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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

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26 September 2023

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43^e législature

Mardi
26 septembre 2023

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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 26 September 2023 / Mardi 26 septembre 2023

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce	
Mr. Robert Bailey	5049
Long-term care	
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5049
Six Nations Chiefs lacrosse team	
Mr. Will Bouma	5049
Health care	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	5049
Music awards	
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto.....	5050
Canadian Paramedic Memorial Foundation Tour	
Paramedic Ride	
Mr. Wayne Gates	5050
Environmental protection	
Mr. Ric Bresee	5050
Government accountability	
Ms. Stephanie Bowman	5051
Volunteers	
Ms. Jess Dixon	5051
Rick O'Brien	
Mr. Trevor Jones	5051

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	5051
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	5051
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5052
Mr. John Fraser	5052
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo	5052
Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	5052
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff	5052
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos	5052
Mme France Gélinas	5052
Hon. Neil Lumsden	5052
MPP Jill Andrew	5052
Mr. Michael Mantha	5052
Mr. Robert Bailey	5052
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam	5052
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	5052
Hon. Jill Dunlop	5052
Ms. Doly Begum	5052
Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	5052

Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	5053
------------------------------------	------

Independent members

Mme Lucille Collard	5053
---------------------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Government accountability

Ms. Marit Stiles	5053
Hon. Paul Calandra	5053

Government accountability

Ms. Marit Stiles	5054
Hon. Paul Calandra	5054
Hon. Doug Ford	5055

Government accountability

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	5055
Hon. Paul Calandra	5055

Skilled trades

Mr. Aris Babikian.....	5056
Hon. David Piccini	5056

First Nations consultation

Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	5056
Hon. Doug Ford	5057
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	5057

Justice system

Mrs. Daisy Wai	5057
Hon. Doug Downey.....	5057

Responsabilité gouvernementale / Government accountability

Mme France Gélinas	5058
Hon. Paul Calandra	5058
M. Guy Bourgouin	5058

Environmental protection

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon	5058
Hon. Paul Calandra	5059
Hon. Doug Ford	5059

Transportation infrastructure

Mr. Sheref Sabawy.....	5059
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria	5059

Land use planning

Ms. Jessica Bell	5060
Hon. Paul Calandra	5060

Rural and northern health services

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	5060
Hon. Sylvia Jones	5061

Seniors

Mr. Brian Saunderson	5061
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho	5061

Government accountability

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens	5062
Hon. Paul Calandra	5062

Tourism

Ms. Natalie Pierre	5062
Hon. Neil Lumsden	5062

Visitors

Mr. Ernie Hardeman	5063
--------------------------	------

Rectification au procès-verbal

M. Guy Bourgouin	5063
------------------------	------

Legislative page

Ms. Goldie Ghamari	5063
--------------------------	------

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Procedure and House**Affairs**

Mr. Matthew Rae	5063
Report adopted	5063

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

**1000067464 Ontario Inc. Act, 2023, Bill Pr33,
Ms. Smith**

First reading agreed to	5064
-------------------------------	------

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Test Your Smoke Alarm Day

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner	5064
Mr. John Vanthof	5064

MOTIONS**House sitting**

Hon. Andrea Khanjin	5065
Motion agreed to	5065

Committee membership

Mr. Trevor Jones	5065
Motion agreed to	5065

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**Northern Health Travel Grant**

Mme France Gélinas	5065
--------------------------	------

Protection for workers

Mr. Adil Shamji	5066
-----------------------	------

Child care

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5066
-------------------------------	------

Social assistance

Miss Monique Taylor	5066
---------------------------	------

Amyloidosis

Ms. Sandy Shaw	5067
----------------------	------

Renewable energy

Mr. Mike Schreiner	5067
--------------------------	------

Renewable energy

MPP Jamie West	5067
----------------------	------

Long COVID

MPP Jill Andrew	5067
-----------------------	------

Long-term care

Ms. Catherine Fife	5068
--------------------------	------

Land use planning

MPP Jill Andrew	5068
-----------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR
**Working for Workers Act, 2023, Bill 79, Mr. Piccini
/ Loi de 2023 visant à oeuvrer pour les travailleurs,
projet de loi 79, M. Piccini**

MPP Lise Vaugeois	5068
Ms. Donna Skelly	5071
Ms. Sarah Jama	5071
Hon. Todd Smith	5071
Ms. Sandy Shaw	5072
Hon. Todd Smith	5072
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	5072
Mr. Mike Schreiner	5072
Ms. Donna Skelly	5073
Miss Monique Taylor	5073
Ms. Laura Smith	5073
Ms. Donna Skelly	5074
Miss Monique Taylor	5076
Mr. Robert Bailey	5076
M. Guy Bourgouin	5077
Ms. Laura Smith	5077
Ms. Sandy Shaw	5077
Miss Monique Taylor	5078
Mr. Andrew Dowie	5080
Mr. Tom Rakocovic	5080
Mr. Andrew Dowie	5081
Ms. Sarah Jama	5081
Mr. Andrew Dowie	5081
Ms. Sandy Shaw	5081
Mr. Trevor Jones	5082
Third reading agreed to	5084

New members of provincial Parliament

MPP Karen McCrimmon	5084
Debate adjourned	5086

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 September 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 septembre 2023

The House met at 1015.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SARNIA LAMBTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's an honour to rise once again in the Ontario Legislature. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome all the members of the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce who have come to Queen's Park yesterday and today for a number of meetings with members of all sides of the Legislature and cabinet ministers, and to share the good news of Sarnia–Lambton and what's going on every day. Our community has a long history of innovation and collaboration when it comes to solving big issues. From energy to agriculture, manufacturing to Bay Street, the people and businesses of Sarnia–Lambton are working together to build a better future.

Mr. Speaker, more than 40 members of the chamber are joining us at Queen's Park today, including Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce chair Nicole Crosby and chamber president Carrie McEachran. Please join me in welcoming the chamber members today.

I'd like to remind all members of the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce reception today from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in rooms 228 and 230. See you all there.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today is September 26, 2023. It has been 315 days since Bill 21, the Till Death Do Us Part Act, passed second reading in this chamber. For nearly a year, seniors across Ontario have continued to be separated from their spouses while this government sits on a solution that could reunite older adult couples during their last years.

The new minister will be visiting Fairview Mennonite this Friday; there are five couples separated in this one home.

Over the summer break, I organized meetings with senior Jim McLeod to hear directly from seniors who are separated from their spouses, as well as their families and academics. They told me of the heartbreak they're experiencing, the severe impacts to everyone's mental health and the negative health impacts caused by isolation.

This week, I'm sending a letter to every mayor in Ontario asking them to bring motions forward to their res-

pective municipal councils in support of the Till Death Do Us Part Act. Their support will help us keep attention on Bill 21, so that it will finally be called to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, one step closer to royal assent.

There is no good reason why the Ford government is stalling Bill 21 at committee. Nova Scotia passed similar legislation, the Life Partners in Long-term Care Act, in just 11 days. Let's work together and get it done for all of Ontario's seniors and the generations of older adults to come. It is time.

SIX NATIONS CHIEFS LACROSSE TEAM

Mr. Will Bouma: It is good to be back in this great House, and it is my sincere pleasure to share some great news to come out of my home riding of Brantford–Brant. Earlier this month, the Six Nations Chiefs secured the men's senior lacrosse Canadian championship by winning the Mann Cup in New Westminster, BC, winning the best-of-seven-games championship series. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I congratulate the Six Nations Chiefs on this momentous win.

1020

The "Creator's game" is what the Haudenosaunee people have called the sport of lacrosse since the earliest of times, long before European contact.

Lacrosse has been used by some First Nations people as a social gathering, as exercise, and even to settle disputes among neighbours. But there is no dispute here; the Six Nations Chiefs are the Canadian men's lacrosse champions, and they have made the Haudenosaunee people, Brantford–Brant and Ontario proud.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: There were thousands of people at Queen's Park to welcome us back on our first day of this session. They were out in force, covering the lawns, and they were here with the Ontario Health Coalition to defend public health care and public delivery of health services.

Public health care is worth defending. This government finds billions for the things and fancy friends that matter to them, but they won't put the money into health care. This government can spin it, but they know we are underfunding our hospitals. We're losing nurses to private agencies and across the border because Bill 124 wouldn't allow hospitals and the public sector to pay their staff and health care heroes what was fair. Instead, hospitals were made to

watch as private, for-profit nursing agencies bribed their nurses away. The hospitals have been held hostage and made to pay agency rates, all the while forbidden by this government from paying their own staff what they would want to.

Despite the government nonsense, people are paying with their credit cards for health care. They're getting hit with surprise fees and charges and getting stuck with the bill. This government isn't preventing or remedying these unfair, often predatory, situations.

This government has friends and family making bucketloads of money from privatization. More and more of our public health care dollars are flying out the door, and they aren't going to better patient outcomes. The profit margins aren't shortening wait times, they aren't opening the Minden emergency room back up, and they aren't helping seniors cover their dental that this government refuses to cover anymore.

I was proud to stand with health care defenders yesterday—and every day. And I invite the government members to take their hands out of people's pockets, their heads out of their offices and come outside to meet real people when they come to see us.

MUSIC AWARDS

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Last month, I had the great honour to speak at the Hollywood Independent Music Awards, at the historic Avalon in Los Angeles, to celebrate the achievements of outstanding young artists from Ontario and around the world. I was thrilled to be able to present an award for best original recording to Neena Rose from Hamilton, for her song FYWO, and the award for best Latin pop/rock song to Ben Anthony Lavozy from Toronto, for the song Kan Can. Shylah Ray Sunshine, an Algonquin native from Ontario, was named best female vocalist of the year.

I want to thank Brent Harvey again for everything he does to help independent singers and songwriters who don't have the resources of a major record label. Brent serves as executive producer of the Hollywood Music in Media Awards. Four years ago, when six Ontario artists were nominated, I was proud to recognize them right here in our chamber.

I also want to thank my friend Tina Cole, well known in Hollywood as Mama Swag, for everything she does to develop and mentor young Ontario artists. Earlier this month, at the 2023 Mississauga Music Awards, Tina was named industry person of the year, a well-deserved honour.

Again, I want to thank Tina and Brent, and on behalf of all the members, I want to congratulate Neena and Ben.

We are so proud of you, and we can't wait to see what you do next. Congratulations.

CANADIAN PARAMEDIC MEMORIAL FOUNDATION TOUR PARAMEDIC RIDE

Mr. Wayne Gates: This weekend, I had the honour of joining the incredible men and women of the Canadian

Paramedic Memorial Foundation as they took part in their annual Tour Paramedic Ride in Niagara Falls. The foundation is on a mission to pay tribute to the unwavering dedication and ultimate sacrifices made by civilian and military paramedics in Canada who have lost their lives while serving on the front lines. For me, it was shocking to learn that no monument or memorial existed. The ride has successfully raised \$800,000, which directly contributes to the realization of a national monument in Ottawa.

This year, over 50 cyclists rode over 350 kilometres through southern Ontario to honour 54 fallen paramedics. They are working hard to build a monument to honour the lives lost but also the mental and emotional toll the job takes on EMS, Ornge ambulance and military paramedics.

There is no denying that every Canadian will, at some point, be touched by the invaluable service of our paramedics, and for that we must honour them for their service.

The ride goes beyond fundraising; it extends its support to those battling mental health challenges and their families. It recognizes that the toll of this vital profession is not only physical but also emotional.

The ride and the Canadian Paramedic Memorial Foundation are a representation of our collective appreciation for these brave individuals who rush to our aid during a crisis like COVID-19. They honour the fallen, they support the living, and they forge a legacy of gratitude and honour for generations to come.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm very proud to rise today to share how the government of Ontario, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, is protecting our flora and fauna and expanding nature preserves all across Ontario, just like in my own Hastings–Lennox and Addington's Napanee plain.

The Napanee plain is a unique formation of alvars, wetlands and karst formations. For those who don't know those terms, alvars have thin or almost no soil covering over a limestone shelf, and by their nature are home to hundreds of rare plant and animal species due to the seasonal variability.

Karst caves and crevices are created when water erodes that limestone underpinning the alvar. Karst ecosystems, like alvars, also support a huge variety of rare plants and animals in some very unique habitats.

I grew up playing in alvar and karst formations. I was fascinated by the breadth of wildlife in that cracked limestone and the huge number of fossils in the exposed limestone sheets.

I'm thrilled to say that the Napanee plain has recently been expanded by 81 hectares to include the Stoco Karst Forest. This new nature preserve provides a natural buffer for the nearby Stoco Fen Provincial Park; a 350-hectare reserve class provincial park located east of Tweed. By connecting with this large forest, we will preserve and sustain some wide-ranging animals like black bear or moose. The expansion will also help to provide flood

protection and natural water purification for downstream rural residents and even communities such as Belleville or Deseronto.

I want to express my appreciation to the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks for the support of these projects.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: Since the Auditor General's report on the greenbelt, several media articles have suggested that this government's handling of the greenbelt is not unique regarding political interference in provincial land use processes, whether it's the 95-year lease for a mega spa at Ontario Place, the government's plan to move the beloved Ontario Science Centre built by legendary architect Raymond Moriyama, or in my riding of Don Valley West, the 194 changes the previous Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing made to the Yonge–Eglinton Secondary Plan. In approving this plan, the minister deleted mid-rise height restrictions on Bayview Avenue and Eglinton Avenue that would have met the province's density targets. Now we're seeing applications for buildings as high as 46 storeys, right alongside signs from the city of Toronto that tell potential residents that schools in the area are full.

Speaker, the Auditor General's report revealed how this government operates—with developers handing over brown envelopes, with the expectation of making \$8.3 billion in profits.

Ontarians want to know why they should believe that this government acted any differently when it comes to sky-high developments in Don Valley West, Ontario Place or the Ontario Science Centre. To really earn back the trust of Ontarians, this government needs to open the books and show the people of Ontario that “open for business” does not mean they're open to backroom deals.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Jess Dixon: I think you can tell I spend too much time on Instagram when I was about to start this by saying, “This is a shout-out post,” when I'm actually doing a member's statement—but it's a shout-out member's statement.

When I was 15, I did my 40 hours of community service at a place called Pride Stables, which now actually happens to be in my riding. Pride Stables is part of the Central Ontario Developmental Riding Program, so it is a stable that is part of an organization that seeks to give a therapeutic riding experience to people with disabilities, both mental and physical, and predominantly children with disabilities.

1030

In the summer, they run something called Camp Pride, which is a fully integrated day camp. You can have children with disabilities and children without disabilities attending the same camp, which is a huge asset for parents wanting to keep their kids together. I saw on social media

over the summer that they were having a hard time getting enough volunteers, and I decided, “Well, I am in charge of my own schedule,” so I spent a week volunteering for the Camp Pride riding camp. It was a wonderful experience.

In my personal life, I don't have cause to spend a lot of time with kids, full stop, or particularly with kids with disabilities or with autism, and seeing the grace that the other volunteers and instructors handled their charges with was incredible. So I want to shout out to Cassidy and Merissa, the instructors, and Amanda, the volunteer coordinator.

And if you can volunteer, always do.

RICK O'BRIEN

Mr. Trevor Jones: Today I take a moment to honour a hero in life: Constable Rick O'Brien, who served at the Ridge Meadows detachment of the RCMP in British Columbia. Constable O'Brien was 51 years of age and was serving as a front-line uniformed officer in his seventh year of service. On Friday, September 22, Constable O'Brien was shot and killed in the line of duty while executing a warrant in relation to a drug investigation in Coquitlam, BC. He is the 11th police officer to be killed in the line of duty since last September.

Constable O'Brien entered the profession later in life than most, and the challenges he endured in realizing his dream likely contributed to the skills he displayed while serving in the community and his natural ability to relate to youth and those struggling with mental illness.

Very early in his career, Rick was awarded the medal of valour, the highest honour, and a commissioner's commendation for his efforts in successfully disrupting a violent home invasion, which led to both a hostage rescue and the arrest of four armed suspects.

Rick was a husband to Nicole, a father to their beautiful blended family of six, and an active contributing member of his community.

Words from his friend best capture this tremendous loss: “This man, his children, this family, was the definition of love.”

Rick was a hero in life, not death. May he rest in peace.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to inform the House that we have a former member of the Legislature with us today: the member for Brantford in the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, Phil Gillies.

Welcome back to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is wonderful to see Mr. Gillies. He's a great friend to all of us here. Welcome to the House.

I want to welcome three guests. They are not all together.

I want to say a special welcome to Faith States-Linton, who is from the same town as me: New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. She now lives in the GTA. I must say, every time I seem to make it into the news, sometimes for not-so-great

things, Faith is always there to make sure I remember that I'm my father's daughter and that I deserve to be here.

Faith, thank you very much for joining us here today.

I also want to recognize two of my great friends—one is a constituent, actually: Michael Crockatt, the CEO and president of Ottawa Tourism, who I worked together well with over the past 18 years, and, of course, his partner in crime, Colin Morrison.

I don't know what you're doing now these days—if you're still the chair of Ottawa Tourism or still the hoteliers—but you are a great friend to the city of Ottawa, and you're a great friend to me.

Welcome all three to our House.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to introduce Karissa Singh. Karissa is the new legislative assistant in my office. She is also a recent OLIP graduate, so I feel lucky to have hired her.

OLIP is a great program. The deadline is October 6. May the best MPP get an OLIP intern.

Mr. John Fraser: I have some guests in the gallery today who are here for the debate of Bill 54, WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act. From the SEIU, I have Andrea Gordon, Erica Valentine, Sandee Green, Vivienne McDougall, Jacqueline Haynes, and Michael Spitale. From CLAC here today, I have Ian DeWaard, Mira Ponomarenko, Carol Bartley-Fray, and Julie Garner. Thank you very much for being here.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to introduce this morning a very dear friend of mine who is here from Little Current, Kevin Eshkawkogan. He is the president of Indigenous Tourism Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: It gives me great pleasure to welcome Chris Bloore, president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and Alexander Miceli, manager of policy and government affairs at the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario. Also, it was wonderful to meet with Dr. Jessica Ng, director of policy and government affairs at the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario.

Thank you to all the fine folks who are here today on behalf of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I have the privilege of welcoming to the House today the director of economic development for the town of Lincoln, Paul Di Ianni. Welcome to the people's home.

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: It's my pleasure to recognize page Minuka Premaratne from Oakville North-Burlington, who's here today with his parents, Gethmi and Saman Premaratne.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to introduce Cathy Orlando, who organized a breakfast for the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment, Citizens' Climate Lobby, and Ontario Climate Emergency Campaign. She is from Sudbury.

Welcome to this House.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I'd also like to welcome Chris Bloore, the president and CEO of TIAO; Rebecca Mackenzie, the board chair; and all the other tourism

professionals and leaders who are joining us here today. I look forward to the rest of the day and the meetings that will follow.

