They want to see that \$6.5 billion returned to our education system. Parents want to have a say in the decisions that affect their kids' schools, but this minister is taking that away from them and giving himself the power to push aside democratically elected school boards for literally any reason he feels like. A Conservative government appointee, with no accountability to parents or communities, making all the decisions about local schools without talking to anyone, isn't going to solve a single thing.

Will the Premier respect parents, respect democracy and withdraw this bill?

Hon. Paul Calandra: No, Madam Speaker. You know why? Because only the NDP and the Liberals would stand up for school boards that think it's their responsibility to travel the world and buy artwork. I will fire those trustees that do that, because that's the right thing to do. But the NDP and the Liberals, they work for them. So, when school boards take money out of the classroom, it's ok for the Liberals and it's ok for the NDP. It's not ok for us. When boards do that, I'll take them over because that's the right thing to do.

As I said in the news conference, I don't need school boards or trustees writing curriculum. I don't need them opining on global affairs. You know what I need them doing? Sitting at their desk putting money back into the classroom. Anything else, I don't need them to do. When

they stray from that mandate, you know what? We'll assume that board, we'll fire the trustees that abuse taxpayer money, and we'll put students, parents and teachers first all the time. Let them stand against that.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Ted Hsu: Speaker, this Conservative government wants the power to let development projects ignore the Safe Drinking Water Act or the Clean Water Act. Bill 5 and this government ignore the history of sickness and death in the Walkerton tragedy. They would recklessly put your water at risk. What else do you get from Bill 5? It's a broken promise to Chatham-Kent in southwestern Ontario beside a dump slated for a giant expansion. Tomorrow, it could be your hometown shafted by a broken promise.

Will this government kill Bill 5 or at least accept my amendments to keep protecting clean water in my community and yours?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response. The Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government has shown the Liberals and the NDP what happens when you cut red tape and lower costs. We have lowered the annual cost of doing business by \$8 billion a year and, as a result, businesses have added 1 million jobs here in the province of Ontario. Yet, every time that we reduce red tape and reduce costs for businesses, the members of the members of the NDP and the Liberals oppose it. Now here we are, in a once-in-a-generation crisis, and they still haven't learned their lesson. They want us to sit on our hands and do nothing as President Trump comes out looking for our jobs and our businesses to land in the US.

We refuse to do that, Speaker. We're going to do everything to ensure that businesses here continue to have the opportunity to create—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: We don't need to put clean water at risk. Bill 5 is a power grab so this government can give itself the same kinds of powers that Donald Trump is using to enrich himself south of the border.

Last March, the Premier said about the Dresden dump, according to the Chatham Voice: "If the people like something, we do it. If they don't, we don't do it. It's about as simple as that."

In reality, we see today that this government doesn't want to hear from the people anymore because it's embarrassing. They're shutting down debate. They won't even allow amendments to Bill 5 to be read out, let alone debated, and they've got 25 amendments themselves. That is how flawed this bill is.

Why is this government so afraid of facing the people?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Response. The Minister of Energy and Mines.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The greatest advantage we can give to President Donald Trump is landlocking Canadian resources. They're the most ethically sourced resources on earth, with the cleanest grid, the highest standards of

environmental and labour protections, and you want our government and all governments, including the federal Liberals, to do nothing, to literally sit on our resources and not get a shovel in the ground, which is the record of the former Liberal government. That is not just irresponsible; that is the greatest advantage to the American President.

We're not going to stand for that when we know Canada's resources could displace the authoritarian regimes in the world, create a quarter of a million jobs, add tens of billions to our GDP and ensure we become self-reliant.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The Liberals will come to order.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Because, Madam Speaker, the leader of the Liberal Party would rather a position of doing nothing, helping President Trump instead of standing up for Canadian workers.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

MPP Mohamed Firin: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Job Creation.

With rising protectionism, global instability and aggressive moves by other jurisdictions to land major investments, companies are being forced to rethink where they do business and where they place their long-term bets. We've seen the impacts of tariffs and buy-American policies, and many workers in Ontario are concerned.

Even in this climate, Ontario continues to the punch above its weight. Speaker, can the minister please share more about why businesses are choosing Ontario and how we're staying competitive in this new global reality?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Let's repeat something from earlier today: Over the last two years, Ontario has seen 184 international companies land here, invest \$30 billion and hire 18,000 people. From 2018 to 2023, more jobs were created from foreign direct investment in Ontario—90,000 of them—than any US state or any province. Companies are choosing us because we have one of the most diverse and resilient economies in North America.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Waterloo will come to order.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: We are home to world-class talent, advanced infrastructure and a strong innovation system.

We know there's a chill on business investment right now. That capital is being stored up, and it will look for a place to land. Speaker, our message to the world is clear: Ontario is the right place to invest.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for York South-Weston.

MPP Mohamed Firin: I would like to thank the minister for his leadership and his response.

In today's economy, Ontario can't afford to rely on just one trading partner. As we see growing uncertainty with the US, it's more important now than ever that we expand our global reach and create new trade opportunities for Ontario businesses.

At the same time, we need to look inwards. Canada is home to everything countries need to be successful: critical minerals in Ontario's north, an abundance of energy out west, manufacturing might in southwestern Ontario and so much more.

We as provinces and territories need to take advantage of this. We need to strengthen Canada's supply chains and trade more with each other. That starts by breaking down costly internal trade barriers.

Can the minister share how breaking down interprovincial trade barriers will help grow Ontario's economy?

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Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government's interprovincial trade legislation, which we're debating at third reading today, is a game changer. We are taking the most ambitious provincial action on interprovincial trade in all of Canadian history.

New research last week came out and showed the economic benefits of reciprocal mutual recognition agreements between provinces. An agreement between Ontario and Nova Scotia could boost our GDP by \$4.1 billion; between us and New Brunswick, \$5.9 billion; and between Ontario and Quebec, \$32 billion, if we clear our interprovincial trade.

Canada's founders envisioned an economic union without barriers between provinces. A hundred and fifty years later, that vision is still unfinished, but this will bring us closer to fulfilling that dream.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.

Trump has just dropped new tariffs on aluminum and steel. Ontario's GDP growth was just 1.2% last year, well below the national rate. The province's joblessness numbers have been higher than the national rate every month for the past four years, climbing to 7.8% last month. Speaker, it's really happening here.

Buffering Ontario from the chaos of Trump requires us to stabilize Ontario's exhausted economy. To the minister, when we get May's unemployment report this Friday, how high are you prepared to let it go? When will Ontario have a plan to reverse the job losses? Because what's happening now is not working.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: To the 17,000 men and women who work in Ontario's steel sector, we are going to do everything in our power to protect you. Our budget of 2025 has programs in it to protect Ontario.

We aren't going to give up on manufacturing, industry and workers, like the previous Liberal government did. Whether it's steel, auto parts or any other product, we will continue to promote Ontario as a top destination for global investment. That is why, in the months of December, January and February, we saw 87,000 new jobs put in place before the Trump tariffs.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Ontario has a lower employment rate than Mississippi. Ontario workers are hurting. Economic confidence is faltering. Trump's tariffs are

triggering massive layoffs, and yet this government is focused on building a \$100-billion 401 fantasy tunnel and spending the next four years in court. Instead of defending our industries and protecting jobs, the Premier spent \$40 million on a pre-election PR blitz, claiming things have never been better. In reality, 63,000 jobs were lost in the first few days of this new term. How can this government justify this disconnect?

To the minister, why is the government more focused on its pet projects that Ontarians have loudly opposed than listening to what workers are telling us they need: protection and support in this economic storm?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. David Piccini: The only disconnect we see is an aggressive President to the south making moves to bring industry, to move approvals faster, south of the border, destabilizing sectors of the Canadian economy. We have a plan to unlock our resources, to connect east to west, to build construction, hospitals, schools, and the people against it are the members opposite, Speaker.

We're going to unlock construction jobs, build training centres faster, get a next generation trained to build a stronger Ontario. We see that consensus from the NDP government in BC. We see that consensus in Ottawa. We are building, nation-building, and the Premiers are meeting in Saskatchewan today to talk about that. The only people left in the past are the two parties opposite.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Stephen Blais: My question is for the Premier.

History remembers Dresden as a city devastated in World War II, but this government is making its own history: turning Dresden, Ontario, into a new symbol of environmental destruction and political betrayal. The Premier committed to environmental review for the garbage dump, but Bill 5 shreds that promise and exposes this community to unknown risks.

Madam Speaker, why is the government bombing its credibility and turning Dresden into collateral damage for a dump nobody wants and a process nobody trusts?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the Minister of Economic Development.

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, think about what the Liberals did to our manufacturing sector: They watched as 300,000 manufacturing jobs fled our province. There was no once-in-a-generation crisis then, there were no tariffs then; it was Liberal policy designed to push these jobs away and crush our goods-producing sector. Now, they want us to revert right back to their playbook. We refuse to do that.

We will not stand idly by as President Trump tries to decimate our companies and our jobs here in Ontario. We are going to do everything in our power to protect and build on the economic progress that we've made, and that starts with Bill 5 and cutting unnecessary red tape.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Mr. Stephen Blais: As the old saying goes: Those who don't study history are condemned to repeat it.

Here in Ontario, we should never forget Walkerton—the lives lost, the families shattered and the lessons we all learned: When you cut corners on water protection, people pay the price.

Yet here we are with Bill 5 gutting environmental reviews and the Premier breaking a promise to the people of Dresden—their water, their health and their trust all on the line.

Does the Premier not see that Dresden is becoming a cautionary tale—a warning that if this government keeps shredding oversight, it's only a matter of time before we risk another Walkerton?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: For the 10th time: We are facing a once-in-a-generation threat from south of the border. It has never been more important for Ontario to remain competitive amid this global economic uncertainty.

President Trump is coming for our jobs. They are coming for our industries. The President does not want us to continue succeeding in landing multi-billion-dollar investments. We landed \$70 billion in investments, and it is all at risk. The threat could not be clearer, but the members opposite want us to sit on our hands and do nothing.

We need to speed up permitting, cut red tape, ensure that businesses can get shovels in the ground faster. This is how we build on the progress we've made so that businesses can add to the nearly one million new jobs we've created in Ontario.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

MPP Bill Rosenberg: My question is for the Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth. The north is strong, but we know the north has faced big challenges with tariffs and trade threats from the US. We know Ontario is facing a lot of economic risk. That means that the north's economy needs to be stronger than ever.

Northern industries, like mining and forestry, are key to Ontario's future. We need to build on those strengths. We can't just rely on one trading partner, and we can't ignore the threats from outside.

Madam Speaker, can the minister tell the House what our government is doing to invest in the north and support northern communities?

Hon. George Pirie: Northern Ontario is the most valuable piece of real estate in North America, if not the world: We have over 10-million acres in just one clay belt; we have a world-class fibre basket in both softwood and hardwood; we have unlimited energy potential; we have minerals, gold, base metals, critical minerals and rare earths. That is why two-thirds of the throne speech focused on northern Ontario, building roads, highways, railroads and ports to access and develop everything we have in northern Ontario, and pivot from our dependence on US markets to international markets.

That is why we're making strategic investments through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund that can

directly invest in projects that leverage the unique advantages of northern Ontario.

Whether directly supporting our resource development industries or small businesses and communities, we are here for the north.

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MPP Bill Rosenberg: Thank you to the minister for the response. The north is a key part of Ontario's economic future. Its industries, workers and communities drive growth for the whole province. When the north does well, all of Ontario does well.

But we know there are challenges, especially with the economic uncertainty and trade threats from the US. We see tariffs hurting our industries and creating risk for jobs and families. Now more than ever, we need to stand up for the north. We need to make sure that we don't just react but plan for a strong, steady future. We need to build up the north so it can keep leading the way for Ontario's economy.

Speaker, can the minister share how our government is making sure the north has the support, tools and resources it needs to stay strong and keep growing?

Hon. George Pirie: Madam Speaker—yes, tariffs. The first visit I did as Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth was to Kapuskasing, where there are 47,000 jobs at risk in the forestry sector—47,000 jobs at risk for tariffs. The second visit was with Algoma Steel. Those tariffs are costing Algoma Steel a million dollars a day—not to mention the Chinese that control the rare earths and critical minerals that drive the aerospace and defence industries. That's why we must build the infrastructure to access everything we have and pivot from the dependence on the US market. That's why we continue to invest in communities and businesses.

I was recently in Timmins to announce a business, OK Tire, that is receiving \$400,000 from NOHFC to expand its facility and serve a growing mining industry. I was in Sudbury two weeks ago. I visited Cambrian College, announcing an NOHFC investment of \$260,000 to establish a battery material recycling space in its chemical analyses and services—in Timmins.

Northern Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Question?

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health: Debbie MacGregor's mother passed away earlier this year after a seven-year battle with cancer. Throughout that time, Debbie collected a stack of parking receipts at the hospital. She and her daughter spent over \$7,000 on parking, just to be with her mom as she passed.

My motion to eliminate hospital parking fees has been endorsed by the Canadian Cancer Society, the Ontario Nurses' Association and tens of thousands of Ontarians who have signed our petition.

Does the minister understand that this is a tax on the sick, and will she support my motion on June 4 to eliminate hospital parking fees in Ontario?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I certainly sympathize with the family and that need to want to be with their loved ones as they are undergoing treatment in our hospitals—and of course visiting palliative as well. But we have a hospital parking directive to help reduce financial burden for hospital parking fees on patients and, of course, frequent visitors. That ensures that we reduce the barriers and increase access to health care.

Since 2019, Speaker, hospitals have been limited to increasing their daily maximum parking rates by the annual percentage change of the CPI. Hospitals that charge a daily maximum rate for the parking facility that is more than \$10 are required to offer five-day, 10-day and indeed 30-day parking passes with discounted rates. These are the policies that we've put in place to ensure that individuals like your constituent have the ability to visit their loved ones in hospital.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Burch: Speaker, the PC government in Nova Scotia found a way to do it; there's no reason this government can't find a way to do it. Families are paying for health care with their credit card, not their OHIP card—something the Premier says shouldn't happen.

Gay Willing of Port Colborne has spent hundreds of dollars on parking this year. Her husband has cancer and requires regular scans and appointments for treatment. These visits are essential, but parking fees are adding a heavy financial burden for their family as they battle cancer.

Does this minister agree that these fees create an unfair and unnecessary barrier to health care access, and will she listen to the citizens of Ontario and work with us to finally eliminate them?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, I think it's really important that we don't just grasp on to simplistic solutions for complicated problems. We have in place a directive to ensure that people have access and have those discounted parking rates. But we also have to acknowledge that our hospitals are using these parking fees to ensure that the world-class access is there, the treatment and equipment is there, and that is where the parking fees are going today.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Niagara Falls will come to order.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: To simply say "eliminate them" is actually going to put additional pressure of course on our hospitals and mean that, in the long term, we have to make sure that the sustainability of the system is there. Respectfully, I do not believe that the member opposite's proposal achieves that result.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas will come to order.

I recognize the member for Don Valley North.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: My question is to the Minister of Health.

In Don Valley North, emergency room wait times are up. Nurse vacancies are up. Hallway medicine is the new norm, and thousands still can't find a family doctor.

Minister, when will this government admit it's failing to protect the people it's meant to serve and fix the staffing crisis once and for all?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: All right. Let's go over some numbers: over \$60 billion, where we are investing in hospital capital—new hospitals, expanded hospitals, retrofitted hospitals. That is \$60 billion that, frankly, the previous Liberal government chose to ignore, and we are dealing with that backlog now.

We have the highest number of nurses who are not only practising and learning in the province of Ontario but indeed have registered to work in the province of Ontario—over 100,000 RNs in the province of Ontario.

Just last week, I was with the RNAO, and they were lauding the work that we have been doing in the Ministry of Health with our Learn and Stay program, with our nurse practitioner expansion, with additional seats for registered nurses in our post-secondary institutions. The people who are in the system understand that change is happening, and positive things are happening because our government has been making the commitment to not only train, encourage but actually offer opportunities, whether it's in hospital, in our community and of course in our long-term-care homes. We're getting it done.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Don Valley North.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: Speaker, the minister can rhyme off all the numbers that she wants, but do you know what really matters here? What matters is the reality on the ground for everyday Ontarians. The reality—

Interjection.

Mr. Jonathan Tsao: I will. The reality, Speaker? The reality is that 2.5 million Ontarians—in Don Valley North, 20,000—still don't have a family doctor. That's the number that you should be worried about. That's the number this government should be focused on every single day. Under this government, it feels like finding a family doctor is actually like winning Lotto 6/49.

Will the minister stop gambling with the health of my residents and finally put the people of Ontario first?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I appreciate the member is relatively new to this chamber but perhaps he missed when we actually expanded primary care multidisciplinary teams in February of 2024: 78 new multidisciplinary teams operating within the province of Ontario, including nurse practitioner teams. Those are working in our communities today, taking on new patients.

Of course, he may have also missed that we have expanded and opened the next opportunity for an expansion of primary care teams. We will be making those announcements in the coming weeks and, again, another expansion where literally hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents who are waiting to have a family practitioner are going to have that opportunity because of the investments that our government has been making, and we will continue to make.

SPORTS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

MPP Monica Ciriello: My question is for the Minister of Sport.

Families across Ontario are facing financial pressure. Costs keep going up, especially for parents who want to put their kids in sports and recreation programs. With global economic uncertainty and the threat of US tariffs, many parents are worried whether they can keep giving their kids this opportunity.

We all know that sports help kids build confidence, grow strong and stay healthy. They learn skills and values that last a lifetime, like teamwork, discipline and resilience.

Speaker, can the minister share what our government is doing to help more kids get in the game and how we're working with partners to keep sports affordable and accessible?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for the question. It's great to see the people of Hamilton choosing leaders they trust to deliver results. Our government is working alongside some phenomenal partners to help keep kids in sport.

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It's fitting that you ask the question as June is Jumpstart month here in Ontario. For 20 years, Canadian Tire Jumpstart charities have helped over four million kids across Canada, including 1.2 million children here in the province of Ontario, to overcome financial and accessibility barriers so they can experience the benefits of sport and recreation.

That's why I was thrilled to join the Minister of Sport, the MPP for Hamilton Mountain and the FAB organization last month to announce that our government is investing \$1.5 million in Jumpstart this year. Seeing our investments first-hand is a reminder of how important sport is to the development of our kids and why these investments are so critical. Under the leadership of the Premier, we will continue to protect Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Back to the member for Hamilton Mountain.

MPP Monica Ciriello: Thank you the parliamentary assistant for her answer and for her tireless dedication to this work.

Ontario families should not have to choose between paying bills and letting their kids play sports, but with the cost rising, more parents worry about keeping their kids in sports and recreation. We know sports give kids so much—it gives them confidence, creates friendships and helps them develop healthy habits. It's not just about games and exercise; it's about skills that last a lifetime.

Programs like Jumpstart help break down barriers so every child can play regardless of their background or their postal code. These investments make sure that kids can take part no matter how much money their parents have.

Can the parliamentary assistant share how these investments are going to keep costs down for families and help kids stay in sport?

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you, again, to the member for her question.

The member from Hamilton Mountain could not be more correct. Our government is taking a strategic approach when it comes to bringing costs down for families in the province of Ontario. This year, our government is investing \$3 million in inclusive grassroots organizations across our province—organizations that are making a huge difference in the lives of kids across Ontario.

From supporting Jays Care Challenger Baseball programs and the Indigenous Rookie League to investing in Canadian Women and Sport to help create more opportunities for girls to participate in sports, our investments are working. These investments are a crucial part of our plan to keep costs down so that families don't have to choose between putting their kids in sport and putting food on the table.

Under the leadership of the Premier, we will continue to protect Ontario and everyone in it, especially our kids.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Workers are facing uncertainty. With regular tariff threats, they are worried about their jobs and their pensions. When companies like the Bay go bankrupt, workers could lose out on the pensions they have earned. Ontario's Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund was created to protect workers' pensions, but the compensation at \$1,500 a month is grossly inadequate.

Does the Premier agree that workers' pensions should be protected in the event a company goes bankrupt?

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for Peterborough-Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government believes, in any kind of negotiation with the union, that it is up to the union and the employer to decide on what they need to do with respect to pensions, compensation and all of that.

So I look forward to seeing what the motion is from the member, but we firmly believe that this is something that should be negotiated between the unions and their employers.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I recognize the member for London-Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund was created 45 years ago, and it has not kept up with inflation and the cost of living. In 2018, the Premier made an election promise to protect pensions and go beyond the fund. He failed to keep his promise.

Tomorrow, I'm going to be debating my motion that will ensure workers will receive the pensions they earned and have the right to if a company goes bankrupt.

Will the Premier keep his promise to protect workers' pensions and pass my motion?

Mr. Dave Smith: As I said just a moment ago, we believe that this is something that should be negotiated between a union and the employer. There are safeguards

that are put in place right now for pensions, and we'll continue working with the people of Ontario because we firmly believe that the workers of Ontario are what drives the Ontario economy.

EDUCATION

Mr. Matthew Rae: My question is to the Minister of Education.

We have tabled a very important piece of legislation. As an expecting father, I want to ensure that my future child has a great world-class education system for generations to come. So I was wondering if the Minister of Education could tell how our government will continue to stand up for teachers, parents and students, most importantly.

Interjections: Prop. Prop.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I don't know what—honestly, I've been called a lot of things, but I've never been called a prop, colleagues.

What a tough but fair question from the member who really, honestly—more importantly, I know how important education is to him and to his constituents. As an expectant father, I know that he only wants to do the best.

But what can I say? If the whip asks me to do something, there is zero chance that I'm not going to make sure that the education system is the best in the world, because he decides how long I sit in this place on a daily basis, Madam Speaker. So, for him, I will do whatever he needs me to do.

DEFERRED VOTES

PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

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

Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 24, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members please take their seats—10 seconds.

On May 26, 2025, Mr. Sarkaria moved second reading of Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rickford, Greg
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Rosenberg, Bill
Bresee, Ric	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Calandra, Paul	Holland, Kevin	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Saunderson, Brian
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Coe, Lorne	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Cooper, Michelle	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, David
Crawford, Stephen	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Surma, Kinga
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dunlop, Jill	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Fedeli, Victor	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Pirie, George	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Schreiner, Mike
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Gilmour, Alexa	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Glover, Chris	Smyth, Stephanie
Bourgouin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Stiles, Marit
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hsu, Ted	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Tsao, Jonathan
Cerjanec, Rob	Lennox, Robin	Vanthof, John
Clancy, Aislinn	McCrimmon, Karen	Vaugeois, Lise
Collard, Lucille	McKenney, Catherine	Watt, Tyler
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fraser, John	Rakocevic, Tom	
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 68; the nays are 43.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 29, 2025, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PROTECT ONTARIO THROUGH SAFER STREETS AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN RENDANT LES RUES PLUS SÛRES ET LES COLLECTIVITÉS PLUS FORTES

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

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 sur les mesures visant les lieux où se déroulent des activités illégales liées à la drogue et modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la sécurité publique et le système judiciaire.

