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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 5 December 2016

Lundi 5 décembre 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

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Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 5 December 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 5 décembre 2016

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you and good morning, Speaker. I'd like to introduce my friend Ishmael Van Der Rassel from the Ontario Métis, and my friend Becky Coles from Newstalk 1010.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I also want to add my greetings to Becky Coles, producer extraordinaire from Newstalk 1010. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to introduce Meghan Lang-Ferguson, who is here in our gallery from Mississauga South. Her uncle Frank was a World War II casualty in an unmarked grave that she found and was able to repatriate. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce students from St. Mike's college school in Toronto. I actually went to St. Mike's myself and they are here today: grade 8 students from St. Michael's College School visiting the Legislature. They are joined by Darryl Giancola, Matthew Pagano, Steve Antolin, Kevin Shaughnessy and Chris Callaghan from their faculty. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome to good friend of mine, Diane Deans, who is visiting Queen's Park. Diane is also an Ottawa city councillor and I want to welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome today in the west members' gallery Kerry Henrikson from Sarnia and her daughter Lena Henrikson, accompanied by Erin Kwarciak from PANDAS/PANS Ontario.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'm just delighted to welcome to Queen's Park today a constituent of mine, David Vandenberg. He is a wonderful young man who cares deeply about our community, works in the not-for-profit sector, and most recently did an amazing food drive. We're very proud of David and I want to thank him and welcome him to Queen's Park. Thank you, David.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today's page captain is Victoria Armstrong from Chatham-Kent-Essex. With her today is her mother, Lora Armstrong; her brother Richard; and a good family friend, Coleen Sanson, in the members' gallery. Thank you and welcome.

M. Grant Crack: Il me fait grand plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue à deux résidents de ma circonscription de

Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. I'd like to welcome M. Léo Proulx qui est ici avec M. Michel-André Lavergne. They're with Sauvons La Nation.

Also, to Margaret Benke and John Irven, who are also here this morning, we welcome you. Thank you for the meeting with the Minister of Energy. It was wonderful.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to welcome Margaret Benke and John Irven from my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Would the members please join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late Ian Deans, MPP for Wentworth during the 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st Parliaments, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his daughter Megan McGovern; son Jeffrey Deans and his wife, Jenn; son Ian Deans Jr. and his wife, Melanie Barrick; daughter Trish Folino and her husband, Dave McCutcheon; his sister, Janis Gallacher, and her husband, Brian Gallacher; grandson Adrian Folino and his wife, Jaclyn Lee; his former wife, Diane Deans; and family friend Julia Keast. Welcome, and thank you for being here today.

Also in the Speaker's gallery we have many former members who have come to pay their respects: Mr. Odoardo Di Santo, MPP for Downsview during the 30th, 31st and 32nd Parliaments; Mr. Stephen Henry Lewis, MPP for Scarborough West during the 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th and 31st Parliaments; Mr. Ross McClellan, MPP for Bellwoods during the 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd Parliaments; and Mr. David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament. Thank you for being with us to show your respects.

IAN DEANS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to recognize the former member of provincial Parliament from Wentworth, Mr. Ian Deans, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent. Do we agree? Agreed.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." That's good advice, as forks in the road often lead to important personal transitions. Ian Deans understood this better than most: a family man, firefighter, professional soccer player, NDP MPP and House leader, professor, part-time MBA student—he did graduate—leadership candidate,

NDP MP and federal House leader, and chair of the federal Public Service Staff Relations Board. The list goes on.

No matter what Ian did, he would blaze a trail. His mother, Margaret, and father, Bob, inspired him. His wife, June, was his rock. The whole Deans clan was always supportive of Ian because politics was a broad family affair.

As smart and charismatic and articulate as he was—in my opinion, next to Stephen Lewis, Ian was probably the most articulate member of the Ontario Legislative Assembly—Ian was, down deep, a very plain and simple man, a man who saw injustice and fought to end it, who saw pain and tried to heal it, and who fought for anyone and everyone with a just cause. He loved his constituents and they loved him back. They may not have always agreed with Ian but they trusted him, believing he always had their best interests at heart. Could that be said of all of us? Simply put, Ian gave those who held nothing sacred something to believe in.

I first met Ian Deans at my own fork in the road in the early 1970s when I undertook a graduate school internship with him here at Queen's Park. Ian was the best professor I ever studied with and the person who most inspired me to a life of public service.

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I helped organize a couple of his campaigns, which in hindsight was fairly easy considering his overwhelming popularity as a politician. We became lifelong friends. For a couple of years, I did constituency work with Ian. Good training, probably, right? No constituency office, no cellphones, no computers, little support staff—I think there was one for every six MPPs back then—but gosh, did he get things done.

I remember spending entire days in the Legislative Assembly library researching special topics for Ian. Once I prepared material on the warble fly act. Now, Jeff would understand what that is, and Ernie and John, but probably few others. I prepared the material, and Ian then gave a very well-received speech on the topic. He thanked me for my hard work, and kiddingly, even sarcastically, said, "You never know when your new knowledge of the warble fly act might come in handy." Neither of us knew at the time he was speaking to a future minister of agriculture and food.

Ian excelled at holding the government's feet to the fire at question period. He had a secret strategy, and I'm going to reveal it, probably for the first time. You see, back in those days, the Hamilton Spectator published twice a day—you may remember this, Andrea—at 3 a.m. and 3 p.m. June, his wife of many years, or I, would pick up the early morning paper and read portions of it to Ian on the way to Queen's Park. He would then be quick on his feet, asking the government tough questions about the very emerging issues that reporters were preparing articles on for the afternoon or next-day paper. Needless to say, Ian appeared, and rightly so, to be on top of everything.

Ian once suggested to me that the single greatest ability any person in public service can offer is the gift of

availability. He worked harder than anyone I've ever met in politics. He would frequently represent his constituents at various board hearings, including the OMB, and he would represent them better than any lawyer ever could.

Ian was as strong an advocate for organized labour as he was a relentless supporter of individual rights, including his own. A bit of a libertarian, Ian fiercely debated the seatbelt legislation when it was first passed. At one point, he simply refused to wear his seat belt. As a friend, I had to refuse to travel with him to Queen's Park unless he did it up, which he did, but boy, was he ticked at me.

I want to extend my condolences to Ian's family, especially his children, Trish, Ian, Jeff and Megan, and his sister, Janis. I know firsthand just how often the spouse and children of politicians pay the price for a life dedicated to public service. We thank you for sharing your husband, father, brother, grandfather with us, and with all the people of Ontario. Thanks largely to you, Ian Deans has left a legacy of difference-making.

Despite the fact that Parkinson's robbed Ian of his spirit and ability to communicate over much of the last decade, Ian, as anyone who knew him would attest, continued as best he could to stay engaged with his family and his community. I will always remember Ian Deans with fondness and thankfulness for his friendship, mentorship and the great life he lived.