MPP Jill Andrew: I'd like to welcome Masani Montague to the House. She is the CEO and president of Rastafest Incorporated. Masani is doing a wonderful event for World Mental Health Day on October 10 in Little Jamaica. We would certainly welcome every member of the House to join. She is such a trailblazer in Ontario tourism. If you get to meet her today, you are very, very lucky.

I would also like to welcome to the House Lyn Adamson, one of our very own community members in St. Paul's. She's with ClimateFast. There isn't a bigger climate justice activist in this world, probably, than Lyn Adamson.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I would like to welcome a friend and a huge advocate of tourism in Ontario, Kevin Eshkawkogan, who is here on behalf of TIAO. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to remind people about the Sarnia-Lambton day today. Two or three special guests who are here—the warden of Lambton county, Kevin Marriott, a good friend of mine; accompanied by Dave Ferguson, the mayor of Brooke-Alvinston; and his wife, Gabrielle Ferguson; along with 37 other people.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'd like to welcome my dear friend Phil Gillies to the House. I recognize that he has just been recognized—but I wanted to say hello to you, and also to Suze Morrison, the former MPP from Toronto Centre and my predecessor, who I understand is here. Welcome.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Good morning, everyone. Welcome back.

I want to welcome the bubbly Beaches-East York team who are here to crusade for the planet. We're a very green riding. Thank you for all you do.

1040

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I, too, would like to take this opportunity to introduce a former member and former Minister of Colleges and Universities, John Milloy. He is here with his fourth-year master's students from the political science program at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Welcome, everyone. I look forward to meeting with you this afternoon.

Ms. Doly Begum: I'm delighted to welcome page captain Emilia Rashid-Cabezas and her proud family members. Her mom, Alejandra Cabezas, her dad, Iftekher Rashid, and her brother Andrés Rashid-Cabezas are here today.

Also, I would like to introduce Robert Kim and his mom, Alysa Kim. Robert is the host of the Robert at Children's Climate Championship YouTube channel, so check it out if you get a chance.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: *Remarks in Anishiniimowin.* Good morning. I want to welcome Chief Rudy Turtle of Grassy Narrows, Head Councillor Cecilia Begg from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Deputy Chief Stanley Anderson from Wapekeka, Elder Alex Moonias from Neskantaga, and other guests who are up there—Stanley Moonias, Sherry Ackabee, Bear Copenace, John Clint

Kokopenace, Arnold Pahpasay, Judy Da Silva, Joseph Fobister, Mike Fobister, Chrissy Isaacs, Harriet Cutfeet, Jacob Ostaman, Samuel McKay, Joshua Frogg, and others I have missed. Meegwetch for coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes our members' introduction of guests. I'm going to remind members that, to the greatest extent possible, we would ask them to keep their introductions as brief as possible and also to avoid any political commentary.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm now going to ask our legislative pages to assemble for their introductions.

It is my honour and privilege to introduce this group of legislative pages: from the riding of Hamilton Centre, River Alanzor; from the riding of Mississauga Centre, Lucia Alonzi; from the riding of Oakville, Sophia Crawford; from Ottawa West–Nepean, Kian Denissen; from Scarborough–Agincourt, Muhammad Huzaifa Farooq; from Mississauga–Lakeshore, Isabella Forodi; from Beaches–East York, James Gillespie; from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Justin Guindon; from Kingston and the Islands, Vera-Claire Hsu; from Spadina–Fort York, Jaden Tristan Joseph; from Brantford–Brant, Ella Knill; from Markham–Stouffville, Bella Li; from Vaughan–Woodbridge, Devyansh Marya; from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Erin McCloskey; from Thornhill, Constantine Papadakis; from Oakville North–Burlington, Minuka Premaratne; from Scarborough Southwest, Emilia Rashid-Cabezas; from Niagara West, Sophia Rose; from Burlington, Clara Tiong; from Toronto–Danforth, Sofia Turco; and from the riding of Carleton, James Wereley.

Welcome.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before we start question period, I have information that at least two members want to raise points of order.

I recognize the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I seek unanimous consent for the House to authorize the Speaker to issue a warrant to command and compel Silvio De Gasperis and Michael Rice to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts within 30 days regarding the Office of the Auditor General's Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Leader of the Opposition is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to authorize the Speaker to issue a warrant to command and compel Silvio De Gasperis and Michael Rice to appear before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts within 30 days regarding the Office of the Auditor General's Special Report on Changes to the Greenbelt. Agreed? I heard a no.

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier, I understand, has a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: Yes. I am seeking unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak during private members' public business today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to speak during private members' public business today. Agreed? Agreed.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yesterday, the Premier and the House leader seemed to think they could just brush off questions related to the greenbelt grab, but people still have many questions—questions like, what exactly happened on a trip to Las Vegas, taken by the Premier's former principal secretary, his director of housing policy, the former minister of public and business services, and a speculator who later stood to benefit from preferential access to greenbelt land?

Speaker, to the Premier: When did he first find out that his minister was living it up in Vegas with people who have business before his government?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government House leader and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: I appreciate the question.

Obviously, the Integrity Commissioner has weighed in on that and is looking at the additional information that has been provided by the former minister.

At the same time, of course, we are not going to do what the opposition will want us to do. This is all about the same thing for them—it's about stopping people from having what all of us wanted and what all of us have: a home for themselves.

I was speaking to somebody just yesterday whose wife delivered their first child. He did everything right. He bought his first condo when he was just out of school. And now all he wants is a home for his family, but 21 offers later, he still doesn't have that home. All he wants—what he said to us—is this: "I want what you had. I want the opportunity to have my first home for my family." That's what he wants, and that's what we will deliver.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I want to ask him to follow along here.

I can't blame the Premier or the House leader for having some difficulty with the dates, because they've changed a few times since these individuals were first interviewed, under oath, by the Integrity Commissioner.

The former minister, Mr. Massoudi and Mr. Truesdell all suspiciously told the Integrity Commissioner that their

trip was in 2019, when it actually occurred months later. The greenbelt speculator Shakir Rehmatullah, someone this Premier knows very well, was at the same hotel on both set of dates. The minister said he was only in Vegas once since being elected; he has now admitted it was twice. That's three different people giving the wrong date for the same trip.

So, my question, again, to the Premier: Can the Premier explain how three different people could mistakenly give the wrong date for the same trip?

1050

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, that is something that the Integrity Commissioner will take a look at. I can understand the leader bringing that question to the floor, but honestly, she should be providing those questions to the Integrity Commissioner. That is the official who is charged with overseeing those types of investigations with members on all sides of the House.

At the same time, we're going to continue to be focused on what matters to the people of the province of Ontario, and that is delivering a strong economy, that is delivering homes for the people of this province—whether it is the senior who wants to downgrade into a bit of a smaller home, thereby making another home available for the young family I just talked about.

I suspect this is all the opposition is going to do—try to put obstacles in the way of Ontarians having that first home. We will remove those obstacles, and we will deliver for the people of the province of Ontario, because they deserve every advantage, the same advantages that we had. The next generation deserves those exact same advantages.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: The minister knows this was never about housing, and what we're asking today is about restoring trust and integrity in government.

Back to the Premier: The discrepancies in these testimonies didn't stop at the dates of the trip. The former minister said he and the Premier's staff only saw the greenbelt speculator in the lobby of the hotel. Now it's reported that they got spa services at the same hotel, at the same time. Of course, we know the member has now left cabinet and caucus in light of these revelations. The Premier has said he can return if he clears his name.

Will the Premier be asking the Integrity Commissioner to get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Paul Calandra: That is the Integrity Commissioner's job to do and not the Premier's job to do on behalf of the Integrity Commissioner.

But the Leader of the Opposition is right—for the NDP, it is never about housing, right? Because if it was ever about housing, they wouldn't have put obstacles in the way, along with the Liberals, that saw us in a housing crisis in the province of Ontario. That is the reality today. We are in a housing crisis because they put obstacles in the way of people building homes. They put obstacles in the way that have led us to a housing crisis. It is the same policies that they're supporting federally. They have the

balance of power federally, and what are they supporting? High taxes, which lead to inflation, which lead to interest rates that put families out of competition for homes.

So I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Don't do what your federal counterparts are doing. Don't do what you did when you supported the Liberals. Don't put housing out of the reach of thousands of people. Join us and make sure that the next generation has all the benefits that we enjoy. That's what we'll focus on.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I'm not raising these questions because I have any particular interest in the jet-setting lives of the Premier's staff and friends; I'm raising them because of what they reveal about how this government makes decisions and who stands to gain from those decisions.

The Integrity Commissioner says evidence suggests someone tipped off Mr. Rehmatullah, but he has been unable to identify who it was.

Does the Premier have reason to believe that any of his ministers or staff may have given advance notice to Mr. Rehmatullah about their plans to remove parcels of land from the greenbelt?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, what the Integrity Commissioner said—page 135: “In fact, I have found that the Premier's office staff were not providing such direction.” Page 140: “I accept the purpose of the decision to remove lands from the greenbelt was to address the housing crisis.” That is what the Integrity Commissioner said—because that is what we have been focused on since we got into office.

We inherited a province that was brought to its knees by the policies of the Liberals and the NDP—the same policies right now, which, across this country, have led to high inflation, which is leading to out-of-control interest rates, which are putting thousands of people out of the market. And when you add on top of that the obstacles that they put in place, making new families have to decide to eat or heat—that was their legacy.

We're going to bring prosperity back. We've already seen 700,000 people have the dignity of a job—and now the next step is to give those new families the same advantages that we had: a house that they can call home for their families, so that we can ensure that the next generation has all the advantages we had.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is back to the Premier. I hope he answers this time.

This speculator's influence wasn't limited to the greenbelt. His company was identified by the Auditor General as one of the top beneficiaries of this government's MZOs. We need some transparency here.

The Premier's former minister paid \$4,550 in cash for three flights to Vegas, but no one could provide clear proof

just how, when or if the balance for the trip was repaid in full. Rooms at the Wynn Las Vegas apparently go for more than \$700 a night.

What steps is the Premier taking to figure out who paid for this trip and when?

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

Hon. Doug Ford: To the Leader of the Opposition: It was very clear that the Integrity Commissioner cleared myself and cleared my office. The Auditor General cleared myself and cleared my office.

Our intent is to build homes—build homes for new Canadians and build homes for young families who come here who can't afford it.

If it was up to the NDP and the Liberals, nothing would get done. We go back another 15 years and talk about scandals, be it the eHealth scandal or every other scandal that they had—nothing got done. We had the highest hydro rates in North America, the highest taxes, more red tape, more regulations—and they wonder why, under their rule, 300,000 people lost their jobs.

As we stand today, there are 700,000 people who have jobs, who will have an opportunity to pay their rent, who have an opportunity to get a mortgage and buy a home. That's our intent. We're going to continue making sure we build the 1.5 million homes.

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

Ms. Marit Stiles: I think the Premier had better go back and read those reports again because their Vegas story is not adding up. You've got the former minister paying cash for flights. He says he believes the Premier's staff paid him back—about \$1,000 each—in cash. That doesn't even cover the cost of the flight. The Premier's now-former principal secretary stated that he thinks he paid him back in cash on or around November 7, 2022. That's nearly three years after the trip and just a few days after the government announced Rehmatullah's land would be removed from the greenbelt. Coincidence? I don't think so.

To the Premier: Should the people of Ontario accept that government policy was being decided on a massage table in Vegas?

Interjections.

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

To reply, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, it's the Integrity Commissioner who will look into any of these—as they do with any issues that come before us from members.

At the same time, the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Liberal Party can make all the jokes that they want, but the reality is this: It is not a joke, because what has happened in the province of Ontario under 15 years of Liberals and NDPs is that we have a housing crisis. These are the very same policies that they fought for here for 15 years, that we're seeing in Ottawa right now. We're seeing the same thing. We said a carbon tax would cost the people

of the province of Ontario and drive up inflation; they said it wouldn't, but it did. We said high interest rates would cause our economy to fall; they said it wouldn't, but we're showing that it does. High interest rates are putting thousands of people out of the market for homes. Why? Because Liberal policies of high debt, high inflation and red tape, supported by the NDP, don't work. It brings an economy to its knees. We're going to do everything that they didn't. We're going to continue to restore the economy—

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

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

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

Speaker, the people of this province have questions about what happened in Vegas between the Premier's former principal secretary, his former director of housing policy, his former minister, and greenbelt developer Shakir Rehmatullah. They all stated that the Vegas trip was in 2019; none of them clarified it may have been in 2020 until they were backed into a corner.

The minister from Mississauga East–Cooksville changed his story about only going to Vegas once since being elected; now we know that he has been there twice. I don't know how you forget that. I know that I would remember a good-luck ritual massage.

Does the Premier believe that one of his ministers and/or members of his staff lied to the Integrity Commissioner?

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary comment.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member would know the process of how the Integrity Commissioner does his work. Having been one of the only members found guilty of an infraction by the Integrity Commissioner, she would certainly know how that process works.

The person she is talking about is no longer a member of this caucus. That person will have to work with the Integrity Commissioner to ensure that all of the documentation that he requires is made available.

At the same time, we're going to continue to move forward to ensure that we build 1.5 million homes for people all across the province of Ontario—it's not just homes for people; it's homes for students; it's long-term-care homes. It's about getting people moving in the province of Ontario. It is why we are building subways. It's why we are building new roads. It's why we are opening up our economy. For the first time in years, Ontario is on a prosperous path. Do you know why? Because we've done everything opposite to what the Liberals and the NDP did for 15 years. People are coming back to the province, and now it's our responsibility to do everything for the next generation to have all the same advantages that we had—

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: The truth matters to Ontarians, and the Vegas story is just not adding up.

The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville paid over \$4,500 cash for the flights. He said he also paid for the hotels. The member estimates that the Premier's staff paid him back \$1,000 each and showed a deposit of \$2,000 on December 20, 2019. But money the member said was for repayment for the trip doesn't even cover the cost of the flights, and he can't recall the particulars. Contrary to the former minister's dates, the staff in question say they paid the minister back in 2020—but then in 2022. One of these staffers say that they actually paid the minister back \$2,000—the other, over \$1,000. The dates are wrong. The numbers don't match.

Is this how the Ford government does business?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, the Integrity Commissioner will work with the member to ascertain what is important on any investigation going forward. I assume the members would appreciate it that the process follows the way it is meant to.

Having said that, what we are going to continue to do, and what we have done since day one in this place, is start to untangle the mess that was created by the Liberals and the NDP—a mess that has led to a housing crisis in the province of Ontario. We're going to remove obstacles. The Minister of Long-Term Care talked about it just yesterday. Under the Liberal watch, 611 long-term-care beds were built across the province of Ontario—611, supported by the NDP. Under this minister's watch, there are shovels in the ground for 18,000 beds. In fact, there are more long-term-care beds being built in the member for Ottawa South's riding than there were for the previous 15 years that he was in that government. We'll continue to get the job done on behalf of all—

Interjections.

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

SKILLED TRADES

Mr. Aris Babikian: My question is for the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

Our province is currently experiencing a labour shortage in every sector of our economy. Across Ontario, jobs are going unfilled every day, costing our economy billions in lost productivity. One of the most critical areas where we are missing talent is in the skilled trades. With so many job vacancies needing to be filled, people need to be provided with the opportunity to launch into these well-paying and lifelong careers.

To help build a stronger Ontario, our government must do all that we can do to help more people get into the skilled trades.

Can the minister please explain how our government is supporting people in gaining the skills they need to address our province's overwhelming demand for skilled tradespeople?

Hon. David Piccini: I want to start by thanking the Premier for this important role and thanking all the many men and women in the skilled trades I've had the pleasure of speaking with over the last 48 hours. I'm really looking forward to working with you.

Speaker, if we're going to be honest with ourselves and we're going to build the hospitals we need, build the schools we need, build the highways, the roads and the bridges that this Premier, this government have committed to doing to support a stronger Ontario, we need the men and women who are going to build them. We need them—men and women like my grandfather, who came off the boats from Italy and found a very rewarding career in the trades. But for too many, that's out of reach. The opportunity for home ownership and everything he did to provide for my family is out of reach. But under this Premier's watch, it's changing.

I want to draw attention to an important fact: Since the moves this government has made to support the skilled trades, we've seen an increase in apprenticeship registrations in the last year of over 24%. Bottom line: It's working.

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

Mr. Aris Babikian: It is positive news that the apprenticeship registrations are up and that more people are entering careers in the skilled trades.

When speaking about getting more people into the skilled trades and that the labour shortage is hurting Ontario's economic potential, our government must focus on implementing solutions that will have a real impact on the future prosperity of our province. We need to remove barriers as well as provide opportunities and pathways to employment in the skilled trades for those who don't currently have jobs but who want to work.

Can the minister please elaborate on how our government is supporting Ontarians in securing rewarding careers in the skilled trades?

Hon. David Piccini: Speaker, as I said, we have a Herculean effort needed to ensure we have the infrastructure we need to support a growing Ontario, but if we're going to be honest with ourselves, we can't ignore half the workforce. That's why we need to take steps to ensure that women are represented in the skilled trades.

I'd like to acknowledge the work of the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity—the work that she has been doing to ensure that we have greater representation of women in the trades—and again, it is working. Under the leadership of this Premier, we have seen an increase in the number of female apprenticeship registrations, up by over 30% from last year. I hope, in the spirit of non-partisanship, that's something that everybody in this House can say is a good thing.

FIRST NATIONS CONSULTATION

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch. Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: This government has all the time in the world to collaborate with developers in Las Vegas,

but they won't show these chiefs the basic respect of meeting with them. Three times they have travelled here and the Premier has ignored them.

Last week, they formally invited the Premier to meet with them face to face. They will be waiting for him out front at 12:15 today. The table is set. Will the Premier meet with the Land Defence Alliance chiefs today? Yes or no?

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I've heard from the First Nations communities, and they have said there has never been a Premier who has been more accessible, returning phone calls, meeting with them. Never, ever have they had a Premier who reaches out to them, supports them in any way I can. I'm going to continue to support them. I return every single phone call and take every single meeting—ask Regional Chief Hare; he was the one who said that in front of numerous chiefs, and they all agreed. So, sorry to dismiss what you were saying.

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

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Those are a different set of chiefs, I think—what he's talking about.

The Premier has encouraged the mining industry to exploit First Nations lands against their will. He has even promised to drive the bulldozer himself.

They are still waiting—he refuses to meet with the five Land Defence Alliance chiefs whose lands and people are at risk.

1110

Speaker, the leaders are here now, today. Will the Premier commit to respecting their rights to their lands, to decide what happens on their land? If there is any other answer, if he is unwilling to meet with them, it just means that he does not care about First Nations.