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

The division bells rang from 1146 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On May 6, 2025, Mr. Downey moved second reading of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Measures Respecting Premises with Illegal Drug Activity Act, 2025 and to amend various Acts with respect to public safety and the justice system.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Sandhu, Amarjot
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Harris, Mike	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Denault, Billy	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dixon, Jess	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dowie, Andrew	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Dunlop, Jill	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Firin, Mohamed	Pirie, George	
Flack, Rob	Racinsky, Joseph	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Cerjanec, Rob	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Lennox, Robin	Tsao, Jonathan
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Vaughois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Watt, Tyler
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 70; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 28, 2025, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PRIMARY CARE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LES SOINS PRIMAIRES

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

Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care / Projet de loi 13, Loi concernant les soins primaires.

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

The division bells rang from 1151 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On May 5, 2025, Ms. Jones, Dufferin–Caledon, moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rakocevic, Tom
Anand, Deepak	Gates, Wayne	Rickford, Greg
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Gilmour, Alexa	Rosenberg, Bill
Bailey, Robert	Glover, Chris	Sandhu, Amarjot
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bell, Jessica	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Blais, Stephen	Gualtieri, Silvia	Sattler, Peggy
Bouma, Will	Hamid, Zee	Saunderson, Brian
Bourgouin, Guy	Hardeman, Ernie	Schreiner, Mike
Bowman, Stephanie	Harris, Mike	Scott, Chris
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Hazell, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Shamji, Adil
Burch, Jeff	Hsu, Ted	Shaw, Sandy
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Dave
Cerjanec, Rob	Jones, Trevor	Smith, David
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jordan, John	Smith, Graydon
Ciriello, Monica	Kanapathi, Logan	Smyth, Stephanie
Clancy, Aislinn	Kernaghan, Terence	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Clark, Steve	Kerzner, Michael S.	Stiles, Marit
Coe, Lorne	Khanjin, Andrea	Surma, Kinga
Collard, Lucille	Leardi, Anthony	Tabuns, Peter
Cooper, Michelle	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Crawford, Stephen	Lennox, Robin	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thompson, Lisa M.
Darouze, George	McCrimmon, Karen	Tibollo, Michael A.
Denault, Billy	McKenney, Catherine	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dixon, Jess	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Tsao, Jonathan
Dowie, Andrew	Mulroney, Caroline	Vanthof, John
Downey, Doug	Oosterhoff, Sam	Vaughois, Lise
Dunlop, Jill	Pang, Billy	Vickers, Paul
Fairclough, Lee	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Pasma, Chandra	Watt, Tyler
Fife, Catherine	Piccini, David	West, Jamie
Firin, Mohamed	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Pirie, George	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Fraser, John	Racinsky, Joseph	
French, Jennifer K.	Rae, Matthew	

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): 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 112; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 28, 2025, the bill is ordered for third reading.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing; and Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation.

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

The division bells rang from 1156 to 1157.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): On May 29, 2025, Mr. Leardi moved government notice of motion number 4 relating to allocation of time on the following bills: Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing; and Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bouma, Will	Hardeman, Ernie	Sandhu, Amarjot
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Harris, Mike	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bresee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Jones, Sylvia	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Trevor	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Coe, Lorne	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	Leardi, Anthony	Surma, Kinga
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Darouze, George	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Denault, Billy	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dixon, Jess	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Dowie, Andrew	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Dunlop, Jill	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Fedeli, Victor	Pierre, Natalie	Williams, Charmaine A.
Firin, Mohamed	Pirie, George	
Flack, Rob	Racinsky, Joseph	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy
Begum, Doly	Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike
Bell, Jessica	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Blais, Stephen	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Bourgouin, Guy	Gretzky, Lisa	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Hazell, Andrea	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Burch, Jeff	Hsu, Ted	Stiles, Marit
Cerjanec, Rob	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Clancy, Aislinn	Lennox, Robin	Tsao, Jonathan
Collard, Lucille	McCrimmon, Karen	Vanthof, John
Fairclough, Lee	McKenney, Catherine	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-	Watt, Tyler
Fraser, John	Margaret	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Pasma, Chandra	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 70; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

2025 ONTARIO BUDGET

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): We have a deferred vote on government order number 2: that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 70; the nays are 42.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

It is therefore resolved that the House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Nina Tangri: I would like to welcome to the House today Raj Narula, Neelam Narula, Harpal Sandhu, Balinder Sandhu and Ranjit Bassi, together with my husband, Ashwani Tangri.

Raj Narula and Harpal Sandhu are recipients of the King's coronation medal, and I just wanted to congratulate them for the great community work that they do throughout the years. Thank you very much.

Hon. Kevin Holland: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today the members of the Thunder Bay Christian School who are here visiting us.

Ms. Doly Begum: I am so excited to invite and welcome many Ethiopian Canadian community leaders and members of my riding and folks from across Ontario who are here today for the introduction of Ethiopian Heritage Month. Welcome to your House.

M. Stéphane Sarrazin: Aujourd'hui, j'ai le plaisir d'accueillir M. Alexandre Tremblay, professeur et coordonnateur des programmes d'administration publique et d'administration des affaires au Collège La Cité à Ottawa. Dans ses cours, M. Tremblay accorde une place importante à l'Est ontarien. Il passe quelques jours avec moi dans la circonscription ici à Queen's Park afin de mieux comprendre les enjeux vécus par nos citoyens. Sa présence témoigne d'un réel engagement envers notre région et d'un désir de mieux outiller ses étudiants grâce à une perspective ancrée dans la réalité du terrain. Merci et bienvenue à Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Just a reminder that these are just for introductions.

I recognize the member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

MPP Andrea Hazell: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to welcome Filipinos in the 6ix and Carlos Cabaneros to Queen's Park. This month is Filipino Heritage Month, and they will be celebrating that in room 228 at 5 p.m. I welcome everyone to attend. Come and enjoy some music, good food and cultural dance.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ETHIOPIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE ÉTHIOPIEN

Ms. Begum moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim the month of September as Ethiopian Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant le mois de septembre Mois du patrimoine éthiopien.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Does the member wish to briefly explain the bill?

Ms. Doly Begum: I am introducing this bill along with my colleague from Toronto Centre, MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.

Today, I am proud to introduce a bill that will celebrate the Ethiopian community in Ontario as an important part of our social, economic, political, religious and cultural fabric. Members of the community are devotees of the three Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—as well as other Indigenous beliefs. Ethiopia is the birthplace of coffee. It is home to over 80 languages, one

of the world's oldest Christian traditions, the first mosque in Africa and a 13-month calendar that is still in use today.

This bill will commemorate September as Ethiopian Heritage Month in Ontario. September holds particular significance as it marks Enkutatash, the Ethiopian new year, and Maskel, the celebration of the finding of the true cross.

With this bill we show respect and appreciation for the Ethiopian community, who have contributed and continue to contribute greatly to our province, with an opportunity to celebrate their customs, traditions and proud history, showcasing their heritage to fellow Canadians and preserving it for future generations to come.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I will remind guests in the gallery that we do not shout in the chamber.

NOTWITHSTANDING CLAUSE LIMITATION ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 VISANT À LIMITER LE RECOURS À LA DISPOSITION DE DÉROGATION

Madame Collard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act respecting the use of the notwithstanding clause / Projet de loi 39, Loi concernant le recours à la disposition de dérogation.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Does the member wish to explain the bill?

M^{me} Lucille Collard: The bill enacts the Notwithstanding Clause Limitation Act, 2025. The act would provide that bills cannot invoke the “notwithstanding” clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms except in certain circumstances.

If the clause is invoked by a minister of the crown, the Attorney General is required to table a report in the assembly detailing how its use can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society and describing why alternatives to its use were deemed inadequate.

Bills invoking the “notwithstanding” clause shall not be adopted by the Legislative Assembly without a two-thirds majority of its members.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Dr. Sally Palmer, who is the chair of the Hamilton Social Work Action Committee, who has gathered 7,870 signatures from people from Hamilton to Oshawa, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Scarborough, Neskantaga, Big Trout Lake,

Toronto etc. The petition is called “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.”

We all know, Speaker, that the rate for social assistance is way below Canada’s official poverty line, as well as Ontario’s poverty line. It is not right for people who cannot work, who depend on social assistance and the Ontario Disability Support Program, to live in poverty. They are able to survive, but they are not able to live.

Many, many—over 230—organizations have written to the Premier and to cabinet ministers to recommend doubling the social assistance rates, both for Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. There has been a minimal increase—\$56 a month—to ODSP, but that’s not enough to keep up with the pace of inflation. So they ask that, at a minimum, they recognize what the government of Canada had done during CERB with a basic income of \$2,000 per month, and they ask the Legislative Assembly to double the social assistance rate for ODSP and OW.

I support this petition. I will affix my name to it and ask page Abd-Ur-Rehman to bring it to the Clerk.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Ms. Catherine Fife: I’m pleased to introduce this petition for the first time. It’s entitled “Social Media Use Among Young Ontarians.” We all know that across this province and country, excessive screen time and mental health concerns are connected. Young people have become very dependant on social media, and now we have greater understanding of the harmful effects related to its use. Even school boards across the province are trying to hold social media companies accountable for the content that our youth are seeing and some of those manipulative algorithms as well, which actually create an addiction to our phones and are particularly vulnerable to sexual content, violence, misogyny, hate and racism.

1310

I’m asking, Madam Speaker, that the social policy committee examine this very serious issue that’s happening across our province around the addictive nature of social media and clarify the responsibilities of social media companies. Also, I believe very strongly that public health should be warning parents about the addictive qualities of these social media platforms. I’m very hopeful that we can work collaboratively together as lawmakers in Ontario on this issue.

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition and give it to page Nathan.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

Mr. Ted Hsu: In my petition today, the undersigned on this petition ask the government of Ontario to withdraw Bill 5, to maintain the Endangered Species Act, 2007 while ensuring economic growth does not come at the expense of biodiversity and ecological integrity. They also note that the proposed legislation concentrates excessive

decision-making power in the hands of a single minister. It just opens things up to lobbying and worse.

I’m happy to affix my signature and hand it over to page Allie.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to present this petition. Many of us have been receiving this petition from Dr. Sally Palmer and folks across Ontario to raise social assistance rates. They have had these petitions signed by over 230 organizations, thousands and thousands of individuals, recommending that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. As they have explained, small increases to ODSP have still left those citizens well below the poverty line, and people who are receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation. They are calling on the Premier and the cabinet, and, as they’ve said, they are calling on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.

Of course I support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Noah.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It’s a beautiful day, everyone. I have a petition here similar to my colleagues. It’s an open letter from 230 organizations to the Premier to double ODSP and to double the rates for Ontario Works as well. We have people in our province living below the poverty line, which we don’t want to have. I know we’re all here in this chamber, in this Legislature, to help Ontarians, so this is one way of doing it. We saw with CERB that people had a basic income of \$2,000 per month, and that was appreciated. This is something that we would like the government to look at.

I’m going to sign the petition and send with page Isabela.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have a petition entitled “Potential Drinking Water Health Hazard in Northern Chatham-Kent Municipality.” In 2019, the Ontario government undertook an all-hazard investigation of well water in Chatham-Kent. The petition goes on to say that the Ministry of Health has failed to undertake further work that was suggested in a report submitted in December 2021. They are looking at water quality samples that cite increased turbidity, discoloration and the presence of sediment. Private well owners have privately funded sampling and testing, and those results have been made available to the Ministry of Health, which has allegedly failed to acknowledge the outreach. Those who have signed the petition call on the government to undertake the necessary studies, as recommended by their expert panel, to determine any health hazard associated with con-

sumption of the sediment in the well water, and to make public the reports on testing and on the determination of any health hazard.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am so proud to present these petitions today on behalf of my constituents in London West. The petition calls on this Legislature to protect Ontario by scrapping Bill 5.

Speaker, I have to tell you, I've never seen anything like it in my constituency office—people are coming up every hour to drop off more signed petitions because they are so concerned about what this government is doing with Bill 5.

The petition points out that that legislation is going to allow dangerous exemptions to whatever law or regulation the government deems should be exempted, and this is very concerning to people who care about environmental protection; people who care about free, prior and informed consent; and people who care about a balanced approach to growth that allows development while protecting people's rights.

I fully support this petition. I'll affix my signature to it and send it to the table with page Taylor.

MIDWIFERY

Mr. John Vanthof: This petition concerns midwifery services in the district of Timiskaming.

As you may know, midwifery services are allocated to so many spots. And currently, in the district of Timiskaming, we have many more spots than are being accessed. We have a demand for the service. We have midwives in place. But there is a problem in the system, and people can't access midwives in the district of Timiskaming.

This petition has been signed by hundreds of people, including, I have to note, by quite a community of Amish people, who never participate in our political system. This is how serious this issue is. So I urge the government to move on this.

I'm happy to fully support this petition.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

MPP Alexa Gilmour: You can hear the drums outside, and we've had the questions through this morning's question period.

In my hands, I have hundreds of names that were gathered in just a couple of hours in my Parkdale riding, all asking to stop Bill 5. I want to thank Kim, Colin, Robyn, Frances, Virendra, Nadia, Ieuan, Dianna, Judith, Barbi, and Pat and Marshelle, who all, within a couple of hours of the request, gave up time on Saturday to gather these petitions.

This petition asks that we protect the environment and scrap Bill 5, and I am more than happy to sign this, with great gratitude to Parkdale–High Park for bringing this to me.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I have a petition here from constituents in my riding of Essex. It talks about inter-provincial trade, and it talks about trade barriers in Canada costing our economy and making it less efficient and less affordable for people to purchase goods that are made in Canada. These constituents are telling me that they want to purchase goods made in Canada, without Canadian tariffs applied against Canadians.

It calls upon the government of Ontario to lead the charge to tear down interprovincial trade barriers and unlock Canada's full economic potential.

It also calls upon the province of Ontario to enable mutual recognition with reciprocating provinces and territories so that people in my riding, like these constituents, can buy goods and services from other Canadian provinces without blocks and without hindrances.

I support this petition. I will sign it and give it to this fine young page to bring to the Clerks' table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Catherine McKenney: I have a petition here that is asking for social assistance rates to be raised.

I think most people would be shocked to know that we expect an individual to live on \$733 a month for food and rent and somebody on ODSP to live on \$1,368. That certainly wouldn't cover anything near rent, let alone food or anything else.

So we have a number of people who continue to sign petitions to have ODSP and OW raised to a level that allows people to live with dignity. As we know, the CERB program showed that \$2,000 per month was the standard support that people require—those who had lost their employment during the pandemic.

I will happily send this down with Taylor, and I strongly support this petition.

CAREGIVERS

Mr. Ted Hsu: I would like to table a petition entitled "Support 24/7 Caregivers," which comes from my riding as well as several signatures from the neighbouring riding of Hastings–Lennox and Addington.

They are calling on the Ontario government to support 24/7 family caregivers, including through financial compensation; 24/7 family caregivers do a lot of work, and at no expense to society. It's a great benefit to society. So these petitioners are asking for our government to help them care for their loved ones so that they can have some relief from financial distress and the resulting mental stress.

INTERPROVINCIAL TRADE

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, we are talking about tough times, and as you know, tough times are the test times, and this is exactly what this petition is talking about. It's talking about having the trade barriers within Canada and the result of those trade barriers: bleeding the money out of our province, our country. There are businessmen and women in our province who are saying, together, let's work together, reduce those barriers and lead the change to tear down these barriers.

So I have this petition. I fully, fully, fully support this petition and am requesting the government and all the Premiers to come together with the Prime Minister, which they are doing today. I was actually just watching TV and seeing how the Team Canada collaboration is coming together, and that's exactly what this petition is talking about.

I am happy to put my signature and give it to this wonderful page, Aastha.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady: I have a petition in my hands, "Prohibit Medical and Surgical Transitioning for Minors."

It says:

"Most children with gender dysphoria need time rather than a medical or surgical transition to before comfortable with their bodies...;

"Children as young as eight or nine are receiving puberty blockers and teenagers as young as 14 are getting mastectomies despite the irreversible, long-term consequences of these procedures...;

"Alberta and many jurisdictions around the world ... are limiting medical transitioning for minors."

It calls on the Legislative Assembly "to prohibit regulated health professionals in Ontario from providing puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and transitional surgeries for minors under the age of 18."

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the Clerks' table with Isabela.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFER MUNICIPALITIES ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR DES MUNICIPALITÉS PLUS SÛRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing / Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2025 visant à restreindre la consommation en public de substances illégales et modifiant la Loi sur l'entrée sans autorisation en ce qui concerne le prononcé des peines.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Flack has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing. 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 to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1324 to 1329.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Would the members take their seats?

Mr. Flack has moved second reading of Bill 6, An Act to enact the Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025 and to amend the Trespass to Property Act respecting sentencing.

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

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rickford, Greg
Anand, Deepak	Gualtieri, Silvia	Riddell, Brian
Babikian, Aris	Hamid, Zee	Rosenberg, Bill
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Sandhu, Amarjot
Blais, Stephen	Harris, Mike	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bouma, Will	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Jones, Sylvia	Saunderson, Brian
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Scott, Chris
Calandra, Paul	Jordan, John	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Ciriello, Monica	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, David
Clark, Steve	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Coe, Lorne	Leardi, Anthony	Surma, Kinga
Cooper, Michelle	Lecce, Stephen	Tangri, Nina
Cuzzetto, Rudy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Darouze, George	Oosterhoff, Sam	Thompson, Lisa M.
Denault, Billy	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Dixon, Jess	Parsa, Michael	Tsao, Jonathan
Dowie, Andrew	Piccini, David	Vickers, Paul
Downey, Doug	Pierre, Natalie	Wai, Daisy
Firin, Mohamed	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Flack, Rob	Racinsky, Joseph	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Rae, Matthew	

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

Nays

Begum, Doly	Gilmour, Alexa	Shamji, Adil
Bell, Jessica	Hazell, Andrea	Smyth, Stephanie
Bowman, Stephanie	Hsu, Ted	Vanthof, John
Clancy, Aislinn	Kernaghan, Terence	Vaugeois, Lise
Collard, Lucille	McKenney, Catherine	Watt, Tyler
Fairclough, Lee	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 67; the nays are 25.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

PROTECT ONTARIO BY BUILDING FASTER AND SMARTER ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO EN CONSTRUISANT PLUS RAPIDEMENT ET PLUS EFFICACEMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 26, 2025, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation / Projet de loi 17, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'infrastructure, le logement et le transport en commun et abrogeant un règlement.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Flack has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation.

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

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1334 to 1339.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Flack has moved second reading of Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to infrastructure, housing and transit and to revoke a regulation.

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

Fairclough, Lee	Parsa, Michael	Vickers, Paul
Firin, Mohamed	Piccini, David	Wai, Daisy
Flack, Rob	Pierre, Natalie	Watt, Tyler
Fraser, John	Pirie, George	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Racinsky, Joseph	

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

Nays

Bell, Jessica	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Bowman, Stephanie	Gilmour, Alexa	Vanthof, John
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Kernaghan, Terence	Vaugeois, Lise
Clancy, Aislinn	McKenney, Catherine	West, Jamie
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Trevor Day): The ayes are 74; the nays are 17.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier today, the bill is ordered for third reading.

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that, pursuant to standing order 50 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be the time of the adoption of this motion; and

That amendments will be considered in the language in which they were filed; and

That the Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet on June 3, 2025, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. and from 6:30 p.m. to midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 5; and

That on June 3, 2025, at 1 p.m., those amendments to the bill which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto; and at this time, the Chair shall allow one waiting period, if requested by a member of the committee, pursuant to standing order 131(a); and

That the committee shall report Bill 5 to the House no later than June 4, 2025, and if the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed passed by the committee and shall be deemed reported to and received by the House; and

Ayes

Allsopp, Tyler	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Anand, Deepak	Gualtieri, Silvia	Rickford, Greg
Babikian, Aris	Hamid, Zee	Riddell, Brian
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Rosenberg, Bill
Blais, Stephen	Harris, Mike	Sandhu, Amarjot
Bouma, Will	Hazell, Andrea	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Bressee, Ric	Holland, Kevin	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Calandra, Paul	Hsu, Ted	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Chris
Ciriello, Monica	Jones, Trevor	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Jordan, John	Shamji, Adil
Coe, Lorne	Kanapathi, Logan	Smith, Dave
Collard, Lucille	Kerzner, Michael S.	Smith, David
Cooper, Michelle	Khanjin, Andrea	Smith, Graydon
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Leardi, Anthony	Smyth, Stephanie
Darouze, George	Lecce, Stephen	Surma, Kinga
Denault, Billy	McCarthy, Todd J.	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Dixon, Jess	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dowie, Andrew	Oosterhoff, Sam	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Downey, Doug	Pang, Billy	Tsao, Jonathan

That upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on the Interior on Bill 5, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith; and

That upon adoption of the report, Bill 5 shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called the same day; and

That when the order for third reading of Bill 5 is called, one hour shall be allotted to debate with 18 minutes for members of His Majesty's government, 18 minutes for members of His Majesty's loyal opposition, 18 minutes for members of the third party and six minutes for the independent members as a group; and

That, at the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of Bill 5 without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the third reading vote on the bill shall be permitted; and

That, if a recorded division is requested on the third reading vote on the bill, the division bells shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Donna Skelly): The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 5.

I recognize the government House leader to begin the debate.

Mr. Steve Clark: Bill 5, as the ministers have said many times in the House, is a very important bill for our government. We tried during the debate—this bill was not closed down and time-allocated at six and a half hours. We let it go longer than that. It went into the committee. Unfortunately, we did not get the co-operation of the opposition parties. Despite their tricks and their games that they had at committee, we feel that it's very important, and I'm going to get into some quotes in a bit.

I just find it very strange that the opposition parties feign persecution by the government when this morning during question period, literally seconds after the Leader of the Opposition leaves of her own accord, there's an email that's sent out from the New Democrats saying, "Can you rush a \$25 donation now to help us keep organizing, mobilizing and pushing back against Ford's dangerous Bill 5?" Here you go, guys.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: The truth hurts. I understand the truth hurts. You say that you're doing it for the right reasons, yet your email seconds after your leader leaves really shows your true colours: that it's all about fundraising.

The other thing that wasn't lost on the opposition this morning was the fact that there are other governments in our country who are moving forward with similar legislation. I felt that this morning we didn't have the opportunity to compare the BC NDP bill to the bill that's before the House. Let's do a bit of compare and contrast before the games and the tricks continue from the opposition benches.