I want to end with the words of a good friend Ian and I shared, the late, great Reverend Dr. Tommy Douglas, who once said this, interestingly, at the funeral of a friend: "If, instead of flowers, we could plant a beautiful thought in the heart of a friend, that would be to give as the angels give." Throughout his life, Ian Deans gave as the angels give. We give thanks for a life well lived. Rest in peace, buddy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Toby Barrett: We in the Ontario PC party are honoured to be part of today's tribute, and we welcome the family and the friends who are here joining us today.

When I think back to the 1960s and early 1970s, as a farm boy south of Hamilton, I vividly recall public awareness and debate on a number of hot issues: the Waffle party, the War Measures Act, and Ian Deans.

Back then, you relied on television aerials and rabbit ears. The only station we could get was CHCH, so we got the news from Norm Marshall, of course, from the Spectator and from Hamilton radio, all of which highlighted news stories and politicians that, as a young fellow, I always found a lot more exciting and controversial compared to our local offerings in Haldimand-Norfolk. Case in point: the Waffle party, as we knew it, was actually originally a radical left-wing group within the Ontario New Democratic Party that, back in 1969, drafted the Manifesto for an Independent Socialist Canada. This was known as the Waffle Resolution, espousing Canadian nationalism and solidarity with Quebec's sovereignty movement.

Wentworth MPP Ian Deans was against it and, since his election in 1967, was known for fighting for what he felt was right. In 1970 he favoured a resolution that would force the Waffle to be expelled from the party. He

was opposed to the Waffle because it recruited its own members, raised its own funds and created the manifesto. That resolution ended up passing at the NDP convention in 1972.

Back in the day, we clearly recall the War Measures Act. In 1970, Ian broke with his NDP colleagues and expressed support for Prime Minister Trudeau's implementation of war measures during the FLQ crisis.

In 1978, Ian decided to run for leadership of the provincial NDP to replace Stephen Lewis. Deans's earlier support for the War Measures Act became a point of contention, I'm told, even though he had, in later years, recanted his position, saying that it was wrong and that he regretted his decision. He was initially projected as the front-runner, but he did lose by a mere 200 votes to Ottawa's Michael Cassidy—in part, as I understand it, because of his support for the War Measures Act.

Deans resigned from this Legislature; the next year, ran federally; won handily Hamilton Mountain; and served as acting official House leader and was the NDP's trade, housing and industry critic.

Some of us do recall the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was a bit of a rough-and-tumble Hamilton politician, one of the best speakers and debaters in this Legislature and also in Parliament in Ottawa. He was also seen as a great listener, known for his honesty—certainly when it came to political viewpoints. If he disagreed with you, he would tell you. He was known to act on things he felt were right, even if on occasion it meant crossing the party line.

In 1986, Ian decided to leave politics and accept an appointment from, of all people, then-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to head the Public Service Staff Relations Board. Ian Deans's relationship with Brian Mulroney during question period, I understand, is legendary. From what I read, he did have an ability to get under Mulroney's skin on occasion.

He took an appointment from a man that he had publicly lambasted. It shocked his NDP colleagues. He indicated that that service in public office—something like 10 years—was one of the best jobs he ever had, second only to being an elected representative. At the board, Ian's reputation and integrity were of utmost importance. He was very productive dealing with cases.

As recently as 2008, Ian seemed to continue running for office. He considered another run federally, but he did step aside.

Obviously, there are many here who know him better than I. I just knew him through the media, primarily CHCH and the Spectator. He will long be remembered as a passionate fighter. He put the best interests of others forward and had that fire within.

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Again, on behalf of the PC Party, to Ian's family and friends who are here today, we extend our heartfelt sympathies.

Thank you, Ian Deans, for your tireless service to the people of our province and our nation. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Miss Monique Taylor: Alexander Fleming, Robert Burns, Johnnie Walker—just some of the people from Kilmarnock and its surrounding area in Scotland that the world can be grateful for. Johnnie Walker gave us his Black and Red Labels. Alexander Fleming revolutionized medicine when he discovered penicillin. Robert Burns, a poet at a time when class and privilege were accepted as the natural order, wrote of equality and global solidarity of honest working people.

We in Hamilton, and indeed, all of Canada, are truly grateful for another of Kilmarnock's sons, Ian Deans, who chose to make Hamilton his home.

Ian Deans was the MPP for the riding of Wentworth from 1967 to 1979, a riding which included a significant part of the riding that I now represent. It is a great honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the NDP caucus to pay tribute to him.

I would like to welcome his family and friends who are here with us today: his daughter Megan McGovern; his sons, Jeff and Ian, along with their spouses, Jenn and Melanie; his daughter Trish Folino, and her spouse, Dave McCutcheon; his sister, Janis, and her spouse, Brian Gallacher; Diane Deans, his former wife; his grandson Adrian Folino, and his spouse, Jaclyn Lee; and family friend Julia Keast. I'm glad you were all able to join us here today as we pay tribute to a remarkable man.

I also want to give a shout-out to those who can't be with us today: grandchildren Melissa, Antony, Andrew, Sage, Evan, Willow and Henry, and great-grandchildren Elizabeth, Kaitlin, Ava, Ben and Caleb—quite an array, who I'm sure brought plenty of joy to Ian's life.

I didn't know Ian Deans, although I did have the pleasure to meet him a couple of times. But I've had the opportunity to speak to a number of people who knew him very well. From all accounts, I missed out on something special.

He is remembered as someone who cared passionately about people, someone who could relate and connect to all people from every walk of life, and he relished his role as an MPP and being in a position of one who could help those who most needed it. Perhaps that reflected his previous career as a firefighter. Perhaps it came from his love of poetry and, in particular, the work of Robert Burns. More likely, it was just who he was.

I don't know if Burns created Ian's passion to fight on behalf of the underdog or merely fuelled it. Either way, it made a great difference to the lives of many people when he took up their cause to fight for them. In one of his former colleagues' words, "He worked like hell for the people in his riding, and they continued to vote for him because of it."

He had a charismatic presence. When he entered a room, people would flock to him. He was known as a wonderful orator and debater. He did his research, and he knew the issues inside and out. When he stood up to speak, everyone listened.

He had an uncanny ability to be, at the same time, the guy next door and a respected legislator. That was reflected in his appointment as the NDP House leader

during the first minority government in Ontario since the Second World War.

I know from speaking to Brian Charlton, the former MPP for Hamilton Mountain, of the significant role played by Ian in shaping him when he first arrived at Queen's Park in 1977.

After leaving Queen's Park, Ian became the member of Parliament for Hamilton Mountain, again becoming the House leader during his time in Ottawa. David Christopherson, the MP for Hamilton Centre, worked for Ian during this time and believes him to be a true leader among the people.

David tells this story of them driving to an event, sharing casual chitchat. When they got out of the car, Ian walked several yards ahead of them, not speaking to anyone. He went into a complete zone. Wondering if everything was okay, David asked Ian's wife if there was a problem. She said, "No, he's just writing his speech." Fifteen minutes later, Ian stood at a podium, giving a barnburner of a speech that would have taken a whole team hours to write. But Ian did it in the walk towards the building.