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Northern Development and Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: Speaker, it couldn't be further from the truth. Under this Premier's leadership, we have settled more treaties, more flood claims and more land claims. We have struck an important balance about creating opportunities, addressing issues, to ensure, as the crown, as the government of Ontario, that we balance the interests of other communities who have moved ahead on legacy infrastructure projects, legacy resource projects, fundamentally transforming the economic, social and health landscape of those communities. That opportunity is extended to those leaders. I have a personal relationship with many of them. I've known them a long time. I meet with them in my constituency office. Chief Turtle is here today. I spoke with the chief of Neskantaga not long ago about some opportunities in his community. We're prepared to work with those communities, as we do with every First Nations community, to create opportunities for Indigenous youth—

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

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mrs. Daisy Wai: My question is for the Attorney General.

The people of Ontario deserve a justice system that is both accessible and efficient. For years, the people of Ontario relied on outdated procedures that were paper-based, inconvenient and confusing when dealing with our provincial courts of justice. Sadly, updates to technology in this sector were clearly not a priority for the previous Liberal government, and they failed to help Ontarians who need timely access in addressing their legal matters. The people of Ontario need solutions that will replace the methods that were slow, outdated and ineffective.

Can the Attorney General please explain how our government is transforming and modernizing access to justice services?

Hon. Doug Downey: I want to thank my friend from Richmond Hill for the question.

I am proud to tell everybody here and tell the world about the bold new step, the new era that we're entering, and our government's plan to build an accessible and very responsive justice system. We're building on the great work our government has done, in collaboration with the courts, to transform how people across Ontario access justice. It's no secret to anybody—after years of being ignored by the previous governments, simply put, we needed to drag this system into the 21st century.

I'm proud to announce that we awarded a \$166-million contract to deliver the most significant digital justice system project in the country, if not North America. It's called the Courts Digital Transformation. It will completely change how people resolve legal matters in the Superior Court and Ontario Court, through the implementation of a faster, modern and more efficient new digital justice system. I'll explain more in the supplementary.

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

Mrs. Daisy Wai: Thank you to our Attorney General. My constituents in Richmond Hill will be very happy. Digital access and implementation of other technologies will go a long way to improve how people interact with Ontario's justice system.

As a government, we must ensure that our province's justice system is effective and supports streamlined court operations. It is equally important that current technology is available in courtrooms across our province, in order to overcome long-standing barriers in the justice system. Modernization of these vital services through critical investments is essential to speed up access to services.

Can the Attorney General elaborate on how technological advancements will improve Ontario's justice services?

Hon. Doug Downey: I want to thank my colleagues in our government, because they are committed to modernizing and digitizing government services so that they're more available to Ontarians in every part of

Ontario. The Premier's commitment to this modernization is historic.

Through this contract, Thomson Reuters will deliver a new platform that will allow you to:

- file documents quickly and easily online;
- digitally access court case information online—that's good for transparency;
- pay fees online;
- connect virtually to hearings;
- manage court appearances; and
- receive decisions electronically.

We're going to make sure that the antiquated system we've put up with for decades, the paper-based system, is a thing of the past. It couldn't be done without our partners in justice—the courts, the users and, of course, the legal associations—and it's in addition to our justice accelerated strategy, in 2021. In 2022, we put in tens of millions of dollars to transform this system.

We're not just making change. We're changing how change is made.

RESPONSABILITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. La population de l'Ontario—en particulier, du nord de l'Ontario—voit que le gouvernement ignore nos besoins, et ce, en faveur de leurs amis riches. Le gouvernement a dit qu'il était pour faire le ménage. C'est ce qu'il nous a répété pendant la campagne électorale l'an dernier. Mais maintenant, il est impliqué dans un scandale incluant la violation des règles d'éthique. Trois ministres ont démissionné en déshonneur ou se sont faufilés vers la sortie. Le personnel entourant les conservateurs s'en va sous un nuage de soupçons, et ils se cherchent tous des avocats.

Le premier ministre a déclaré que la responsabilité lui incombait. Alors, monsieur le Président, le premier ministre va-t-il enfin nous dire la vérité et expliquer son implication personnelle dans le scandale de la ceinture de verdure?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Speaker, as you know, as I said earlier, the Integrity Commissioner will be reviewing that.

The Integrity Commissioner also did say this: "In fact, I have found that the Premier's office staff were not providing such direction." He went on further to say, "I accept the purpose of the decision to remove lands from the greenbelt was to address the housing crisis."

This member in the north should know just how important it is that we address the housing crisis. She, of course, was part of a coalition with the Liberals that said that the north was just a wasteland, that nobody should make investments in the north. They stood by the Liberals when they made that claim. This member from the north stood by the Liberals when they made that claim.

Here's what we're doing: We're restoring the Northlander, because that's what is important to people in the north. We're opening up the economy of the north.

I visited Kenora to ground-break on a new long-term-care home in a housing project there. I got delayed because they were blasting, because they were making new roads in Kenora.

That is what we are doing when it comes to the north—we're getting the job done for all Ontarians, including your constituents.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question? The member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Il y a encore tellement de questions auxquelles ce premier ministre et ce gouvernement refusent de répondre entourant le scandale de 2,8 milliards—pas des millions, des milliards—de dollars.

Encore, au premier ministre: comment ces spéculateurs ont-ils su donner à votre bureau de l'information sur les terrains à retirer de la ceinture de verdure avant même que cette possibilité soit rendue publique? Qui leur a donné la puce à l'oreille?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Mr. Speaker, again, I've addressed this multiple times in the House. The Integrity Commissioner has addressed that multiple times within his report. I refer the member to page 135, page 140, page 141, and page 142. Perhaps he can refresh himself. At the same time, he might want to take a look at the budgets we've introduced that have seen prosperity return to many, many parts of the north.

We're talking about bringing long-term-care homes to the north. We're talking about building homes in northern Ontario. We're talking about bringing jobs and prosperity back to northern Ontario.

In fact, when we changed the Mining Act to help benefit the people of northern Ontario, the member for Sudbury, whose riding is so dependent on mining jobs, voted against it. But we shouldn't be surprised, because they supported the Liberals when they called the north a wasteland; they supported the Liberals, who brought in carbon taxes, which directly impact the people of the north.

To the people of the north, I say very directly: We'll get the job done for you. The NDP and Liberals have always failed you; we will not.

1120

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: My question is to the new Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. Congratulations. I look forward to working together with you.

The greenbelt scandal has left an \$8.3-billion stain on this government, resulting in the resignation of ministers and senior staff. And while the decision has been reversed, I seriously worry about the environment under this government's leadership, and so do Ontarians. Notably, the previous Minister of the Environment was absent from the

discourse of the greenbelt sale, at least publicly, when the destruction of the greenbelt would directly affect Ontario's environment.

Why wasn't the ministry an active participant in the Greenbelt Task Force, and how will this minister be involved in the development of upcoming legislation that will return the greenbelt lands to their protected status?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: Again, it is worth noting that the changes we had anticipated making to the greenbelt that are no longer happening are not costing taxpayers a cent—unlike the Liberals, who cost the taxpayers billions of dollars. And what did the Liberals accomplish with the billions of dollars that they cost? Nothing. Their big accomplishment was that 300,000 jobs fled the province of Ontario. They called the north a wasteland. They said that Ontario should transition to a service economy and forget manufacturing. That is the legacy of the Liberal Party.

It was a Progressive Conservative government that actually brought in the Ministry of the Environment.

It was a Progressive Conservative government that protected the Oak Ridges moraine.

We'll take no lessons from a party that opened up the greenbelt 17 different times. In fact, what are we doing? We're protecting the greenbelt. We're codifying it in legislation. We're adding 9,400 acres to it—the largest increase in lands ever. And we'll—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. Stop the clock. The House will come to order so we can resume question period.

Start the clock. I recognize the member for her supplementary question.

Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon: Wake up. We're in a climate emergency, and you need to act. The greenbelt scandal should have alerted you that Ontarians value our environment and are extremely concerned about the climate emergency. As we face this climate crisis, we need strong and proactive environmental leadership.

At the end of August, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks quietly released a report called the Provincial Climate Change Impact Assessment; the previous minister had no press conferences about it, and this government has yet to say a word. Maybe it's because the findings are so damning. Ontario is not doing enough on infrastructure or for Ontarians to protect us from the future; your Financial Accountability Officer even told you that.

Does the new minister believe that there's a climate crisis, and how will she utilize the recommendations from the climate change impact assessment report to influence—

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

To respond, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, anything coming from the Liberals, supported by the NDP—I find it really rich. And

I really like Triple M. We work together at Queen's Park. You've been sucked in, Triple M; I'm sorry for that.

Let's talk about the infrastructure. Let's talk about the \$184 billion that we're investing and the \$50 billion in the hospitals, building 50 sites. Let's talk about the billions of dollars we're spending on transportation, building the largest transportation system in North America, building \$30 billion of subways. We're doubling the size of the TTC to get people out of their cars and into the subways. Let's talk about the billions of dollars being invested by Algoma and Dofasco that's taking two million cars off the road. Let's talk about the 600 schools that you closed and the hundreds of new schools that we're building. That's what we're doing on infrastructure.

Interjections.

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

The House will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I've got all morning.

I am going to remind members to refer to each other by their ministerial title or the riding the member represents.

Start the clock. The next question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Traffic congestion and gridlock on highways lead to delays and frustration. For people who live, work or travel through the western part of the GTA, Highway 413 will make a significant difference and have a huge impact on the quality of their lives. The hard-working people across Peel region know that Highway 413 will make travel more convenient and will help to prepare for the massive population growth expected in the next 30 years. It is clear that this project is essential not only for the people living in Peel region, but it is also necessary for the overall prosperity of Ontario.

Can the minister please explain how our government's investment in critical highway infrastructure projects, like the 413, will benefit the people of Ontario?

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: The people of this province sent a very clear message: Build Highway 413.

Mr. Speaker, just like my colleagues, I hear the same thing every single day: Gridlock in the GTA is taking away from things that matter most, like spending time with your family. That's why, in Peel region, one of the fastest-growing regions, with an expectation of over a million more people, it's even more important for us to build these critical highway infrastructures across the province.

Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government, supported by the official opposition, refused to support the building of this highway. They expect the status quo.

We're going to continue to invest \$27 billion in expanding highway infrastructure across this province.

The opposition and the Liberals are completely out of touch with the challenges that Ontarians are facing. That's why we're going to build—

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

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Ontario needs infrastructure to help move people and goods or Peel region will quickly become overwhelmed. Our government must provide transit relief that will make travel more convenient and that will increase opportunities for jobs and economic growth.

The reality is that we need critical infrastructure such as Highway 413 to continue attracting investments here in Ontario. The people of Peel region are tired of the voices of “no” and the people who continually oppose this project. They expect our government to deliver on building Highway 413 in order to keep up with the GTA's population growth and business needs.

Can the minister please elaborate on how Highway 413 will contribute to supporting our province's economy and growth?

1130

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: We know that building Highway 413 is the right thing to do for families, for the economy and for our future.

Under the leadership of this Premier, we've attracted over \$25 billion in new investments into this province.

Gridlock has cost this province over \$11 billion per year, and it will only get worse if we don't build these critical highways.

Highway 413 will keep the economy moving. During the construction of Highway 413, we will support an estimated 3,500 jobs; we'll add approximately \$350 million to the GDP each year. Once construction is complete, we will reduce gridlock and keep our goods moving.

Highway 413 will also have a dedicated transitway to connect people to our major employment centres and attract more businesses to the area.

It is very critical that we build Highway 413. The independent Liberals—

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, your own experts have said very clearly time and time again that we don't need to open up more land to meet our housing targets. While this government has backed down on opening the greenbelt, this government continues to force municipalities to expand their boundaries and pave over 35,000 hectares of farmland, even when municipalities from Hamilton to Waterloo are telling you they can build the homes they need with the land they've already got.

Minister, can this government reverse course and stop paving over farmland?

Hon. Paul Calandra: We saw this yesterday—it's the next shoe for the opposition. It's never about building

homes. You can never get a question—“How can we help you build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario?” You'll never get that from them.

No, we're not going to continue to put obstacles in the way of building homes. Let me be very clear: As the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, I'm going to remove obstacles. Do you know why? Because it is our job to ensure that the next generation has all of the same advantages that we have.

We have one job as parliamentarians: to leave the province in better shape than we found it in. Under the Liberal and NDP coalition, what did you do? You brought the province to its knees.

So, no, I will not put new obstacles in the way of building homes.

And to our partners who have said clearly that you have enough land to build in your areas—we're going to make sure that you come on board and that we build those homes in those areas.

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

The supplementary question.

Ms. Jessica Bell: This government has had five years to fix the housing crisis, and it has never been more expensive to rent or buy a home. That is your legacy.

What we're also seeing now is that housing starts in Ontario are starting to go down; they went down by 20,000 in July, and they went down another 13,600 in August.

To build the homes we need for Ontarians, we have been calling on this government time and time and time again to do more to increase density in towns and cities so we can build homes in neighbourhoods people want to live in. What is your plan to do that?

Hon. Paul Calandra: The member can rest assured that we are going to ensure that every community across the province of Ontario will be building homes within their urban boundaries—they can rest assured.

We have been talking about removing taxes from building purpose-built rentals. We talked about this. Finally, the federal Liberals agree with us—they recognized—that when you put a tax, it drives the economy down. They have finally agreed with us, and they've agreed to remove the tax on purpose-built rentals—something that we put in the budget. Colleagues, you'll remember, we put this in the budget. The finance minister put this in the budget. We're seeing purpose-built rentals at the highest level in over 15 years. We put it in the budget. The member talks about it. How did she vote? She voted against it. The member talks about transit and building in communities, but when we talk about densifying around community infrastructure like GO trains and subway stations—how did she and her party vote? They voted against it.

Don't worry. We'll get the job done for your community as well.

RURAL AND NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Minister of Health.

Last week, Manitoulin Health Centre announced that they will have to close one of their emergency departments on days throughout October due to a shortage of available doctors. This will mean that people who live in central and western Manitoulin will have to travel at least an extra 40 kilometres when they are experiencing a medical emergency.

Before the summer break, I warned the minister about the shortage of primary care physicians on Manitoulin, and now we are seeing the consequences of understaffing play out. This is unacceptable. This government cannot continue to allow rural emergency rooms to go short-staffed.

Can the minister commit that she will not allow ER closures on Manitoulin so that it doesn't become a common occurrence?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about some of the things that we've been able to do to, in fact, keep emergency rooms open, because we know the temporary closures are very disruptive to local communities. Of course, the member opposite would know that there has not been a single closure of an emergency room north of the French River, which covers the entire northern part of the province. We've worked incredibly hard to make sure that those temporary coverages, where committed physicians are prepared to go into communities that are not their host communities, working those hours to make sure that we have that covered—as I said, there has not been a single emergency department closure. That is a result of the coverage that we've been able to do with physicians. We'll continue to do that work.

I'm guessing the member opposite is specifically referencing Mindemoya. We'll make sure that we work with all of those partners to ensure those coverages.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, to the Minister of Health: Emergency room closures due to short-staffing are becoming common across Ontario in rural and northern communities. Despite raising the communities' concerns with the minister time after time, we are still seeing ER closures happen across Algoma-Manitoulin. Rural hospitals like Manitoulin Health Centre, Lady Dunn in Wawa, the North Shore Health Network, St. Joseph's in Elliot Lake, and hospitals in Manitouwadge and Hornepayne work tirelessly to limit closures.

However, this government has not shown any urgency in addressing the physician shortage facing northern Ontario. We know that ignoring the problem is only making it worse. Overburdened doctors in the north are burning out and being forced to close their practices.

While I appreciate that the minister is extending locum coverage in the Manitoulin area, the fact is that officials are still saying it is not enough to avoid ER closures.

What is the minister going to do to ensure that all northerners have reliable access to physicians in their communities?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I will agree on one point, and that is, the status quo is not acceptable. We were left with a

system that, frankly, wasn't training enough physicians. We had a Liberal government of the day who actually shuttered and reduced the number of residency positions available for new physicians to train in the province of Ontario.

In fact, it is our government, under the Premier, which has ensured that if you are a physician in any part of Canada and you want to live and practise in the province of Ontario—come on down. We have made it easier for people to do that.

It was, of course, a Progressive Conservative government that opened a northern medical school.

And it was our government that actually expanded those positions so that we have more physicians being trained in the province of Ontario.

We have more access for individuals who want to practise in the province of Ontario. We will continue to do that work because we see a population that is expanding, aging and wanting health care and housing.

SENIORS

Mr. Brian Saunderson: My question is for the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. My riding of Simcoe-Grey recently had the pleasure of hosting the minister for the first annual Grand Parade fundraiser hosted by Contact Community Services in Alliston. I want to commend the work of Contact Community Services—for their leadership in organizing this event and for the important work they do supporting seniors in our riding. For over 40 years, Contact has provided support to the residents of Simcoe-Grey through seniors programs and a range of other free services for those in need. I am very happy to share that Contact Community Services exceeded its fundraising goal of over \$20,000 and that they had the most teams registered of any of the walks across Canada.

1140

Can the minister please explain how events such as the Grand Parade fundraiser in Alliston are important to the well-being of our seniors across this province?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you to the excellent MPP from Simcoe-Grey for the question. He is doing a marvellous job advocating for seniors in his riding. He invited me to kick off the Grand Parade and meet the friendliest people in Alliston, Ontario. Events like this are important because they create ways for seniors and their families to get active, be together and support each other.

I'd like to give a big shout-out to Contact Community Services for this marvellous event. I encourage all members to follow their lead and bring seniors in their community together.

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

Mr. Brian Saunderson: Thank you to the minister for that response.

Our senior population not only provides us with wisdom and experience, but they are critical to the continued growth of our communities. Events such as the Grand Parade are important in bringing seniors together for social

interaction, but we also know that there need to be ongoing opportunities for seniors to be engaged in their communities. Our government must continue to work for the many Ontario seniors who built this province, who lent their expertise, so that they can remain active, healthy and live comfortably. Seniors in Ontario deserve our best and our continued support on every level.

Can the minister please explain how our government is supporting our senior population in this province?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Speaker, social isolation is enemy number one for seniors. This Premier understands that the best thing we can do is get seniors active and connected. That is why our government invested \$6 million this year to support the delivery of over 280 local projects for seniors, from educational classes to Zumba and pickleball.

In fact, Contact Community Services received \$25,000 to help isolated seniors live healthy, get engaged and access resources in the community. This is how we are supporting seniors in Simcoe–Grey and across this province to get together, get the supports they need and be in their community.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: My question is to the Premier.

The property at 502 Winston Road in Grimsby was removed from the greenbelt. New Horizon Development Group purchased this property after you became Premier. Since then, the co-founders and their families made substantial donations to the PC Party.

Given public concerns in Niagara, what actions have you taken to investigate potential links between these donations and the greenbelt decision?