What does BC Bill 15 do? It creates provincially significant zones. What does Bill 5 do? It creates special economic zones. BC Bill 15 has a cabinet that has the

authority to exempt permitting. The bill in Ontario—oh, my goodness—has a cabinet who has the authority to exempt permitting. This bill in British Columbia streamlines approvals. What does the bill in Ontario propose? To do the same thing, to streamline approvals. The BC bill further—the legislation reaffirms the duty to consult. What does Bill 5 do? The exact same thing: Our legislation reaffirms the duty to consult.

The only difference between BC's Bill 15 and Bill 5 in Ontario is that BC's Bill 15 has passed. It's passed the Legislative Assembly, where our bill has been delayed with the opposition.

1350

The other challenge I want to put forward is, again, something for the Liberals. During His Majesty's speech from the throne—and this is the King's speech, right from his speech, right from the throne speech of Prime Minister Carney's government:

"Given the pace of change and the scale of opportunities, speed is of the essence. Through the creation of a new major federal project office, the time needed to approve a project will be reduced from five years to two; all while upholding Canada's world-leading environmental standards and its constitutional obligation to Indigenous peoples."

That was from the King in the throne speech. It wasn't any ChatGPT-pro speech that I saw Liberals give in committee the other night.

As well, the Toronto Star reported on Saturday that on Friday, Prime Minister Carney told the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Ottawa that he wants to work with provinces to fast-track the building of housing on a massive scale in Canada, as well as accelerating nation-building projects and streamlining environmental assessment.

The issue here isn't what the opposition claims. It's that they are consistently, as the minister said this morning, opposing responsible resource development. That is the truth. Those are the facts.

Again, I wanted to provide a few comments from a great Canadian. There are a lot of quotes that have been thrown around in this Legislature. They're quotes from my green days in opposition. But I've done a lot more reading and a lot more studying, and it's actually important to know the rules. In Parliament they have a rule that was talked about by a great Canadian, the Honourable Peter Van Loan, who was leader of the government under the fantastic government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The quote that I'm going to quote was from October 24, 2013. In our House, it's standing order 50 that deals with time allocation. The standing order that House leader Van Loan is going to quote from is standing order 78(3). I just want to read this to you to provide some clarity on the rules:

"The purpose of section 78(3) is to allow the facilitation of scheduling of our business here in Parliament. The member has often said that it was designed to limit debate, but we have always said it is not designed for that purpose at all. Time allocation is designed to ensure adequate

debate and to create certainty for members of Parliament so they will know when the debate will occur. It provides some certainty of when to expect a vote to occur, so that members can organize their affairs in that manner. It facilitates the business of the House so that there is adequate debate and decisions are made.”

We’re in our last week, and it’s so very important that we have an efficient House, that we have a House that gets to the business of government. I think that this great Canadian, the Honourable Peter Van Loan, really encapsulates what time allocation is, not what it isn’t.

I want to go one step further, because he goes on in a dissertation on March 27, 2014. The Honourable Peter Van Loan—at the time he was part of the great government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper—worked diligently as the House leader, ran a very efficient House. Now that I’ve had this great opportunity to read some of his dissertations about the use of time allocation, it only makes me really understand that, especially when there is less than four days left in the House, we must have an efficient and effective House.

We must facilitate a hard-working, productive and orderly Legislative Assembly of Ontario as we lead to the end. I’m going to further quote him, and this, again, is a quote from the Honourable Peter Van Loan on March 27, 2014. His quote is—he’s referring to the opposition House leader:

“For example, he was concerned with time allocation and referred to it again as limiting debate, yet when he reviews the rules, as I know he is going to, and I know he will do that with some enthusiasm in the near term, he will notice citation 533 of Beauchesne’s Parliamentary Rules and Forms of the House of Commons of Canada, sixth edition, which reminds us that:

“Time allocation is a device for planning the use of time during the various stages of consideration of a bill rather than bringing the debate to an immediate conclusion.”

We’ve seen enough of the opposition’s tricks and games and delay tactics. We saw it the other night in committee. We’ve seen it today. We’ve seen the leader of the opposition walk out the door as a fundraising email was being sent out.

This is all about being efficient and an effective use of the House. It’s doing just as the BC bill—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: Through you, Speaker, I want to say to the member for Kitchener-Waterloo, you should be more like David Eby’s New Democrats, because our Bill 5 is exactly the same as Bill 15. Again, through you, Speaker, I can send you over a copy of the bill if you need to read it. I know you’re a busy person; you might not have had a chance to look at what they’ve done in BC. But the only difference between the BC legislation and the Ontario legislation is their bill is passed; our bill is not passed.

So again, enough with the tricks and procedural games. What this time allocation motion requires is it gives members in the last week of the legislative sitting an opportunity to manage their time and to make sure that important government bills get passed when they should.

Thank you so much, Speaker, for that opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It’s been very entertaining to hear the member from the other side talk about tricks. When you think about the fact that from last summer until the election, we sat until seven weeks, and all of a sudden in the last week or 10 days, how many bills did we have to push through? How many times did they call time allocation?

Well, this time we have seven weeks in the Legislature, and lo and behold: bill after bill after bill. Is there time to really debate them? Is there time? Is there time to listen to the people? Is there time to listen to the people who are outside right now?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Order, please.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Is there time to listen to our member from Kiiwetinoong? Is there time for you to even read the bill? I warrant you have not read the bill because there’s one piece of that bill that is relevant to mining and speeding up mining, and you have all-party support for that part of the bill.

I can tell you, I met with MineConnect this week, a very interesting meeting. The first thing one of those people said to me—this is someone who travels the world to bring funding together with mining projects who said to me, “I can’t believe how dreadful Bill 5 is.”

It has nothing to do with improving mining situations or moving those things faster. The one part of the bill that does that has all-party approval; the rest of it is about lawlessness. The rest of it is about these bizarre practices of, first of all, tromping all over First Nations’ rights. Obviously, you have not convinced anyone that you’re not doing this, otherwise we would not be having this demonstration out front today. We would not have had the member from Kiiwetinoong saying truth to power and being removed from the chamber.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: If you had read the standing orders—

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Excuse me, this is the guy who was playing games—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I would like to ask for order. I would like the member to also make sure that her comments are directed through the Chair.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you very much.

All right, so clearly there’s a great deal of distress about this bill. And you know what? This distress is not about that little part that is about speeding up mining approvals and having a kind of system navigator that helps guide companies through that process. There is no dispute about that. But you guys like to say, “Oh, it’s going to take 15 to 20 years.” You’re full of—excuse me. Through the Speaker: The parts that are about the habitat—for example, undermining the endangered species protection portion. It’s like, “Okay, we’ve got an owl’s nest here.

We're going to protect the owl's nest, but we're going to rip down the rest of the forest so that the owl has nothing to eat. But hey, we're protecting endangered species." That's the significance of that part of their bill.

1400

We're talking about time allocation. We know that we had 500 submissions to that committee that were never read, that were never able to be part of the conversation. So why are we having time allocation? Because this government has pushed and pushed and pushed and made sure that there was so little time in the House to actually deal these bills, many of which are egregious—one or two of them are actually okay, but—

Interjection.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Surprise, surprise, one or two of them are okay.

But frankly, when we're talking about tricks and games, the fact that we only had a seven-week session this time around, the fact that we only had a seven-week session before we went into an election—absurd. And I can tell you that the people of Ontario—certainly the people of my riding—are appalled at what they're seeing here.

I will end my comments there.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Bill 5 is concerning because it is, I would say, a threat to democracy and rule of law because schedule 9 of the bill allows the minister to exempt projects or proponents from any act or any regulation.

But we're here to debate closure, and I think what is surprising is that the government did not want to even hear—as a result of this motion—the amendments, because all the amendments will be deemed to be moved, so they will not be read out.

I wanted to use this time to talk about some of the amendments that might have been ruled out if the government had simply let the committee do its business last Wednesday night. For example, one of the amendments says that, "Nothing in this act may be used to modify or create an exemption from the requirements of"—just for example—"the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 or a regulation made under that act."

Another example would be the Clean Water Act. Another amendment which now will not be read out—not even be read out, let alone not debated—is an amendment to say that, "Nothing in this act may be used to modify or create an exemption from the requirements of the Clean Water Act, 2006 or a regulation made under that act." Now, the Clean Water Act—its purpose is to protect existing and future sources of drinking water. It covers source protection plans, and it allows municipalities to regulate drinking water threats. There's another related act called the Safe Drinking Water Act, which was introduced after the Walkerton tragedy when many people became sick and some died.

I don't understand why this government wouldn't allow the passage of such an amendment, which says, "Okay, you can go and develop things, but you have to do it in a

way that protects clean drinking water and safe drinking water." It just doesn't make sense that the government wouldn't allow this amendment or wouldn't even think of this amendment. It seems, for some reason, that the government wants to have the option to exempt a project or a proponent from any act or any amendment.

A further danger to this is that it opens up this government to a lot of lobbying. Because the minister now has these discretionary powers, it means that all sorts of people are going to come and lobby the minister for an exception to this rule or that rule. It's going to be all about lobbying and whether you have the ear of the minister and what events you can attend to try to get the ear of the minister.

And that's if things are working well. If things are not working well, it opens governing up to a lot of corruption, because we have ministers with a lot of discretionary power. That's why we have the rule of law: so that we're not electing a benevolent dictator to make up the rules, decide what rules get followed and which don't have to be followed, doing all of that at the last minute or depending on who's willing to do some other favour in return.

That's what we see south of the border right now. One example of that is Donald Trump rewarding the purchasers of TrumpCoin with a dinner where they have access to the President and all of his discretionary power. Selling TrumpCoin has enriched the Trump family to the tune of at least a billion dollars—probably significantly worse than that.

So this is what we're trying to avoid, and this is why we cannot let this government push Bill 5 through committee in a way that's unchallenged.

For some reason, the government—it was 7 o'clock on Wednesday; we were considering amendment 11. We had gotten all the way to amendment 11. For some reason, the government wanted to introduce a motion to have us go from midnight to 9 o'clock in the morning, even though we were chugging along. The problem with that is, they were asking the staff, the Clerk and all the committee staff, as well as their own poor PC staff, to stay throughout the night. I offered an amendment to the government's motion, saying, "Why don't we just meet from 8 o'clock in the morning to 8 o'clock at night the next day?" But the government wouldn't accept that for some reason. And the reason, I would say, is that they don't want to face criticism; they don't want to face voters. So we're here, really, because of the government, because they couldn't get their way.

One thing about our democracy is that we have a system where the government doesn't always get its way. A system where the government always gets its way is called a dictatorship, or maybe an absolute monarchy. We've spent centuries in our Westminster system of government to limit the power of the monarch and create a democracy, and now we seem to be going backwards. We shouldn't be looking at the example we see south of the border.

So I would call on the government to withdraw this motion and to allow amendments to the government's bill to be read out and debated. We proposed that last week, and the government did not allow that to happen.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today, on behalf of the constituents I represent in London West, to speak very strongly in opposition to the motion that is before us today.

We heard the government House leader talking about the tricks and games at committee. Those were not tricks and games. That was a real effort by the members of the committee who are not on the government side to force the government to listen to the people of the province, to listen to the people who are outside right now rallying in opposition to this bill, calling on the government to scrap this bill.

The content of this opposition day motion—I would say it does represent tricks and games. This is the sixth or seventh bill that we have seen this government try to rush through this Legislature to try to undermine the democratic process, to try to deny the people of this province the opportunity to have input into decisions that are being made by the Ford government.

The government House leader was disappointed that the opposition members did not provide the co-operation that this government was looking for. Do you know why we did not provide that co-operation, Speaker? Because the people we represent are urging us to do everything possible to get the government to stop on Bill 5.

I'm sure that members on the government side are being inundated by the same emails that we are receiving in our constituency offices—emails entitled “Bill 5 Would End the Rule of Law”—because that is what this bill would do. It creates no-law zones that the government likes to call special economic zones, within which the government has the absolute power to decide to exempt whatever provincial law, provincial regulation, municipal bylaw, municipal rules—whatever it wants can now be exempted within those no-law zones.

1410

This is not a bill that is about development, Speaker. We all know that. This is a bill that was designed under the cloak of Trump's tariff threats. It was designed to centralize as much power as possible in this government, and that's what we see in this time allocation motion that is before us. It is just another demonstration of this government's determination to centralize as much power as it can to run roughshod over the rights of the people in this province.

It's an interesting coalition that this government has triggered with this bill. We see Indigenous leaders; we see environmentalists; we see people who care about human rights, who care about civil liberties; we see legal experts; we see labour experts who are very concerned about the power that this bill gives to government to undermine hard-won labour rights in this province.

Speaker, we cannot support this time allocation motion. We cannot support this bill. We cannot support anything else that this government tries to do that is an attack on democracy.

The other thing that the leader of the official opposition has been constantly reminding this government of is that

this bill is not going to speed up permitting. It's not going to address the issues, the legitimate issues, that have been raised about the time it takes to get a mining application. This bill is going to result in those applications being bogged down in the courts for years, and that is not the way to get Ontario's economy moving.

I urge this government to withdraw not only this time allocation motion but to withdraw Bill 5.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Stephen Blais: Good afternoon, everyone. This government calls Bill 5 the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, but what it really does is unleash unchecked power, and it muzzles the people of Ontario.

Bill 5 is one of the most sweeping omnibus bills this Legislature has ever seen. It guts the Endangered Species Act. It rewrites environmental protections. It weakens heritage preservation and lets the government bulldoze local rules inside so-called special economic zones. That alone should demand serious debate. But instead of listening, this government has time-allocated the bill, jamming it through with as little scrutiny as possible.

We have to ask: If the bill is so good for the economy, why are they so afraid of the questions? I think that's pretty important. The Minister of Economic Development has never before been afraid to answer questions. He answered questions for almost an hour today during question period. So if this bill is so good for the economy, why is the government so afraid of answering questions?

Madam Speaker, let's not forget, this bill is facing fierce opposition from Indigenous leaders, from environmental experts and from municipal officials alike. The Assembly of First Nations has sounded alarm. The Canadian Environmental Law Association has demanded that the bill be withdrawn because they know what's at stake: the environment, treaty rights and the democratic process.

And yet, what is this government's response? The government's response isn't to slow down and take their time. The government's response isn't to seek expert advice and feedback from the public. The government's response is to speed it up, is to bulldoze through. That's not responsible, Madam Speaker.

Let's be clear: This is not red tape reduction. This is public trust destruction, plain and simple. Bill 5 would allow the government to override long-standing protections for species at risk, just with the signature of a pen. It opens the door to backroom deals in areas exempted from planning laws and it creates zones where environmental assessments, local input and even Indigenous consultation can be pushed aside—no more community input, no more expert input, no more rules.

It sounds a lot like this debate on time allocation, Madam Speaker. The government is not interested in any additional input from the public. They're not interested in additional input from the opposition. They're just interested on facilitating their summer vacation.

Madam Speaker, if there are no rules, who is responsible for the future consequences? I don't think the

government has given us a good answer on that. If there are no rules in these special economic zones and something gets built or something gets accelerated, and then something bad happens as a result of that, who is on the hook? Who is on the hook, other than the people in that community who will be most directly affected? This is not how we build prosperity; this is how you build lawsuits. If the government's objective is to have the people of Ontario sued a lot more, they have hit a home run with Bill 5.

Perhaps what is most disturbing is this government's contempt for democracy. They are using time allocation to cut off Indigenous voices. They're using it to block environmental scientists. They are using it to silence the opposition, who are just trying to do our jobs, which is to question, which is to raise concerns, which is to bring feedback from people that we're hearing from in our communities, in our areas of expertise. Madam Speaker, that's not leadership from the government. That is legislative cowardice.

The people of Ontario deserve better, and, frankly, the people of Ontario know what's happening. This government is trying to bury Bill 5 before it gets the scrutiny it deserves, before the headlines catch up with the consequences, before communities realize what's being taken from them. Madam Speaker, as I said, this isn't red tape reduction; it's public trust destruction. Bill 5 guts environmental protections, it silences Indigenous voices and it hands the government the power to bulldoze local planning rules behind closed doors. And now they're time-allocating the bill, ramming it through before people can even read the fine print.

If this government is so confident that the bill will help Ontarians, why are they so terrified of debate? You don't rush democracy unless you are afraid of what the people might say, Madam Speaker.

Finally, in my opinion—and I think in the opinion of a lot of people—when you hide your agenda behind an omnibus bill and a stopwatch, you are not unleashing the economy. You are unleashing damage, and doing everything you can to avoid accountability for it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: It's an honour for me to join this debate today, but it's also a very disturbing time. This time allocation motion that we have before us today on Bill 5 is really a muzzle and a hammer. One of the fundamental principles of our parliamentary democracy is that we have time to discuss, to consider, to involve the public and to make sure that we evaluate legislation for all of its consequences. Yet, through the time allocation motion, this government is shutting down the voices of the people.

I think about the great folks at Dresden Citizens Against Reckless Environmental Disposal who pointed out so many problems that will affect the water. This landfill is in an area prone to flooding. There's a high-water table. It's close to the Sydenham River. It's close to the St. Clair

River. This time allocation motion is shutting those people's voices out.

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This bill and this time allocation motion represent the greatest threat to southwestern Ontario agriculture that I have seen in quite some time. It is the richest soil in Canada. We grow corn, soybeans, winter wheat, carrots, tomatoes, so many more, and yet from this government we see no one standing up for southwestern Ontario.

York Developments has been found to leech—other York sites have had asbestos, benzene, chloroform, toluene, and xylene leach into their systems. What is going to happen to our agri-food system if that were to occur? And this time allocation motion is ignoring all of that. It would have us pretend as though everything is fine because this government is muzzling their own members and bringing in a legislative hammer.

When we first looked at time allocation, it was put forward to be a device for planning the use of time at the various stages of consideration of a bill. It wasn't meant to bring the debate to an immediate conclusion. That was never its intention. But that is certainly what this government is doing by shutting down voices and shutting down debate.

I want to quote opposition leader—and this is federal politics—Robert Stanfield. He called the motion for time allocation “an ego trip ... foisting on the country a bill they do not understand just to try to save the face of the government.” This government is bringing forward this time allocation motion because they know there is significant opposition to Bill 5 and they want to shut down people's voices.

And then, on time allocation, it has also been said, “over the past thirty years ... governments have each used this order for bills involving a social issue or a contentious national debate.”

I'd like to also quote John Diefenbaker. The Honourable John Diefenbaker noted, “If Parliament is to be preserved as a living institution, His Majesty's Loyal Opposition must fearlessly perform its functions. When it properly discharges them the preservation of our freedom is assured. The reading of history proves that freedom always dies when criticism ends.”

There are so many questions with this bill, and it is certainly questionable that this time allocation motion has come forward at this time. We heard the government House leader, when they were in opposition, saying that “My party loves to hear from people.” He also said, “If this government doesn't want to listen to people, I'll give them a guarantee. I'll give them, actually, the People's Guarantee, because we will listen to them, and we will ensure that those Ontarians are being listened to.”

That sounds a lot like empty words. It's kind of like that paperweight that's sitting on some Conservative desk saying, “For the people.” Absolutely empty—it's not even functional as a paperweight because it is empty. Not only that, but the current House leader said that his words about that were “brash and abrupt.” How is listening, making

promises and providing assurance—how is that being either brash or abrupt?

This time allocation motion on a very disturbing piece of legislation shuts down environmental assessments. It shuts down the duty for free, prior and informed consultation, and it creates zones of no laws. This is utterly disturbing. This is a threat to our democracy. This is something that all of Ontario would oppose if this government would make them aware of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you, Speaker, for the chance to speak on this motion for time allocation on Bill 5.

Bill 5 has been promoted by the Premier as needed to develop northern mines and critical minerals. Don't believe it. The government is giving itself the power to name any city, any town, any neighbourhood a special economic zone, which are really no-law zones, for any company hand-picked by this government, from anywhere in the world, that can override Ontario laws or municipal laws. We're talking about labour laws, clean water laws, pollution laws, heritage laws, zoning laws. Oh, and if anything goes wrong, if people are hurt, experience financial or personal loss, they are also creating a law that gives them legal immunity.

This morning, the minister defended this sweeping legislation by pointing to former US President Donald Trump's two-week approval of a uranium mine as an example to emulate. Let that sink in: Ontario's government is citing the Trump administration—known for gutting environmental protection, silencing science and dismissing public accountability—as the model for how our province should function.

The mandate the Ford government sought was to fight the Trump regime, not to emulate it. Ontario Place and the Dresden dump are just the beginning. I can see Ontario Place from my riding down by the lake. The Auditor General strongly condemned the billions spent in the deal with Therme Spa.

More recently, in the face of public opposition, the government was forced to abandon their plan to dump a sewage pipe into the west channel. Kayakers, rowers and swimmers use that channel. It only came to light because of the regulatory requirement that they register it on the environmental registry. Under Bill 5, they will no longer be required to take that step, leaving the public in the dark about the potentially contaminated water.

I've been thinking a lot about the bill and the risk to public health and safety, the price that families and communities can pay when governments don't do their jobs. You see, I've lived for many years, close to 25, in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, a community that I love deeply. But I'm also a daughter of Bruce county, raised on the shores of beautiful Lake Huron, not far from Walkerton. So I remember what happened there 25 years ago last month, when a completely preventable tragedy unfolded. In May of 2000, the people of Walkerton—families, children, and seniors—drank from the municipal water

supply, unaware that it had been contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. The result? Very sadly, seven people died. The youngest was two years old. Over 2,000 others became quite seriously ill. This didn't happen in the distant past or in a developing country; it happened right here in Ontario. It happened because of government failure to protect at the most basic level.

So I will quote from page 30 of the Walkerton Inquiry, authored by Justice Dennis O'Connor: If the Ministry of the Environment "had adequately fulfilled its regulatory and oversight role, the tragedy in Walkerton would have been prevented ... or at least significantly reduced in scope."

But Speaker, the responsibility went beyond the ministry alone. Justice O'Connor made it abundantly clear when he wrote: "The regulatory culture created by the government through the Red Tape Commission review process discouraged any proposals to make the notification protocol for adverse drinking water results legally binding on the operators of municipal water systems and private laboratories."

In other words, a political choice was made to weaken public safeguards in the name of cutting red tape, and people paid for it with their lives. So we're now a quarter century later and we see the government repeating those same mistakes, only this time on a potentially grander and more dangerous scale.

Bill 5 doesn't just amend a few regulations; it creates a legal framework to exempt entire developments from the laws that protect our environment, public health workers and local economies. Under schedule 9 of Bill 5, the so-called Special Economic Zones Act, the government can designate trusted proponents and designated projects and exempt them from any provincial statute, any regulation or municipal bylaw. It's not policy. This is about a power grab.