The NDP was proud and fortunate to have Ian Deans in our ranks. But Ian was a political brand unto himself. He attracted votes from all across the political spectrum because of his dedication and commitment to the people who elected him.

After fighting fires, his fire never died. Even though he began to have health issues, he continued to run for political office later in life. Although he didn't win, his dedication to making his community a better place never left him.

His daughter Megan tells me that she grew up in a family that lived for politics, but it wasn't all serious. Ian enjoyed singing and playing the piano, as well as making people laugh with silly jokes.

Politics can be a demanding life, and from what I've been told, for those who knew him, that would have been particularly true of Ian Deans. For many, that would mean missing a lot of family events, but not for Ian. According to Ian Jr., his dad was a man of endurance. He would put in 25-hour days driving back and forth between Hamilton and Toronto, not only for the local events and meetings, but also so as not to miss his children's events, and hockey and baseball games. That couldn't have been easy for Ian or for his family, but to Ian, it was worth it.

To his family, thank you so much for sharing him with us. I hope you leave here today knowing that he made so many happy. Hamilton is a better place for having Ian Deans.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all the members for their very kind and heartfelt comments and tributes to Ian Deans. To the family, thank you for the gift of Ian. On behalf of the Legislature, we will see that you receive a copy and a DVD of the tributes paid today. Hopefully it will have a lasting memory for you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. As CTV's Paul Bliss said last week, the Auditor General's report "contains probably some of the worst examples of government waste, mismanagement, and incompetence that [he's] seen in [his] 14 years" at Queen's Park. The stories, he added, were "sure to trigger anger and disbelief." And: "The auditor's report details story after story of government incompetence and waste of taxpayers' money."

Mr. Speaker, now that the Premier has returned, which one of these examples of incredible scandal, waste and incompetence would she like to apologize for?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say that I am very happy to be back, and I welcome the two newest members of the Legislature, the member for Ottawa-Vanier and the member for Niagara West-Glanbrook. Welcome to the Legislature.

I will report to the Legislature and to the people of Ontario that the trade missions to Japan and Korea were very successful—about \$240 million worth of agreements and 426 new jobs for Ontario. But beyond that, the over 45 businesses and education leaders that travelled with us to Korea and to Japan made contacts that will lead to research, to further business, to benefits for both Ontario and their jurisdictions. So they were very successful.

It's great to be back, and I'm happy to talk about the Auditor General in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: That wasn't even remotely an answer, so I'll go back to the question about the Auditor General's report.

Let's talk about some of the highlights. The government built upside-down bridges. Let me repeat: The government built upside-down bridges. The Auditor General said that the cap-and-trade scheme won't actually reduce emissions in Ontario, as the Liberals had—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The Liberals will force Ontario to send \$466 million to California in the next four years. The government has now wasted \$8 billion on eHealth for an incomplete system, with no end in sight.

Mr. Speaker, where do I begin? These stories are incredible, and I would appreciate an apology to the people of Ontario, rather than another answer that is a diversion. The people deserve an apology for this incompetence.

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the ministers are very eager to reinforce what they said last week when the Auditor General's report came out. But Mr. Speaker, first let me just say that we feel very strongly that the Auditor General has a very important role to play in looking at what is happening in government, on making

recommendations and providing insight into the work of government.

In many instances, the work on implementing the auditor's recommendations is already under way, because we know that there are challenges. She has identified some of those.

But it's important that we work with officers of the Legislature so that we can make improvements. It is the Auditor General's job to shine a light on issues within government, to work with ministries to make sure that changes happen, and that's exactly what's under way. Many of the recommendations are already being acted upon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The government paid \$8 million a year in bonuses to companies that let roads crack and crumble. The Liberals rewarded one company with another \$39-million contract after they built a bridge upside down.

The Premier is a former Minister of Transportation. How could she let this happen? Does the Premier have any remorse for rewarding a company that built a bridge upside down? Please, explain to the people of Ontario how you can reward incompetence like that.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, I want to begin by acknowledging where I was this morning. I was actually in the wonderful community of Barrie earlier this morning, and in Barrie I was standing alongside the member of Parliament for Barrie—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, I was there alongside the member from Barrie. I was there alongside Mayor Lehman from Barrie—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All right. If we're going to start, I'll get into it as soon as I sit down. Member from Nepean–Carleton, come to order. If you'd like, I'll go to warnings. Just signal.

Finish, please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, I was there alongside the member. I was there alongside the mayor. We were there today specifically to announce brand new year-round weekend GO train service for that community.

Today is also the day that the brand new Gormley GO station, delivered on time and on budget, is open and taking trains in Richmond Hill. Both of these examples and so many more are a clear indication of our Premier's and our government's determination to build the province up.

I don't understand why that leader can't see a way to support our initiatives to help his community of Barrie and every community around this province. I've said it before; I'll say it again: He should get on board with our plan.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Since I can't get a justification on the upside-down bridge, let's try something else.

As of last Friday, the traumatic stress services workplace program at the London Health Sciences Centre is no more. It has been cancelled by this government. First responders battling PTSD have used this program, and it has incredible results, life-altering results. But now the next closest place for first responders—where they can receive treatment—is here in Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier commit to funding to make sure that we can reopen the PTSD program in London? It is essential.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that excellent question, because it deals with an issue that I think society has been able to come to grips with just in the recent past, and that obviously, I think, society should have been paying a lot more attention to.

What the question, as I understand it, revolves around is that, in an attempt to ensure that services are available to all workers who end up having to deal with the symptoms of PTSD, there are regional centres for those workers to avail themselves of. There is one available in London, there's one in Toronto, and there's one in another area of the province that makes it easier.

As a result of a decision that was made by that organization, they have decided to wind up that program. There's still a very strong interest from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to ensure that services are provided to people where they need them, close to their home.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: The traumatic stress services workplace program at the London Health Sciences Centre was closing because of a \$500,000 shortfall in funding from this Liberal government. First responders in London and in areas throughout Ontario have been calling the news devastating. These individuals have served our province with distinction and honour, but the government is turning their backs on them when they need help most.

Mr. Speaker, the AG's report has shown hundreds of millions of dollars in waste. When it comes to our first responders—\$500,000 to make sure we have access to PTSD treatment in London. Don't turn your back on these proud first responders. Please ensure, Premier, that the funding is there. Yes or no: Will you make sure that treatment is available in London?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you again for the supplementary question. There's no government in the history of the province of Ontario that has done more for PTSD and first responders than the government of Kathleen Wynne. I think the first responders will acknowledge that.

This is an issue that has plagued us. It has come through the armed forces. We have found that the same evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder exists in people

who go to work for us on a daily basis. Our firefighters, our police officers, our paramedics and those who work in our corrections system came to us and asked us to take action on post-traumatic stress disorder. We've put in a presumptive program so that they don't have to go through the typical application process at the WSIB. But more than anything, what we've done is put in a prevention program, because as I stand today, PTSD is, as we know it, incurable. The best thing you can do is make sure that people don't get PTSD in the first place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier, directly: I applauded the government when they finally listened to the opposition calls for legislation on PTSD treatment. But here's the thing, Mr. Speaker: It's one thing to bring legislation in—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's one thing to bring legislation in, but it's all for naught if you can't get treatment. They're closing the places where first responders can get treatment. How disingenuous is that? How inconsistent is that?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You can't say that. Please withdraw.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: How does it make sense to say that you want better access for people with PTSD and then close the treatment centre? Those first responders need somewhere to go.