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

Hon. Paul Calandra: In fact, it was the Integrity Commissioner who took a look at that. I refer the member to page 142: “I cannot find that political donations were the basis for the decision to remove lands from the greenbelt. Accordingly, I find there was an objective basis for the decision”—the objective basis for the decision was, namely, a housing crisis. The Integrity Commissioner, actually, on page 140, referenced the fact that all political parties received donations from the exact same people.

The reality is, what we are trying to do is build more homes for the people of the province of Ontario, including in that member’s own community. That member is a member who voted against, of course, long-term care. She voted against new hospitals in her community.

Thankfully, there is a good Progressive Conservative member in that area who has brought more investment into Niagara, I think, than all of the other members combined from Niagara since, probably, Confederation. Thank you to the member. Thank you to Mr. Oosterhoff for the great work that he has done in bringing investment and jobs to his community.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Again, I’ll ask members to refer to their colleagues by their riding name or ministerial title.

The supplementary question.

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens: Don’t you find the timeline is concerning? New Horizon’s purchase of 502 Winston Road, followed by significant donations from the co-owner’s family to the PC Party—note: many being their first-ever provincial contributions. Before 2022? No donations. And afterwards, we see max donations—over \$10,000.

What have you done to investigate the surge in the financial support and the degree of favoritism in the greenbelt sell-off?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Of course, that is something the Integrity Commissioner will look into—but you talk about favoritism, right? This is a member who voted against the expansion of roads in her community.

We were just in Niagara Falls last week, and I can’t tell you how many people came to us and said, “Finally we have a government that cares about our region. Finally, there are members of provincial Parliament who care about our region.”

We have new hospitals going in. We have the Skyway being expanded. She, of course, voted against that. We have long-term care.

The best part of it is, colleagues, that when we break ground on long-term care—guess who shows up? The NDP. They show up, they want to take credit for it, but then they don’t tell their constituents and colleagues, “Well, we voted against it. We’re just here to take credit for it.”

Come on. You know full well what the job of a member of provincial Parliament is—it’s to bring investment to your community, and there’s only one member in that area who’s doing it; it’s the member for Niagara West.

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

Once again, I’ll remind members to please make their comments through the Chair.

Start the clock. The next question.

TOURISM

Ms. Natalie Pierre: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Today, delegations from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario are holding meetings with members and with our government to update us on their work to provide new and innovative tourism experiences to locals and visitors alike. It’s vital that we value and appreciate their insight as we all work together to understand and address the challenges facing businesses in the tourism sector.

Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to support Ontario’s tourism industry?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Thanks for the question—and I’d also like to thank her for all the work she has done in a very short period of time and the impact she has made, not only in her community, but across Ontario. It’s great work, and thank you for that.

Mr. Speaker, tourism touches us all in many ways, and today it has touched us a lot because we've had the great pleasure of not only having a reception last night with the leadership group and people around and colleagues showing up—but today in meetings.

Tourism, I've found, has become very special to me in many ways. When I've had conversations and understand what tourism does on driving economic power into our province—how they do it and how they went through a very tough time. I've met with a lot of them, and I'm going to meet with more of them because they're inspiring. They're inspiring because when you sit down, they don't say, "Here, I need this, help"; they say, "We have a problem. Here's our solution. Will you work with us to get to that solution?"—and you bet we will, Speaker.

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

Ms. Natalie Pierre: Thank you to the minister for his response. It's encouraging to hear the minister's confidence in our province's tourism industry.

Today's meetings with members of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario are timely since tomorrow is World Tourism Day. That being said, it's also a reminder that while tourism is celebrated and recognized internationally, it's also a highly competitive industry.

Can the minister please explain how our government is partnering with the tourism industry to unlock its true economic potential and ensure Ontario remains a world-class tourism destination?

Hon. Neil Lumsden: Mr. Speaker, that's another great question. I think the right word there is "partnering"—it's not so much working, but it's partnering with people; it's understanding their dilemma and their situation. As I said in the earlier answer, it's so refreshing to sit down with people and have them have solutions to their own problems and look for a partner to work with. We are that partner.

When I look across the industry—and really, like most things, it comes down to people, the types of people you're dealing with, and whom we've been dealing with in the tourism industry have enlightened, have expanded and have been aggressive, to go through a tough time and come out the other side and find ways to be better.

A great example—and I won't necessarily mention—yes, I will: Blue Mountain ski resort. Blue Mountain has taken a turn and they do things other than just with snow. They take advantage of the landscape and the natural beauty. They do so many things to draw people to their area—and that's not just about Blue Mountain; that's about the whole region. There are regions across this province that have so much to offer, like Blue Mountain, and the people who are in this—

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

VISITORS

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I'd like to introduce the class from Rehoboth school in the great village of Norwich who are here this morning. I would have done it earlier, but they were caught in the traffic and they couldn't get here. But they are here now, and we would like to say welcome to Queen's Park.

RECTIFICATION AU PROCÈS-VERBAL

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Mushkegowuk—James Bay apparently has a point of order.

M. Guy Bourgouin: Je voudrais corriger le record : j'ai mentionné 2,8 milliards de dollars quand je voulais mentionner 8,3 milliards de dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. That's a legitimate point of order.

LEGISLATIVE PAGE

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

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that, when the page from Carleton was introduced, apparently his last name was mispronounced. It was pronounced "Worsley" and not "Wereley." I received a call to my office asking if this could be corrected on the record.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I apologize for mispronouncing the page's surname. Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

Are there any more points of order before we recess?

This House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I invite members to introduce their guests, if they have any, I'm going to remind them that the standing orders allow five minutes for the introduction of visitors. Ideally, we would ask that the introductions are as brief as possible and that there be no political commentary associated with the introductions.

Introduction of visitors? I hope I didn't scare anyone off.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Mr. Matthew Rae: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill Pr23, An Act to revive Ice Hockey Resources Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1000067464 ONTARIO INC.
ACT, 2023

Ms. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr33, An Act to revive 1000067464 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TEST YOUR SMOKE ALARM DAY

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: It is my privilege to rise in the House today in recognition of the inaugural Test Your Smoke Alarm Day, taking place on September 28.

Interjections.

Hon. Michael S. Kerzner: Thank you.

I want to thank Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal for launching and tirelessly promoting this important day of action and awareness. And I want to thank my colleague the member from Oxford, whose private member's bill a long time ago paved the way for us and our action today.

Mr. Speaker, fire statistics show that fatal fires have increased year over year for the past four years. Last year there were 133 fire fatalities in the province. This is the highest number of fire-related deaths in the province in two decades. Statistically, the Office of the Fire Marshal's investigators found that in the majority of fatal fires, there were no working smoke alarms.

This troubling trend continues. This summer, a mother and her child from Brampton and a 54-year-old in Waterloo died in residential fires with no working smoke alarms. There has also been a high number of fatal fires in First Nations communities across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, these preventable deaths prompted Ontario's Office of the Fire Marshal to spearhead the first-ever Test Your Smoke Alarm Day. This day of action aims to raise awareness about the critical importance of having working smoke alarms in our homes and the role they play in keeping our families safe.

Smoke alarms are a first line of defence. They provide early warning that can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a fire emergency. However, smoke alarms are only effective when they are in good working condition, and that's why Test Your Smoke Alarm Day is so crucial.

This year's theme is "Saved by the Beep," emphasizing the vital role that properly functioning smoke alarms play in safeguarding our homes and loved ones. "Saved by the Beep" reminds us that the simple act of testing our smoke alarms can be a lifesaver. These small devices are often taken for granted, and yet they have the power to provide early warning and save lives in the event of a fire.

Mr. Speaker, on September 28, I encourage all residents of Ontario to just take a few minutes and test your smoke alarms to ensure they are functioning properly. Here are some steps to follow on Test Your Smoke Alarm Day:

(1) Press and hold the test button on your smoke alarm to ensure it makes a loud and audible sound. The sound will be three loud beeps.

(2) Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm if they are more than a year old. I've led by my own example of changing all my batteries at our home, which is the right thing to do.

(3) Vacuum or gently dust your alarms to remove any debris that may interfere with their operations.

(4) Ensure you have smoke alarms installed outside all sleeping areas and on every storey of your home. For added protection, we encourage everyone to install a working alarm in every bedroom.

(5) Lastly, replace all smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old.

To learn about the Saved by the Beep campaign and find resources on smoke alarm maintenance, safety, tips and educational materials, I encourage Ontarians to visit the dedicated website, savedbythebeep.ca. There's a wealth of valuable information to help people ensure the safety of their home and family.

By participating in this initiative, we are not only prioritizing the safety of our own families, but we are also contributing to the overall safety of our communities. A well-prepared and vigilant community is a safer and more resilient one.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let's make Test Your Smoke Alarm Day an annual tradition in our province. Together, we can help prevent tragic fire-related incidents and protect the well-being of all Ontarians.

Thank you for your commitment to safety. Let's work together to save lives by making sure that every home in Ontario is equipped with a properly functioning smoke alarm.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Responses?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in the House—today, actually, is my first chance speaking since we came back from break—and to give a few comments on the first annual Test Your Smoke Alarm Day.

There are some sobering statistics that we don't often think about. In 2022 in the province of Ontario, 133 people died as a result of residential fires. That's an incredible number. It's the highest in two decades. There are also statistics to show that a working smoke alarm, between 2015 and 2021—I'm going to reword this, because this is a very serious issue. Between 2015 and 2021, homes without working smoke alarms accounted for nearly three out of four deaths, 74%.

Another statistic, and this one is a US statistic, but I think it would pertain to Canada as well: According to the US National Fire Protection Association, a working smoke alarm in your home cuts your risk of dying in a fire by 55%.

1510

It's very easy to do. There are people who forget, but it's easy to do. Anyone who knows me knows I'm not

much of a cook, and the few times I've tried to cook something, often the smoke alarm goes off. You know what? I have been guilty of taking it down. It's easy to do because you always think that it will never happen to you.

I commend the fire marshal's office for giving us the chance to remind people once again—it's so easy to do—to check it and make sure it works.

I don't think we can talk about the risk of fire without talking about firefighters, both volunteer and professional, who actually run towards the fire while, hopefully, we are running away. For those people who take the ultimate risk, the least we could do is to remind people to make sure your fire alarms, your smoke alarms are working.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention the member from Oxford and his long journey to get the Hawkins Gignac Act passed, which makes carbon monoxide testers also a requirement in houses in Ontario. The member from Oxford is on the opposing party, but he happens to be my uncle, so I'm kind of obligated to mention it. It is an example of a really good initiative that took far too long to get through this House, but it did finally get through. It happened. He was so adamant because he had a tragedy happen in his riding. We've all had tragedies happen, and it's one of the things that drives us to prevent further tragedies from happening.

There's one other issue I would like to mention regarding emergency services, particularly in northern Ontario: There are parts of Ontario—parts of populated Ontario—that still do not have 911. They don't have it. I am told that people are working on it and we're going to get it, but as we speak, there are people in this province, especially those moving to my part of the world, who think they have 911. If they hear their fire alarm and they call 911, they will not be directed anywhere. That's something else we need to change as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTING

Hon. Andrea Khanjin: I move that when the House adjourns on Thursday, November 2, it stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2023.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Ms. Khanjin has moved that when the House adjourns on Thursday, November 2, it stands adjourned until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mr. Trevor Jones: I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Leardi replaces Mr. McGregor, Mr.

Kanapathi replaces Ms. Gallagher Murphy and Mr. Oosterhoff is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Mr. McCarthy is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Cuzzetto is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Mr. Rae is removed;

On the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy, Ms. Kusendova-Bashta replaces Ms. Smith, Thornhill; Mr. Rae replaces Mr. Holland; Mr. Coe replaces Mr. Thanigasalam and Mr. McGregor is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on the Interior, Ms. Gallagher Murphy replaces Mr. Flack, Mr. McGregor replaces Ms. Dixon and Mr. Leardi is removed; and

Finally, on the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, Mr. Holland replaces Mr. Coe, Mr. McGregor replaces Mr. Sabawy and Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, is removed.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Mr. Jones has moved that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, Mr. Leardi replaces Mr. McGregor, Mr. Kanapathi replaces Ms. Gallagher Murphy and Mr. Oosterhoff is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Mr. McCarthy is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Cuzzetto is removed; and

On the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Mr. Jones, Chatham-Kent-Leamington, is removed; and

On the Standing Committee—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to thank Madame Monique Roberge from Chelmsford in my riding for this petition.

“Whereas people in the north are not getting the same access to health care because of the high cost of travel and accommodations;

“Whereas by refusing to raise the Northern Health Travel Grant (NHTG) rates, the Ford government is putting a massive burden on northern Ontarians who are sick;

“Whereas gas prices cost more in northern Ontario;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To establish a committee with a mandate to fix and improve the” Northern Health Travel Grant;

“This Northern Health Travel Grant advisory committee would bring together health care providers in the north, as well as recipients of the Northern Health Travel Grant to make recommendations to the Minister of Health that would improve access to health care in northern Ontario through adequate reimbursement of travel costs.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page Sophia Rose to bring it to the Clerk.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Adil Shamji: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1520

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

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

“Whereas there is currently legislation before the House: Bill 54, WSIB Coverage for Workers in Residential Care Facilities and Group Homes Act, 2022;

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

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

I agree with this petition, affix my signature in the corner and hand it to page Devyansh.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My petition is to “Stand Up for Early Years and Child Care Workers.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas child care centres across the province are closing rooms and limiting enrolment because they cannot retain staff in their programs; and

“Whereas child care experts and advocates estimate Ontario may need as many as 65,000 new child care workers to meet the expected demand for \$10-a-day child care; and

“Whereas without a strategy to recruit and retain child care workers through setting a salary scale, increasing wages, and implementing decent work standards, parents will lose access to affordable child care; and

“Whereas early years and child care workers have long been overlooked in child care policy-making discussions; and

“Whereas the vitally important work of early years and child care workers has been historically undervalued, with low pay, poor working conditions, and high turnover;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately establish an Early Years and Child Care Worker Advisory Commission to develop recommendations on how to support the early years and child care workforce and address staffing shortages, including through a salary scale, increased compensation and improved working conditions.”

I fully support this petition and give it to page River to deliver to the table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition titled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas the recent small increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens” far “below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation;

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this and thank Dr. Sally Palmer for continuing to gather these petitions and send them in to me. I give them to page Lucia to bring to the Clerk.

AMYLOIDOSIS

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to thank Jennifer Enright from my riding and members of the Canadian Amyloidosis Support Network for this petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas amyloidosis is an incurable disease that affects Ontario residents and their loved ones;

"Whereas amyloidosis, including hereditary and non-hereditary forms of the disease, is caused by abnormal proteins, known as amyloids, that build up in the tissues and/or organs of the body and can cause organ failure and can be fatal;

"Whereas recognition of this disease is critical in order to ensure that more Ontarians are diagnosed earlier. Earlier diagnoses can ensure patients receive treatments in a timely manner and can contribute to a more positive outcome, better quality of life and longer quality of life. In addition, these benefits can reduce the burden on society in general;

"Whereas both national and local support groups for patients are working to ensure that more treatment options are available to patients in this province, that more publicly funded drugs are available to fight this disease in Ontario, and that adequate care is accessible to all Ontarians no matter where they live;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

"To recognize March 2024 as Amyloidosis Awareness Month to raise awareness of this disease among our fellow Ontarians and to improve outcomes for both patients and their families and for newly diagnosed and as-yet-undiagnosed patients."

I fully support this. This is a disease that my father suffered from before he passed so, believe me, I think this is a very worthy and important petition.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm pleased to read this petition that was handed to me this morning by members of CAPE and the Citizens' Climate Lobby.

"Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"For Meaningful Climate Action Stop Gas Plant Expansion.

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

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

Therefore "we, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop fossil gas and invest rapidly in lower-cost, proven renewable energy and conservation technologies."

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will sign it and ask page Sophia to bring it to the table.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank Cathy Orlando, who's joining us here in the gallery from Citizens' Climate Lobby, for helping collect these petitions.

"Pause the Expansion of the Methane-Fired Electricity Generation.

"Whereas the Earth just passed through the hottest three months on record;

"Whereas Canada is experiencing the most severe wildfire season on record;

"Whereas the Ontario government is preparing investments for electricity supply for the long term;

"Whereas in light of recent reports by the RBC Climate Action Institute, Dunsky Energy and Climate Advisors and the Sustainability Solutions Group;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to pause the expansion of methane-fired electricity generation and evaluate the role of renewable energy in the storage, conservation, distributed energy resources and municipal net-zero plans in meeting Ontario's electricity needs."

I support this petition. I've learned from Cathy's daughter, Sophia Mathur, to listen to the experts. I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Huzaifa for the table.

LONG COVID

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is entitled "Support Ontarians Living With Long COVID." I just want to thank Lesley Stoyan, who is an amazing local community organizer in St. Paul's and is also a certified therapist and movement wellness coach. She does many things, but a lot of it has been impacted by long COVID.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the impacts of long COVID are extensive and devastating, which include migraines, dizziness, vertigo, brain fog, loss of smell or taste, and mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety;

"Whereas socio-economic analyses on long COVID project significant negative impacts on the economy through its effects on the labour market, gross domestic product, as well as added costs in health care and social supports;

"Whereas 1.4 million Canadians or approximately 500,000 Ontarians are suffering the devastating health impacts of long COVID;

"Whereas adequate treatment options for those suffering from long COVID are mostly limited to private clinics and can cost as much as \$5,000 a month in order for them to continue in their day-to-day lives through gainful employment, parenting, and overall life enjoyment;

“Whereas the Ontario government has failed to properly address and support the escalating crisis of long COVID and how it is devastating the lives of an increasing number of Ontarians;

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

“To immediately allocate funding to support fair, equitable, accessible, and appropriate treatment for the complicated symptoms of long COVID and implement a cohesive and comprehensive funded support system for those suffering from the disease.”

I couldn’t agree more. Again, thank you to Lesley Stoyan and all of those in St. Paul’s who have signed this. Thank you. I’m going to sign it and pass it over to Kian.

1530

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: This petition is called “Support Bill 21, the Till Death Do Us Part Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are 38,000 people on the wait-list for long-term care; and

“Whereas the median wait time for a long-term-care bed has risen from 99 days in 2011-12 to 171 days in 2020-21; and

“Whereas according to Home Care Ontario, the cost of a hospital bed is \$842, while the cost of a long-term-care bed is \$175; and

“Whereas couples should have the right to live together as they age;

“Whereas Ontario seniors have worked hard to build this province and deserve dignity in care;

“Whereas Bill 21 amends the Residents’ Bill of Rights in the Fixing Long-Term Care Act to provide the resident with the right to be together upon admission and to continue to live with their spouse or their partner;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Long-Term Care to call Bill 21 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy to find a compassionate solution to provide seniors with the right to live together as they age.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature to my petition, and let’s get this done.