Let's remember what's at stake. The regulations that the government calls red tape are protections for the water we drink and making sure it's safe and clean, the air we breathe is not filled with toxic emissions, the soil that grows our food is not contaminated and the places where we raise our livestock remain healthy and viable and the workers who build our homes and maintain our infrastructure return home safe each day. These aren't burdens; they're responsibilities, and it's the basic job of government to protect people.

Premier, this government may want to unleash Ontario's economy, but not at the irreversible cost of damage to our health, our water and food systems. Because of Bill 5 in its current form, no community, urban or rural, is safe from having its rights overruled; no mayor or council will be able to say no to a project if the Premier says yes; and no resident will have the right to know why or when these decisions are being made.

This bill deserves input from communities across the province. There are some parts of the bill that our caucus actually can support: the "one project, one process" that's included in schedule 5, which is actually really intended to help us with mining.

I urge the government to withdraw the time allocation, rethink Bill 5 and listen to the voices of Ontarians who are standing up for their communities, their health and their environment.

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And to my fellow members of this Legislature on all sides of the aisles: You have a choice. You can rubber-stamp this government's overreach, or you can defend the hard-earned lessons of our history and the rights of the people we represent.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am very pleased to be able to take an opportunity to stand in this House and speak clearly in opposition to this egregious Bill 5. All members of this House have been inundated with calls from the broader province to put a stop to this bill. Our inboxes are filled. Our voice mails are filled. And everywhere we go, people are talking to us about stopping Bill 5.

Here we are at Queen's Park, and we are talking over the drumming that is on the front lawn of this building. First Nations leaders and allies are here at Queen's Park, on the lawn. There are chants, calls for this government to do the right thing in this moment and withdraw Bill 5.

This is not an economic plan. It is a power grab, and everyone can see it. It doesn't matter how they spin it; everyone can see through it.

Speaker, free, prior and informed consent is not just a bumper sticker—it's not a process where the government can just tick the boxes. It must be an approach. It is about building relationships with First Nations. It is about respect. It is about reconciliation. It can't only be to have a meeting and tick the box—it has to be to build those relationships to make the world better, ultimately. And it shouldn't be about bending First Nations to the will of this Premier.

The government needs to do this right. This bulldozer of a Premier is going to be doing long-lasting damage, but the people of this province will outlast him. Development and infrastructure should be done in a good way. They need to listen to the province.

Municipalities are passing resolutions to stop this government from passing Bill 5. These special economic zones, or so-called, are zones without laws. That would exempt these favourite zones from all provincial laws—no input, no rules, no local planning, no consultation.

And the opposition is from all sides, not only the NDP—definitely the NDP—but Indigenous leaders, First Nations leaders, environmental voices, scientists, labour experts who know that this government is working to undermine hard-won labour rights, businesses, legal experts, municipal leadership.

This bill overrides democratic process, treaty rights, environmental protections, and it destroys public support. It will not speed up the process. This will be tied up in courts for years.

Ultimately, Bill 5 is a contempt for democracy, treaty rights, a healthy future for this province. This government knows how unpopular it is, and they don't care—but the

people of Ontario do care. I would urge them to withdraw Bill 5.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I'm pleased to rise to discuss the time allocation motion in regard to Bill 5.

I want to begin my remarks by reflecting on three of the comments that we just heard this afternoon from the government House leader.

The first: I want to reflect on how interesting it is to hear him speaking and complaining about ChatGPT, given how much we hear the government members read what is just handed to them by their staffers, and most egregious of that is the choreographed charade of self-congratulatory questions that they ask each other during question period, where they pretend to stand up for the citizens of Ontario.

The other thing that I found difficult to stomach as he made his comments was hearing him complain about fundraising pleas. While it's not my role to stand up for other parties, it is interesting to hear that from the government House leader, given the government's proclivity for leaning on their friends for donations when it's convenient to them. Ask the Premier and his wedding guests at the stag and doe or the donors to which he promised the greenbelt.

And finally, it was difficult to stomach his comments regarding the urgent need to speed things up. I agree that we do need to act with ambition and audacity to protect the economic interests of our province, especially as we face threats from down south. However, while I can always stand up for the need to reduce bureaucracy and red tape, is forcing things through with midnight sittings, shuttering debate and stifling voices the right way to do that? Those voices are outside right now as we speak, and they are wondering something. They're wondering if this government, as it claims, is committed to free, prior and informed consent. Given the opportunity to obtain free, prior and informed consent with this legislation, why isn't it doing so?

For example, the Indigenous communities that may be most impacted by this legislation aren't actually—some of them may be outside, but many of them are up north. Given the opportunity to travel this bill to northern Ontario, to hear from those voices, to seek free, prior and informed consent, this government chose not to do that.

That's not even to speak of all of the exceptions that will be introduced by this legislation, fast-tracking opportunities for more free, prior and informed consent through the exceptions that will be made to requirements around heritage protections, labour protections, environmental protections, opportunities for citizens of Ontario and Indigenous people who will be impacted by this legislation to come forward and ensure that labour rights, heritage protections and environmental protections are in place.

Returning back to the urgent need for us to mobilize quickly and protect our sovereignty, protect our economic strength, one cannot forget that the world certainly did change with the election of Donald Trump, and we do need to make changes to become an economic powerhouse, to

alter the power and economic structures around the world, to place us at the centre, because we as a province do have so much to offer.

But is this government and is this legislation the way to do it? This government that promised to solve hallway health care but set it on fire, this government that said they would fix the housing crisis but has just made it worse, this government that rushed through legislation with Bill 135 to supposedly fix home care but threw it into disarray—and against that backdrop, we're supposed to trust this government in accelerating the legislative process, entrusting them now to fix the challenges that we face currently and down the road with our economy, introduced by our neighbours to the south? Time and time again this government has shown, given the trust from the people of Ontario, they don't do their homework, they don't do things right and they consistently flip-flop. Whether that is with the greenbelt, with Bill 124, Bill 28, Bill 23, it's always this: Introduce something, and then walk back 10 steps a little while later.

On the issue with special economic zones and fast-tracking and centralizing power in cabinet and deregulating things, we've been down this pathway before with ministerial zoning orders. We've seen how, while the promise was to clear red tape and bureaucracy, in fact, as per the Auditor General, all that served to do was create, "foreseeable and significant delays. These delays beg the question why an MZO was used instead of the municipal planning process." So appropriate planning processes were thrown out the window, and, subsequently, delays—in the years and anticipated even to be decades—have ensued.

Finally, I will just comment that most egregious about the legislation before us, which we are not getting an opportunity to speak about, is the entire lack of Indigenous consultation. It is one thing for this government to say that they are going to do it, but when the Indigenous people are literally outside telling us that it is not happening, this government has not earned our trust and will not earn our support on this time allocation motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Toronto Centre. My words will begin by strongly condemning this government's tactic to silence First Nations communities, to silence the opposition, to silence public input into Bill 5 and to silence the opposition and third parties.

Ontario is rich in critical minerals. We recognize that we have the workforce to bring them to the market, and it's critical that these minerals be unlocked to fuel the prosperity that can come for decades. But this time-allocation motion to quash consultation, quash and erode Indigenous sovereignty, and to limit the debate is not the right way to go about it.

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Bill 5 does have some redeeming merits. One of them is in schedule 5: "one project, one process." This is a matter that is supported by all parties. But outside of that,

there's so much wrong that needs to be righted. Bill 5 gives this government the power to rip up and disregard any laws that they deem necessary: to strike out environmental protections, to tear up labour laws, to kick endangered species and to basically put them into extinction, to rip up the Heritage Act, and so much more. That "so much more" includes ripping up municipal and provincial bylaws under the guise of these special economic zones. It erodes our democracy, it destroys the environment and it upends everything that we deem to be good about Ontario.

Let us remind this House that government is made up of laws and not men, in the words of John Adams. That is what this government needs to understand: that they do not rule by fiat; they rule on behalf of the people of Ontario, and the people of Ontario, including the First Nations leaders, are outside saying, "No, you cannot proceed as is. You must bring them in."

Speaker, outside Queen's Park we have hundreds of First Nations communities. We can hear some of the speeches bellowing out into the chamber. We can hear their drum call, calling this government to pay attention to them and to not push them any further. They have already risen up and provided a threat that, should you continue, they will be idle no more. Those are the words that we should be paying attention to. Those are the words that we should all be careful about.

Bill 5 is being rammed through this chamber in the least transparent way possible. The allocation motions for time should be reserved only for dire emergencies, not for bills where the government is too embarrassed to receive feedback. Bill 5 has already received over 500 submissions during the committee process—500 submissions; that is almost impossible to read in one night—and yet this government tried to bring the bill back into committee and to ram it through. They have 25 amendments that haven't and won't get the proper debate time, because, once again, they truncated that debate time.

There is evidence that they will continue to do this, as we've seen before. But there is history when a government moves through too recklessly, without care for the community and the stakeholders and the people that will be affected, and that was the Greenbelt grab. Speaker, when that happened, you will recall Ontario rose up, and they were furious, and this government had to back down. This government is going to learn that lesson once again, and it is so regrettable that they will not listen and that they will continue to push ahead. This is an opportunity for them to take a sober moment to think about the impact of what they are proposing, and to recognize that they're standing on an island by themselves, while Ontario First Nations are coming together calling for the necessary change.

When the government talks about tricks and traps and technical traps to slow down the bill, they're right. It's because they've left the opposition, the third party and every other fair-minded Ontarian with very little option, because they won't pay attention to much else. And so a tactic, filibustering, is something that we have to use in order to say, "Please, think through what you are doing. It

will have a generational impact if you don't. If you can't think about the Indigenous communities that are outside protesting on the lawn, then think about your own children and the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren. What will they inherit?"

This morning, the minister bragged about how Donald Trump approved a uranium mine in two weeks. Well, I think we can all agree, Speaker, that no one in Ontario would like to see Donald Trump's governance replicated in this House. If you do, then you're in the wrong country. The fact that this government thinks that that is inevitable because they've given themselves power to do so does not make it right.

Speaker, we need to recognize that there are a series of questions that experts are asking, with no answer coming from the government—questions such as, how can the surrounding communities be assured that they are safe from toxic levels of radiation in such a short period of time? How can anyone believe that a mining company is using the best safety practices available to extract, store and transport the critical but dangerous minerals? Are the workers safe? Questions such as, how can communities trust that the mine waste will be dealt properly, with mine closures that make the land safe again for residents and the ecosystem? There is no ability to answer some of these very basic questions that I'm sure that ministers, as well as backbench government members, would like to have answered for their own communities. And yet, they are plowing ahead, recognizing that they are going to do everything they can to upend this process.

Let me speak for a minute or so about First Nations people and Ontario's lack of consultation process with Indigenous communities. This is a problem that has been flagged on numerous occasions by many different Indigenous and First Nations organizations that have come forward. They have called out this government to sit down with them, to co-operate with them. And this government has, every single time, refused. Despite the fact that they say they will, regrettably, Speaker, they do not. That's why we need to be able to get this bill right, this particular bill even more than others, because First Nations people are calling on this government to do so. Had the government, in the writing of this bill, deeply consulted with Indigenous communities to create standardized processes, the court cases would be reduced, including the one that will ultimately challenge Bill 5. You're not speeding up anything.

This morning, my constituent Daniel called my office to let me know how deeply appreciative he is for those who are speaking up against this government's erosion of the democratic process. He said that he was going to personally call the Premier's office to tell the Premier about his thoughts. Let's hope that the Premier does listen.

At the beginning of my remarks, Speaker, I said that the legislation to streamline development is necessary and, I would say, even welcome, but the way this government is doing it—behind closed doors, steamrolling Indigenous sovereignty, erasing existing laws, damaging the environment, damaging endangered species, heritage acts and other such laws—is not the way to go about it.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for this opportunity. I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Stephanie Smyth: I'm happy to speak on the time allocation motion because, after all, it is all about time. The fact is that this is a bill about power. It's pro power, even though the government might be trying to portray it as pro growth. And that power is becoming more consolidated, centralized and unregulated, and this has all to do with exclusion, not inclusivity.

The absolute least this government can do, Speaker, is give us extra time to thoroughly examine the effects of this law, if we're unable to stop it completely. First, to hear from Indigenous leaders, the ones who are being pushed aside—as we're hearing them outside—while this government claims to consult: Treaties are not invitations; they are binding constitutional agreements, yet this bill bypasses consultation and violates the spirit, if not the letter, of these agreements.

The member from Kiiwetinoong reminded us of that when he invoked Idle No More in this chamber last week. It wasn't a slogan; it was a warning. The chief from Temagami and beyond are preparing action—rallies, roadblocks, blockades, legal challenges—but none of this is inevitable. We could still use this time to get to the table to find common ground instead of heading for the courtroom or the highway. How are you going to like it when we start seeing the highways blocked as people are trying to get to their cottages? They're not going to be too kind to the Ford government for that.

Secondly, we should use this time to consult the communities directly impacted by those special economic zones that are quietly buried in this bill. We have questions that Ontarians deserve answers to, like why does Ontario Place need to be declared a special zone? Why was the Environmental Bill of Rights bypassed for its redevelopment? And why did 865 trees get cut down in the middle of the night, under the cover of darkness, without public notice or input? Those are not decisions made by a transparent government. Those are the actions of a government trying to get away with something.

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We need time to ask also about the Dresden landfill. Cancelling an environmental assessment without an explanation and tacking it into a massive bill with economic language doesn't just raise eyebrows; it raises red flags. Dresden residents are demanding to know why due process was skipped, and, frankly, they deserve to know whether political donations had any role in that decision. We need time to get those answers, we need time to look at the connections and we need time for the Integrity Commissioner to do their job.

Speaker, this bill is more fiercely opposed than any other legislation, as we're hearing, this government has tabled since re-election. That's not a coincidence; it's cause and effect. People across Ontario—not just in this chamber—are angry. They feel ignored and they feel sidelined. They feel like this government is tearing up

environmental protections, local voices and legal norms in the name of economic gain—and for what? To rush through private development projects without oversight?

Giving us more time to examine Bill 5 is not a delay tactic; that's called democracy. We would use that time to ask questions the public is already asking. We would use that time to bring First Nations leaders to the discussion, and we would use that time to listen to municipalities, environmental groups and ordinary Ontarians who want a say in how their land is developed.

The Premier has changed his mind before. He's walked things back; he's done the right thing—eventually. If this government wants to show Ontario that it is listening, truly listening, then it can start by giving the gift of time—because if we can't kill this bill the least we can do is slow it down and shed some daylight on what it is doing, before it's too late.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? I recognize the member from Parkdale–High Park.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Hi there, Speaker. Thank you. I rise today with great urgency to oppose the Conservative government's time allocation motion to end debate and fast-track Bill 5 over the outcry that we hear from the First Nations leaders, from environmental experts, from scientists, engineers, labour groups, business and industry leaders and thousands upon thousands of Ontarians who have demanded that the government slow down and properly debate this bill.

Bill 5 is a dangerous bill for so many reasons. It's called the Protect Ontario by Unleashing our Economy Act, but it's not an economic plan at all. It's an anti-democratic power grab. The Premier is using the Trump trade war as cover to push through a bill that gives his cabinet sweeping, unchecked powers to override any law that they want, including labour protections, environmental safeguards and constitutionally protected Indigenous rights.

To use this time allocation motion to limit debate on a bill of this scope—Speaker, it's simply unacceptable. Let's just think about this. Under the guise of protecting Ontario from Trump, the Premier is importing Trump-style politics into our province. It's shameless, it's reckless and it's going to have massive long-term consequences for our democracy, for reconciliation, for the environment and for the rule of law in Ontario.

The government has advertised this bill on the basis of its “one project, one process” approval mode, which they say is meant to cut red tape and streamline approvals to speed up critical mineral and resource development projects. Of course, this in and of itself would not have been so bad. As others have spoken to, and I have said previously in this chamber, the NDP believes in the importance of responsible mining. We're in favour of helping the processing and permitting system to improve, and we know that in the face of Trump's tariffs we need to strengthen Ontario, get Ontario building and grow our economy. We have said that from the beginning. We've said that we can't afford another decade of stalled

development. We must find a path forward that works for workers, for communities, for First Nations, and for the long haul. To do this, we must follow our existing democratic processes.

Speaker, fear makes us do strange things. This time allocation motion is a fear-based response. Our forebears put democratic safeguards in place for this very reason. They may seem too slow and perhaps inefficient, but they are not, for they protect the greater good by ensuring that all voices have a place at the table.

Trump has stolen our sense of economic safety and well-being. We cannot let Trump steal our democracy.

This time allocation motion sacrifices democracy, which we hold sacred. We saw this with the bill from the beginning, and it has now become more and more apparent over the past few weeks of digging deeper into this bill.

Bill 5 isn't just cutting red tape. It's cutting democracy. It's cutting accountability. It's cutting oversight. It's giving the government unlimited powers that we're just supposed to entrust them with. With the creation of special economic zones, it hands the government—and let's be clear. It doesn't just hand the current Conservative government, but any future government, in perpetuity—the cheat codes to do whatever they want, wherever they want. Premiers and their ministers will have unlimited power to pick a region or a project, to suspend any laws—labour laws, environmental protection, public health rules—even legal liability.

Speaker, Bill 5 is a grave violation of Indigenous rights, and it's made so much worse by this time allocation motion that we are speaking to, that is going to end debate and force this bill through, even as First Nations leadership has been very clear that this bill violates the duty to consult and ignores the requirement of free, prior and informed consent. It guts protections for archaeological sites and endangered species, disrespecting treaty rights and threatening land and water.

First Nations have travelled thousands of miles on multiple occasions, and they are here with us now.

Interruption.

MPP Alexa Gilmour: Speaker, we can hear the drumming. We can hear the cries of Mother Earth. We have had hundreds of thousands of voices represented by the members on this side of the chamber, and yet even in these last few moments of the debate, I am unsure whether the government side is hearing us. They are speaking against this bill. They are saying they will not give consent to this shameless power grab.

Speaker, consultation is not just a check box; it means obtaining free, prior and informed consent, and it means making sure that the benefits from mining and infrastructure projects flow to the people the land belongs to.

The government is promising to honour its duty-to-consult obligations by meeting with First Nations during the summer, after Bill 5 is passed. But how can First Nations possibly trust this promise when the government is using this time allocation motion to end debate and ram this bill through with no regard for the major concerns that

they are voicing right now, outside this building, at this very moment?

Speaker, First Nations leaders have warned us plainly that they are preparing for a return of an Idle No More style of confrontation if the Conservative government passes Bill 5 into law. They have told us plainly that the government can expect lawsuits, protests, disruptions if they do not slow down and try to undertake true consultation. The government cannot be surprised when this happens. It cannot deflect the blame. With this time allocation motion to end debate and silence First Nations voices, the Conservative government is choosing this outcome. The Premier is putting his own unchecked power over First Nations treaty rights. He and his government will own the consequences.

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Speaker, today's time allocation motion also shuts down the voices of environmental advocates across Ontario who are alarmed by Bill 5's threat to environmental regulations and its repeal of the Endangered Species Act, which ends the most meaningful provincial protections for endangered, threatened and special-concern species. Environmental Defence has stated that "Bill 5 would ... deal a body blow to the environment and hopes for energy sovereignty in Ontario." They've said the bill "reads like an attempt to outdo even the most regressive policies and the most transparently false political pretexts of the Trump administration," and that it "represents a direct attack on species at risk, clean and healthy communities, clean energy and the rights of Indigenous peoples ... exactly the values that the Premier claimed he would protect when he was seeking re-election" only a few months ago.

So many environmental groups have sounded the alarm on this bill including Ecojustice, Ontario Nature, the Wilderness Committee, and many local environmental groups such as Parkdale for climate justice in my own riding. These groups want us to slow down, to debate this bill, to make sure that we understand what is at stake for our environment—the decisions that we are making will affect generations to come, and as we continue to confront global climate change, we need this time.

Workers, as well, have said that they haven't been properly consulted on this bill, which allows the government and its ministers to disregard existing labour laws within any deemed special economic zones. The Ontario Federation of Labour stood with First Nations this morning at Queen's Park and stated that there has been, "No consultation with workers. No consent. And no respect."

First Nations, environmental advocates, labour leaders, they are all telling us—now is the time to hit pause on this bill, not to fast-track it, not to rush it through without proper consultation and input from stakeholders. Ontarians are telling us—in my own riding this weekend, in a two-hour time frame, over 300 people signed a petition calling on the government to rescind Bill 5, not to move forward. Hundreds more have signed my online petition and I have been getting dozens of emails, phone calls and

in-person visits since this legislation was introduced. Constituents have been asking me what they can do to oppose it, and they've been coming out to volunteer. What this government calls "tricks and games," we call democracy.

Today's time allocation motion is a slap in the face to the residents in my riding, to the First Nations and to the Ontarians that are demanding that we uphold the treaty obligations, preserve our democracy and honour our sacred contract. For all of these reasons, I oppose this motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: I'm grateful for the opportunity to rise today to speak about Bill 5's time allocation motion, but not because I support it. Of course, I am opposed and that is because I have had hundreds—almost a thousand emails from my constituents in Don Valley West speaking out about Bill 5. It's almost like the greenbelt. At that time our inboxes were flooded. I'm sure on the government side, as well, and I'm sure likewise, this time, on Bill 5, their inboxes are being flooded with concerned constituents' emails saying to stop this bill. I really do wish they would listen.

I want to applaud my colleagues from Beaches–East York and Kingston and the Islands for all of their work on the amendments that they presented in committee and spoke so eloquently about. Unfortunately, they were not all heard, and that is because this government—everyone is talking about games today, so I'm going to chime in on that as well. I feel like we're playing two games: We're playing Whac-A-Mole and we're playing Monopoly. We're playing Whac-A-Mole because when you look at this motion, it's kind of like, "Okay, what could pop up over here? Let me hit that down. What could pop up over here? Let me hit that down." So that's the Whac-A-Mole part. And then, of course, in Monopoly, we all know there's a famous card everyone loves: Get out of jail free. This bill lets this government get out of jail free if any harm is done to anyone whomever, any group whatsoever.

Those are the kinds of reasons that my constituents are speaking out against this bill. This motion to shorten debate is really just a way of the government saying, "We don't like the rules. The rules as they exist aren't working for us, and so we're going to change them."

Speaker, we are putting at risk clean water, as we've heard eloquently in the debates. We are putting at risk environmental protections. We are putting at risk the rights of workers.

I would say that when we talk about First Nations and their rights, we have done projects together in this country—even in this province—where we have Indigenous groups at the table from the beginning. In fact, Indigenous leaders are using examples from Hydro One, when Tim Hodgson was on the board there, of how to do it right: to have them with you from the beginning, to make sure that the obligation to consult is honoured and that we do this together. That would get things done faster.