I assume the Deputy Premier will be urging the Premier to do the right thing and not abandon London, not pass the buck. My question to the Premier is; Will you make sure that first responders in the city of London and southwestern Ontario can get treatment for PTSD and promise us here today that the funding will not be cut?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition sounds like the rooster taking credit for the sunrise. He knew it happened; he was around somewhere, but he had absolutely nothing to do with it, Speaker. That's exactly what's coming up here.

When we needed you in this House, you weren't here. The member from Sarnia-Lambton raised this issue and said, "We need services right around the province. We need you to do something in London to make sure those services are still available." You weren't here; the member from Sarnia spoke up.

We've been talking with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Speaker. They have assured me that what they want is services for our first responders available close to where they live.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A gentle reminder that you speak to the Chair, either through question or answer, please.

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HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. For months, New Democrats have been raising the concerns that people have with overcrowded hospitals. We asked about hospitals across Ontario running at over 100% capacity. For months, the government refused to admit that there was a problem that needed solving. Last week, the auditor confirmed that 60% of hospitals in Ontario are overcrowded. Overcrowded hospitals mean more infections and longer wait times.

Will the Premier stop denying that hospitals are overcrowded and stop robbing our health care system of the resources it needs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe that if the leader of the third party looks at the budget document, she will see that, in our recent budget, we added \$345 million to hospital operations. On top of that, we have recently announced \$140 million for hospitals.

We recognize that hospitals have made very difficult decisions over the last number of years. They have held their costs down as the health care system is transformed, as we have moved services from hospitals into communities. But at the same time, we recognize that hospitals have needed increases. That's why the \$345 million was in the budget, and that's why \$140 million was just announced.

We recognize and we appreciate, as I said earlier, the work of the Auditor General, and we will continue to work with her to make sure that we make the investments that are necessary, so that the health care system and all of the services that we deliver can be at the very highest quality.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: An overcrowded hospital means that when a parent takes a sick child to the hospital or a senior has a fall, they can't get the care that they need. That's what's been happening in Ontario, year after year, under this government's watch.

The auditor reported, "We saw patients placed on uncomfortable stretchers or gurneys in hallways and other high-traffic areas that were never designed for patient care." This is hallway medicine of the worst kind right here in Ontario.

The government created this problem—no doubt about it. The government created this problem when they froze hospital funding for four years running, and they're making it worse with budgets that still don't keep up with the cost of inflation, never mind population growth.

Will the Premier stop underfunding Ontario's hospitals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I just said in my first answer, we have recognized that there needed to be in-

creases to hospital funding, and we have put those in place.

We understand that all Ontarians deserve high-quality health care and that patients come first. In every decision that we make, we need to make sure that patients are at the centre of those decisions. The transformations that have been going on within the health care system are exactly about that: They're about making sure that people get the care where they need it.

To the Auditor General's report: As I said, it is the Auditor General's job to look at the work of government and to make recommendations. She talks about certain specific cases that are unacceptable, and we agree with that and that they need to be addressed. But she also said that nine out of 10 patients—and these are emergency room patients—were generally treated and discharged within the ministry target time.

Mr. Speaker, that's commendable. The 10%: We absolutely have to work on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People have to be able to trust that the health care system is going to be there for them when they need it. They want to trust that going to the hospital won't leave them sicker, but that's just one side effect of overcrowded hospitals.

After years of cuts, things are getting worse. People who are sick or need care are waiting longer because the government doesn't want to admit that anything is wrong. We just saw the Premier once again make an excuse instead of owning up to the problem that she created in our hospital system.

Will this Premier stop pretending that nothing's wrong, truly put patients first and stop the cuts to our hospitals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would never suggest that our work is done in the health care system. I would never suggest that. There is obviously more to do.

I recognize, in the quote that I read from the Auditor General—that 10% of people are not getting care within the ministry-targeted time—that that's unacceptable. We have to work to make sure that 10% also gets the care within the targeted amount of time.

But the reality is that there are changes that have happened within our health care system that are positive. There are good things that have happened. So while I recognize there's more to be done, we also have to recognize the work that has been done by the hospitals around the province, by the health care workers and the administrators, to deliver the best care possible to the patients.

Since 2003, we've increased our investments in health care each and every year. Both the Fraser Institute and the Wait Time Alliance have consistently ranked Ontario as having some of the shortest wait times in Canada. Those are good things.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. I don't think the Premier realizes just how

hard life is getting for people across Ontario. Last week, I asked about families and businesses struggling to pay their hydro bills. Instead of listening, instead of trying to understand what this means for people, the minister said, "I just don't believe the premise" of the question.

Will the Premier start listening to what skyrocketing hydro bills actually mean for people and take an important step forward by getting those bills under control and stopping the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I recognize that there are challenges that people are facing with their electricity bills, which is exactly why we have been taking actions. We have taken the debt retirement charge off people's bills. We are taking the provincial portion of the HST, that 8%, off everyone's bills across the province. It seems to me that that's something that the leader of the third party was calling for before we did it; then we did it, and now it's not something that she can support.

We recognize that there's more to be done. I have said that. The Minister of Energy is working. We are working very hard to look at the other things we can do, but the reality is that the leader of the third party conflates issues: The broadening of the ownership of Hydro One has to do with building transportation infrastructure in this province, which she also, I would have thought, as a member of the NDP, would be supporting.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last week, I told the story of Sharon, a senior from the Soo. After question period, I got an email from a senior in northern Ontario who had heard that story. This senior asked me not to use his name. He uses candles because he's worried about the cost of turning on the lights. He told me about the shame he feels because he can't explain to his friends why he can't meet them for coffee: because the hydro bill leaves so little money left over.

Nobody in Ontario should have to live with that kind of worry or feel shame for something that isn't their fault. Will this Premier send a message to every Ontarian who is worried about their hydro bill and stop the sell-off of Hydro One, which is only going to make those bills climb higher?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to respond. We recognize that there are families out there, there are seniors out there, who are having a very difficult time paying their bills. That's why we acted with the speech from the throne. The speech from the throne brings forward that 8% reduction for all families, for all seniors across the province. There also is the 20% reduction for 330,000 households right across the province that actually live in rural or remote areas like northern Ontario.

But we also know that that doesn't necessarily always cut it and there is room for more help. That's why we have the Ontario Electricity Support Program. That will help seniors—up to \$45. If they actually heat their homes with electricity, they can actually then claim that to get \$75 back.

So we've recognized that; we're acting on that. We've brought forward these programs. The Premier and I know that more needs to be done, and we'll continue to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Glow Juicery is a small business in Hamilton that just opened recently. Between May and July, the hydro bill for Glow was \$1,400, and from July to September, \$1,200. Jesse Briscoe is proud of the company that she started, but she's worried that she might have to close up shop. This is what she said about the Premier's hydro mistake: "Okay, you say it's a mistake, what are you actually going to do about it?"