LAND USE PLANNING

MPP Jill Andrew: This is titled “Stop the 413 GTA West Highway.

Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is pushing ahead with plans to build Highway 413, a redundant and wasteful 400-series highway through the greenbelt that would cost taxpayers an estimated \$10 billion or more; and

“Whereas according to a TorStar/National Observer investigation entitled ‘Friends with Benefits?’ powerful developers and land speculators with political and donor ties to the Premier and the” Conservative “Party of Ontario own thousands of acres along the proposed highway

corridor and would profit from its construction, suggesting that this \$10-billion taxpayer-funded highway is about serving the private interests of the Premier’s friends and donors, not the public interest; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s expert panel concluded in 2017 that Highway 413 would be a waste of taxpayer money that would only save drivers 30 to 60 seconds on their commutes; and

“Whereas that expert panel identified less costly and less destructive alternatives to new highway construction, such as making better use of the underused Highway 407, just 15 kilometres away; and

“Whereas Highway 413 would pave over 400 acres of greenbelt and 2,000 acres of farmland, destroy the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and pollute rivers and streams; and

“Whereas building more highways encourages more vehicle use and increases traffic and congestion; and

“Whereas the highway would cause significant harm to historic Indigenous sites;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop” its Conservative “plans for building Highway 413.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’ve affixed my signature and am handing it over to Devyansh.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for petitions this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WORKING FOR WORKERS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT À OEUVRER POUR LES TRAVAILLEURS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 25, 2023, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l’emploi, le travail et d’autres questions.

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

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 79. Much like the previous two bills introduced by the former Minister of Labour, there are a number of important issues addressed in the bill, but it tends to tinker around the edges. There’s a lot of substance missing. It gives the appearance of doing something for workers without actually taking on the most concerning issues.

I would like to start by looking at schedule 1, and I have here notes from the submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs’ review of Bill 79, submitted by the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, Workers’ Action Centre and Parkdale Community Legal Services. What they have said is that when the labour minister introduced the Working for Workers Act, he stated that it would strengthen protections for foreign

workers. However, Bill 79, as drafted—and no amendments by the official opposition were accepted by the government—will not benefit most migrant workers facing exorbitant recruitment fees and labour exploitation. EPFNA only applies to foreign nationals who have valid work permits or are in the process of applying for a work permit. Many migrant workers fall outside of this narrow application. For instance, recruiters often bring migrant workers to Ontario on visitor permits. Because of the use of visitor permits, the EPFNA does not apply to those workers, who find themselves open to illegal fees and labour exploitation. This bill does nothing for those migrant workers.

The government talks of penalties and increased fines under violations of EPFNA; however, Bill 79 only proposes to apply higher fines to employers and recruiters that withhold passports and work permits. Nothing in this bill applies to penalties for illegal recruitment fees. Evidence exists that migrant workers have been forced to pay as much as \$10,000 to get to work in Ontario. Therefore, schedule 1 also should have addressed workers in fear of employee retaliation for raising concerns of exploitation. Very few workers will come forward to raise claims of withheld documents and illegal fees. Those few migrant workers that do come forward and are successful in their claims find that fines and penalties are effectively not levelled against recruiters and employers found in violation of the act.

What we've seen is that according to this bill, the fines have been increased, but between 2009 and 2017, only two employers were given a fine—of \$250—out of 35 employers found in violation of the EPFNA. Similarly, under the Employment Standards Act, prosecutions of employers in violation of the act went from 79 in 2017-18 to only 12 in 2021. Clearly, we need to increase the proactive enforcement of both the EPFNA and the Employment Standards Act.

Considering the significant barriers that migrant workers face, a complaint-based approach to minimum standards compliance cannot effectively address the systemic mistreatment and wage theft that we see migrant workers face. A more effective strategy of enforcement is through proactive inspections of recruiters and employers of migrant workers. Proactive inspections are supposed to be conducted by the employment standards officer in a manner that protects the identity of individual workers that may have made a complaint. Unfortunately, under this government, proactive inspections have declined from almost 3,000 in 2017 to 224 in 2021. It really begs the question of how sincere the government is in applying fines to wage theft and other forms of exploitation of migrant workers. Indeed, the deterrence of the fines proposed in Bill 79 is negligible if those fines are never actually levied against anyone.

Finally, they have another recommendation. The ministry also publicizes prosecutions under the Employment Standards Act. Given that the ESA and the EPFNA are complementary pieces of legislation and part of the same minimum standards, prosecutions under the EPFNA should also be published. That's about section 1.

We in the official opposition know that we need to create new jobs as part of our transition to a low-carbon economy. I must say, I'm very interested to hear what the members of the Ford Conservative caucus are prepared to admit about the existence of climate change after our summer of incredible floods and fires.

1540

I'm just going back to some statements that were made in the House at the end of the spring session. At that time, we had drifting smoke from wildfires triggering special air quality advisories for large swaths of Ontario—we recall that here, in this House and outside this building—with Environment Canada warning of high levels of air pollution that can be harmful to everyone's health, even at low concentrations.

"At Queen's Park, Premier Doug Ford acknowledged the 'major impact' of the blanket of smoke across the greater Toronto area but said the province is 'responding in full force' with 142 fire ranger crews, 28 aircraft and nine heavy water bombers."

Now, I'm going to come to these numbers again later, because numbers can be very deceptive. We don't know what these numbers compare to, so, in fact, we don't know whether these numbers and the number of people fighting wildfires are actually sufficient.

"During question period, NDP leader Marit Stiles claimed this isn't an ordinary fire season and expressed concern about the 'new normal' in Ontario as children are forced to stay indoors due to poor air quality.

"This is not normal, with the very real impacts of climate change being felt by millions of Ontarians," Stiles told the Legislature. "Yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry refused to acknowledge a connection between the climate crisis and these forest fires."

"Ford, who accused the NDP is politicizing the wildfires, pinned the blame on campers and the weather.

"I have heard approximately 50% of the fires are started by lightning strikes, the other 50% are people starting campfires and not putting out the campfires properly.... I'm asking every Ontarian, please do not light any campfires."

"When pressed on whether climate change is contributing to the current wildfire season, Ford dismissed the suggestion.

"They happen every single year similar to the floods," Ford said. "The wildfires start every single year."

I have another article here. The headline is "World on Fire: 2023 Is Canada's Worst Wildfire Season on Record, and It's Not Over Yet." That was on September 4.

"More than 15 million hectares have gone up in smoke across the country this year, shattering the previous record of 7.6 million hectares in 1989 as well as the 10-year average of 2.5 million hectares."

Oh, my goodness. And we know that four wildfire firefighters died this summer, one from Ontario, working out in BC. People have lost their homes, communities have been evacuated again and again, and clearly—although it might not be admitted on that side of the House—climate change has arrived. It's urgent that we deal with it.

In fact, it was interesting: I listened to something on the CBC. It was a series of 30-year-old interviews with David Suzuki, and those interviews 30 years ago were saying, "This is urgent. We absolutely must do something now. We can't fiddle around." Well, apparently we are still fiddling around, at least on one side of the House.

I want to move on to wildland firefighters, because there are many issues here. I received a number of copies of this letter, and I will read it. It's from a constituent in my riding.

"I'm writing to you today to express my extreme disappointment at the Ford government's cuts to wildfire management programs and unfair treatment of those on the front lines working hard to protect us and our communities.

"Forest fire workers are working around the clock to manage record-breaking fires with minimal resources provided. But the Ford government is gambling with their safety, and our ability to breathe clean air. There are runaway fires burning right now that could have been contained, but there are not enough crews. This year, Ontario is 50 crews short, because the Ford government cut 67% of funding for wildfire management programs."

This brings me back to the uselessness, or the tactic, of giving numbers—how much money is being spent—when we don't know how much it compares to and how much is actually missing. So it's a 67% cut of funding for wildfire management programs.

"High turnover persists in Ontario's aviation, forest fire and emergency services because of low pay and precarious work. Bill 124"—oh, we've come back to Bill 124 again—"has made the crisis even worse. Experienced workers are moving to different jobs where they're better paid and have more job security. This means there are not enough experienced fire rangers to lead crews.

"Representatives from 14 bases met with the minister to reiterate their demands for:

"—better wages;

"—danger pay;

"—more permanent, full-time jobs;

"—proper training and equipment.

"This government has the power to fix this crisis. It is gambling with our safety with cuts and wage caps across the public sector. As a constituent in your riding, I urge you to listen to forest fire workers and move quickly to fix the crisis."

This letter is signed by Khelsey Benson, who is from the riding of Thunder Bay–Superior North.

I want to continue on the topic of wildland firefighters. Last night, on CBC News, there was a very sad story, and I'm going to read a little bit of this: "Kim Leblanc is the widow of Thomas Leblanc, a former wildland firefighter who died from cancer in 2010. She fought for almost 10 years to get Ontario's workers' compensation system to recognize that his illness was caused by 35 years of wildfire exposure.

"Thomas Leblanc spent 35 years fighting wildfires in Montana, Alberta, British Columbia and his home province of Ontario, but when he developed a cancer linked to

firefighting, he was repeatedly denied workplace coverage.

"'Being outside was his dream,' his widow, Kim Leblanc, said from the family home in Coldwater, Ont. 'He loved it. He was like a Dalmatian sitting in the front seat of that fire truck and waiting for the call.'

"In 2009, Leblanc found a lump in his neck and was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, one of more than a dozen cancers considered a presumptive work-related illness in most parts of Canada for structural firefighters." That means urban firefighters. "That means the illness is automatically accepted as likely being caused by occupational exposure—making it easier to access workplace compensation and supports.

"Leblanc applied to" the WSIB "for compensation but was rejected.

"In all but four jurisdictions in Canada, wildland firefighters are excluded in legislation from the presumptions granted to structural firefighters, who respond to fires inside buildings, fire alarms, chemical spills and accidents...

"Thomas Leblanc died at the age of 54 in August 2010, roughly a year after he was first diagnosed. He asked his wife to keep fighting the WSIB claim.

"'He said nobody, nobody should have to go through this,' she said."

This is something that surely could have been addressed in one of these three workers bills, but it is not addressed, and I know that it has been raised. It's been raised numerous times.

I just want to go back to some of the warnings that were expressed earlier in this year. This is from June 2, just before we ended our session at the Legislature:

"A water bomber flies overhead of Parry Sound 33, one of the more aggressive fires Ontario rangers dealt with in recent years.

"While provincial firefighters are trying to douse the flames of several forest fires in northern Ontario, their union is raising concerns about how the Ontario government is running the wildfire program.

"JP Hornick, president of the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union (OPSEU), said the province is short 50 fire crews this season....

"A big problem, the union leader says, is how the province has been approaching the recruitment—and retention—of its" firefighters.

1550

"'Every season [the province] faces the same problem.... There's a scramble to manage with too few workers.'

"'What you have is that young workers start but there are too few permanent jobs, and so they leave.'

"According to Hornick, the province offers firefighters three to six-month contracts, rather than year-round employment.

"It wasn't always this way....

"'Used to be that in the non-fire season what the rangers would do is clear brush,' Hornick said.

"'They would do the kind of upkeep work in other areas of the ministry or across ministries to actually help prevent

forest fires the following season and to help with things like snow clearing and whatnot.’

“‘With the cost of living crisis as it is and housing and travel that’s required, people simply either aren’t applying or they’re finding jobs in other sectors where they can find that permanent employment....’

“Adding to the challenge of recruitment is the lure of full-time firefighting work with municipalities—and their more lucrative salaries—which draws a lot of bodies out of the potential pool of firefighters....

“‘It should be a no-brainer that the wage gap needs to be closed, period,’ Hornick said. ‘They need their pay increase, but they also need that contract problem addressed.’

“‘There is no world in which we think that fire rangers should be on short-term contracts at this point with climate change the way it is....’

“The ministry has adjusted to staffing challenges” apparently “by mobilizing slightly larger crews,” even though they were still short 50 crews, “which they hope will provide enough experience to train future leaders.

“The province also has several agreements with neighbouring provinces and states to tackle larger fires, and if needed, can call on reinforcements from countries like Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand.”

But it’s important to note—I had a very long conversation with an experienced fire crew leader who had been around for a long time, and what he said to me is that you need at least seven years’ experience fighting specific kinds of fires. For example, in northern Ontario, that would be boreal forest fires. He said it’s great when the international firefighters come, but they can only assign them to the simplest kinds of fires to put out because they don’t have the experience with the kind of fires that they’re facing. They need people to have permanent jobs so that that experience is built up over time. There are certainly young people out there, and I know of young people—because I met the father of one this summer who said his son had been a wildland firefighter. He had hoped it would be his career, but he got wind that there were only going to be part-time contracts available, so he quit and moved into something else.

In conclusion, again I want to emphasize that the work of wildland firefighters could have been addressed in this bill. The WSIB protections could have been addressed. They’re not here. It’s critical if we’re going to face climate change. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We’re going to move to questions for the member. Any questions? The member for Flamborough–Glanbrook.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s nice to see you back in the chair this afternoon.

I was listening intently to the comments by the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North. You did ask, “I’m interested to hear what the members of the government feel about climate change and what the Ford government has done to address climate change.” And I’m very proud of what our government has done to address climate change. I want to just remind the member, and I’m sure

you recall, of the \$400-million investment we made towards manufacturing green steel at the Dofasco in my hometown of Hamilton. We made the largest investment in the world in manufacturing electric batteries for electric vehicles. The largest transit expansion in North America is being currently done under this government, under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford. Of course, we also opened the first provincial urban park—one of the first provincial parks in decades.

My question to the member opposite is more about firefighters. Do you agree with expanding the coverage that we are now providing firefighters?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I have two points. The coverage is not explicit enough in the bill as it is for firefighters.

Regarding climate action by this government, I simply need to point to the greenbelt and the giveaway of farmland; the giveaway of farmland that we’re seeing in the Hamilton area and the loss of wetlands and the things that they were told—“Absolutely, do not do this.” They were begged for months and months and months: “Do not do this. It will be harmful to the environment. It undoes anything else you might be doing to address climate change.” You can’t just take away with one hand and do something over here and expect they will never come together.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Sarah Jama: How would you better this bill to impact disabled people who get injured on the job?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Disabled people who get injured on the job—there is so little, I will say, good work happening by the WSIB right now. What we need, and I would love to have seen it in this bill, is addressing what I’m going to call claims suppression that has become normal so that people, whether they are starting work with a disability and become more injured or whether they didn’t have a disability but acquire a disability through an accident at work or through being exposed to something poisonous at work—the answer is their claims are not approved. They’re forced to appeal and that takes years, and during that time, people have nothing to live on and they are forced to live with their pain and disability without support.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Hon. Todd Smith: I do have a question for the NDP member from Thunder Bay who was wondering about the Conservative stance on fighting climate change.

Certainly at the Ministry of Energy we’ve been very, very busy over the summer rolling out our plan for powering Ontario’s growth, investing in our nuclear assets that we have in the province. Those assets have allowed us to undertake the largest environmental action by removing coal from our electricity system, largely because of our major component replacements, our refurbishments that we’re doing and at our Candu nuclear supply facilities and also building out the new technology—small modular reactors.

Now, it’s come to my understanding that the NDP member from Thunder Bay has recently joined a group

called something to the effect of “nuclear free north.” I’m wondering if she stands with the long list of NDP members that are opposed to what many in the environmental community are saying is the only answer to continuing to remove emissions from our electricity grid, and that is support for our nuclear supply chain and nuclear assets in Ontario.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Thank you for the question. Actually I might send a question back because I wonder about the expansion of gas-fired generators, which is not actually helping. I will leave it at that.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I heard the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook say that she’s proud of the government’s progress on climate change, so maybe she hasn’t read the Ontario climate change impact report. She wouldn’t be alone, because nobody in the province got to read that report because this government buried it. They received the report in January and they quietly, quietly slunk it out in August.

1600

Just so we’re clear: On every measure, this government is doing so poorly when it comes to climate. Ontarians are going to see worsening and severe impacts in every single category. This is a government that is just completely unprepared.

Your acknowledgement of the work that firefighters do in this province—it is so important to hear that message because they are on the front line of the deliberate negligence of this government to invest in climate change and to invest in firefighters.

My question to you is, why do you think that this government does not have the backs of firefighters who are keeping us safe all across northern Ontario and the rest of the province?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It does seem to be a government that is good with some kinds of infrastructure but really lousy with workers and proper employment and paying decent wages and making sure that they actually have protection for when they are exposed to hazardous materials in their job. I truly don’t understand. I know that there are members on that side of the House who do understand the risks of firefighting, but I do not understand why that side of the House does not respect wildland firefighters enough to pay them properly and make sure that they are covered for work exposure to carcinogens. That needs to happen now; it could have happened months ago. It needs to be in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Hon. Todd Smith: I would love to get an answer to my question. It’s well documented what the NDP critic for energy and environment has said and how he feels about continuing to have our province powered by nuclear, which makes up 50% to 60% of our electricity every day. Our nuclear sector employs 76,000 people in this province, Madam Speaker. We know how the NDP critic feels about this. He’s against nuclear in Ontario.

I’m just wondering how widespread it is in the NDP caucus, because the NDP member from Thunder Bay—now, I know the Conservative member from Thunder Bay is supportive of our nuclear assets, but the NDP member for Thunder Bay: Is she for or is she against our Ontario nuclear advantage, which isn’t just powering Ontario but has the potential to allow other jurisdictions around the world to do what we have done and eliminate coal-fired electricity generation?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I think the minister knows full well that there are many, many questions around—

Mr. Graham McGregor: Oh, we’ve got an answer coming. We’ve got an answer.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Yes, and if you’re quiet, I will continue to answer.

The minister knows full well that there are very, very legitimate concerns about how nuclear energy is going to roll out. If there is no space on that side of the House to actually entertain those concerns, they are not doing their job as a responsible government. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Another last quick question.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the member for her debate. I’m going to have to ask a very quick question. I have a constituent who has had wage theft occur. I just wanted to know what you think this bill, Working for Workers Act, could do better in order to help people recoup their wages from employers who have wage theft among their own staff.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: It’s critical that inspections take place, but it’s also critical that they take place in a way that the workers are protected, because they are at great risk. I know that wage theft is taking place in a number of areas. Migrant workers are very much at risk of this. We need those inspections. We need it to be taken seriously enough. There aren’t enough inspectors. We know that the number of charges were reduced drastically over time.

I’d also like to mention that this is also taking place with workers in the trucking industry—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That’s all the time we have.

We’ll have to move to further debate. I recognize the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: It’s an honour to rise for third reading debate on Bill 79. I’d like to open my comments with a focus on schedules 6 and 7, the Ontario Disability Support Program Act and the Ontario Works Act.