I want to just say, I really do encourage the government to think about withdrawing this. It is not about unleashing

our economy. It's about unleashing unchecked power—more power; less accountability. I think, for that reason, we need to keep debating this and talk about why this is the wrong thing to do, not just for the people of Ontario, but for this government. We know they're going to get themselves in trouble, and why they're more afraid of debate than the trouble they're going to get into is beyond me.

I would ask them to consider again withdrawing the motion. Withdraw this bill, go back to the table and get it right.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know, it's a powerful day here in this House right now. In all my years, I've never seen a government so hell-bent on undermining our democracy. Hearing the drums on the front lawn from our First Nations leaders and people from around the province, I actually find it very emotional that we are here in this place. When the government chooses to use time allocation as a weapon in this place, and you limit our voices as MPPs, you are silencing Ontarians, the people that we're elected to serve.

I also want to point out to the House leader, because he's bringing up the BC equivalent of Bill 15, that Bill 15 is different than Bill 5. The BC legislation also narrowly passed; the Speaker had to break the tie vote in BC in order for Bill 15 to pass. There was major pushback from First Nations and business groups alike, so we should be trying to improve and learn and not blindly copy what is actually happening in BC.

Also, a big difference between Bill 5 and Bill 15: Bill 15 actually aimed at fast-tracking public sector projects like schools and hospitals and housing, as well as private projects. But I think the first part of this bill is really important, that public sector projects are a key part of it. What do we have here in Ontario? We have a stupid tunnel. It is very embarrassing when every time this Premier, or even the Minister of Transportation, says, "This tunnel is going to get built without any feasibility studies or fiscal due diligence or financial overview." This is where the government takes us.

Ontario is in a very precarious place in our economy right now: We lag all other provinces in GDP growth. We have the highest unemployment rate for youth in Ontario compared to all other Canadian provinces. Last month's unemployment rate was at 7.8%.

What the government is doing right now is very damaging because you are cooling investment opportunities. No investor is going to look at Ontario and say, "Hey, everything is going really well over there. I think I'd like to invest some money in a mine where I'm going to end up in court for four years against First Nations communities." The goals of the government and the legislation as it's crafted—there is such a strong disconnect between these two things.

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I do want to say we've seen how this plays itself out in Wilmet township, where the government is funding to

expropriate prime agricultural land for an undisclosed industrial factory. Do you know what's happened in that area? People have just turtled. They've gone full retreat. They don't know what the government is doing. They don't know what's next on the agenda.

So, Bill 5 will actually cause a great deal of harm to our economy and, also, reconciliation. If you look out on the front lawn of Queen's Park—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Andrea Hazell: I rise today on behalf of the people of my riding that I love so much, Scarborough—Guildwood, and the communities across Ontario who are outraged by Bill 5, a reckless bill that guts environmental protections, centralizes power and eliminates government accountability.

I must tell you, my constit office received hundreds of emails on this Bill 5. This isn't about unleashing Ontario's economy; it's about unleashing unchecked political power. In Scarborough, we know exactly what's at stake: the Rouge National Urban Park and the Toronto Zoo.

Rouge Park isn't just a local treasure; it's Canada's first national urban park, home to over 17,000 species, including nearly 30 at-risk species. It's a living classroom, a protected ecosystem, a piece of reconciliation work done in partnership with First Nations communities, and it's now on the chopping block under Bill 5. When you gut the Endangered Species Act, when you rewrite what "habitat" means, when you let developers self-register their projects before environmental review, you don't just threaten the ecosystem; you threaten real places, real species and real people.

We also have the Toronto Zoo. It's beautiful. I would say it's the centre of Ontario. This zoo sits beside the Rouge Park. It's not just a zoo; it's an internationally respected centre for conservation, education and research. But their work will become meaningless if the habitats surrounding it are stripped of legal protection, if wildlife corridors are cut off and if laws designed to protect biodiversity are thrown out for the sake of streamlining.

This bill, if passed, could undo decades of conservation efforts and threaten some of Ontario's most vulnerable species. The Toronto Zoo has warned that Bill 5 could drive species into extinction.

One of them is the Blanding's turtle, a threatened species that nests, feeds and hibernates right in Rouge National Urban Park. More than 700 of these turtles have been released by the zoo into Rouge in partnership with Parks Canada, but this government plans to narrow the definition of "habitat" and remove science-based recovery strategies, which would sadly wipe out the areas that these turtles need to survive.

When the zoo has to ask for an "insurance policy" to preserve the genetic material of animals at risk from Ontario laws, that should be a wake-up call for this government.

Let me be clear, Madam Speaker: We are not against economic development. That's not why I'm standing speaking today. We support good jobs in Ontario, clean

energy, responsible mining and public infrastructure, but that must come with accountability, public input and respect for the environment and Indigenous rights, and that is not what this bill offers.

The government has a pattern: push through legislation quickly like wildfire, name it something nice and hope no one notices the damage until it's way too late.

I find it very disappointing that this government is still pushing through Bill 5. Let's stand up for the parks, let's stand up for our ecosystems and let's stand up for the voice of Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: It starts with “beautiful”: beautiful Beaches–East York.

Madam Speaker, I am always happy to rise in this chamber and speak on behalf of my residents in beautiful Beaches–East York, but also for all Ontarians. But I'm not happy to rise and speak about time allocation, because I do not want to deny the voice of Ontarians. That is unjust and unfair and unacceptable.

When I look at who came to committee for Bill 5, we had lots of people coming from far away. My colleague from Kiiwetinoong proposed a motion for us to travel to Thunder Bay and have a public consultation there, and hear from the voices from farther away.

When I come here every day, it's eight kilometres—by bike, that is, too; safely, in bike lanes. We heard from the Sandy Lake First Nation: Cynthia Fiddler, the band councillor; and Adam Fiddler, legal adviser. They came from 1,500 kilometres away. That is not fair.

We also saw and heard from people from Nishnawbe Aski Nation: Christopher Moonias, former Grand Chief. His flight was \$1,200 to Thunder Bay, and then a \$1,000 flight from Thunder Bay to Toronto, then his hotel fee. That is not fair. That is not right.

What are we saying? I'm all for Toronto, but we're saying, “Unless you are in Toronto, basically, or close by, we don't want to hear from you.” That is wrong.

We had people from Anishinabek Nation. We had people from Walpole Island First Nation. We had people from Robinson Huron. We had other people from Mushkegowuk, Attawapiskat, Neskantaga First Nation and Saugeen Ojibway First Nation. They had to come all the way here.

Everyone in Ontario votes. They have a voice and they need to be represented.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Clark has moved government motion number 5, relating to the allocation of time on Bill 5, An Act to enact the Special Economic Zones Act, 2025, to amend the Endangered Species Act, 2007 and to replace it with the Species Conservation Act, 2025, and to amend various Acts and revoke various regulations in relation to development and to procurement.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”
All those opposed to the motion 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.

Vote deferred.

PLAN TO PROTECT ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LE PLAN POUR PROTÉGER L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Oosterhoff, on behalf of Mr. Bethlenfalvy, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes / Projet de loi 24, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

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Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: I look forward to sharing my debate this afternoon with the member for Peterborough–Kawartha.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Peterborough–Kawartha.

Mr. Dave Smith: I rise today to speak in strong support of Bill 24, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025. I stand with a feeling of pride in what we've accomplished and with a sense of purpose for what lies ahead. This is a plan that reflects the core values of our government: protecting people, investing in our communities and building a stronger, more affordable Ontario for everyone.

This plan isn't just about numbers or lines of items in a budget document. As important as that document may be, it's more than that. It's about people, the people of Ontario: the families working hard to keep up with rising costs, students dreaming about their future careers, seniors trying to stay in their own homes. And it's about the communities that make this province such a special place to live. It's about listening to what Ontarians are telling us, and it's about us as a government responding with real, practical solutions that make life easier, more affordable and, of course, more secure.

Madam Speaker, we know that Ontario families have faced extraordinary challenges in recent years. From inflation to housing shortages to global instability, the pressure on everyone is real. In the face of these challenges, our government has taken decisive action, not just to respond but to protect: to protect Ontario's economy by creating the conditions for growth and investment; to protect families from rising costs through tax relief, fuel savings and direct financial support when necessary; to protect young people's futures by investing in skilled trades, education and access to high-demand careers; to protect our communities, urban, rural, northern and

Indigenous, by making smart investments in infrastructure, public safety, health care and, of course, high-speed Internet; and to protect the long-term strength and stability of our province by building a societal foundation that is resilient, modern and inclusive.

This plan reflects a government that doesn't wait for problems to get worse before initiating a response. This plan reflects a government that acts early, listens carefully and delivers results that people can feel in their everyday lives. We're not just managing to maintain the status quo; we're actually building to bring about a better future.

This plan protects what matters most and it sends a clear message to the people of Ontario: We're on your side and we're building to bring about that future.

That's why this plan takes deliberate action to make life more affordable for Ontario families. We've led the fight against the federal carbon tax which drove up the cost of fuel, and we're glad to see it finally set to zero as of April. This change will mean real ongoing savings at the pumps and on energy bills for families right across the province.

But Madam Speaker, we didn't stop there. We introduced the \$200 Ontario taxpayer rebate, an innovation that put money directly back into the hands of over 15 million people. Imagine that, Speaker: a government more focused on putting money back into taxpayers' pockets and not out of taxpayers' pockets. As a measure in the spring bill, we're proposing to make the cuts to fuel and gas taxes permanent because every dollar counts when you're filling up the tank and commuting to work or driving your kids to school or to their activities.

Madam Speaker, people in Ontario rely on their vehicles for everything, from getting to work and school to running errands or visiting loved ones. I want to point something out directly from my riding because I've had opposition members talk to me about public transit and how we shouldn't be doing some of the stuff that we're doing with vehicles. In one of my communities in North Kawartha, Apsley, their only grocery store burned. If you didn't have a vehicle, you had no way of getting groceries. The nearest grocery stores were in Bancroft, Buckhorn and Lakefield, all of which were about 50 kilometres away. You can't ride your bike, you can't walk and there is no public transit. If you had no vehicle, you had no way of getting groceries.

There will even be greater savings, though, for families who rely more heavily on their vehicles. This isn't just temporary relief; it's a long-term solution that reflects the reality of how people live, work and travel in our province. It's about putting more money back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians, where it belongs. We're taking real, practical steps to make life more affordable, and this permanent tax cut would be just one more way we can deliver on that promise.

Just as we're making it more affordable to get around, we're also taking action to make it more affordable to put down roots. We know the dream of home ownership feels out of reach for far too many across the province: young people who want to start their lives in the same communities that they grew up in, families who need

more space but can't find anything they can afford or seniors who want to stay close to their support networks. When it comes to housing, everyone is feeling the pressure, and we're responding.

We know Ontario needs more homes, and we're not standing by; we're acting to get them built faster. Through our plan and the Building Faster Fund, we're rewarding municipalities that are rising to the challenge. Those that are able to meet at least 80% of the provincially assigned housing targets get rewarded. These are the municipalities that are showing real commitment, and we're backing them with the resources they need to succeed.

So far, over \$280 million has been awarded by our government to municipalities that are getting the job done. This provincial funding is helping pay for the infrastructure that makes new housing possible: things like roads, waterlines and sewer systems. But we also know that municipalities need more than encouragement and incentives. They need the tools to plan, finance and grow.

That's why we're making up to \$1 billion in affordable long-term fixed interest rate loans available through Infrastructure Ontario's Housing-Enabling Water Infrastructure lending stream. These funds are helping communities build and upgrade the systems that support housing—from pipes and pumps to treatment facilities—because you can't build a neighbourhood of homes without water and infrastructure. It really is as simple as that.

When it comes to housing, we're thinking outside the box. With targeted investments in modular construction, with our plan we're supporting innovative new building methods to cut costs, speed up timelines and help meet demand, especially in our communities where traditional construction faces delays or labour shortages.

Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to a company in my riding, Cormor. They're 3D printing homes. It's a very innovative process, and they believe they can cut the cost by 30%. They're actually doing a build—they'll be starting it this month—for Habitat for Humanity because the reality is that every person in this province deserves a place they can afford to call home. We're committed to making that a reality.

Just as every Ontarian deserves a safe and affordable place to live, they also deserve access to quality health care close to home when they need it most. Because building stronger communities means investing not only in housing, but also in the health and well-being of the people who live there.

1530

Ontarians deserve access to timely, high-quality health care when they need it and where they need it. For too long, people in many parts of our province have faced barriers to accessing essential services, whether it's because of long wait times, overwhelmed hospitals or having to travel hours away just to get a routine diagnostic test or surgery.

That's why our government is taking decisive action to bring care closer to home. We're expanding integrated community health service centres across Ontario so that

more people can access critical services like MRIs, CT scans, endoscopies and orthopaedic surgeries without long delays or long drives. These centres are helping to reduce pressure on hospitals while ensuring that people receive faster, more convenient care in their own communities.

Better health care doesn't stop at diagnostics and surgeries. We also recognize the urgent need to invest in mental health and addictions services. That's why, as part of our plan, we're putting over \$303 million into strengthening those services across Ontario, supporting the community-based programs people can rely on every day. This funding will enhance access to counselling, crisis services and addiction treatment, making sure that help is there when people need it most.

And for those dealing with complex, interconnected challenges such as homelessness, mental illness and addiction, we're building real, integrated solutions. Through HART hubs—health, addiction, response and treatment—we're providing wraparound supports that connect people to everything from health care and addiction services to housing and employment supports.

We're going to meet you where you are, but we're not going to leave you there.

It's all about that continuum of care—to bring someone in for the help that they need, but not put them back in that same situation that got them there. It's about that continuum, so they can continue on a journey for health and wellness.

We're also adding 560 new supportive housing units, offering stability and a path forward for those who need it most.

Access to care also means access to people—the doctors, nurses and health professionals who make our system work. Right now, in far too many communities, that access simply doesn't exist. This is not what a modern health care system should look like.

To help address this gap, as part of our plan, the government of Ontario is investing an additional \$159.6 million over three years, further expanding the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant. This further expansion supports medical school students, beginning with those who started in the 2024-25 school year, and covers their direct education costs, including tuition and fees. In return, these students are committed to practising as family physicians in communities across the province once they've completed their training. This is a targeted investment to grow the number of family doctors in Ontario, reduce the number of orphaned patients and strengthen our health care system where it's needed most. Our plan sees us supporting Ontario-trained doctors and encouraging them to serve where the need is greatest and laying the foundation for a more sustainable, accessible and equitable health care system. Together with our broader efforts to bring services closer to home and expand community-based care, this investment will help ensure that no one in Ontario has to go without primary care.

Madam Speaker, for Ontario to truly thrive, everyone in Ontario must have opportunities. That means creating pathways to success and investing directly in the potential of our young people.

That's why, through our plan, we're providing \$16.5 million this year through the Ontario Black Youth Action Plan, an initiative that was already supporting more than 19,000 youth across this province. These young Ontarians are building careers in skilled trades, technology, health care and the arts—sectors critical to our province's future. But we're not stopping there. We're also supporting community organizations—because they know what their local communities need. They understand the local challenges, and they're in the best position to drive meaningful local change.

When we invest in people and empower community leadership, we build a more equitable Ontario for everyone. This is how we unlock potential. This is how we build equity. And this is how we build and protect Ontario.

Opportunity today depends on connection. In the modern economy, being disconnected means being left behind, whether it's in school, in business or in accessing basic services like health care. That's why, as part of our plan, we have made a nearly \$4-billion investment to expand high-speed Internet to every community across this province. Thanks to our plan, more than 120,000 homes and businesses that were previously underserved now have fast, reliable Internet.

This is about more than just technology, though. It's about the foundation for economic inclusion, better health care outcomes and vibrant rural and northern communities. Madam Speaker, we will not stop until every single Ontarian is connected.

Everything we're doing, whether it's building homes, strengthening health care, connecting communities or creating opportunities, is about delivering for the people of Ontario. It's about building a province where every person, no matter where they live or who they are, has the tools they need to build a good life because safety is not a luxury; access to care is not optional; opportunities should never depend on your postal code, your background or your income. With our plan, we're protecting Ontario, its people, its communities and its future.

Our plan sees us taking real action to keep our communities together, our families supported and our economy is strong. We're investing in a stronger, fairer, more resilient province—one that lifts people up, bringing communities together, and prepares us not just for the challenges of today but the opportunities of tomorrow.

Speaker, I'm on record multiple times saying this: There is no such thing as luck. Luck is simply where preparation meets opportunity. We know the opportunities exist, and Ontario will be prepared to make sure that what some people consider luck becomes a way of life for everyone in this province.

We know our work is not done, but our direction is clear, and we're headed in that direction. We will continue to listen to people. We'll continue to act. And more importantly, we'll continue to deliver on what matters most to the people of this province. What matters most to the people of this province is opportunities, growth, security and safety.

Speaker, I ask everyone in the chamber, let's pass Bill 24, Plan to Protect Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2025.

Together, we're protecting a more connected Ontario for everyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm pleased to be rising to speak to the budget. Again, what concerns me is that the budget debate is time-allocated, which means that we only have about 18 minutes at the third reading level to summarize some of the concerns we have heard from Ontarians and to raise them in the Legislature.

The reason why is because this government made a decision to not take the budget bill to committee, which is rare. And I'll tell you why it's rare. We went and asked legislative research how often do budget bills—it's \$200 billion—not go to committee? They sent me a little summary back to 2010 outlining if budget bills went to committee or not, and the only other time it has been done since 2010—it was this government that did it recently. Back in 2024, it was referred to committee; 2023, it was referred to committee; 2021, it was referred to committee; 2020, 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014. My point is, it's common practice to send a budget bill to committee so that the 14 million Ontarians, the key stakeholders, organizations, can give their feedback and improve the bill, and it didn't happen. Pretty uncommon—it's not following democratic processes. It's not following democratic norms.

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I also want to talk a little bit about what's in the budget. I've already raised some of the issues in previous speeches, but some new information has come out since the budget was released and one piece of information that came out was the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario's assessment of the budget. And their assessment is pretty much in keeping with what our assessment of the budget is, with a few surprises, which I'd like to go through.

Number one, when you look ahead, funding to the core sectors that the Ontario government is responsible for delivering on, such as health care, post-secondary, even education, child and community services—they're all seeing cuts, when you factor in inflation and population growth and increased need. They're all seeing cuts—pretty concerning.

And what Financial Accountability Officer also noticed is that this government is on track to have the government in debt of approximately \$500 billion in the next few years. And the budget—the government said, "Oh, look, we've got a plan to get us back to no deficits so that we can begin to pay off the debt." The Financial Accountability Officer looked at what your plan is to achieve that, and my read is that the Financial Accountability Office said, "It's not credible." You're assuming that growth is going to be far higher than what it actually is and what it has been historically. It's not credible. You have no credible plan to reduce the deficit and pay off the debt. No credible plan: That's the Financial Accountability Office's assessment.

Interjection.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I can't hear you from over there, but that is the Financial Accountability Office's assessment. It's very concerning.

I want to talk about some of the other issues that we heard about from constituents over the last few weeks. One came from an individual called Lyndon. Lyndon went to the protest that was outside Queen's Park recently to express their dismay at this government's, quite frankly, inhumane, futile and incredibly expensive tough-on-crime approach to dealing with encampments. Instead of building permanent homes, supportive homes, affordable housing and providing addiction treatments and mental health treatment to people who are struggling, this government has decided to instead invest in more correctional facilities and cut funding to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing by the tune of about \$300 million. That's what's in the budget. It's a shame. And when I think about how much it costs to house someone in jail—what is it? Over \$100,000. And you compare that to the cost of providing care in a supportive home or an affordable home, it's far less. So why choose the more expensive option? Why do that? It doesn't make sense at all, especially when we think about where people—what we have seen and what we see from stakeholders is that when people leave hospitals, when they leave foster care, when they leave jails, if they were homeless beforehand, they're more likely to be homeless after. It's not a path to recovery and rebuilding their lives.

I want to summarize what Lyndon said because she's an individual who's directly impacted by this government's budget and what they're choosing to prioritize and what they're choosing not to prioritize. I'm going to read it out:

"My name is Lyndon. I am currently a shelter resident, a former encampment resident and a member of the Toronto Underhoused and Homeless Union. I'm grateful for this opportunity to be with you today and to share with you my experiences.

"When I was in an encampment, I had to use drugs to manage the physical pain I was in. I had attempted to address my symptoms through the health care system but was not treated the way I deserved or needed to be treated at the time. After many attempts, I had no choice other than to self-medicate in order to live.

"Living in an encampment already feels like going to jail, when you have a bunch of security walking around constantly and can't leave your tent unattended because city workers may steal everything ... and throw it away. What a traumatic experience it can be.

"The ones we feared most weren't necessarily each other in the encampment, but it was the staff or police that felt like they had it out for us. Life in an encampment is hard, and I can tell you that if I were arrested or fined for using drugs, that would only make me want to use more. How would that fix anything? How would that have helped me get out of this situation I was in?...

"Bill 6 is completely out of touch with the needs of people in encampments. It sees them as the enemy instead

of residents who have worth and deserve to live dignified lives....”

The reason why I’m reading out something that’s related to Bill 6, even though we’re talking about the budget, is because this government has made the decision to cut funding to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This government has made the decision to not seriously invest in affordable housing and supportive housing, and this government is choosing to invest in correctional facilities and a tough-on-crime approach, even though every reasonable expert out there is telling you that that approach doesn’t work. It doesn’t make sense.

This is another recent statement that we received, and this is from CUPE and OPSEU. Their concern with the budget is around this government’s decision to cut funding to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. It’s very worrying. The reason why they are so worried about it is because many workers in the social services sector have not received their back pay as a result of Bill 124 and they are still being provided with wages that are not enough to make ends meet. It’s not enough to make ends meet.

What they wanted me to say today and what I’m very concerned about is that many of these community and social service agencies—we know they performed critical services during the pandemic, and they continue to provide these services today. These are the people who work in shelters. They are the people who provide legal support to women fleeing violence. They care for and support people with developmental needs. They treat people facing addiction and mental health issues. They are front-line workers, and many of them are living in poverty, working two, sometimes three jobs, and relying on the very same food banks used by their clients.

Now, why this is important to a budget debate is because if these workers are going to get the back pay and wages and the wage increases that they are entitled to because Bill 124 has been repealed and it is unconstitutional, then there needs to be an increase in funding to the ministry of community services to help these social service agencies pay their workers properly.