"Give small businesses a break. Do something. Anything."

That's the desperation that small businesses are feeling in Ontario today. So will this Premier take an important step for Jesse, for her small business and for small businesses across this province, and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

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Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to say that this Premier has acted, along with this government, to make sure that it is better for small businesses out there. Again, that 8% reduction is applying to every small business and farm right across our province.

There's also the saveONenergy program, which we encourage every MPP to talk to their small businesses about. They can save significant amounts of money. For example, Donaleigh's Irish pub in Barrie took advantage of the business refrigeration initiative through the saveONenergy program. They received more than \$2,500 in one-time incentives, and they're saving \$2,400 annually on energy. Arbor Memorial and the Chesswood Arena—there are many, many businesses that are saving on energy by contacting their local utility and finding ways that they can join these programs.

We're there, we are acting, and we know we've got more to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Earlier, the Minister of Labour had made a reference to someone's absence. I want to remind all members that you do not make reference in any way, shape or form to people's presence in the House. I'd appreciate it if we stayed with that convention. It works well. So make sure that we don't go down that road, please.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Michael Harris: While the Premier's looking for new revenue tools to meet infrastructure demands, the auditor's report is clear evidence she needs only to look in the mirror. In case after case, the auditor pulls back the curtain on millions wasted for poor planning, poor workmanship, and lacking oversight and accountability when our money is needed to spend on infrastructure.

We all heard about the reward contract for the contractor who installed the upside-down bridge truss, but that's just the start. On page 491, Metrolinx paid \$4.4

million for the construction of boiler rooms at GO stations. The only problem: The contractor never actually built the rooms due to design consultant failures, leaving us with no boiler rooms, a \$4.4-million bill and another \$760,000 to the same consultant to actually start over again. Will the Premier tell us: With all the vital infrastructure this province requires, how the heck does this happen?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his question. A couple of things right off the top: I said this last week, when the auditor provided her report—first of all, I thanked her for the report and accept the recommendations in the report.

I did stress that over the last five years, which is the window of time the auditor was looking at, by and large, as it relates to Metrolinx, 275 construction projects have been started and completed by Metrolinx. Of those 275, the majority have been delivered under budget or on budget. It doesn't mean that we don't have more work to do. We do, which is why I stressed that day that we are embarking on something known as the vendor performance management system, which will help take into account whether or not a contractor has the kind of track record we want them to have going forward. Again, right off the top, I would say the majority of projects are delivered on budget or under budget—

We accept the recommendations from the auditor. I'll be happy to provide additional information in the follow-up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: It's 13 years later. We're now going to start fixing the problems.

The auditor revealed countless examples of contractors being allowed to breach regulations without penalty, while many are paid well beyond approved budgets. At page 483, Metrolinx issued a contractor two payments totalling \$1.2 million over the project's approved budget without having authorization to exceed the budget; three years later, same project, three more payments of \$3.2 million over budget without approval. Meantime, CN Construction charges to Ontario are sometimes 130% higher than other railway standards.

The waste just continues, Speaker, and we, the taxpayers, keep paying for it.

Speaker, will the Premier tell us when she will stop looking to taxpayers to bail her out for all the Liberal mistakes?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Last week, when I had a chance to respond to a question from the leader of the Conservative Party very similar in approach to the question I just got today, I had my own list. These are projects I'm going to go through that have been contained in multiple budgets going back over the last three or four years here in this Legislature: GO regional express rail; LRTs in Toronto, Peel and Hamilton; GO train extensions to Bowmanville and Niagara; BRTs in York region and Durham region; new streetcars in

Toronto; Union Station revitalization; the four-laning of Highway 69; the Morriston bypass; the 427 widening and extension; the 410 widening; the 407 extension, phase 1 and phase 2, which will help the people of Peterborough immensely; and the 417 upgrades in Ottawa.

Speaker, at the end of the day, all of these projects—four-laning the trans-Canada in northern Ontario—every single one of the projects I just mentioned and many more were voted against by that member and by that leader repeatedly. That's what the people of Ontario cannot understand: why they don't support building up this province.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Last week, the Auditor General found that Metrolinx does not hold its contractors accountable for poor performance. Metrolinx keeps giving contractors that fail second, third and fourth chances. In one case, a contractor failed to show up for work for six months, and not only got a second chance; they got 22 more chances.

Two months ago, Metrolinx chair Rob Prichard was reappointed for another term as the chair of the Metrolinx board of directors. Did the minister know what was in this Metrolinx audit when he allowed Mr. Prichard another chance as chair?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned in my response to the member from Kitchener—275 construction projects completed by Metrolinx over the last five years, Speaker. The majority of those were delivered on budget or under budget, which I think is important.

At the end of the day, Speaker—and I said this last week. I've said it already in the House this morning, and I'll repeat it now: I accept all of the recommendations, as does Metrolinx, that the auditor put forward in her report. We thank her for her report. We know that we have more work to do. But at the same time, we also know that we have a compelling responsibility to the people of Ontario and the people of this region to deliver on the transit mandate that they gave us in 2014. It's what we're actually doing. We're putting more service out there. We're getting more shovels in the ground. We are delivering on the commitment that the Premier made to the people of the GTHA and beyond, and we're going to keep doing it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Back to the Minister of Transportation: The minister has promised that people who fail at Metrolinx will be held accountable, but no one has been held accountable for Presto cost overruns, the disastrous rollout of the Union Pearson Express, upside-down bridge trusses, and years of transit planning chaos. The minister has in fact decided that Liberal insiders like Rob Prichard are doing just a fine job at providing oversight at Metrolinx. Public support for transit investment won't survive more Metrolinx audits like this last one. Public trust depends on accountability, and accountability needs to start at the top.

A simple question: Who does the minister hold accountable for the failures at Metrolinx?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, I thank the member for the follow-up question. One thing I mentioned last week—everybody in this House will know I sent a letter of direction to the board chair back in March, about nine months ago. As a result of that letter of direction, we now have more transparency around the activities that are taking place. The kind of rigour that's now in place as a result of the report is something that will help a great deal.

But the rest of the premise of the question coming from the member from Parkdale–High Park—I've got to tell you, Speaker, it sounds like, as is all too often the case coming from the NDP, convenient mythology around whether or not we're actually building or not building. I know that they want to paint a particular picture of what's happening around transit in Toronto and beyond; it's just not true. More weekend GO train service, a brand new GO station, hundreds of more train trips on the entire corridor, LRTs, VRTs, highways, Speaker—there's only one Premier and only one party that's actually interested in building up this province. It's Kathleen Wynne and the Ontario Liberals.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Associate Minister of Education for Early Years and Child Care. Minister, I'm proud that our government has made it a priority to improve and expand child care and early years programs in our province. It is encouraging to know that the government is working to address the needs of Ontario families.