I want to make three points. When I saw that these acts were being opened, I was hoping the government was going to make a commitment to ending legislated poverty, not only because it’s the right thing to do, to stop forcing people to live in poverty—think about it: If you’re on Ontario Works, you make about \$1,200 a month. The average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is \$2,500 a month; in my riding in Guelph, it’s about \$2,000 now. How can we expect people to live on \$1,200 a month?

Especially, I would also think the government would be interested in ending legislated poverty because it costs the

province \$33 billion a year, putting added pressure on our health care system, our justice system, our social service systems. So why don't we more than double ODSP rates to bring them above the low-income cut-off line, end legislated poverty in the province of Ontario and save \$33 billion?

Second, I was hoping they would actually improve access to the program, because I can't tell you how many people in my riding are denied access to ODSP when they clearly have a disability and then have to go through months and months of waiting for their appeal to be heard while they're living in even more legislated poverty of \$731 a month. That's cruel. It's not what we as Ontarians are about.

Finally, the government talks a lot about ending red tape, so why don't we end red tape for people living in poverty? Why don't we end the penalties of having your benefits reduced if you're actually living in the same space with someone you love? I was hoping when I saw these schedules open that that's what the government was going to do.

Next, in the brief moment I have left, I want to talk about schedule 1, because, yes, I think we need to do better by migrant workers in this province. I believe that the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act should apply to all migrant workers, period, not just those with permits, because we want to make sure we end this practice of exploitative recruitment of migrant workers. Two, we want to make sure there are fines for all infractions, not just for permit seizures. And three, we need to have proactive inspections if there are going to be any teeth to the increase in fines under this schedule.

Speaker, I'm happy to now accept questions from the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Questions for the member for Guelph?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you to the member from Guelph for his remarks this afternoon. One of the areas that I think is very interesting in this bill is the efforts being put to encourage more women in the trades. We know that we have an extremely big shortage of workers in all of the skilled trades, and one way to address that is certainly to attract women into a profession that pays good wages.

When I was lucky enough to meet a number of women who were training to be electricians, they were talking about how this job was giving them an opportunity—they were single parents—to provide for their family. They felt very fortunate that they were in a profession that paid fairly high wages.

One of the things that we're doing is changing facilities so women feel more comfortable on job sites, for example. I just wanted to get your opinion on women in the trades.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'm a big supporter in encouraging and creating the conditions for more women to enter into the trades, there is no doubt about it. Having proper washroom facilities is one small step in achieving that.

We also have to understand that we need proactive government action to ensure that we fight harassment, sexual and gender-based violence in the trades as well and

in all professions, because we want to make sure that when women enter the trades, they're entering a workplace that is safe for them and free of harassment. I hope that all of us can work across party lines to ensure that happens in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member for his comments this afternoon. I have definitely been listening to all debate across the House today.

The member from the government side talked about encouraging women into the trades, which we all know is a fantastic thing to be happening, but I think she was putting her words towards things that aren't even in the bill. She was referring to washrooms being on job sites as an encouragement for women in the trades. I think we could do much more than that to encourage women to enter the trades, because it's a great job and a great living to be able to support their families on.

1610

You touched on some sexual assault training that should be happening on the job sites also. Do you have any other thoughts? And do you think it would have been important to put that into this actual Working for Workers legislation?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Thank you. I appreciate the question.

Absolutely, additional provisions to protect women in the trades should have been included in this legislation. As a matter of fact, there's a number of things that should have been included in this legislation. It's very narrow in its scope on almost every single schedule in this bill. I think if we're going to talk about working for workers, we need to create the workplace conditions that make work safe for all workers: free of harassment, sexual and gender-based violence. We also need to make sure that when workers are injured, they're actually taken care of, which was one of the things that I think was missing from one of the schedules of the bill that talked about injured workers. I think there are many ways in which this bill could have had an expanded scope to create a bill that truly worked for workers.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Another question?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank my colleague across—not so across at this moment. We all know and appreciate that our military families and the people in the military do so much for us. They keep us safe, both here and abroad. The last thing they should need to worry about is their day jobs and when and if that job will be secure when they get back.

Does the opposition not support expanding reservist leave for the brave men and women in uniform who serve our country in the reserve forces?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you for the quick question. For a quick reply, the member for Guelph.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Yes, I absolutely support that in schedule 2, but schedule 2 is missing a number of things. What about ending the practice of deeming for injured

workers? What about raising the loss-of-earnings benefit to 90%, which the members opposite promised in their election campaign and have failed to deliver on? There are many things that could be delivered for injured workers in this bill that are not in it.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): That's time for questions. We're going to move to further debate.

Ms. Donna Skelly: I would like to begin by congratulating our new Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Minister David Piccini. I would also like to thank the former minister, the representative from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Monte McNaughton, for all of the work that he has done on this bill, and of course our parliamentary assistants, the representatives from Mississauga-Malton, Deepak Anand, and Scarborough Centre, David Smith, for their work on Bill 79.

The efforts by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development on the Working for Workers Act support the goal of our government to help more people find meaningful work and combat the province's historic labour shortage.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak in support of Bill 79, the Working for Workers Act, 2023. With more than 800,000 people relying on social assistance and approximately 285,000 jobs unfilled in the province, our government is making it easier for job seekers to get the help they need to find better jobs tailored to their individual needs. Recognizing this, our government is taking the necessary steps to stimulate the labour market and to ensure that workers feel looked after, two specific areas being firefighters and the armed forces. Those are the two areas I will be focusing on this afternoon.

In both of these occupations, workers risk their lives for the well-being of the population and experience adverse side effects while doing so. Firefighters can die of cancer at a rate four times higher than those in the general population, and 25 to 30 firefighters die every year in Ontario. Thyroid cancer and pancreatic cancer are some of the more common types associated with the occupation, yet not currently covered by the WSIB. This proposed legislation has provisions to make it easier for firefighters, fire investigators and their survivors to get access to WSIB compensation.

The importance of supporting firefighters hits close to home for many, especially those in the Hamilton area, as one of our own, Captain Bob Shaw, passed away due to his exposure at the Plastimet fire. For those of you who don't know what the Plastimet fire is: In July 1997, plastics recycler Plastimet Inc., located on Wellington Street North in Hamilton, erupted in flames and continued to burn for four days straight. It was not until afterwards that people learned the severity of this fire. More than 400 tonnes of PVC and other plastics were stored at the facility, and throughout the several days of burning, dioxin and other hazardous chemicals were released into the air.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to turn now to an article that was published 20 years after the Plastimet fire in Hamilton's CBC News. "The Plastimet fire burned for days—but its effects lingered for years.

"On July 9, 1997, a raging fire broke out in an industrial recycling factory on Wellington Street North. Toxic chemicals filled the air as the plastics burned—you could see the smoke billowing into the air as far away as Niagara Falls. Almost 300 firefighters responded, many of whom suffered short- and long-term health issues in the wake of the fire.

"It was the largest plastics fire in Canadian history. It was also a catalyst for change, directly altering the way firefighter health is monitored in Hamilton, and the way firefighters with health issues are compensated in Ontario."

The CBC went on to interview a number of people who were on site that day. "Rob D'Amico, secretary of the Hamilton Professional Firefighters Association, deployed to the Plastimet fire.

"It was a typical warm summer night. Rob D'Amico was out in the truck doing inspections with his crew when they started hearing radio chatter about a fire in the area."

"We didn't think much of it at first," he said.

"But the chatter continued. After four or five emergency upgrades to the alarm, they were called in to help.

"When we got there most of the building was engulfed."

"His crew was ordered to set up an aerial tower from their truck, so they positioned themselves on the nearby train tracks.

"The smoke rose hundreds of feet in the air, he says. 'It was unbelievable, nothing I've ever seen before.'

"At the time, all they could focus on was putting it out. But after the smoke settled, many firefighters were concerned about what they'd just been exposed to.

"Many of our guys had rashes, their skin peeled off, they had lung issues, coughing," he said. 'I remember the smell of chloride in the air when we got there. We didn't know exactly what was burning, but it didn't smell good'"—we know now.

I recently sat down with members of the Hamilton firefighters association, who spoke to me about the importance of expanding the coverage provided by the WSIB to firefighters. The efforts put forth by these members, as well as many more throughout the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, have resulted in great advancements, such as coverage for 19 cancers now, as well as a screening program and medical exposure monitoring program available to any fire department in Ontario in hopes of catching the disease early.

Madam Speaker, I'm also very fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with men and women who have served in Canada's military. Many, many moons ago, when I was working as a reporter, I covered many stories when I was based in Petawawa at CFB Petawawa and at RMC Kingston. I also had the opportunity to travel to Doha, Qatar, in 1991, during the very first Gulf War, to cover Canada's military presence on the base there called Canada Dry One. These experiences resulted in a profound connection that I have to the Canadian Armed Forces, which only solidifies my support with what is laid out in Bill 97.

Thousands of people in Ontario are active reservists that put their full-time careers on hold to join military missions at home and abroad. We need to recognize their sacrifice and enable the process to be as smooth as possible. That is why our government is proposing to reduce the length of employment needed before going on reservist leave to two months of continuous employment, rather than the current three, and no length-of-employment requirement if the leave is for assisting during a domestic emergency. We are also proposing to create a new leave to help reservists recover from injuries, physical or mental, after a deployment.

1620

Madam Speaker, in my riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook, which is a rural community, the skilled trades play a critical role. Bill 79 is in alignment with our government's efforts of investing nearly a billion dollars since 2020 to break the stigma, to attract youth, to simplify the system and to encourage employer participation in the skilled trades. Although Ontario has added close to 700,000 new manufacturing jobs since we formed government in 2018, we still have a huge shortage. With more than 100,000 unfilled skilled trades across the province today, it is crucial that our government commit to attracting more young people to a good career in the trades.

That is why, if this legislation is passed, it will require students entering grade 9 beginning September 2024 to earn a grade 9 or 10 technological education credit as part of their Ontario secondary school diploma. This will create new pathways to jobs in STEM and the skilled trades, which is necessary, as projections state that by 2026 approximately one in five job openings in Ontario will be in a skilled trade-related field.

This legislation will combat historic labour shortages experienced by the province by allowing students in grade 11 to transition to a full-time skilled trades apprenticeship program. Once receiving their certificate of apprenticeship, these young workers can apply for their Ontario secondary school diploma as mature students.

This will help encourage more young people who are thinking of leaving high school before they actually are able to achieve getting a grade 12 diploma to stay in school, to acquire a trade, to be able to move on and perhaps buy a home, get married and raise a family. This particular route will be open to both girls and boys. Young girls, as we have mentioned earlier, will be encouraged to pursue a career in the trades.

Additionally, our government plans to commence consultations this fall with stakeholders such as employers, unions, trainers, educators and parents on further efforts to make it easier for young people to enter the trades. This could look like altering academic entry requirements for certain skilled trades in Ontario to allow students to enter the workforce sooner.

In the Hamilton area, both the Hamilton International Airport and our port are of particular interest for us in encouraging more workers into the trades. The Hamilton International Airport is the busiest overnight cargo airport in Canada. It actually received the very first shipment of

COVID vaccines in Canada, and our Premier was waiting on the tarmac to accept them. The airport is also home to a classroom developed out of a relationship between Mohawk College and KF Aerospace. Students experience in-class and hands-on learning to become airplane technicians.

Also, Madam Speaker, the Hamilton port is the busiest port on the Great Lakes. Once again, the skilled trades play an integral role. Recently, our government awarded \$3.7 million to Heddle Shipyards through the Skills Development Fund. This investment will help 300 shipyard workers, apprentices and job seekers get the training that they need in the growing ship-building sector. This is just another example of a relationship between Mohawk College and a local business where some students received both in-class and hands-on training focused on improving and refreshing the technical skills necessary for work in the shipping sector.

Madam Speaker, there is a very real shortage of skilled workers in all of the trades. For example, we need over 100,000 skilled workers over the next 10 years to fill positions in the construction industry, and that as we prepare to build Ontario at an unprecedented rate.

The people of Ontario are experiencing a housing crisis. The riding of Flamborough–Glanbrook is one of the fastest-growing in Ontario, and our province is welcoming hundreds of thousands of new Canadians each year. They will need a place to live. Our young people, like my own sons, who are at that age where they want to buy a home want to realize the dream of home ownership, as many of us here in this chamber have all realized.

In order to do that, we must address the shortage of homes in Ontario. We must build more homes, and we cannot do that without the workers to build the homes. We need more people in the construction industry. We need more framers. We need more people in the electrical industry. We need more plumbers. We need people to fill all of the trades, and the work that we are doing, including the measures that we are presenting today in this bill, will help address that particular shortage.

Our government's commitment to build more homes faster cannot happen, as I've said, without the labour force to do so. Apart from the credit requirement, another way to encourage jobs in the trades is through enforcing better working conditions on the job site. In the case of construction specifically, amending construction project regulations for properly fitting PPE and amending existing hygiene provisions will further support women pursuing a career in the trades.

I was reading up on one of the issues on PPE, and it was really something I hadn't thought about, but when you think back to jobs that historically were filled by men, the PPE—the equipment, the clothing that workers in the skilled trades wore and continue to wear—are generally designed for men. It's not unlike what happened with us when we first were able to sit in the chair. We were fitted out in a uniform, if you will, that had been originally designed for a man. So these women who now want to pursue a career in the trades are using ill-fitting, for example, PPE because, again, it was made for a man.

This particular bill will address those issues. It will require more attention to be paid so that women can actually have proper-fitting PPE. It's going to be part of a measure to make job sites safer for women.

The other part that I think is very important: I know a lot of my colleagues would not and would never probably want to use any of the washroom facilities on a job site. In this particular bill, Madam Speaker, Ontario is proposing to require women's-only washrooms on construction sites and, as we talked about the PPE, to ensure that women have properly fitting safety gear.

These proposed regulatory amendments are part of a comprehensive strategy to meet labour demand and to bring better jobs and bigger paycheques within reach for more people, but particularly for more women. The proposed improvements will encourage women to be able to enter the field and feel more comfortable in using the toilets that are on-site. They will feel safer. There will be better lighting. They will have to be cleaner. Sanitizer will have to be made available.

Ensuring female workers have access to at least one women's-only toilet facility on a construction site where five or more toilets are required, reducing the distance workers need to travel to get to toilet facilities when reasonably possible: As I said, these proposed regulatory amendments are all part of a comprehensive strategy to meet labour demand and to bring better jobs and bigger paycheques to all people across Ontario who are interested in pursuing a career in the trades, but in particular to women, to encourage more women in the field.

I also want to talk a little bit about, Madam Speaker, some of the—just bear with me here. This was about foreign workers and what we are doing to address some of the issues that are facing vulnerable workers, foreign workers in particular—I know it was raised by one of the members opposite earlier. To build a stronger Ontario, we are protecting vulnerable and foreign workers by making sure they are safe, they are protected and that they are treated fairly.

1630

Ontario is introducing new legislation that would, if passed, strengthen protections for vulnerable and foreign workers by increasing the maximum fines for employers and recruiters that are convicted of taking or retaining a foreign national's passport or work permit under the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, 2009. Despite being outlined in the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, some employers continue to take employee passports and work permits. By increasing maximum fines under the act, individuals or corporations could be liable and convicted for taking or retaining passports or work permits.

Madam Speaker, enhancing the labour market has been a particular focus of our government. In 2021, our government introduced the first Working for Workers Act. We have made amendments in 2022 and now in 2023 as well, responding to changing circumstances in order to better Ontario.

The first act introduced measures to make it easier for workers to spend time with their families and loved ones

by requiring employers to have a right-to-disconnect policy. We also banned the use of non-compete agreements, ensuring fairness for our workers by allowing them the opportunity to advance their careers and by helping smaller and growing businesses find the skilled workers they need. We also acknowledged the importance, as I mentioned, of immigrants for stimulating our labour market. We made it easier for internationally trained workers to practise the professions they trained in when we welcome them to Ontario.

The second act made Ontario the first province in Canada to establish a minimum wage and other foundational rights for digital platform workers who provide rideshare, delivery and courier services. This helps level the playing field.

Madam Speaker, these changes proposed in the Working for Workers Act, 2023, build on the successes of the Working for Workers Act, 2021, and the Working for Workers Act, 2022, and are part of our government's plan to make Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member opposite for her debate time. I definitely listened intently as she raised the Plastimet fire. We know the case of Bob Shaw and the cancer that he obtained through that, and the presumptive legislation that came from that fire and Bob, due to the work of Andrea Horwath, who was the previous leader of the NDP and is now the mayor of Hamilton, who worked diligently to ensure that that legislation was passed. We're pleased to see that expanded, but I find it unconscionable that it is not in this legislation.

Can the member please explain why they do not feel it is necessary to embed it in legislation and ensure that it is there to support firefighters forever in time?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Firefighters, as we know, and as I mentioned in my remarks earlier, die of cancer at a rate of up to four times higher than the general population. On average, 50 to 60 firefighters die of cancer yearly in Canada, and half of those are actually in Ontario. That is why, Madam Speaker, our government is making it faster and easier for these people and their families to access the compensation and support that they deserve.

Now, the proposed changes by our government would presume thyroid and pancreatic cancers to be work-related and streamline the assessments of workplace injury claims. These claims related to thyroid and pancreatic cancers would be retroactive to January 1, 1960. The changes would apply to full-time, volunteer and part-time firefighters, firefighters employed by First Nations, band councils and fire investigators.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question? The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Well, thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate that.

I want to commend the member for Flamborough-Glanbrook on her remarks today on Working for Workers. I had a question. It's something dear to my heart; I've been

involved with the 1st Hussars back in Sarnia–Lambton. Could you speak a little more about the expansion and improvements to the military reservists and what we're looking at doing there?

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you to the member for his question. It is also an area that touches my heart. As I mentioned, I was fortunate enough to go over to Doha during the First Gulf War, and it's incredible, the work that these men and women do. We need to be there to support them, as we need to be there to support our men and women who serve us in Canada and in our police services.

One of the things that we are doing is we are addressing reservists and troop shortages in the Canadian Armed Forces who feel that they are overburdened. We are going to be introducing new legislation that would guarantee that reservists can return to civilian jobs, for example, after deployment even if they need additional time off to recover from either physical or mental injuries.

Reservists are not paid while they are on reserve leave. However, their employment is deemed to be continuous. Seniority and length-of-service credits continue to accumulate. Employees on a reservist leave are entitled to be reinstated to the exact same position if it still exists, or a comparable position. The employer is not required to continue any benefit plans.

Our proposed change would also make reservists eligible for job-protected leave when deploying abroad or upgrading their skills.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

M. Guy Bourgouin: Ça fait tout le temps plaisir d'avoir la chance de parler, puis aussi de poser une question.

J'entendais la collègue parler, sa présentation. Moi, j'ai un neveu qui a travaillé comme sapeur de feu. En plus de ça, il était un « crew leader ». Il a fait ça pendant des années, puis il a changé d'emploi parce que—je lui ai demandé : « Pourquoi, Travis, tu es parti, que tu n'es pas resté dans le milieu? » Parce qu'il était un « crew leader ». Il était bien respecté. Il aimait ce qu'il faisait. Mais il se sentait dénigré. Il se sentait comme s'il n'était pas respecté.