But instead of providing the necessary funding increase, this government has cut funding to that ministry by \$266 million. That’s what’s in the budget. I wish that these workers in CUPE and OPSEU had the opportunity to go to committee to express their concerns to MPPs, as is the process around here. But instead, this government chose to have the budget bill bypass committee. It’s very rare. I have a lot of concerns about that.

I want to talk a little bit about what we are seeing with health care. The reason why I want to talk a little bit about health care is because, in my riding, when I went door to door, during the election and before, health care was one of the biggest issues that came up at the door. The biggest issue that people had to speak about was the difficulty in getting access to a family doctor.

Now, I commend the government on bringing forward the previous bill to expand primary care, as well as their

related funding announcement to provide additional funding to organizations so that they can bring in more people, provide them with a primary care provider in postal codes that have more than 8,000 people in need of a family doctor. It is a move I support. I believe we voted in support of it earlier today.

But what I also know is that the amount of funding that’s being allocated to health care is not enough to address the critical needs that we’re seeing. It’s not enough. When you factor in inflation, when you factor in population growth, we have grown by 12% in the last six or seven years. We are a rapidly growing province.

When you factor in the reality that overall people are using the health care system more than they used to, even when you factor in age, what we are seeing is a cut to our health care system. What that means is that the 2.3 million people in Ontario who do not have access to a family doctor or a primary care provider—a lot of them are still not going to have access to a family doctor or a primary care provider. For those who are worried about hallway medicine and the long wait times we’re seeing for necessary surgery, those long wait times are going to continue in 2025, 2026 and beyond because there is not enough investment in the health care system to address the issues that we’re seeing. I have a lot of concerns about that.

1550

I’ve also noted in my previous speech, but I think it is worth mentioning again today, that the government, while it is choosing to underfund the health care system, is also choosing to invest an additional \$280 million in for-profit health care clinics—\$280 million. The path of moving down, providing for-profit care into Ontario is a path that is not going to end well for Ontarians. It is not going to end well.

We’re already seeing the creep of privatization in our health care system. We see it when we want to go to LifeLabs and get tests. Sure, the test is covered by OHIP. But if you want to actually access your results, you’re going to have to pay for it because it’s a for-profit system and they are going to—and they do—work hard to make money off us when we walk in.

We see it with the rise of for-profit nurse-led clinics such as Care&, where you can pay \$75 to get a visit to see a nurse. A lot of people—I’ve met people at the door who tell me that they are patients of Care& because they couldn’t get access to a family doctor. They feel they have no other choice. They’ve got medical conditions that they can’t wait and ignore. They need to see someone, and so they’ve made the decision to pay to access medically necessary care. I don’t believe that should be happening in Ontario. I just don’t.

Recently, a report came out showing the rise of for-profit staffing agencies who are taking the very same nurses that used to work under the public system—the very same nurses—hiring them as agency staff, and then they’re going back to the same hospitals. They’re being paid a whole lot more. But then you’ve got this for-profit agency that’s taking a cut off the top as well. It’s costing hospitals millions and millions of extra dollars to work

with these for-profit staffing agencies, and you wonder, are our hospitals actually performing better? No, I doubt it. I have a lot of concerns about that too—who we're choosing to support and who we're not choosing to support.

I want to talk a little bit about the lack of investment in climate action in this budget. I've reviewed the budget, and what I noticed is that the word "climate" isn't mentioned in the budget at all. It isn't mentioned in the budget at all. While we do see some measures to invest in electric vehicle manufacturing, we do see some measures to continue to invest in public transportation infrastructure, what we don't see is a serious plan to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions in line with the crisis. There are actually no hard targets at all from this government to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. And we don't see a serious plan to reform our transportation sector or our building stock or our housing stock to adapt and mitigate. There's no serious plan.

And this is happening at a time when, in May, and we're in early June, we already have significant, significant wildfires in Ontario and Manitoba, and we haven't even hit the peak of summer season. Yet this government has decided to, in this budget, cut funding to emergency firefighters as well. That's not a wise decision. It's not a good investment. It is not a good investment.

I want to talk a little bit about education, because it's the other sector in society the Ontario government has a significant responsibility for. What I do see—the minister opposite has talked a good game about how he wants to support students, he wants to support teachers; school boards are the reason why we have all these troubles. Quite frankly, that's not what I see. That's not what I see. When I think about the issues that are facing our schools today—the staffing shortages, the lack of educational assistants for kids who need that extra attention in the classroom, the schools that aren't properly maintained because there isn't enough funding for state of good repair—attacking school boards is not going to address these issues. Providing additional funding to schools so that they can meet the needs of kids—that is what's going to address these issues.

While we are seeing a small increase above inflation in this year's education budget, when you look ahead like the Financial Accountability Officer did, their trajectory is cuts. The trajectory is cuts, and the quality of education that our kids receive is going to suffer as a result.

I look at the TDSB—the difficulties, the tough decisions they need to make in this school budgeting process. There is nothing left to cut. They are cutting muscle. There is nothing left to cut. They're cutting music instructors. They're closing pools. They're delaying and extending how long each child has access to a Chromebook, beyond the life of the computer. The shortfall in special education: The shortfall is too big, and they are talking again of increasing class sizes, and we know who's going to suffer as a result.

I wish I had more time to speak about the budget. I wish I did. But this government has chosen to time allocate the measure. I would like to see a budget that seriously

invested in health care, education, post-secondary education, climate and addressing poverty and housing—the issues that really matter to people. What we've seen in this budget is that is not what's happening. There are no serious measures to address affordability—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 24. I will try to summarize it: Never has a government spent so much, borrowed so much, incurred so much debt and done so little—almost half a trillion dollars.

Interjections.

Mr. John Fraser: I'm glad the members opposite are listening, because the promise in Ontario—the promise that existed for decades and decades and decades—is that if you're sick, "Don't worry. We've got it. You won't need your wallet." And for your kids? "Don't worry. They're going to have the best schools. They're going to have the greatest education"—not under this government.

This budget doesn't address the fact that more and more Ontarians every day are having to use their credit card instead of their OHIP card to get the basic primary care services that they need. And our schools are still getting less money. Our students are getting less money than they did in 2018, in 2018 dollars. The government is spending less money on education.

Don't get me started about what's happening in our colleges. What's happening in our colleges is mortgaging our future. It is not just about the moral imperative to create opportunity for all; it's about actually what's smart to do economically, and this government is allowing our college system to wither. In Ottawa, Algonquin College has cut 37 programs, and it's the same story across the province.

This government, these members can stand up and crow about the budget, but the reality is, they are not actually living up to the promise that is Ontario, which is, if you're sick, don't worry. We've got it. You won't need your credit card or your wallet. And your kids, we're going to make sure they have the best schools. But not under this government and not under this budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: It's a pleasure to rise once again to talk about the budget. There's a lot to say here. I've been joking with some of the members: When they say, "What do you think about the budget?" I say, "Well, there's a lot of ammunition here."

Let me just talk about some of that, Speaker. The government came to power talking about the moral imperative to reduce the debt. It's kind of laughable because under this government the debt has risen \$106 billion already, and they're going to add another \$100 billion in the next few years, taking us to half a trillion dollars in debt. It's kind of shocking. The government that said it was a moral imperative to reduce the debt has clearly lost their moral compass.

It's important when you look at a budget—as a chartered accountant, I love looking at the numbers. So it's

not just about the rhetoric; it's about the numbers and the tables and the charts, and the footnotes, even, that tell us the real story.

1600

I've said before that there are a couple of things I like in the budget. So when we vote against it, we're not voting against the whole budget; we're voting against it because we don't believe that the direction the government is taking is the right one.

The finance minister talked about being at a crossroads and that this budget was consequential, and I absolutely agree with him, but it's not just because of US tariffs. The government used US tariffs as an excuse for an expensive, early and unnecessary election. Now they're using that to justify power grabs with Bill 5 and a budget that will not meet the needs of the people of Ontario—and let me tell you why. It's because this budget provides no new direction for Ontario, unless you want to take a fantasy tunnel under the 401. We're at a crossroads because the people of Ontario are living with the consequences of seven years of fiscal mismanagement of this government. Never has a government spent so much to deliver so little. We have deficit after deficit in the numbers, and yet we have crisis after crisis in our health care system, in education, in housing, in homelessness, in opioid addictions. It's really shameful.

Look at the overall Ontario economy. Ontario used to buoy up the rest of Canada. Now we are a drag under this government—second-highest unemployment rate in the country. When they took office from the Liberal government, they inherited a province that had the second-lowest unemployment rate in the country. Under this government, 691,000 people are out of work. That's one of the highest numbers in the last 10 years.

So this budget was a chance to stand at the crossroads—but to stand at the crossroads, look in the mirror and take a different direction. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

Speaker, the fall economic statement showed that the deficit would be about \$6.6 billion this year, and the government's budget came in kind of close—\$6 billion. But guess what? It would have been \$7.8 billion if they hadn't had an unexpected windfall from a tobacco settlement. So they were almost \$2 billion off, just six months ago, in their fall forecast. I asked the Minister of Finance why he was so wrong with his forecast. I did not get a good answer.

The debt-to-GDP ratio is another thing that this government likes to talk a lot about, and for good reason. It is a very important metric for how our economy is doing. Sadly, under this government, we'll be back almost to where we were when they took office. Again, they're not doing the job that they promised Ontarians they would do. Once again, they are deferring the path to balance. For 2026-27 and 2027-28, they were actually saying that revenue will grow even faster than the economy. That's highly unusual. Basically, it's unrealistic. So when they say that they will balance the budget now—another year later, by 2027-28—they're probably off by a couple of years again. The path to balance is clearly a lost path under this government.

We've got an affordability crisis. Mortgage delinquencies have gone up recently. People are having trouble making their mortgage payments. And yet there's no immediate support to families, to workers, to small businesses.

This budget was an opportunity for the government to deliver on their 2018 promise to deliver a middle-income tax cut. The government hasn't gotten it done. Once again, this budget has no tax cut for middle-income earners.

It has no tax relief for small businesses.

Speaker, under this government, the number of people working in small businesses has gone down. We are seeing small businesses close their doors because of the uncertainty that they've been facing. They're still struggling to get back to pre-pandemic levels, based on changing consumer habits and the affordability crisis.

This budget was a chance to help small businesses as well by including a small business tax cut—the bill that I introduced last year. Unfortunately, they defeated that bill. That relief would have been very welcome relief to the small businesses in my riding of Don Valley West and across Ontario that are fighting just to keep their doors open.

Speaker, let's talk about housing. This government, again—big, huge promise to deliver 1.5 million homes; they have barely delivered on half of that. The fall economic statement showed that they're going to deliver 20,000 less than they would have delivered according to the fall economic statement. Their numbers on housing targets keep falling. They're getting weaker, not stronger, and that's a real shame for the people in this province who need a home. Those people who are living in encampments, the people who are trying to make their first home purchase—this government has let them down once again.

Speaker, the government has been talking about the billions of dollars to help the economy, and it's just not here. Let's look at the numbers. The \$9 billion in tax relief—it's only temporary. It's kind of like saying, "Here's \$9 billion, but by the way, I want it back in six months." That's what the government's saying. It's just temporary relief.

Their protect Ontario account, which they've, again, been bragging about, is up to \$5 billion. Well, they're only planning to invest about \$1 billion of that at the most next year, and they're going to force businesses to jump through many hoops. They basically will be exhausted trying to find the funds that they need to keep their doors open.

Speaker, we have this kind of strange situation where the government is spending so much, but they've really spent themselves into a corner because now, as we face these economic headwinds, they're actually cutting program spending in real dollars by about 1.2%. We will feel those cuts.

A couple of weeks ago, I was in schools in my riding and virtually every school—the four schools I went to—all brought up the challenge that they're having with special-needs assessment teachers. They're having to cut those teachers right now, and those cuts, let's face it, are hurting our children. Those are hurting our future. We

want to be investing in education. Especially as technology and AI continues to grow and change how we work, we need students who are prepared and able to take on those learning challenges as they proceed to post-secondary education. If they don't get the help they need while they're in elementary school, middle school and high school, they won't be ready.

A number of the education unions and groups have been talking about the cuts that they are feeling in the classrooms. It's about \$1,500 per student in real dollars that is being cut. As Karen Littlewood so eloquently put it, I think, in last year's pre-budget consultations, "Multiply that by ... 30 students," that's half a teacher. Multiply that by a whole school, you start to see how very quickly that adds up to a lot of staff who are just not in our classrooms to support our kids.

Speaker, when you think about the economy and how you could invest in it to drive growth—which is, of course, what we need. Under this government, productivity has suffered. Our per capita GDP has fallen. We're now on par with Alabama. We are not meeting the moment with this budget. We're not taking advantage of the opportunity that Ontario has traditionally held in our country. You look at the post-secondary education sector, and we know they've been struggling for years. We know that this government did not implement the recommendations from the blue ribbon task force that they set up. So now we're in a situation where we will have tens of thousands of students wanting to seek post-secondary education in the years to come and the spots will not be there.

Certainly we want to make sure that students are prepared for the future and for the jobs of the future—we don't even know what those jobs will be. The way they get prepared for those is to get post-secondary education, whether it's in colleges or universities. We need them to be prepared, Speaker.

While this government is continuing to spend on their pet projects, like a \$2.2-billion spa with a foreign company at Ontario Place, spending over \$1 billion to move the beloved Science Centre out of Don Valley East and the Don Mills location where it has sat for generations and where it was built to stand, where they're talking about a fantasy tunnel, instead they could be doing things like repairing the infrastructure backlog, tackling the infrastructure backlog. That would create jobs in every part of our province, Speaker.

Just recently—I shared this story before—a construction worker showed up at my constituency office. He said, "I've never been out of work before. I can't find a job. Please help me. I don't want to go on welfare." Speaker, if we started fixing bridges, roads and highways across this province, we could put that worker and others like him—and women—back into the workforce in the construction sector. If we could focus on those things, instead of on the pet projects that this government is so unfortunately tunnel-vision focused on, I think we would be a lot better off.

1610

Speaker, I am disappointed with the budget. I am disappointed on behalf of the people of Ontario, because

certainly, we are facing economic headwinds and we need some help to get out of them, and unfortunately, this budget will not do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I rise today to speak to the government's budget. When I was first elected, I talked a lot about the need to address the climate crisis, but this budget reveals a deeper crisis in Ontario and that's a crisis of caring, a crisis of not investing in the people of this province. It's hard to care about the planet if we don't care for each other, and it's hard to care for each other if we don't care for this place that we call home.

This budget talks a lot about tunnels, booze and luxury spas, but it doesn't talk a lot about investing in the people of Ontario. I know the members opposite will say, "Oh, we've spent more money than any government in Ontario history," but the people of Ontario don't feel it. When you look at the fact that, since 2018, population has grown by 5.5% and inflation has grown by almost 20%, by definition you will be the highest-spending government if you're even hoping to keep up with population and inflation growth, which this government has failed to do.

The biggest crisis they're failing to address is the housing crisis: a whole generation of young people wondering if they will ever own a home. Yet housing starts are at historic lows; housing prices are at historic highs. The government is at half of what we need on an annual basis just to be able to meet the government's own target of 1.5 million homes. Yet, the Premier says no to legalizing gentle density and missing-middle housing. Even though 81,000 people are experiencing homelessness in Ontario right now, the Premier says no to building deeply affordable, non-profit and co-op housing, even though 93% of the deeply affordable homes built in Ontario were built before 1995.

You see it in health care: 2.5 million Ontarians without access to a family doctor or primary care nurse practitioner; rural hospitals taking out lines of credit and even closing emergency departments. Speaker, that's what happens when you have the lowest funding per capita of any province in Canada. It would take an additional \$13-billion investment from this government just to get Ontario to the Canadian provincial average.

You see the same thing in education: a \$1,500 per student cut since 2018. That's why we have overcrowded classrooms. You see it in post-secondary education, where we are the lowest-funded, once again, of any province in the country. It would take an additional \$7.2-billion investment just to get Ontario to the Canadian average, yet this government is cutting post-secondary by another billion dollars.

What does that lead to? Lower productivity, a less-competitive workforce, closure of programs and innovation that help drive the next great Canadian companies.

You see it at ODSP: \$1,300 a month. We're forcing people to live in legislated poverty. That math doesn't add up when average monthly rent is almost \$2,000 in this province.

You see it in the \$266-million cut to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the very ministry funding the most vulnerable in this province

And finally, Speaker, you see it in the cuts to climate. Right now, wildfire firefighters are being cut in this budget, and yet we have communities in northwestern Ontario evacuating people due to forest fires. That is not acceptable.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: There are some good items in this. In my riding, we do need expanded hospitals. We see expansions to schools in my riding and expansions to primary care and GO Transit.

Unfortunately, this budget has abandoned too many people in the province of Ontario. Young people who want a livable planet, young people who want a seat in a university or college, people on a low income, folks with disabilities and renters have all been forgotten in this budget. You know how many times the words “climate change” were mentioned in the budget?

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Zero.

Ms. Aislinn Clancy: Zero times. This is an epic, centuries-long, devastating issue that we are facing, something that cost the city of Toronto \$4 billion in three hours. How responsible is it to not even mention it? It is ignoring something that is existential to our society, to our species, to our children and, really, to all of us right now.

And what are we doing? We're subsidizing the rich. If you own a car and you drink alcohol, this is a good budget for you. If you're Drake or Galen Weston and you want your hydro subsidized—if you're all of us in this room and you want your hydro subsidized—this is a good budget for you.

But it does nothing to help folks who are living on the streets. There are over 80,000 people who are homeless in the province of Ontario. That rate went up 25% in one year alone, and it's set to hit 300,000 by 2035. I'm not making this number up; it's from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. These are our cities and regions across Ontario that are grappling with the impact of homelessness, and why? Because we expect people on OW to live off of \$300-and-something a month. You can't find anything for \$300-and-something a month.

Unfortunately, our schools are also suffering. More and more, we see cuts to special education. That is a moral injury to anyone working on the front lines. Everybody on the front lines—whether you're in health care, education, addiction and mental health—you are alarmed, you are burnt-out, and that is because funding isn't going to the right people in the right places.

It's time that we kept up with inflation and we met the moment and the needs of the people in our province who are feeling very vulnerable right now.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: I'm glad to be rising again to speak to the budget bill. I've gone into some depth on how I feel about this budget. In those other debates, I've

highlighted some of the aspects that I actually like that are in the budget, and then also some of the areas that I think need to really be addressed.

The first I'll say is there are, ultimately, in this budget, billions that are directed to highways and police, while health care, education and housing are flatlined or cut. There is this \$5-billion fund that has been included, that is really there to help to support the implementation of Bill 5—which, again, I think all of us would be loving to have more conversation on Bill 5. But ultimately, there's very little criteria or accountability built around that fund.

We see some areas flatlined—flatlines that are in areas that are ultimately the principal responsibility of a provincial government: health care and education. Post-secondary education is actually forecasted as a decline over the next three years. I find that hard to understand. I find it hard to understand, again, when the government is saying their primary objective is to protect Ontario in this economic time, and yet, these things that are so foundational to our economic prosperity seem to be an afterthought. I've said before: It struck me that it took until minute 29 in the budget speech to hear about them at all.

It's actually my birthday today—

Applause.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you. I wasn't looking for—thank you.

And I say that because, as I was leaving very early this morning, my husband said, “How are you going to spend your birthday?” And I said, “I'm going to ask for my birthday present,” which is that, boy, I would love to see a little more; more in health care—yes, we've got a plan to address family physicians in this plan, which is great. I'm going to watch very closely to be sure that the 22,000 in Etobicoke–Lakeshore will actually get access to that in a team-based model. That's what's been committed. But in other areas, I would have loved to have seen more.

We know our hospitals are by far the most efficient in the country: lowest per capita investment, lowest cost per average stay. We've seen some increases here, but they don't even cover the labour costs. If I could go back and—maybe next year's birthday, we can talk again. Yes, we will talk again next year, and maybe we will see some adjustments in those areas.

The other area that I did want to comment on, which is in the budget bill itself, is the power grab that we see and hear around municipalities. We've got three schedules in this budget bill: schedule 2 for the City of Toronto Act, schedule 9 for the Highway Traffic Act, schedule 13 for the Municipal Act—again, a lot of focus on grabbing that power and limiting municipalities' abilities to make the choices for themselves.

1620

Again, you can feel in different ways about different things. I got another letter this week from somebody in grade 2 requesting that I raise it here that we don't pull out the bike lanes and incur that additional cost. So I'm doing my job to represent someone in my riding—a young person, who is our future—to make sure that is clear. Again, this was about more than that in this bill; this was

about really trying to do a power grab with the municipalities.

I'll maybe close off by saying that, ultimately, I think there are some good things here. I wish the government would prioritize their primary role in those three big areas that I talked about more. Lastly, I would just say I'd love to see more outcomes—more outcomes. What are we going to get for making the investments that we are? What are we going to get from this record deficit we're going to enter into? What are we going to get for the people of Ontario?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House passed May 29, 2025, I'm now required to put the question. Mr. Oosterhoff has moved third reading of Bill 24, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion 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.

Third reading vote deferred.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I beg to inform the House that the following document was tabled: the annual report of the review of expense claims covering the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, pursuant to the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario.

MORE CONVENIENT CARE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025

POUR PLUS DE SOINS COMMUNES

Ms. Jones moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care / Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à édicter ou à modifier diverses lois en ce qui concerne les soins de santé.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Good afternoon. It's my pleasure to rise today to support the More Convenient Care Act. This is a critical piece of legislation that supports our government's bold and innovative actions to build a strong, connected and patient-focused health care system, building on Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care that our government established in 2023.

Your Health is a comprehensive plan for our province's health care system. It is a plan that is providing the people of Ontario with easier and faster access to health care services and growing our health care workforce. It's a plan

that is connecting people to high-quality care and more effectively meeting the needs of patients and their families across Ontario.

The More Convenient Care Act builds on our progress to connect more people with the right publicly funded care in the right place, where and when they need it, bolstering the province's health care workforce for years to come and protecting our health care system for the future.

The proposed legislation and regulatory changes will help more people connect to convenient care in a number of ways. It will strengthen governance and transparency in our health care system, and it will enhance patient care and improve the delivery of important health care services. This includes creating a transparency framework for staffing agencies in hospitals and long-term-care facilities to disclose administrative markup rates through the Health Care Staffing Agency Reporting Act.

We will enhance hospital governance by defining best practices and ensuring providers have access to the necessary tools and resources they need to deliver high-quality care.

We are modernizing the provincial electronic health record, or EHR, to provide eligible Ontarians with safe, secure and direct access to their personal health information online. Nurse practitioners will be allowed to complete and sign mandatory blood testing forms to expand access to care for people submitting applications, including victims of crime, correctional officers, members of the College of Nurses of Ontario, medical or nursing students and paramedics.