In my riding of Kingston and the Islands, I've heard from parents who say that demand for quality affordable child care is great. I remember that when my children were young, they went to Pladec Day Care, Building Blocks Nursery School, and my grandson now goes to Bayridge Drive Child Care Centre. I know how important it is that parents understand that their children will be safe, well looked after and happy while they're they are at work each day. Other parents clearly feel the same way, and it's important that parents know that level of comfort and support. Going forward, my constituents would like to know what the government is doing to make sure that those needs are properly met.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Kingston and the Islands for the important question. We are transforming the way we deliver child care in this province, and creating 100,000 new licensed child care spaces in the next five years.

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But this is about much more than just spaces and jobs. This is about improving our early years programs to better serve Ontario families and developing a new vision focused on high-quality care for Ontario children. In fact, we've already begun our public consultations to inform our new framework. Recently, I visited Thunder Bay,

Moosonee and Moose Factory Island, and we heard from people in the child care and early years sector. We held consultations, town halls, and I even visited several local child care centres.

The response has been wonderful. People are enthusiastic and thankful, and we have already received a lot of feedback and advice. We're continuing our consultations in the coming months. I'm glad to say Kingston is one of the cities. To attend one of these consultations, visit Ontario.ca/morechildcare.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It's encouraging to know that we are heading to towns and cities across the province to meet with families and sector leaders, including my riding of Kingston and the Islands. This will ensure that the government hears from as many families as possible across the province.

I know that there's a lot of work still to be done, but people involved in the child care and early years sector are keen to see how the system will be modernized, and parents are eager to see that these new spaces open up. We know that the demand for more spaces is high and that parents are looking forward to more support when it comes to child care. Like them, we want to ensure that their children have the best possible start in life and that parents are receiving the support that they need to provide for their families. The commitment of 100,000 new spaces is over five years. When can Ontario's families expect to see these spaces rolling out?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to answer the member's question. I know families and stakeholders are excited about this, and so are we. This is a historic investment, one that will benefit all of Ontario, which is why we are moving quickly and thoroughly. Actions speak louder than words.

As we heard in the fall economic statement, we've already taken our first step in creating 100,000 additional licensed child care spaces by 2022. We're investing an additional \$65.5 million this school year to support the creation of 3,400 new spaces for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. This investment promotes early learning and development while helping more parents find quality, affordable care. This is the first step of many.

Unlike the opposition, we have a plan. I want you to know that we are working tirelessly to build an early years and child care system that is high quality, affordable and responsive to the needs of parents and children. We're working to get it right.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. Earlier this year, I asked the then Minister of Energy why he was hiding the cost of cap-and-trade price increases on natural gas bills by putting them into delivery charges on ratepayers' bills. Sadly, at that time, the minister put crass political calculations before sound public policy. Now in the Auditor General's latest report, it was

revealed that in a broad survey, a staggering 89% of respondents thought it was important to disclose the costs on the natural gas bill.

Will the Premier be open and transparent for once, disclose the true costs of their cap-and-trade on natural gas bills and order the OEB to include it as a separate line item on those bills?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm pleased to rise and to talk once again about this issue that we talked about a few months ago.

The decision on how to present cap-and-trade on consumers' bills was made by the OEB, the Ontario Energy Board, an independent and arm's-length regulator for the province's energy sector. It did so based on extensive consultations with consumers, utilities, environmental stakeholders and including over 40 written submissions. In their decision, the Ontario Energy Board highlighted that cap-and-trade costs are part of doing business of delivering natural gas to home and businesses. To quote the board:

"In the OEB's view, separating out cap-and-trade related costs as a line item on the bill is inconsistent with the manner in which all other ongoing costs of operating the utility are reflected on the bill." The government does not have the legislative authority to make this decision. The OEB does.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's included in other jurisdictions—and the government does have the authority. You've issued more than 90 directives; one more won't change it.

On page 182 of the auditor's report, it goes on to say that the cost of cap-and-trade should be revealed because it would help educate the public. The government refusing to disclose it—what I would call their cash-and-charade scheme—is just further evidence that this plan is not about reducing greenhouse gases but simply a way to take more money out of consumers' pockets.

The Auditor General wants the Premier to reveal the cost on bills, natural gas companies want you to reveal the cost on their clients' bills, and consumers want the costs revealed on their bills. I say to the Premier: Stop playing politics. Do the right thing for once and order the OEB to include it as a separate line item on natural gas bills.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: It's very interesting that they want to get themselves involved with a quasi-judicial organization when they don't like something, but when they do like something, they don't want anything touched. That's very unique about the PC Party.

Let's be very clear. The OEB regulates the natural gas sector in Ontario, with a strong mandate to protect the public interest and ensure that consumers receive reliable and cost-effective natural gas service. Their decision on the presentation of cap-and-trade costs was made after extensive consultations with stakeholders.

I know in the first question, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As a quasi-judicial regulatory body with a mandate to protect consumers, it's just like the federal government: They can't dictate terms to the Supreme Court or to the Bank of Canada or expect that decisions will be in the favour of the Ontario Energy Board. The Ontario Energy Board has the authority to do this. They did the consultations. This is their decision.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Last week, Statistics Canada released their long-term perspective on the youth labour market. It shows that young Ontarians are less likely to be employed full-time than they were in the 1980s. If they can find work, it is often precarious work.

It is increasingly difficult for the young people of this province to establish themselves. Life is becoming more unaffordable. Costs are going up and wages are staying flat. When is the government going to wake up to the realities facing young people and make the changes that will allow them to stay and prosper right here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development and Growth.

Hon. Brad Duguid: This government cares deeply about the challenges of young people finding their way into the workplace. That's why we're leaders globally when it comes to creating experiential learning experiences for those young people. It's why we're leaders—and she would know this, being from the Waterloo area—in leading co-op programs. That's why we came forward with a youth employment strategy that has provided 30,000-plus young people with an opportunity to work.

That being said, there are still challenges. But we can't ignore the fact that, just last week, we saw that our unemployment rate in Ontario has dropped to the lowest level in eight and a half years, the lowest level since May 2008: 6.3%. That's something that we can be proud of as Ontarians, and something all of us can take advantage of. At the same time, we're going to work to get that unemployment down even lower so more and more of those young folks will have opportunities in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Back to the Premier: Young Ontarians right across the province are hurting. They are leaving school and not finding work. The youth unemployment rate is higher than 30% in Barrie, 17% in Hamilton, and 16% in London.

To make matters worse, wages are actually declining. According to Stats Canada, young, full-time employees are making less today than they were in the 1980s. Mr. Speaker, the numbers don't lie.

Premier, it's getting harder to live in Ontario and build a good life for the young people of this province. Will the

Premier admit that the status quo isn't working and take an important step by raising the minimum wage to \$15?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to build this province up. We're going to continue to invest in infrastructure. We're going to continue to ensure that we can grow this economy. We've seen 660,000 net new jobs created since the global recession. Three quarters of those are in the private sector, and 76% of those—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Niagara Falls.