Premièrement, il n'était pas bien payé. Il dit : « On se fait débarquer dans des lieux de travail et on n'est même pas compensé pour vivre dans des tentes, vivre dans des conditions qui, on peut dire, sont assez difficiles, là. » Puis ils se font déménager assez souvent. Le gouvernement a eu l'opportunité d'adresser, de payer—on sait que la province brûlait cet été, là. On a vu un tapon de feu—on voit comment il y a eu d'impact à cause de la planète qui se réchauffe.

Comment le gouvernement—j'aimerais que la députée réponde à ma question. Vous avez eu l'opportunité. Pourquoi ne pas rémunérer ces personnes-là comme il faut, et leur donner des augmentations—pas 1 %, comme le projet de loi 124? Retirez le projet de loi 124, puis rémunérez ces personnes-là, puis donnez-leur aussi des payes de—comment est-ce que je te dirais ça—

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Merci pour la question.

The member for Flamborough–Glanbrook to respond.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for the question. There is a lot we can do in many areas. But this legislation is addressing something that is very important, and that is giving firefighters protection, extended medical coverage when they are exposed to chemicals. I mentioned the list, and it goes back not just in the last nine months, but this is retroactive to January 1, 1960. We can continue to build on this. We've introduced legislation now for three years in a row, and we have continued to improve the lives of workers across Ontario.

In terms of some of the provisions in this particular bill that we are speaking to today, they will simply help them when they are seeking coverage after they have been exposed to toxic chemicals. Also, it will expedite and make it easier for them to get their WSIB benefits.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to thank you for your very thoughtful comments on everything that's being brought forward with this bill. The member brought up a very interesting point. I was listening to the adjustments of PPE, which is something I've actually heard personally from constituents: women forced to wear PPE that was designed for men and perhaps less safe as a result. I'm wondering if the member wanted to comment further on what this will do for women in the trades.

1640

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you for the question. Yes, our government has a really ambitious plan to build across Ontario, and to deliver on that plan, we need all kinds of workers and we need women in the trades. Currently, only one in 10 construction workers in Ontario is a woman. To attract more women to these really well-paying and rewarding careers, we need to make our job sites safe and welcoming.

The standard for PPE fit and sizing in construction has historically been a male body. This has made it harder for women and others outside of the standard fit and sizing to find equipment that properly fits the proportions of a woman's body, with many having to refashion ill-fitting garments or equipment to fit, potentially compromising the effectiveness of the PPE. The proposed changes would clarify and make explicit the requirement that PPE and clothing be a proper fit, taking into account all factors, including consideration of diverse body types.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): For another question, the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: With all due respect to the member from Flamborough–Glanbrook, you keep saying that this is in the bill, but the provision for washrooms for women, not in the bill; the provisions for presumptive legislation for firefighters, not in the bill. It's a disservice to the people of the province of Ontario when you say something that couldn't be further from the truth.

Here's my question. National Steel Car in Hamilton: We know there were three deaths in less than two years in

Hamilton. Quoc Le, Fraser Cowan and Collin Grayley all lost their lives on the job in what is known around Hamilton to be a very, very dangerous work site.

Your government cut workplace inspections, and very rarely do you inspect and very rarely do you levy fines. When you do finally levy fines, those awards never go to the grieving families who are left without a loved one to provide for their families. What do you have to say to the families of Quoc Le, Fraser Cowan—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw:—about this lack of enforcement on the part of your government?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. The last seconds for the member to respond.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our government takes workplace health and safety violations very seriously, which is why we are proposing to implement the highest maximum corporate fines in Canada under workplace health and safety legislation.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There's no more time for additional questions.

We're going to move to further debate.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to be able to weigh in on Bill 79, the Working for Workers Act, at third reading. I don't believe I had the opportunity under second reading before the Legislature rose, so it's a great time to be able to stand up and speak on behalf of workers and to really talk about what New Democrats would do for workers in the province of Ontario, which we know is very different than what we have seen the Ford government do.

They have claimed to be supporters of workers, and yet we have seen several examples of where they've clearly not been on the side of workers: for example, cancelling and freezing the minimum wage for three years when they first came into office. It was just put into place that workers in this province were finally going to get an increase to minimum wage, something that the New Democrats had to fight the Liberals forever to be able to get them that minimum wage increase, and when the Ford government came in, they cancelled that increase right away, of course, once again affecting and attacking the most vulnerable people in our province.

Sick days: We, again as New Democrats, had fought with the Liberals to get paid sick days put in place, and the minute the Ford government came in, they cancelled those paid sick days. We've seen what happened during COVID when people did not have access to those paid sick days and we had to fight tooth and nail, really, the Conservative government to be able to get paid sick days put in place. But now they've also been cancelled, as the time has run out on them, and, quite frankly, we're seeing another rise in COVID cases. We have our hospitals in Hamilton, for sure, who are now asking people who work within the hospital system to wear masks once again, so we know that those paid sick days are so critical to the fabric of our community.

Someone who is working day in and day out in this province is probably just making it. Many folks are just

making it. With the cost of rent, with the increased cost of mortgages, with inflation rates, with the cost of food, we know that people are living paycheck to paycheck more and more, each and every day. When you don't have that safety net of a paid sick day, it puts families and homes—their valuable homes—at risk, and that is something that we really don't have room to allow to happen.

I can tell you, I hear on a daily basis from friends of mine who are at risk of being homeless. They've lived in homes for years that they've rented, and now those landlords are selling those homes. They're terrified about where they're going to go, and to be able to pay the rent. One, for instance, is a teacher in an elementary school and works part-time as a bartender at night to be able to make the difference, to take care of her and her kids. She is one of these people who are facing eviction, and she has no idea where she's going to go. She has health concerns. She can't just not go to work, and she has to be able to feed her family. This struggle is real for her, and I feel for my friend, but there is just not the affordable housing that our community needs.

Another woman I know—again, another single mom—her place is also for sale, and she is struggling, trying to figure out how she is possibly going to make it work. She's like, "I think I can pay up to \$3,000 a month. That's stretching it, but I think I can make it." Now, that's a lot of money—\$3,000 a month, just to be able to afford to pay the rent. These are the workers in our province. These are the people who this bill is supposed to be about, and yet there is nothing in this bill to protect the workers of this province.

What else did I see in here? What else have you done? Was it Bill 28 that tried to stomp on the charter rights of Canadians? We've seen what happened there, as people across this province protested day in and day out, until this government had to reverse their decision—which is something that we see happen on a regular basis around here. The greenbelt decision being reversed is probably the fourth time, I think, in the six years that this government has been elected that they've had to reverse course on legislation they put forward, backtrack and come back in with new legislation to make up for the mistakes that they have been caught with.

I think the only mistakes that this Premier truly thinks he has made is that he gets caught, and that people stand up to him, and they are the workers of this province—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Sorry you got caught.

Miss Monique Taylor: Yes, sorry you got caught.

Constitutional rights—there we go. That one went there.

Bill 124, again, is another hit against workers that we have seen in this province: nurses, correctional workers, any public service worker. They're left out to be able to receive the increased wages that their bosses, I'm sure, are receiving. They've been frozen at a 1% increase, and that hurts when we have a 19% increase in inflation of food in our communities. A 1% increase just certainly isn't going to cut it.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It hurts women.

Miss Monique Taylor: As my seatmate beside me has just said, this mainly affects women, particularly single moms who are trying to make it work, and this bill will do absolutely nothing to be able to support those same moms.

1650

I've been looking at some information, as I was a speaker the other evening at the Frozen in Time town hall, to talk about ODSP and OW and how those rates have been frozen for so many years, and the effect that that has on our community and what it has on folks. The reason that I'm raising this is, well, first of all, because they need to be increased—doubled; there's absolutely no doubt. A person on ODSP is making \$1,227 a month; a person on Ontario Works, \$733 a month. The average rent in Hamilton is \$1,800 a month for a one-bedroom, probably pretty-much-nothing apartment, so those folks are definitely struggling.

But what that brought up to me in this point and why I wanted to raise it is because in my notes from that town hall that night, I talked about Canada's Market Basket Measure, which is a formula to determine how much an income has to be, to be able to survive in the community. For folks in Hamilton to be able to live modestly, it's \$49,952. A person earning minimum wage is not coming close to that mark, and it's forcing them into extreme poverty. It's forcing them into tents in our communities.

We're seeing this time and time again. We have so many people who are going to work every day; they're sleeping in tents, they're sleeping in cars, they're couch-surfing, they're living with their parents and they're just trying to figure out how to make it work in the province of Ontario when they simply cannot afford to do so.

Another thing in this bill in schedule 4 is the collection of personal data from post-secondary institutions relating to employment services programs in the province. So I'll take you back again: People who are on Ontario Works or ODSP, the employment services were rammed through our local municipalities—and it was a knowledge base, it was a relationship base where they understood our city or our small little town or wherever the person lived, and they could relate to the jobs that made sense there, what was working and what wasn't.

When this government again decided to attack the most vulnerable people and thinks that the best social service and social safety net is a job—even when you're disabled, they think that everybody can go to work—they contracted out the employment services. They took it away from our municipalities. Hamilton is a municipality that bid for the contract to be able to provide this service, and they lost the bid. They lost the bid to a private company. This is how it went—“contracting out of employment services for the Muskoka-Kawartha, the Peel region and the Hamilton-Niagara region. The Hamilton-Niagara contract has been awarded to American firm Fedcap. The Peel region's services will be contracted out to WCG, a subsidiary of Australian company”—

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Oh, boy. Privatization.

Miss Monique Taylor: Privatization—and not even in our own country to be able to provide services to the

people of Ontario is absolutely shameful. And now we're seeing in legislation that they want to be able to collect personal data, that they want to be able to get that data. What do they need it for in the States? It always makes me question them.

“Under the new model, providers only get paid for employment services functions provided to social assistance recipients when a job-match is made, with fees set according to the difficulty of the case.” So it's a performance-based framework that we have given to another country to be able to deal with and to support, which should be support services and employment services to the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's mind-blowing to me, when I think about it.

Let's just take a scenario of someone on Ontario Works: They're making \$733 a month. They're definitely struggling. Let's take it a little further—let's take it as someone who is currently in a tent in one of the parks in our city. They're making \$733. They could have some mental health issues. They could have some addiction issues, or they're getting clean from addiction issues. But what comes with all of that? Do they have a place to wash their clothes? Do they have a place to have a shower? Do they have a place to get good food intake to be able to go to work? Now we have an employment service that has no idea what's happening in our community going to force this person to get a job and being paid to get this person a job. How are they going to work when they have nowhere to sleep, nowhere to clean, nowhere to brush their teeth, nowhere to eat, unless they're eating out of food banks? And when this person fails, the person goes back on the list and they're able to get another placement, and they get paid for the same placement again? I'm not really sure.

We do have some cases that have been sent to us about these same employment services and problems that people have had, so I have a couple of case summaries here, but I just want to touch on a few aspects of it. Remember, this is employment services; they're supposed to support these same individuals to get them into the workforce and whatever they need. They've been denied gas money, which they should be entitled to, to travel to approved activities—being told incorrectly that she didn't qualify for assistance for going to college, and confidentiality issues with her personal information being shared in ways that she did not authorize. And now, here, we see in this legislation the government doubling down. So I've talked a lot about that.

There are a few other things—and time goes fast around here when you have a lot to say, so I'm going to leave it there. There are obviously issues with that that I've raised my concerns about.

I want to talk about schedule 2. Schedule 2, I believe, is—a reservist who needs to have time away from their work to be able to serve our country. I wholeheartedly agree with this. I think whatever we can do for someone in the reserves is still not enough. But I also want to remind the government that those same reservists come home. We

deploy them. We send them to war. We send them to things that no one should have to see. They do that to protect us or to protect others, and we do nothing to protect them when they come home.

In Hamilton, we have identified—and this number is from last year, so it may even be more than that now. We have identified 97 homeless veteran individuals on our streets of Hamilton alone—Hamilton, surrounding, we have over 300.

I was working with the former Minister of Housing on bringing a Homes for Heroes project to the city of Hamilton, wraparound supports—to ensure that veterans in our communities have a safe place, with the supportive wraparound supports around them, to ensure that we're getting them back to their families, getting them back to their loved ones, getting them back to work, getting them into a healthier place. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find land.

I don't know what the developers on the other side are saying—

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: I don't know about the MZO's, on the other side—because, honestly, when we know the developers want an MZO, it happens really quick.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: But our veterans—

Miss Monique Taylor: But our veterans—we're starving for one acre of land. I beg—I message the Minister of Infrastructure on a regular basis. I text her: "Have we found anything? Can we come up with anything?" And the answer continues to be no.

1700

I'm not bashing her on it. I don't know what is happening over there. I really want that land. That's all I know. I know that the veterans in our communities deserve to have that space, and I think it's an actual great model going forward of how we can do supportive housing in our communities. We know that Homes for Heroes has already happened in Kingston, and I think London was another one that was on the list as a possibility, but Hamilton is critical to be able to have that support of the Homes for Heroes.

There are lots of folks in Hamilton, veterans, who are ready. They're at my fingertips. When I call them, they're going to be there, ready to jump on those committees to support that initiative and bring Homes for Heroes to Hamilton.

I'm going to leave that portion there. I do want to talk very quickly in the less than two minutes I have left about the things that, again, are missing from this bill. We've heard of the presumptive legislation; that is nowhere to be seen in this bill. We have scoured it. It is not here.

We've heard a lot about washrooms and facilities on construction sites, to encourage more women on-site. Well, I think not just women, but everyone deserves to have a clean bathroom when at work, and that, again, is not in this bill. There is nowhere where we can find that in this legislation, and yet those are the main talking points if you listen to the government go on throughout their debates. The things that they're talking about most are the

firefighter presumptive legislation and the facilities for women on job sites, neither of which is in the bill.

If the members wanted to talk about these things through debate, it's unfortunate that this wasn't built into the bill, particularly the presumptive legislation for firefighters. That should be in here. It should be written in gold. We should be so grateful for what they have done and what they have given up to protect us. That legislation should be in here, front and centre, for everyone to see and to ensure that it is in legislation forever; that this government, when they decide that they're just going to flip on their heads, can't remove that too, like they did the paid sick days, and like they did for the increase for people on social services, and like they cut—I've said the minimum wage, the paid sick days.

There are so many things that we've seen this government reverse, that people need. I would hate to see that presumptive legislation be another one of those things, because they didn't put it in legislation.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to questions for the member.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I thank the member for her speech. One of the things that I know is definitely within the bill is the credentials recognition. I know I've spent a lot of time in my professional engineer association finding foreign-trained engineers who were not able to get licensed. Certainly to make sure that we have our employees—or, rather, our citizens and permanent residents—have a chance to make a go of it is important, to work in their fields.

The proposal that the government has put forward includes several measures to help clarify the existing legislation where there might have been some gaps and to help people start work in their fields of choice, faster than ever. Would you agree that this is a move in the right direction and helps address the province's labour shortage in critical sectors?

Miss Monique Taylor: You know, there are so many things that we could do to ensure that workers are supported and regulations are in place, like better safety training on the job—we know that that has been left to the unions to be able to do that work, and I'm so grateful for them, but ensuring that the dollars are there to fund them and to support them.

I think increasing wages, increasing benefits, making sure that people have proper pensions, WSIB coverage, get rid of deeming—these are the types of things that people in this province need and want and have been asking for, for many years.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: I want to thank the member for her presentation. Schedule 5—and there are other schedules in this bill—talks about raising fines. You know, a government likes to look tough when they're punishing those who are misbehaving, and one of the ways in which, of course, they like to say that is by raising fines.

When they've done studies on the matter, they find that to discourage bad behaviour, to discourage the breaking of

rules, it's not so much the level of a fine but the chances of getting caught that discourages, but we have a government that has shown in many different areas that they've reduced inspections as a result of their activities and the decisions that they make. What are your thoughts on that matter?

Miss Monique Taylor: Reducing inspections causes death, and we have definitely seen this, as we heard from my seatmate next to me. I'm looking at Trudy Cowan, who is the widow of Fraser Cowan, one of the people who died at Steel Car. And I was looking her up for a reason—because the fine that they received was \$144,000, and that was on their second death at Steel Car. Now, the third death was coming up into court, and she was concerned that this \$144,000 was going to be the set rate once again because they bargained with the company beforehand.

The government needs to truly stand up for workers, stand up for people who have been injured, stand up for families who have lost loved ones on the job by focusing on these kinds of issues.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to the next question.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: Just a follow-up question: One of the most exciting parts of this legislation for me was the Employment Ontario services transformation. The city of Windsor has a partnership with Workforce WindsorEssex, which has taken on that contract, and they do great work. They've been doing great work for a long time. To see that there was confidence in that organization meant a lot.

We've seen remarkable improvements under the new format compared to the old system, helping job seekers find gainful employment so that they can support their families. Would the member opposite agree that we should be doing everything we can to help those on social assistance find meaningful work?

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you to the member opposite. We should be doing everything we can for people on social services. Let's start with doubling the rates. Start with doubling the rates. We have people living in extreme poverty, people with disabilities that are legislated into poverty, and that is disgraceful: \$1,244. I bet you the former minister—he got a thousand bucks just to take a flight. That \$1,244 is not even enough to pay the rent.

We've seen the increases in our food banks. We have seen more tents pop up in our communities. You want to do something? Double the rates. When they actually have rates and they can somewhat afford to live, then we get them into the job field. You can't stick someone who lives in a tent out to work when they can't even afford to eat.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Sarah Jama: Do you think that this bill, Bill 79, has done enough for sick workers—workers who get sick and need sick days on the job?

Miss Monique Taylor: Absolutely not. New Democrats have been working under the member from London West, who brought forward the ten-paid-sick-days legislation, trying to ensure that workers had the ability to take a day off work.

Think about a mom with a special-needs kid who doesn't have an EA in the classroom and has to go and pick her kid up from school because they can't handle the kid in school; there's nobody there. What's that mom going to do? She needs that paid sick day to be able to make up that cost.

But instead, we're telling mom, "Listen, you're going to struggle with supports because your kid hasn't had any supports for autism, and we're going to not keep the kid in school because we don't have enough adults in the classroom, and then we're going to tell you that you can't pay the rent because you couldn't go to work that day." Paid sick days are a social safety net for vulnerable people and people who are working in our community.

1710

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: To the member opposite: I know one of the issues that's been coming into my office lately has been the terms of work, and this piece of legislation appears to address that, giving basic information to employees about their employment as soon as they begin. Having a written record of what your responsibilities are in terms of work is an important step to ensure that workers know what is expected of them and what the requirements of their employment may be.