We continue to implement Roadmap to Wellness. We are exploring options to further strengthen a comprehensive, connected, consistent and quality mental health and addictions system.

To enhance patient safety and make it faster for paramedics to access the tools they need to deliver emergency care, we're reviewing the ambulance vehicle and equipment standards.

And we will improve delivery by strengthening the authority of the Chief Medical Officer of Health to provide for greater alignment and consistency when section 22 class orders are issued by local medical officers of health across Ontario public health regions.

One of the key aspects of this initiative is how we are taking steps forward to enable people to conveniently access certain personal health information which is held within the provincial electronic health record and certain other types of records. Our government understands a modern, connected and efficient health care system is a digital one.

One of our government's key health care priorities is to provide better and more connected digital services that will improve access to health care services to Ontarians and support front-line providers.

The proposed legislation also builds on the province's Digital First for Health Strategy. The Digital First for Health Strategy was developed to streamline and connect digital health systems across Ontario, leveraging previous investments to give patients and providers access to the

kinds of online tools and services that they have come to expect from a modern health care system. The province has made significant investments to create the provincial electronic health record, a secure record of a patient's health history that is managed by Ontario Health. This digital record has become a vital tool used by health care providers to understand a person's medical history, make clinical decisions and support integrated care across the health care system.

The personal health information in the electronic health record includes personal health information in several areas. These include:

- lab tests, orders and results from hospitals, community labs and public health labs;
- dispensed publicly funded drugs, pharmacy services and monitored drugs, regardless of payer;
- reports and images submitted by hospitals and integrated community health service centres; and
- clinical information from hospitals and community care organizations.

This personal health information is currently available for health care provider access through provincial clinical viewers, and some patients can view their lab data via select patient portals. However, direct patient access to personal health information that is held in the electronic health record is not currently available. It's important that Ontarians are able to access their own personal health information conveniently, including through a general right of access to their personal health information in the electronic health record and certain other records, subject to any specific exceptions.

The proposed legislation would amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act to enable the prescribed organization to collect, use and disclose personal health information to provide a unique and secure means of validating and verifying a person's identity. The prescribed organization would then be permitted to issue a unique digital health identifier, enabling eligible Ontarians to be able to access their own health records confidentially and securely in the electronic health record, subject to any exceptions specified by regulation.

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Eligible individuals accessing their personal health information in the electronic health record may start their access to certain data categories at first, such as their lab data from the Ontario Laboratory Information System, as well as dispensed drug information relating to publicly funded and monitored drugs from the Digital Health Drug Repository. The province would continue to work with the prescribed organization to expand the data available for access.

To ensure the privacy and security of personal health information, eligible Ontarians will be able to access their records using a secure log-on mechanism. Before this log-on can be used to access certain personal health information through the provincial patient viewer, an individual will need to confirm that they are who they say they are. This process will be facilitated by a common government service provided by our government and

partners at the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement using an active Ontario photo health card. This service will validate that the information on the health card matches the information held by the Ministry of Health, that the health card is valid, and verify that the picture on the health card matches the Ontarian's preference. Should a person be unable to successfully verify themselves through this process, they may have the option to complete this process through a video chat with a ServiceOntario agent during regular business hours.

Our government is ensuring rigorous privacy protections. Our government has made significant investments in privacy and cyber protections to ensure people's personal data is safe. We will ensure that any digital solution is tested and meets the highest standards. Our government wants to ensure the people of Ontario can have convenient access to a wide range of information.

Significant progress has been made in advancing access to modern, digitally-enabled services in our health care system. We are continuing to focus on adding additional digital health-related services to keep increasing the value and convenience for Ontarians. This proposed legislation and related regulations is part of our government's broader efforts to create a modern and convenient digital system where Ontarians will be able to easily access a wide range of health information.

Enabling patients to access their health information is an important part of their health care journey. Providing patients with access to their medical records can help facilitate patients to work with their physicians and improve communication between providers and patients. It can make people feel more informed about their health status and treatment, make progress on their health goals, feel more empowered to manage their health, and support them in making more informed decisions. Providing Ontarians with safe, secure and direct access to their personal health information online is a vital step towards protecting health care and providing more people with the right care in the right place.

The proposed legislation builds on our government's record investments in our province's publicly funded health care system and the Your Health plan. Through Your Health, we are providing the right care in the right place by expanding and bringing together primary care; improving access to home and community care, mental health and addiction services, and care provided through local pharmacies; connecting care through Ontario health teams; and providing people with more virtual care options such as getting health information 24/7 through Health811.

We're advancing Ontario's Primary Care Action Plan, which aims to connect everyone in Ontario to a family doctor or primary care team within the next four years. This includes creating and expanding more than 305 additional primary care teams to connect approximately two million people to primary care. We are also delivering faster access to care by reducing wait times for surgeries and procedures, building new hospitals, adding more beds, providing faster access to emergency care and investing in pediatric services and long-term care.

We are hiring more health care workers, through significant investments in health profession education and workforce training, by making it easier for health care workers who want to work in Ontario and maximizing the skills and expertise of health care workers.

I strongly encourage all members to support the health care needs of Ontarians, help build healthier communities and join me in supporting the More Convenient Care Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's kind of weird to go directly from second reading to third reading. There are lots of people who wanted to have an opportunity to be consulted with that bill, who wanted to have an opportunity to bring amendments to the bill so that we do things right.

We live in a moment when our health care system is in crisis, when things need to change so that the 2.5 million Ontarians without access to primary care gain access to primary care; so that the crisis that we're living through, whether you look at our hospital system or long-term care or home care, mental health and addictions—all of this needs urgent attention.

We have a bill in front of us, and we have dozens and dozens of people who want to come, yet the government time allocates the More Convenient Care Act so that this duty to let the people of Ontario have a say into the work that we do is taken away—this opportunity to go through clause-by-clause so that we can effect change to the bill, so that it works not only for the people in the GTA, but it works for the people I represent in northern and rural communities, for First Nations, for francophones. None of this is possible because they have rushed this through without taking the time to listen to people.

If there's something that is important to each and every one of us, it's our health care system. You're bringing a bill that will change dramatically part of our health care system. Let people have a say.

But it's not going to happen. I'll have 12 minutes to talk about the More Convenient Care Act, and that will be the end of that. And then we'll vote. We have a majority government. It will pass without an opportunity to hear people, without an opportunity to respect people, without an opportunity to do a good job.

There are schedules in the bill that everybody agreed to.

Schedule 1, the City of Hamilton Act, so that the boundaries of the board of health of the city of Hamilton are very similar to what happens in other big cities—all good.

The Connecting Care Act: This is kind of funny. In 2019, I put an amendment forward to that bill so that Ontario Health atHome would be under the French Language Services Act. They voted this down. But now they're bringing it back. Yay! We're all happy with that.

Schedule 3, Health Care Staffing Agency Reporting Act: This misses the moment. We have a brand new report from the Auditor General telling us that our hospitals and long-term care spent \$1.1 billion on agency nursing just in 2023. This is an amount that has never been spent before. That \$1.1 billion—a very small part of this went to

actually pay nurses. The rest of it went through all sorts of ways that staffing agencies make profits on the backs of the crisis that we live in our hospital system and in our long-term-care system. This could be fixed.

The Premier of this province is the head of the association of all the Premiers. Did you know that one of the first things they asked him is, "What are you doing about staffing agencies?" In every other province, they are tackling this problem head-on. They are making changes. They are passing laws to make sure that staffing agencies don't poach, that staffing agencies are not allowed to pay staff an amount of money that makes them quit. There are many things that could be done. There's a bill that I had presented here for staffing agencies that you voted down. I will reintroduce it. This should be part of schedule 3—health care staffing agencies.

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Many health care organizations—hospitals, long-term care, nurses themselves—wanted to come and talk about schedule 3, to say, "You need to do more." To ask a staffing agency to simply report—we don't even know if they would be reporting profit, just reporting their activities—is, yes, a tiny, weeny step, but it's not going to solve the problem.

The problem needs to be solved the same way it is solved in every other province where you limit. You give hospitals and long-term-care homes a number of years to put forward a staffing plan: How will you make sure that you limit the use of staffing agencies? Quebec just started theirs. They start with big cities: Montreal, Quebec, Trois-Rivières. All the big cities in Quebec have already started to limit the use of staffing agencies. Why isn't Ontario following suit?

The problem in Ontario is huge. The Auditor General did a report. She makes recommendations. She tells us that things need to change, but it's completely being ignored. All we're going to do is have a report that maybe will be made public at some point. I'm guessing I'm going to spend a lot of money on freedom of access to information to get that information out, like I do with many other parts of our health care system. Really, Speaker, that's the best we can do? I think we can do way better.

The next one: Schedule 4, Health Promotion and Protection Act—for a government that talks about red tape non-stop, they are adding red tape to public health. Now, a medical officer of health will not be able to issue a directive about communicable diseases without going to the Chief Medical Officer of Health. We have medical officers of health in all—34 now—public health units. They know how to do this. They know when to issue a directive. They don't do this lightly. To say that you will now have to write to the Chief Medical Officer of Health, that we'll have to review—we all know that the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Ontario—nothing against Dr. Moore, but he is an employee of the Ministry of Health. No other provinces do this. Ours not only reports to the Legislative Assembly; they are also an employee of the Ministry of Health. Why do we want medical officers of health in our public health units to have to go to the Chief

Medical Officer of Health for something that only affects their public health unit? I don't know.

Schedule 5, mandatory blood testing—absolutely. Nurse practitioners have the knowledge. They have the skills. When an EMS person has been in contact with blood or other bodily fluid, the nurse practitioner should be allowed to order those tests so we protect our emergency personnel, our EMS—no problem with that.

The schedule that needs a lot of re-work is the Personal Health Information Protection Act. Do people in Ontario want to have access to their health care information? Absolutely. Do we want to know the result of our tests, to have access? Yes, absolutely. Do we want this to be done in a way that will be respectful of what the Integrity Commissioner had to tell us? Yes, absolutely.

When you put forward a schedule of a bill and you get an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly writing to you to say that she has issue with it—she is the Information and Privacy Commissioner. She has issue with schedule 6.

The minister talked quite a bit about schedule 6 in her 12 minutes allocated to talk about the third reading of this bill. A lot of what she said I hope will happen, but they will happen in regulation. We all know, Speaker, that legislation is something that is debated in this House, that we can all agree on, that we can vote on, but regulation is not. Regulation—any minister can table new regulations. It goes for 30 days', 60 days' public input, and then they make changes with—none of this comes here. None of this comes to the House or an MPP can talk about it. It is a serious issue.

Data—health care data—is money. There is a lot of money to be made if you can gain access to health care data. There is nothing in this bill that will reassure the integrity and privacy commissioners that health care data will not be used by third parties.

We had a special briefing on this bill. The entire session was about schedule 6 to try to reassure us that our personal information will not be shared. They failed to do that. They failed to reassure the integrity and privacy commissioners.

This is wrong. Our health care system will suffer because of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Just to pick up from the last debate, I do want to say thank you to my colleagues for the birthday greetings that rapidly came to me.

Hon. Sam Oosterhoff: Happy birthday.

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you.

I am really pleased to be here to speak to Bill 11. Like my colleague, I wish we had more time. There are six schedules in Bill 11, and I've made points in previous debates that I generally support schedules 1 through 5, with some enhancements that I think my colleagues will touch on. In particular, I support an increased level of accountability for private agency health care staffing reporting, outlined in schedule 3. So overall I would like to support this bill, but then there's schedule 6.

Now, as you've heard today, the objective of schedule 6 is to allow patients to have digital access to their patient records that come from different providers. Whether it be lab tests from different labs, different hospitals, primary care teams, they would access it in one place. I have been a very strong advocate for patient access to their electronic records since 2007. I've worked in the system, on project teams, on digital advisory committees to try to move this forward because the evidence shows it will result in better quality care for patients. When I served in leadership roles in hospital, I asked this question everywhere I went: "When we will get digital access for patients to their records?" So initially I was actually really excited to see this bill finally come through.

However, when I read the Information and Privacy Commissioner's letter on December 12, 2024, regarding the bill—then known as Bill 231, last fall—I was confused as to why the government would reintroduce this bill this spring with virtually no changes. There were five concerns but I'm going to highlight three significant ones.

One, instead of expanding access rates for individuals, it restricts access rights that were previously available. That's significant.

It specifically authorizes the government to make regulations that could exclude requirements related to individual consent, one of the most fundamental privacy protections.

And the third is—lastly, it says that there's a "prescribed organization," which is not identified in the legislation. From our briefing with the Ministry of Health, it is expected to be Ontario Health—that I actually have some confidence in to do this work and protect privacy. But why not be explicit then? As written, the minister can appoint any third-party company with this legislation, and actually, today, I heard there might be other options.

I've been watching this carefully, so when she was asked in question period, I was somewhat encouraged when the Minister of Health told the Legislature that she'd been working with the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office all through preparing this legislation. But, Speaker, then the IPC posted another public letter on May 27. According to the commissioner, that was a one-way conversation; that's what the letter says. It was a one-way conversation, and that one-way conversation goes back to the government's first attempts at these measures through regulations last summer. A total of three public letters from the IPC with her stated concerns and recommendations, and last week we actually learned the IPC prepared the amendment. She did the work for the government. She prepared what the amendments needed to be for this to be acceptable. She also publicly posted those revisions so that we could go forward. She did all that work, and the government appears to be choosing to ignore it and fast-track this bill with no consultation at all at committee.

Now, as a previous hospital president, I made sure I had the expertise around me to make informed decisions on tough issues. That's what leaders do. It's not just in hospitals; it's in any organization.

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In this case, we have an officer of the Legislature, the IPC, who has done everything that she can to inform you that this legislation needs to be fixed. Yet here we are, moving ahead with no opportunity for consultation, no opportunity for amendments. I and others, including the IPC—I had stated I was willing to make suggestions so that we could actually proceed, so that we could give patients access they need to this information.

It is far too long. We are way behind the rest of the country. It's right there. I just cannot understand why the government won't change it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Wayne Gates: I only have two minutes, so I want to do this very quickly.

I want to say that Fort Erie isn't asking for special treatment when it comes to health care, but we had a 365-day-a-year, 24/7 Fort Erie urgent care centre. This minister and Niagara Health have reduced that to 10 hours a day, seven days a week.

People in Fort Erie need to have their urgent care centre open. What we should be doing with Bill 11, instead of rushing it through—health care is one of the most important things that we can debate in this place, for our seniors, for our kids, for everybody.

What they need to do: They need to come to Fort Erie. Every one of you guys, you've been to Niagara. They come down to Niagara to enjoy the sights. Come to Fort Erie, come to Port Colborne, come to Welland and hear from those residents that don't have an urgent care centre even though the AG report was very clear. If you want to alleviate your problem in emergency care rooms, what do you have to do? Invest in urgent care centres. Instead, what do they do? They're closing them down. They're shutting them down. It makes absolutely no sense to me—none. I'm saying think about it.

In Fort Erie, Crystal Beach, Ridgeway, Stevensville, Port Colborne, Welland—the average age in those communities is 55 years old. They need health care. As you get older, you need health care. We all know that.

And when you say, "Who's supporting this?"—well, let me tell you, Niagara region is supporting it. The mayor is supporting it, Wayne Redekop. The regional councillors are supporting it. All the residents are supporting it. Save Our Hospital, a group of residents, are fighting every single day.

I'm saying to this minister and I'm saying to everybody over there: Come to Fort Erie. Come and have a town hall meeting with them and hear what they need in Fort Erie. What we need is health care. We're not asking for special treatment.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

MPP Tyler Watt: As a registered nurse and the member for Nepean, I want to begin by acknowledging the intention behind Bill 11. Ontarians are frustrated, and they want health care that is connected, transparent and

accessible. So when the government brings forward a bill aimed at doing these things, I support it.

There are some positive steps in this bill that I want to recognize. Moving towards the modernization of our digital health care infrastructure for patients and expanding the role of nurse practitioners in communicable disease testing is a smart move.

But Speaker, good intentions are not good enough. What matters is how legislation is implemented, and what this bill leaves out is just as important as what it includes.

For one, Bill 11 tackles symptoms of a broken system, but it stops short of addressing the root causes. Schedule 3, which requires staffing agencies to disclose their markups and administration fees, is a welcome step in terms of transparency, but let's be real: It doesn't do anything else. As a nurse, I've seen how hospitals and long-term-care homes have been pushed to rely on expensive temp agencies because the government has failed to invest in and fund properly stable, full-time staff. So yes, let's shine a light on transparency, but let's not pretend that this alone will fix the staffing crisis or really do anything to stop the use of expensive staffing agencies. Where is the strategy to actually hire and retain nurses and PSWs?

This bill also centralizes decision-making around public health, requiring local medical officers of health to seek written approval before issuing class orders. While consistency is important, we must be careful not to undermine local flexibility. We saw during COVID-19 just how important local autonomy can be in responding to outbreaks. This bill undermines that. During public health crises, delays can cost lives. We should be strengthening our local public health units and not limiting their autonomy.

There are also some serious concerns from the Information and Privacy Commissioner that my colleague outlined about privacy and access to personal health information under Bill 11 that this government is not listening to or addressing.

Finally, Speaker, if the government truly believes in convenient care, it should start by investing in front-line workers and expanding access to family doctors, nurse practitioners and preventative care because no digital dashboard or staffing report will matter if people can't be seen.

So while I support the spirit of Bill 11, I urge this government to go further, to be transparent about its intentions, to protect patient privacy, to respect local health authorities and, most of all, to deliver the investments that make care not just convenient in name, but in practice. There's no need to rush something so important, so let's get it right the first time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: I hope the members of this House will forgive me for being skeptical about Bill 11, the More Convenient Care Act, after its predecessor, simply the Convenient Care at Home Act, Bill 135, conceived Ontario Health atHome and proved to be a complete and

utter disaster for patients who are seeking medical care in what should be the dignified comfort of their own homes.

For the purpose of my brief comments this afternoon, I wanted to focus on four schedules within Bill 11. The first is schedule 2, which brings Ontario Health atHome under the auspices of the French Language Services Act, a move that I absolutely support. But I would like to point out how disappointing it is that it took nearly a year after Ontario Health atHome was conceived before some consideration was given to the health care of francophone Ontarians.

The second schedule I'd like to address is schedule 3, which pretends to address the challenges that we face of temporary nursing staffing agencies here in Ontario. This schedule, which purports to solve the problem, offers no fines, no obligations, no commitment to change and has none of the concrete measures that I had introduced and recommended in my earlier legislation to regulate the issue of temporary nursing agencies. It does nothing to address the predatory recruitment practices of certain staffing agencies, does nothing to ensure that they are in compliance with certain basic standards, and it leaves far too much up to chance.

We've seen the consequences of not regulating these agencies properly. We've seen hospitals, long-term-care homes and home care agencies literally held hostage through the tens and hundreds of millions of dollars. This legislation, this schedule, is not a serious attempt to do anything about that.

Next, I want to turn to schedule 4. Schedule 4 seeks to legislate that any public health officer working in their local unit that wishes to institute a class order must seek permission from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Allow me to provide an analogy: If I'm working in the emergency department and I have a patient who comes in in cardiac arrest, that patient requires immediate defibrillation, instituting a policy such as asking me to go to the chief of cardiology for permission to apply defibrillator pads is wrong and most likely will cost lives. In the same way, if there's an urgent public health situation, such as a massive outbreak in a long-term-care home, requiring a local public health officer to implement a class order—we should not be making it more difficult for that to happen, especially as we've seen how difficult it can be to find our Chief Medical Officer of Health during the most recent outbreak of measles.

In my final seconds, I want to address schedule 6, which relates to privacy protections that are intended to make it possible for people to be able to access digital health records in a more streamlined manner. I want to highlight a couple of things, but given the limitations of my time, I just want to quote from the Information Privacy Commissioner. After being ignored by this government—despite the Minister of Health saying that she was listening—after being ignored, the IPC, in the second last paragraph of her letter, said, “Given that these significant drafting concerns remain unaddressed” by Bill 11, “I must again urge the Legislature to strike schedule 6 from Bill 11 until these defects can be resolved.” Since this government has not—

1700

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It's an honour to rise today to speak on third reading of Bill 11.

Speaker, I voted in favour of this bill at second reading because there are some good things in this bill, including French-language services and Ontario Health atHome—good thing; requiring data collection and transparency related to agency nurses—good thing, though it utterly fails to actually address the systemic crisis that we're facing in nursing, especially when it comes to the over \$1 billion the province is spending on agency nurses, money that shouldn't be going into the private pockets of shareholders and should be focused on patient care. If we actually hired enough nurses, paid those nurses fair wages and provided safe working conditions for them, we wouldn't have to rely so much on private agency nurses and people could actually get better care at a lower cost if we treated our front-line health care workers the way they deserve to be treated.

I voted in favour of the bill because I think it's important to expand the scope of practice for nurse practitioners. I'd like to see it expanded even more to have full scope of practice. I'd like to see nurse practitioners have billing codes so they can actually bill directly and do the kinds of jobs we know nurse practitioners can do to help address the primary health care crisis we're facing in Ontario.

But the schedule I want to raise concerns about—and I've heard other colleagues on this side of the House raise concerns—is schedule 6. The Information and Privacy Commissioner clearly stated that schedule 6 should either be withdrawn or completely overhauled. We would have had an opportunity to do that at committee, which is exactly why folks like myself are willing to work with government and vote for a piece of legislation that has a lot of good elements in it but just needs a little bit of fixing at committee. But instead of taking the time to get it right, to actually listen to an independent officer of the Legislature, the government said, “No, we don't need to listen. We're just going to ram it through. We're going to skip the committee process, and we're going to limit third reading debate” to something like 40 minutes, I think it is we had—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes—to actually raise some of those concerns.

I think what's so frustrating about it right now, Speaker, is, at a moment when I think we need to maximize unity when our country is under threat—I think of bills like Bill 2, removing interprovincial trade barriers. That's the kind of bill people can come together and work across party lines to get done and defend our economy and our sovereignty. I think this is a bill—clearly, by the vote we had earlier today—that could get all-party support and show unity on ways that we could advance and improve our health care system.

But it becomes incredibly hard to do that if the government is going to bypass the democratic process, cut debate short and not allow opportunities at committee to actually put forward amendments and improve legislation, especially when an independent officer of the Legislature clearly came to us and said, “You know what? There are some serious data privacy concerns related to people’s health care records. There are concerns that, the way the bill is written, people might even have limited access to accessing the information that we want to expand access to.” So I ask the members opposite, why did they not take the time to help us fix this bill?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House passed May 29, 2025, I am now required to put the question.

Ms. Jones has moved third reading of Bill 11, An Act to enact or amend various Acts related to health care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion 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.