1140

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, 76% of those 660,000 jobs created since 2003 earn above-average wages. Some 90% are full-time jobs—90%, Mr. Speaker. Those are good jobs. Those are jobs that our young people will have for many generations to come.

We've still got work to do. The unemployment rate for youth is still higher than we'd like. There still are some people being left behind. Our job now is to ensure that they also share in the prosperity of this growing economy.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

M. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, l'honorable Marie-France Lalonde.

En juin 2016, quand la ministre a débuté son mandat, elle a annoncé que notre gouvernement avait soumis une demande d'adhésion en tant qu'observateur à l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. C'était une première étape importante afin d'emmener notre francophonie en dehors de nos frontières.

Je sais que la ministre est allée à Madagascar la semaine dernière pour le Sommet de la Francophonie, et nous sommes d'ailleurs honorés que la demande d'adhésion de l'Ontario comme membre observateur au sein de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie ait été entérinée.

Est-ce que la ministre peut nous faire part de la décision prise pendant le Sommet de la Francophonie?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Premièrement, je remercie le député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour l'excellente question.

Notre gouvernement a pris l'engagement de promouvoir la langue française ainsi que sa culture et sa forte identité dans toute la province et également à l'international. Effectivement, lorsque j'étais à Madagascar, l'Ontario a été salué avec enthousiasme par les 80 États membres de la Francophonie. Grâce à la vitalité de nos communautés et de nos institutions francophones, tous les membres savaient que l'Ontario avait sa place au sein de la grande famille de l'OIF. C'est pourquoi notre province a été élue à l'unanimité.

L'adhésion de l'Ontario est un vote de confiance envers les efforts de notre gouvernement pour faire avancer la langue et la culture franco-ontariennes. Cette

entrée sur la scène internationale est un moment historique pour l'Ontario et, particulièrement, pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes.

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci, madame la Ministre. Je vous remercie pour votre dévouement à la communauté franco-ontarienne et à la langue française.

Monsieur le Président, je félicite la ministre pour sa représentation de notre province à l'OIF. Avec un des meilleurs systèmes d'éducation dans le monde, comprenant un vaste réseau d'écoles de langue française, de collèges de langue française et d'universités bilingues, une économie très avancée et une communauté francophone très diversifiée, il est clair que l'Ontario sera un partenaire solide pour les membres de l'OIF.

Moi-même, je suis très fier d'avoir une communauté francophone très active et dynamique dans ma circonscription d'Etobicoke-Nord. Est-ce que la ministre peut nous en dire plus sur les avantages d'une adhésion à l'OIF?

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci encore une fois au député d'Etobicoke-Nord.

Je suis vraiment fière de l'engagement de l'Ontario au sein de l'OIF. Notre adhésion à l'OIF ouvre la porte à l'Ontario pour potentiellement diversifier ses échanges commerciaux à l'étranger par l'entremise du renforcement de ses relations d'affaires, de l'exportation et des liens d'échanges avec les pays membres de la Francophonie. Il y a aussi le potentiel de favoriser l'atteinte de la cible de 5 % de l'Ontario en immigration francophone et le potentiel d'amener plus d'étudiants et d'étudiantes francophones de l'étranger à venir étudier dans les institutions postsecondaires de langue française de l'Ontario.

En bref, notre adhésion à l'OIF est un grand pas pour tous les Ontariens et les Ontariennes. Merci.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Premier: Recently, the Minister of Energy put a stop to the LRP II projects due to the power not being needed in the province. There is no need for the power from the Nation Rise wind project in my riding either, a project which scored nothing but zeroes on all the rated criteria and should not have been imposed on the unwilling hosts of North Stormont.

The Premier made an attempt to apologize for her mistake on the energy file, but keeps implementing her failed policies, making her apologies ring hollow. Will North Stormont see some substance in the Premier's apologies and have the Nation Rise wind project cancelled?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to once again rise and speak to the importance of renewable energy in this province. We've invested, as a government, to ensure that we can eliminate coal. We haven't had a smog day in this province since 2014, and do you know what, Mr. Speaker? That's because of the fact that

we've had to invest heavily in renewable energy to rebuild a system that they left in tatters.

I understand that when we're looking at renewable energy and wind around the province, there are concerns coming forward from the community, and I understand that the IESO is the entity that looks after those contracts. I know they get all in a huff on that side when you talk about energy, because they are the pro-coal party. They are the ones who want to go back to coal. We on this side will continue to work with communities. We'll continue to work with the IESO to find solutions, to continue to have a clean, green and reliable system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Back to the Premier: The Nation Rise wind project had no municipal council support resolution, no municipal agreement with all project communities, no abutting landowner support, and no First Nations agreement—a complete and utter failure in the rating criteria score, and yet it was approved.

North Stormont is an unwilling host, as thousands of letters that I will soon hand over to the Premier will demonstrate. The LRP I projects have yet to break ground, and there's still time to cancel those. Those are the hosts who want nothing to do with them.

Will the Premier listen to Ontarians, as she committed, show some integrity and cancel the Nation Rise wind project?

I'm going to need two pages to pass these on.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The LRP I process really tried to strike the right balance between early community engagement and achieving value for ratepayers by putting an emphasis on cost. I do have to say that the MPP from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has been a very tireless advocate on behalf of the constituents we met with today to try to find solutions.

That's what we're doing on this side of the House: trying to find solutions, because the one thing that the MPP from across the way didn't talk about is that even when a contract is offered, the process is not over. Maybe he should learn about the process and actually do some investigating with the IESO.

Project developers must obtain all required licences and approvals, such as the renewable energy approval and environmental assessments, before they can start construction on the projects. The environmental approval process includes additional community engagement requirements that provide further opportunities for communities. That's something that this member knows, and he is working with these groups to make that happen.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. For months, my constituents have written letters, signed petitions and even sent their hydro bills to the Premier and Minister of Energy calling for relief. Businesses in my community are struggling to keep the lights on.

For Kabab N Curry, the lights may be off permanently if relief from skyrocketing hydro bills doesn't come soon. Other area businesses say that the cost of hydro is their number one barrier to expansion, the number one barrier to bringing more jobs into my community.

Speaker, will the Premier take immediate action to reduce the cost of hydro so that businesses in Windsor can continue to operate and expand?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Yes, we already did. Mr. Speaker, we brought forward the speech from the throne. They're going to see an 8% reduction on all of their bills—that's for small businesses. For those businesses that are actually a little bit bigger, that use one megawatt of power, they will now qualify for the ICI program, expanding their businesses—to make sure that they can do it—by up to one third.

It's not just us saying this, Mr. Speaker; it's the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, who are applauding this decision that we brought forward because they are going to see more businesses now expanding their businesses, growing the jobs in our province. This is good news for many of them.

There are many programs that we also have out there to help small businesses, and I look forward to talking about those programs when we get into the supplementary.

1150

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Again to the Premier: Every time someone in my riding opens the hydro bill, they're reminded how this Liberal government is failing them. They're making them choose between heating and eating, between paying their hydro bill and taking their medication. Come Christmastime, they'll be reminded, when they open your bill, the one that you send to them because you're not providing support to them—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: —and they'll have to explain to their children why they don't have gifts under the tree.