Would the member opposite agree with the proposal in the legislation to require employers to provide new hires with information about their terms of employment?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm struggling to find that in the legislation; maybe the member wants to point it out. But I'll tell you, people are not coming into my office worrying about the terms of work. They're worrying about actually finding a job that they can afford to work at. You have to be able to earn, like, \$30, \$35 an hour, minimum, just to be able to pay the rent in the city of Hamilton. If you move into the city of Toronto, you better be making a big whopping paycheque to be able to afford that.

More than hearing from my constituents about terms of reference, I'm hearing about the affordability costs and what that's doing to their mental health, when they're struggling each and every day to be able to pay the rent, to get the food on the table, to be able to put gas in the car, to be able to pay the bus fare that it takes for them to be able to even just possibly get to work.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Last question?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I just have to say: I couldn't be prouder to sit beside the member for Hamilton Mountain. She fights every day for the most vulnerable people in our community, and she lets this government know every day how they've let down not just workers with this paltry legislation, but how they failed on the autism file, how they failed to deliver housing for people that need it most and how they've legislated people into poverty with their poverty imposition for people on OW and ODSP.

My question to the member is: Can you just explain that this government has not only legislated poverty, but they don't protect workers—for example, vulnerable workers

who had their wages stolen—and they don't enforce it with employers to make sure that they are paid the wages they are due, and in general, how this government does not actually support vulnerable people through this legislation or at all?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'll ask the member to quickly respond.

Miss Monique Taylor: That was a lot in there, but thank you for that.

I just need the members opposite to see that everything is connected. People can't go to work if they don't have roofs over their head, if they can't afford food. If we do not support them to actually get into a workforce with safe, affordable housing, we're setting them up for failure, and that's only going to provide more money—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We have no more time for this round.

Further debate?

Mr. Trevor Jones: It's exciting to be back in the House for the fall session and I'm honoured to be standing here today in support of Bill 79, the Working for Workers Act, 2023. I want to thank my colleague the former Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development for asking me to speak in support of this bill—a bill that will reduce labour shortages, address workplace safety and protect the rights of workers. I want to offer additional thanks to the member from Scarborough Centre and the member from Mississauga–Malton for their hard work on this important file.

This bill builds on legislation previously passed in 2021 and 2022 which has tangibly improved the day-to-day lives of Ontario workers. I'm confident that this bill will build on that legacy to create better outcomes for Ontarians across the province.

Legislation previously passed included the right-to-disconnect policy, which allows Ontarians to draw a clear line between work and home life. We also banned a common practice of employers using non-compete clauses, allowing workers greater freedom to apply their skills and advance their careers without fear of reprisal from previous employers. We've removed many barriers for internationally trained workers so they can access jobs and master qualifications and skill sets for jobs right here in Ontario. We also require recruiters and temporary help agencies to be licensed as a means of protecting vulnerable workers, which is an issue very close to my heart.

That list certainly isn't exhaustive by any means, but the positive changes seen here were expanded. We saw the establishment of foundational rights and protections for digital platform workers who provide rideshare, delivery and courier services to all of us; improvements in the level of employer transparency when monitoring electronic devices such as computers and cellphones; and an enhancement of workplace health and safety by increasing the maximum fines for operators and directors of businesses that neglect to provide a safe working environment.

Speaker, over the last few years, our government has done a lot for workers in Ontario, especially those—and

those have been very well received by the public, but our work certainly isn't done yet. Today, I'd like to talk about this third critical piece of legislation which, if passed, will build upon previous legislation in very substantive ways. I'm extremely passionate about this specific legislation because these changes will provide all workers with tangible enhanced benefits. These enhancements will have positive impacts on the broadest spectrum of workers across Ontario and particularly safeguard some of the most vulnerable workers in communities like mine in Chatham-Kent–Leamington and Pelee Island.

As a former OPP officer, I understand the inherent risks and challenges of front-line workers and what they face on a day-to-day basis, particularly those who work in emergency services. Ontario's volunteer and professional firefighters work tirelessly every day to protect our communities. Firefighters answer a wide range of calls for duty that range from traffic collisions to chemical hazards, building collapses, structural fires and natural disasters. I was so proud of the firefighters I worked alongside from Leamington Fire Services and Chatham-Kent Fire and Rescue and the many professional and volunteer services I encountered all across Ontario. As a member of the OPP's emergency response team and public order units, I had the privilege of serving in communities large and small all across Ontario. Wherever I went I witnessed the dedicated, selfless, highly trained fire personnel who answered the call of duty at any time, in any weather. These were the people who rushed into danger when others had to flee. On more than one occasion I know that I was able to return home to my family safely because of the efforts of a firefighter.

Nevertheless, this risk comes with great personal risk, both immediate and long-term. Firefighters do have a cancer rate four times higher than the general population. It's not coincidental. Despite modern personal protective equipment, firefighters can still be subjected to exposure from fire, smoke and a wide range of chemicals that can, over time, cause a number of cancers and other diseases. If passed, this bill will expand the list of presumptive cancers to include thyroid and pancreatic cancer, two of the most prevalent, so firefighters can access the benefits and support services they need and they're entitled to through the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. This bill would apply to full-time, volunteer, and part-time firefighters as well as those hired by Indigenous band councils. Most importantly, to ensure no one gets left behind, this legislation, if passed, will be retroactive back to January 1960. Speaker, similar legislation has already been passed in Manitoba, Yukon, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. Now it's our time to support those who support our communities every day.

Our former minister, his parliamentary assistants and their entire dedicated staff conducted extensive stakeholder consultations, and this specific portion of the bill was the number one ask from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. This summer we witnessed the bravery, skills and selfless efforts of firefighters who

worked across northern Ontario and in communities all across the province to keep Ontarians safe amid some of the most trying conditions. This bill will serve to safeguard thousands of firefighters from across Ontario and create a legacy of support to those who place themselves in harm's way.

1720

Speaker, another important feature contained in this bill directly addresses the unprecedented labour shortage in Ontario. Presently, Ontario's employers report that over 300,000 jobs remain unfilled. To deliver on our ambitious infrastructure plans, there are going to be 100,000 construction jobs required to be filled in the next 10 years alone. There is, however, a clear disparity between supply and demand, and we need to act now to fix it.

To address the disparity and to encourage our high school students to pursue stable, high-paying and rewarding jobs in the skilled trades, this bill develops a clear pathway to apprenticeship as early as grade 11. I've witnessed first-hand how early exposure to opportunities in the skilled trades can inspire high school students to pursue these in-demand careers, through visits to Blenheim District High School, John McGregor Secondary School, Ursuline College Chatham and my alma mater, Leamington District Secondary School. We saw first-hand the excitement that is building in young people being exposed to and pursuing skills in the skilled trades.

Throughout my riding of Chatham-Kent-Leamington, there is excitement growing because people know we're making these investments right now. Recently, I was joined by my friend and former colleague the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to announce an investment of over \$460,000 through the Skills Development Fund for 24 youth from Chatham-Kent, providing financial support as they pursue training and apprenticeship in high-demand trades.

To succeed, Ontario employers will need to attract both men and women with a wide range of interests and skills to fill the current and future vacancies, knowing that of the 600,000 people currently working in Ontario's construction industry, only 10% are women. Most of these jobs were perhaps deemed traditionally male because they were viewed as physical, physically demanding, even dirty. But the reality is, both men and women, with the proper training and mentorship, can succeed in performing the wide range of tasks necessary to have a successful and long career in any one of these trades.

One specific limitation that was identified as being restrictive was access to PPE, personal protective equipment, and other gear that properly fit and could be comfortably worn by a wide range of body types in both men and women. Now, modern equipment is designed, marketed and available to suit men and women in all shapes and sizes. This bill, if passed, will codify this into law to ensure properly fitting PPE is accessible to any man or woman wanting to pursue a career in the trades.

One further modernization to job sites across Ontario that was long overdue and will be remedied if this bill

passes is access to clean, women-only washroom facilities. Although it may seem trivial to those not working outdoors in the elements for long periods of time, access to well-maintained, private, gender-specific washroom facilities is a necessary component to attracting and welcoming both men and women to the wide range of jobs available in the trades across Ontario—jobs that anyone can be proud to do to support their families.

This bill, if passed, remedies both issues by requiring that appropriate, proper-fitting PPE is available and provided to both men and women, and that well-maintained, gender-specific washrooms are available on all job sites. To do so, our government will ensure that both men and women feel welcome, feel safe and they're fully able to participate in these well-paying, stable jobs in industries across Ontario.

Speaker, our competitive advantage and our recipe for our success is to truly grow Ontario through our hard-working people. Working for workers means investing in the training and skills, ensuring all workers feel safe, welcome and protected, and allowing workers to flourish and contribute in a meaningful way to their families and to our economy. The return on this investment will allow our people to grow Ontario. This legislation, if passed, will ensure the most in-demand careers are more attractive and more accessible to all.

Another action this government is taking to address labour shortages and to ensure more Ontarians receive a stable paycheck is expanding social services and helping people find those meaningful careers. Speaker, over 600,000 people in this province are on social assistance programs. Many are seeking to find good, meaningful jobs to support themselves and their families. This bill will tangibly help Ontario job seekers access these very resources by expanding enhanced employment services to London, Windsor-Sarnia, Kitchener-Waterloo, Barrie, Durham and Ottawa.

Employment service programs can be a critical stepping stone for all job seekers to find meaningful careers that match their skill sets and interests. Through job matching and job coaching, a wide range of people—including citizens with disabilities, youth with barriers, and newcomers—can find a fulfilling career that provides them with financial autonomy.

I'd like to note that we unveiled the first round of this program in Peel, Hamilton-Niagara and Muskoka-Kawartha with great success. Already, Speaker, the program has helped 17,000 people, including 5,700 on social assistance programs.

These programs give people the tools they need to gain independence and support themselves and their families.

I look forward to the expansion of all these services across Ontario—for active job seekers to get their first job, apply their skill sets and interests in a different direction, or advance their careers.

In addition to providing Ontarians with easier access to employment, we're also taking action to ensure employees are protected in the workplace. One of the ways we're doing so is by ensuring workers have comprehensive

employment information at the beginning of their very first shift; this includes a written agreement regarding pay, hours of work, and work location. By doing so, we're clarifying expectations and obligations both for workers and their employers. Clear, written communication from the outset will create the conditions for a transparent, mutually beneficial working relationship between employer and employee, with better potential for successful outcomes and reduced opportunity for anyone to be taken advantage of.

Although opinions may vary, for better or for worse, COVID-19 led to many changes in our workplaces—particularly where we work. In the latter half of 2022, over 1.4 million workers in Ontario had exclusively remote jobs, and an additional 800,000 worked on a hybrid model, working a portion of their hours at home and the remainder in an office or other workplace. Naturally, these workers deserve the same employee protections that all in-person employees receive, but there is currently a gap in the legislation. An amendment to this bill will ensure that remote workers are afforded all the same opportunities and protections that their in-person counterparts have.

For example, the proposed legislation would require companies to deliver eight weeks of minimum notice of termination and adequate compensation with pay-in-lieu, if necessary. Although it seemed sensational when we first heard about it, we've witnessed too many examples of workers across industries—including some of our most prominent tech companies—receiving impersonal, mass notifications of a job loss via a virtual call or even through the media. This is truly unacceptable. As a government, it's our responsibility to protect workers and ensure they have ample notice of layoffs so that they can be supported and adequately plan for their future. These small changes can make big differences in the everyday lives of any worker in any industry and will prevent workers from being disrupted in providing for themselves and their families.

Speaker, I now move that the question be put.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Mr. Jones has moved that the question be now put. I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Piccini has moved third reading of Bill 79, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

1730

NEW MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 8, 2023, on the motion to recognize newly elected members of provincial Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Further debate?

MPP Karen McCrimmon: Good afternoon, Madam Speaker. Colleagues, it's with tremendous humility and gratitude that I rise for the first time in the Ontario Legislature. I want to begin by thanking the people of Kanata–Carleton for once again trusting me with the honour and privilege of being their elected representative. I'm ready and I'm eager to represent them at the provincial Legislature, and I promise to work hard every day to serve them.

I must also acknowledge I would not be in this honourable place without the love and support of my husband and children. They have been the ones who have made the sacrifices needed for me to do the work to serve the people of Kanata–Carleton. I love you so much.

Madam Speaker, it was a crazy summer, with a by-election in the heat of July. I just want to say thank you to all of the volunteers, the donors and the supporters who came out day after day, night after night, working hard to make that victory possible. We knocked on almost 20,000 doors in that short election, and I heard loud and clear what the priorities of my constituents are. They're worried about the protection of public health care. They're worried about the protection of public education, and they're worried about their green spaces and the environment—so many important issues, and they all need to be addressed.

Kanata–Carleton is a beautiful and diverse riding that has attracted people from all over the world to work in its high-tech business park that actually produces over \$15 billion in GDP annually to Canada. It employs the best and the brightest of this country, and it's the centre of innovation and entrepreneurship.

We are also blessed to have a thriving agricultural industry with many generational farms producing dairy and livestock and cash crops, and we are lucky enough to be able to host the Carp agricultural fair, a tradition that stretches back to 1863, older than the country itself. But many rural residents are worried about their way of life. They're worried about being able to sustain their farms. They need to know that both their farms and their way of life will be protected. We need farmers to keep farming. Paving over prime farmland is a folly of the highest order.

Madam Speaker, I want to give a shout-out to two long-time residents of Kanata–Carleton who represent the very best of community builders: 98-year-old Roly Armitage, a World War II veteran who served our country with distinction. Juanita Snelgrove is a bright, beautiful 106-year-old who has always served her community with heart and commitment. Roly and Juanita, thank you for being such an inspiration to all of us and for serving our wonderful community.

As provincial parliamentarians, we have a tremendous responsibility to serve the people of Ontario. Let me be clear, Madam Speaker, that I strongly believe in quality public health care for everyone and a strong public education system for all of our children, and I will do

everything I can to protect the public green spaces and farmland in my riding and indeed right across Ontario.

In the past six years, my riding has had two record-setting floods of the century and a tornado. Many people are still recovering, trying to recover what was lost. Preventing these kinds of catastrophic events is not something easily done; however, protecting the natural landscapes that help mitigate extreme weather events is something that is definitely achievable. The public green space in my riding is critical to the health of the greater watershed and plays a vital role in flood management in the local area. Protecting critical green spaces is something that is within our power, and we need to do whatever is necessary to protect them so we don't end up facing the serious consequences of what is expected to be more frequent and more severe weather events, like flooding.

We must incentivize the building of safe, sustainable, affordable homes that also does not jeopardize the safety and well-being and security of others. We have some challenges ahead of us, but we have the skills and the talent needed to overcome these challenges if we do what's best for the greatest number of people—if we do what is the greatest good and if we work together.

I saw two signs yesterday—my first day at Queen's Park. One said, "Public pain for private gain," and I heard a lot about pain in the by-election, knocking on doors of people who were hurting because of this dismantling of our public health care system. The number one issue at the door was the lack of primary care—the lack of family doctors. There are no silver-bullet solutions because of the damage inflicted on our health care system by COVID, but there are things we can do today to improve the situation in both the short and long term.

Another sign said, "Health for the many instead of wealth for the few." Madam Speaker, these are important messages. Our prime mission should be to serve the many, to serve the greater good, to serve all the people, not just the powerful and the wealthy few. We need to be listening to these messages. We need to be taking action, to make our governmental decisions as fair, open, transparent and democratic as possible. We also must be cognizant that introducing a profit motive into our public services brings with it considerable risk.

It's important to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge the challenges facing us. We owe our constituents no less. We earned the trust of their vote and now our actions will determine if we retain that trust. We need to look at the long-term impacts of decisions we make. We need to ask ourselves: What are the potential consequences of our actions, both intended and unintended? Are we addressing a need today, only to create the problems of the future? This is something we need to consider, and we need to ensure that our decisions are not creating hardship and risk, not only for our children and grandchildren, but also for the most vulnerable among us—the elderly, the sick, the disabled. They all deserve our care and support.

That's why decisions must not only be based on data, evidence, science and statistics, but also on compassion. I will work hard every day to help make the best decisions

possible. I don't care who has the good idea which will help people—I will work with you. I will give you the credit; I don't need the credit. I just want to help make people's lives better and I think the people in this chamber feel the same way.

This is what I will be doing when I consider legislation. I'll look at the short-term and long-term impacts, and my military and aviation past has led me to look at the risks and dangers of any particular action or decision. As always, the devil is in the details, and those details are important if we want the best outcomes for people. I want to make sure we use this lens to guide our actions to create the best opportunity for people to prosper and live their best lives. We need to be clear with our constituents on the priorities and objectives and plans, and we must hold ourselves accountable by measuring and evaluating our progress.

Madam Speaker, it's not what we say that matters; it's what we do. Sometimes we need to remember that here in question period.

The constituents of Kanata–Carleton have heard me, many times, say again and again—I'm going to share it with you. It's my mother's favourite saying: It is not happiness that makes you grateful; it is gratefulness that makes you happy. Let me close by saying how very grateful I am to be here today, to be with all of you, to work with all of you, to be the best servant I can be. My thanks to you all.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

I believe the member for Nepean has a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes, on a point of order, Speaker: I know you're going to rule it out as a point of order, but I think it's incumbent upon all of us in this Legislature to welcome new members. I'll always remember my maiden speech and some of the funniest things that were said by Peter Kormos after I finished.

I will say this because I've known the member opposite from Kanata–Carleton for quite some time: I want to formally congratulate her in the House on behalf of the government and all of my colleagues. I know we're proud to have you here. And Karen, if I may call you Karen just for the next few minutes, I want to say thank you as well to your family. It must have taken a lot of time to convince them to run again after having been in retirement, so they are—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. I do have to interrupt the member. I would have allowed a shorter point of order, but it's really going out of—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There's no question. I'll give you 10 seconds.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I want to say thank you for your public service. I know that you will work hard for the people of Kanata–Carleton, and by extension the people of the city of Ottawa, and I wish you well and great success.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Orders of the day? The Minister of Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: I move adjournment of debate.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Simcoe North has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Orders of the day? The Minister for Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Jill Dunlop: No further business.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 6 p.m.

The House recessed from 1743 to 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Deputy Clerk / Sous-Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell, Wai Lam (William) Wong

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresce, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Hon. / L'hon. Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario Premier / Premier ministre Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hazell, Andrea (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Hon. / L'hon Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiwiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Hon. / L'hon. Todd J. (PC)	Durham	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
McCrimmon, Karen (LIB)	Kanata—Carleton	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (IND)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Deputy Speaker / Vice-Présidente Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Small Business / Ministre associée déléguée aux Petites Entreprises
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Hon. / L'hon Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	