Third reading vote deferred.

PRIMARY CARE ACT, 2025

LOI DE 2025 SUR LES SOINS PRIMAIRES

Mr. Leardi, on behalf of Ms. Jones, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care / Projet de loi 13, Loi concernant les soins primaires.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I’m just simply sharing my time with the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos): I recognize the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

Mr. John Jordan: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the third reading of the Primary Care Act, Bill 13, and I appreciate everyone’s support on the second reading. It’s the next step in our government’s latest stride in connecting millions of Canadians to primary care.

I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to Ontario’s health care workers for their steadfast support and commitment to the health and well-being of people in Ontario. This government knows and appreciates the value and importance of their work and dedication. This bill is another step in supporting that work.

Our government is delivering on our promise of delivering health care in Ontario that is compassionate, comprehensive and easily accessible. Since the people of this province placed their trust in us in 2018, ensuring that every Ontarian has access to primary care has been a top priority. The reality is that primary care is the cornerstone

of our health care system. Our family doctors, nurse practitioners and allied health professionals deliver integrated, comprehensive care across all stages of life, ensuring patients receive the support they need—the right care by the right provider at the right time.

The evidence is clear: A robust primary care system is a fundamental part of any effective broader health care system. In fact, research shows that primary care visits cost only a third of an emergency department visit, and individuals connected to primary care experience 36% fewer emerg visits. I know of programs that have reduced emerg visits by up to 50%.

Primary care teams accomplish this reduction in emerg department visits through means such as preventative care and proactive management of chronic illness. Working upstream with the right provider and services continues to take pressure off our physicians and hospitals.

In recent years, our government has made significant investments to expand access to team-based primary care, and we are moving forward with connecting every Ontarian to primary care, all while continuing to provide operational funding to support existing interprofessional primary care teams as well as equipping them with the necessary resources to enhance the delivery of high-quality care for the people of Ontario. The increase in the availability of our MRIs is a great example of this.

In February 2024, we announced that in 2024-25, thanks to this government’s investment of \$110 million, we will see up to 328,000 Ontarians connected with primary care teams. This includes 78 new or expanded interprofessional teams, such as family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics, community health centres and Aboriginal health access centres, including two new and expanding family health teams in my riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston.

In the fall of 2024, we bolstered our dedication to optimizing Ontario’s primary care system by establishing a new primary care action team led by Dr. Jane Philpott. With a mandate to connect every Ontarian to primary care by 2029, the team has developed and is actively implementing a comprehensive action plan to achieve this goal.

Overall, in January 2025, we announced an unprecedented \$1.8-billion investment to establish more than 300 new primary care health teams across the province. With this pivotal investment, two million additional Ontarians will gain access to a publicly funded primary care provider within four years, furthering our vision of delivering primary care for all. And just last month, the province also initiated a call for proposals to create and expand up to 80 new primary care teams.

1710

I would like to take you for a little virtual tour, if you will, to give you a better sense of what a team is.

ConnectWell Community Health is an organization that I am very proud of. It provides health services; mental health services; child, family and developmental services; autism services; respite; and much more, with a number of sites in Lanark and Renfrew counties.

Let's take a look at the North Lanark Community Health Centre site, where I spent 21 years of my career. Lanark village was a Scottish settlement. The member from Peterborough might appreciate that, given his attire. The centre is a chalet-type wood structure nestled in against the Canadian Shield and pine trees. Quite often, there would be deer outside my windows, which was quite surprising to my urban visitors.

When you enter, you are greeted by friendly reception and immediately have the feeling you are being listened to.

As you make your way down the north wing, you will see the triage room for checking vitals, conducting phlebotomy and other procedures.

Autoclave is across the hall, where trained staff are cleaning instruments.

Next is foot care, a service in much need and high demand, especially by our diabetics and seniors.

In partnership with public health, we will see a state-of-the-art dental suite, including X-rays, with dentists, dental assistants and dental hygienists, providing services for children with the Healthy Smiles program, and seniors programs.

Respiratory therapists and respiratory educators are conducting spirometry and coaching asthma and COPD patients to self-manage their condition and enjoy life.

We will now see an open area referred to as the nursing station. Electronic health records are rapidly being maintained. Health admin staff are busy entering patient data and making specialist appointments, as required, or referring them within to social workers, addiction counsellors and psychotherapists.

Adjacent is a consult room, where physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, allied health can and do daily consults and draw on each other's expertise.

Let's talk about health promotion and our community rooms in the south wing. Our health promoter and volunteer coordinator manages an army of volunteers who assist with seniors' exercise, cooking classes, mindfulness-based stress reduction, and other programs to help people improve their health overall.

The north wing houses a skeleton admin staff and IT support so doctors can doctor, nurses can nurse, social workers can counsel, dietitians and respiratory educators can help people manage their chronic illnesses.

This Bill 13 continues to support team-based care, and together, we need to support this bill and continue that mission.

I can give you an example of a woman who lost her home to flooding. She was lost herself after that. She did move to the area to get a primary care provider. Multiple visits to her primary care practitioner and to the emergency department—but that wasn't really the problem. The problem was depression, anxiety. She would leave her home only to access her primary care provider or to go to the emergency department. She was prescribed, by her physician, a social prescription. It's a non-traditional care plan. A provider issues a formal prescription for treatment that uses all of the resources in the community where

people can meet and gather for social connection—book clubs, hiking, walking groups, card games and games, man sheds, cooking groups, play groups and craft corners. So she does, now, go out of the house. She very seldom needs to see her primary care provider. She only needs to see them when there's something acute.

That's an example of how we reduce the demand on our primary care providers and our emergency departments.

Today, we're building on the groundbreaking progress we have already made and are taking another bold step in strengthening Ontario's primary care system through the Primary Care Act. If passed, this legislation will establish an enduring vision for Ontario's primary care system. In fact, Ontario would become the first Canadian jurisdiction to ensure a sustainable, patient-centred primary care system for generations to come.

The Primary Care Act outlines six key objectives to build the government's design, implementation and on-going development of primary care, shaping what Ontario should expect when accessing these essential services.

The first objective: to expand our access to health care province-wide, particularly rural and northern.

Connected care: That is, ensuring that primary care is seamlessly integrated with existing health and social services. From my experience in health care, I know how important these partnerships are in building capacity and providing the right care for our clients.

The third objective outlined is convenience, meaning that people should have access to timely primary care services and should be able to easily receive care when they need it most.

The fourth objective outlined: inclusivity, ensuring that people from all communities can access primary care without barriers, discrimination or stigma. A new primary care clinic for the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, which will connect over a thousand people to essential services right in their community, is a great example.

The fifth objective is patient empowerment, which means giving individuals access to their personal health information through a digitally integrated system.

Finally, the sixth objective emphasizes responsiveness, which means ensuring the primary care system evolves alongside the needs of the communities it serves, with real-time access to performance data that supports ongoing improvements.

This proposed legislation aligns with Ontario's existing health care laws, obligations and accountability structures, including service agreements, ensuring a seamless integration into the province's broader health care system.

As this legislation moves forward, we are committed to fostering collaboration by engaging with organizations, partners and the public in meaningful discussions. Their feedback will play a vital role in refining the objectives and framework outlined in this legislation and help to shape a stronger, more responsive primary care system that meets the evolving needs of our province. This bill is another step to reaching our goal of 100% of people attached to a primary care provider with a focus on team-based care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): Further debate?

M^{me} France G  linas: I'm happy to have all of 12 minutes to talk about the Primary Health Care Act, Bill 13.

Again, it is a bill where, in the House, we go through first reading; second reading, where MPPs get to debate; and then we go to committee, where people have an opportunity to come and talk to us, where anybody in Ontario has an opportunity to be heard. This is what a democracy is all about. But the government is taking away all of this. They don't want to be for the people. They just want to pass the bill quickly.

Bill 13 is actually a very good bill, but we could make it even better with a little bit of tweaking—a little bit of tweaking that shows that we have listened to the people of Ontario. We know how to make something good even better. But none of that will be possible because there was no opportunity for people to be heard. There was no opportunity for people to read in. There was no opportunity to go through clause-by-clause so that we can make sure that some of the tweaking to a bill that is very good could be made even better.

I don't know why this government doesn't want to hear from the people of Ontario. Some of what they would hear would be, "Congratulations on things well done. Here's an opportunity to make things even better." But no, this is not going to happen.

We're talking about primary care. Most of us will know Tommy Douglas brought us medicare—thank you, Tommy—where we get the care we need based on our needs, not on our ability to pay. But in truth, medicare means that you gain access to physicians and you gain access to hospital services. That's what's covered by medicare. The rest of it is kind of hit and miss.

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So things have changed since the day that Tommy Douglas brought us medicare. In those days, most family physicians were also small business owners. They ran their small business in order to be able to provide care. Lots of physicians still do this. We thank them for the work that they do. We thank them for giving access to a lot of people.

It was the Northern Ontario School of Medicine University graduation the Friday before, and I'm happy to say that, in the 20 years that they have been there, they graduated their 1,000th medical student. That happens at their 2025 graduation. I'm saying this because the new graduates of the school of medicine have trained in interdisciplinary teams. They want to work as part of an interdisciplinary team, and those teams are not always available.

So when we talk about interdisciplinary teams, what that means is—the most well-known ones are community health centres. Community health centres have been there since the 1960s. They're a place where people have access to primary care. They will have a family physician, nurse practitioner or nurse, but they also have dietitians, social workers, physiotherapists, lab techs etc. working as part of a team in order to meet people's needs.

Not only do people really appreciate having access to an interdisciplinary team, but every team member who gets to work to their full scope of practice also enjoys it. But for all of the new grads of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, I'm happy to say that over, I think, 60% of them were going to do their residency in primary care, wanted to become family physicians. All of them wanted to work in an interdisciplinary team.

Unfortunately, whether you talk about the 75 community health centres that exist, the 27—it used to be 25, now 27—nurse practitioner-led clinics, the 10 Aboriginal health access centres, the 187 family health teams—community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, Aboriginal health access centres have not seen a base increase to their base budget for about 12 years now. Last time they got a pay increase—they're now paying their staff at the 2017 salary. We're in 2025; things have changed. The cost of living has gone up. Wages have gone up in many other parts of our health care system, whether you look at hospital care—but not in primary care. It makes it really hard for them to recruit and retain a stable workforce. Worse, not only have they not had budget increases to allow them to pay for better salaries and working conditions for their staff, they also haven't gotten any increases to the number of staff. You can ask every single community health centre, nurse practitioner-led clinic, Aboriginal health access centre or community-governed family health team; they all have long wait-lists.

We could help hundreds of thousands of Ontarians gain access to primary care like this, Speaker, by funding them, by funding new positions in existing community health centres, nurse practitioner-led clinics, Aboriginal health access centres, family health teams. They're all ready to go. Do we need new ones? I have no objection to what the government is doing right now: another call for proposals to fund another 80 or expansions of some. I'm all for it. But the need is now. The need is huge.

Lots of people don't have access to primary care. We have the means within the close to 300 interdisciplinary teams that exist right now in Ontario to look after hundreds of thousands of more Ontarians. Why aren't we doing this? As I said, we could do both. We could make sure that areas of the province that have lots of people that are unattached get new centres. But a lot of the existing ones would be able to give access to a lot of people. Let's do that.

Specifically talking to the bill: The bill makes a point to talk about publicly funded primary health care, but it never says "publicly delivered." With this government, if they don't say "publicly delivered," we all know what that means. That means they're leaving the door open to private for-profit delivery. We know, with private for-profit delivery, there is a ton of money to be made off the backs of sick people. When you are sick, your child is sick, your spouse is sick, nothing else matters. You will spend the money; it doesn't matter what it is. But it does matter. We are Canadian—we're not American—and we get care based on our needs, not on our ability to pay. But they're leaving the door open. They passed Bill 80 in the last

Parliament to open the door to privatization of our health care system. They're now leaving that door wide open with the primary care bill where they specifically go into "publicly funded" but never say that it will be publicly delivered.

When we go through the six points that every primary health care team will have to report on, again, there is nothing in there that says that we will report on governance. Is this going to be a not-for-profit agency with a governance board making sure that the governance is the eyes, ears and conscience of the community that they serve so that they can direct the executive director and their teams to make sure that they meet the needs in a way that needs to be done? A lot of what will be reported on, we would like to see—and had we had committee, I can guarantee you that you would have.

They talk about reporting back to the Ministry of Health about how many people have been attached. It would be good for this to be more specific: How many people have been attached, by geographical area? How many people have been attached that are francophone, or a member of the LGBTQ or a member of First Nations? To just have broad statistics for the province, I guess, is better than what we have now, but a lot of people would like to know.

We know that if you look at the rate of diabetes within First Nations, it is through the roof. The number of amputations within the First Nations because diabetes is not well treated is also through the roof, costing in general \$1.2 million per patient for an amputation due to diabetes. All of this is not being counted, is not being reported. To have a general report is a step in the right direction. To have a specific report that takes into account rural areas, takes into account northern areas, takes into account francophones, takes into account First Nations or LGBTQ or children versus elderly people—all of this matters to the health care system, but is not mandated to do. Had we had an opportunity to listen to people, you would have heard those comments. I guarantee you, I would have put amendments to the bill to make sure that this type of detail is reported upon, but it is not to be, because they decided they did not want to hear from people of Ontario. Their bill was so good that they did not want to do any change to it. Nobody is perfect. To take the time to listen to other people who want to do good is always a good thing.

We had the opportunity to have a briefing with Dr. Philpott. What a wonderful resource Dr. Philpott is to this file. She understands the importance of interdisciplinary community—I would say "community-governed," but no—interdisciplinary primary health care. Her heart is in the right place; she really wants to push this forward.

The six objectives that the government of Ontario should have in the design, implementation and maintenance of the publicly funded primary health care system all make sense. As I said, a seventh one that has to do with community governance would have been good. A more detailed one that tells you to report on young and older and rural and First Nations, etc., would also have made the bill better, but the bill is still good.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): Further debate?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care. And at a time that we face the worst health care system performance in our province's history, at a time when more people than ever before are disconnected from primary care, I welcome legislation that brings forth what I had hoped would be a new vision, a new level of seriousness and a new ambition to resolving the challenges that we face in primary care. At a time of runaway privatization, where we see temporary nursing agencies and temporary staffing agencies holding our health care system hostage, whether it is in hospitals, long-term care or home care; at a time that we see executive health clinics running roughshod, putting up barriers to OHIP-funded care through block fees; at a time that we see for-profit, private billing, nurse practitioner-led clinics that this government is not willing to do anything about, I was relieved to see a piece of legislation before the House that is essentially a reaffirmation of the five principles of the Canada Health Act, those five principles being comprehensiveness, universality, public administration, portability and accessibility.

Now, mind you, that reaffirmation of the Canada Health Act already happened more than a decade ago in the form of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act—and it was reaffirmed with teeth, with fines and penalties. Nonetheless, it is good to hear from members of this government that they purport to be committed to the principles of the Canada Health Act. On top of that, it is exciting to see—and I welcome—the additional aspirational messaging around ensuring that health care in Ontario is going to be province-wide, convenient, connected, inclusive, empowering and responsive.

But what if I told you that this legislation is breaking those promises even before it is even passed? For example, this legislation promises to Ontarians that health care will be province-wide, but that promise is already broken to the people who live in the catchment areas of the 1,300 emergency department closures that happened last year.

This legislation promises that health care will be convenient, but it has broken that promise to the massive wait-lists of people waiting for surgeries and diagnostic tests. It breaks that promise to the 11,000 people who died waiting for surgeries and diagnostic tests in 2023.

This legislation promises that health care will be connected, even as we see nearly half of all municipalities in Ontario without a single rostering family doctor, according to this government's own data.

And taking all of that into consideration, it makes sense, then, why this legislation promises those things, but then gives itself an escape clause, because as I have done before, I will draw all members of this House to section 5 and section 6. Section 5 makes it explicitly stated that despite these promises of convenient, province-wide, empowered, responsive care, no patient or citizen in Ontario actually has a right to those things, and this government

claims no duty to deliver those things. Furthermore, in section 6, it gives yet another escape clause to this government by saying that any act, regulation, policy, directive, instrument or decision is not required to be in compliance with anything else in this legislation.

Which therefore begs the question: All of this sounds really nice, but what is the point if citizens have no rights to the things promised in this, the government has no duty to provide the things that are promised in this and no law, act, policy or directive is required to be in compliance with this?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): Further debate?

Ms. Lee Fairclough: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this bill, the Primary Care Act. Access to primary health care was by far one of the number one issues in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore during the recent election. I don't think it's any secret that the weak state of our health system was a primary motivation for my own decision to run for public office, because it's so critical to the well-being of families, communities and our prosperity. My constituents hold me to account, and I will be holding the government to account.

During the campaign, my team estimated that if we were to line up the 22,000 people in my riding without access to primary care—and we had a visual for this—that line would stretch from the Humber Bay bridge all the way to the Toronto Beaches neighbourhood—or actually, in fact, all the way to Queen's Park. This is going to be our metric: “Is that line getting shorter?”

It must get shorter because the costs borne by families who cannot get timely care has been far too high, the cost to our health system in clogged emergency departments is far too high, and the cost to people and families when early intervention is missed is too high. To this day, I don't understand how or why the government let the system fall into such a state of disrepair. The heartbreaking stories that I hear in my own riding must be stories that other members hear from their constituents too.

It's important that we get this right, and I recognize it's going to take time, but it's important that we have access to timely and regular reporting on progress against goals. Accountability is a key component in strengthening our health system.

We know how to do this; actually, we have known for many years. What was missing the last seven years was the political will. In the mid-2000s, Ontario faced primary care shortages in small cities and northern and rural communities, and the Liberal government of the day took the problem head-on. There's a peer-reviewed article, actually, in CMAJ that documents that approach. From 2008 to 2018, the result was an increase in the attachment, 21.6% improvement, with well over 90% of the population having regular primary health care teams.

The not-so-secret ingredient is political leadership that actively manages the file, invests the time and money, adjusts incentives and, once again, reports publicly on the progress.

I want to state the goal in this legislation—I'm a little worried about how it's stated. It says “access to a physician or a team,” whereas I think what we really want to see is team-based models of care.

Speaking of investments, the \$2.1 billion in funding: It's a head-scratcher that, actually, we put more investment in the Therme spa at \$2.2 billion. I'm not sure how it ranked higher and came so late relative to that investment.

Funding investments for team-based models will be needed to attract physicians to the model. We need a model that's available seven days a week and evenings if we really want to provide timely access. This is how we improve care. This is how we reduce overcrowding in emergency departments and we can confidently discharge people to their homes for care to resume in the community.

We should be clear-eyed on the challenges. Ontario's population has grown by 1.4 million people since 2019, and we're still falling behind, so we cannot lose sight of this. This is a critical piece of work that needs to be successful.

But trust can only be achieved with honest baselines; regular public reporting, including what is working and what is not; and making adjustments. We can't just decree that there's a plan; we actually have to make it happen. I hope and look forward to this being successful for people in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): Further debate?

M. Stephen Blais: Notre système de santé est débordé et soumis à une pression extrême. Plus de 2,5 millions d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes, y compris plus de 15 000 de nos amis et voisins à Orléans, n'ont pas de médecin de famille. Les temps d'attente pour les soins d'urgence et les interventions chirurgicales importantes grimpent en flèche. Les patients sont traités dans les couloirs plutôt que dans les chambres d'hôpital. Nous faisons face à une grave pénurie de médecins, d'infirmiers et de PSSP, mais ce gouvernement continue de sous-financer notre système de santé.

Nous avons besoin de mesures concrètes et urgentes :

- plus de financement pour nos hôpitaux publics;
- des incitatifs ciblés pour recruter et retenir les médecins et les infirmiers;
- éliminer les retards dans les opérations chirurgicales; et
- des investissements concrets dans les soins primaires afin que chaque Ontarien et Ontarienne puisse avoir accès à un médecin de famille.

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Notre priorité doit être de défendre et de protéger ce qui compte le plus : notre santé, nos familles et nos proches, et le système de santé publique dont nous dépendons tous et toutes. L'Ontario mérite mieux. Orléans mérite mieux.

Mr. Speaker, our health care system is overwhelmed and strained beyond capacity. Over 2.5 million Ontarians, including more than 15,000 of our friends and neighbours in Orléans, don't have a family doctor. Wait times for emergency care and vital surgeries are skyrocketing, patients are being treated in hallways instead of in hospital

rooms, and we are facing a dire shortage of doctors, nurses and PSWs. Yet this government continues to underfund our health care system.

We need real urgent action to increase funding for our public hospitals; targeted incentives to recruit and retain doctors, nurses and PSWs; and we need to eliminate the surgery backlog and provide real investments in primary care so that every Ontarian has access to a family doctor. This is about defending and protecting what matters most: our health, our families, our loved ones and the public health care system that they all depend on.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario deserves better. The people of Orléans deserve better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House passed May 29, 2025, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Leardi has moved third reading of Bill 13, An Act respecting primary care. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 2

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent, pursuant to standing order 84(c), for Bill 2, An Act to enact the Buy Ontario, Buy Canadian Day Act, 2025 and the Ontario Free Trade and Mobility Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts, to be considered in the morning, afternoon and evening meetings of the House today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Brian Saunderson): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent, pursuant to standing order 84(c), for Bill 2, An Act to enact the Buy Ontario, Buy Canadian Day Act, 2025 and the Ontario Free Trade and Mobility Act, 2025 and to amend various other Acts, to be considered in the morning, afternoon and evening meetings of the House today. Agreed? Agreed.

Report continues in volume B.

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Clancy, Aislinn (GRN)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
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Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
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Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Energy and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie et des Mines
Lennox, Robin (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Sport / Ministre du Sport
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
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McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
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Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pinsonneault, Steve (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Northern Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement et de la croissance économique du Nord
Quinn, Hon. / L'hon. Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	Minister of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security / Ministre des Collèges et Universités, de l'Excellence en recherche et de la Sécurité
Racinsky, Joseph (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs and First Nations Economic Reconciliation / Ministre des Affaires autochtones et de la Réconciliation économique avec les Premières Nations Minister Responsible for Ring of Fire Economic and Community Partnerships / Ministre responsable des Partenariats économiques et communautaires pour le développement du Cercle de feu
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Rosenberg, Bill (PC)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
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, Chris (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
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, Hon. / L'hon. Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Speaker / Présidente 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	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smyth, Stephanie (LIB)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
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 des Petites Entreprises

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon. Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué à la Santé mentale et à la Lutte contre les dépendances
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Attorney General / Procureur général associé
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Tsao, Jonathan (LIB)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Vickers, Paul (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
Watt, Tyler (LIB)	Nepean	
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	