With the winter upon us, life is only going to get more difficult for the hundreds of families in Windsor who are already struggling to keep the lights and heat on in their homes. Community programs like Keep the Heat do all they can to help people pay their hydro bills, but with a 12% increase in applicants from last year, there simply isn't enough money to go around.

Speaker, will the government act today, get energy costs under control, stop the sell-off of Hydro One, and ensure that hundreds of people in Windsor can heat their homes tomorrow?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: We do recognize and empathize that families are having difficulty with paying their hydro bills. That's why we acted very quickly, when I took over as minister, to make sure, in the speech from the throne, that we have an 8% reduction coming for all families—that's very important—on top of the debt retirement charge that we already eliminated plus the

programs that we've put in place, like the Ontario Electricity Support Program that helps families. We had 145,000 families sign up by the end of October. I know we're looking forward to getting the numbers for November. But there is room for more, and I do encourage them to contact their local utilities to find out if they qualify for this program.

Because you know what? As a government, we're continuing to invest, to make sure that we can help all families and all businesses right across the province. I know that in the first question we were talking about Windsor. Windsor—up to 11,000 net new jobs, year over year, and that's due to the great work that we've been doing as this government. We're continuing to do that. We'll continue to invest and find—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science. Speaker, you don't need to be a nuclear scientist to know that this government is working hard to encourage new technology sectors that will yield exponential job growth and economic growth in Ontario, but it helps.

One such area is clean tech. Today, Ontario has 35% of Canada's clean tech companies, and I believe that clean tech is an industry that will help us build a better future for all Ontarians. I want to give a shout-out to my friend Bryan Watson, who is the coordinator of Clean-Tech North, a networking organization for all the various stakeholders in clean tech.

Speaker, I understand that the minister is working hard on a clean tech strategy that will strengthen Ontario's position as a leader in this sector. I would like to know if the minister would inform the House on our strategies for a new clean tech growth sector.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the hard-working member from Beaches–East York for that very important question. I'm glad to inform the House that Ontario has the highest concentration of environmental and clean tech companies in our country of Canada. The clean tech sector plays a critical role in keeping Ontario's economy competitive worldwide.

Going forward, my ministry will be working in close collaboration with other ministries to find ways that clean technology can improve recycling, power production, water and waste water solutions.

Our government is working with industry partners to reduce environmental harm and create an industry sector that is friendly to emerging technologies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science for the excellent work that he is doing to expand clean tech in our province. It's great to see that the ministry is assisting companies on the cutting edge of new technologies, creating jobs and cementing Ontario's leadership in this newly emerging

marketplace. After all, creating jobs and growing the economy is a huge priority for our government and a priority that we on this side of the House are making good on.

Speaker, will the minister inform the members of the House on the very specific clean tech programs that are helping grow this vital sector in Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to again thank the member from Beaches–East York for his advocacy for our knowledge-based economy in this province.

Since 2003, our government has committed over \$436 million in 1,100 clean tech and bio-economy projects. Because of those investments, the clean tech sector has grown to generate \$8 billion annually and to have 3,000 companies with 65,000 employees. Some of our industry partners include Trojan Technologies, a leader in the ultraviolet purification of water; ElectroVaya, a global leader in developing advanced lithium-ion battery solutions; and Ensyn, a biofuel developer that is helping manage CO₂ pollution in our province of Ontario.

Our government will continue to invest in clean technology so that we can protect our environment and grow our economy in the meantime.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Premier. It has been 11 years since this Legislature passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Yet, today, over a third of a million students with disabilities continue to face far too many barriers when they try to go to school, college or university in Ontario.

Today's Toronto Star reports that 22 respected community organizations wrote the Premier, urging her to finally say yes to creating an educational accessibility standard and to tear down those unfair barriers.

Premier, on October 31, you told this House that you were considering this. Will you agree to do it today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member has said, I have already indicated that I think this is important. I had a meeting with David Lepofsky, who is, I know, mentioned in the article. The Minister of Education and the minister responsible for accessibility have also met with David Lepofsky and many other groups.

We recognize that, as we have developed standards in other areas, as a health standard is being developed, that there also needs to be a standard developed in the education sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Premier: You've had 10 years and you spent \$8 billion on the eHealth registry. I hope that this isn't going to be another fiasco like that.

This government's continued inaction on this file is inexcusable. This government has no comprehensive plan to ensure that our education system will become fully Accessible by 2025, as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires. The AODA Alliance has pressed you for over half a decade to agree to develop the standard under the AODA to tackle these barriers.

Can you tell a third of a million students with disabilities and their families: What's the holdup after five years of this issue being before your government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's interesting. Since we came into office in 2003—and when we came into office, under the previous Premier, there was legislation that was in place that had no teeth and would have produced no results in terms of accessibility. We scrapped that and started again and put in place legislation that has, over time, developed standards and has put in place acceptable standards across our society.

There's a lot more to do, which is why we are working in the health sector right now. There are billions of dollars that are spent within the education system, whether it's on special education or the \$1.1 billion in additional funding that is going into building and renovating schools—all of which goes toward building schools that are more accessible.

The reality is, when many of the schools were built—particularly in the Toronto District School Board, where there are many old buildings that are still being used as schools—they were not up to standard. They were not accessible in any way.

We recognize that there's more to be done, and there will be an education standard developed.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. Back in June, the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services announced that nine ServiceOntario offices across the province were under consideration for possible closure, including the Blind River office, which is part of my riding of Algoma–Manitoulin. A very successful Keep Our ServiceOntario Open rally was held in Blind River, and the government announced that these closures have been suspended, pending re-evaluation and reconsideration.

Here we are, six months after the original announcement, and we have yet to receive any update, with a cloud of concern hanging over these many communities. We have seen the government overturn and flip-flop its decision in the past, such as the Guelph ServiceOntario office.

I ask again one more time: Can you confirm that no further ServiceOntario offices will be closed, taking away these much-needed services from our communities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to say thank you to the member opposite for the question.

We as a government are committed to making the best decision possible regarding delivery options for ServiceOntario, and we are continually refining services and service delivery options to better match customer demand. We're also examining the decisions to close those certain ServiceOntario locations, as we want to provide the very best service for our customers. The decision will be determined, as mentioned before, on a case-by-case

basis, as the locations in question are all unique in circumstances. There is no one-size-fits-all set of criteria that would be appropriate for all locations.

Customer service is and will continue to be our top priority.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Municipal Affairs on a point of order.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'd quickly like to introduce, from northern hospitals, Wade Petranik, the CEO of the Dryden Regional Health Centre; Nicole Haley, CEO of the Espanola Regional Hospital and Health Centre; and Fabien Hébert from the Smooth Rock Falls Hospital.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Chief government whip on a point of order.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to correct the record. On Thursday afternoon in an address to the assembly, I indicated that the Lougheed family had donated the land where St. Albert school was for the purpose of helping the needy in the community. That was the original purpose. It ended up being donated for the purpose of a park. It was actually St. Clement's church which was donated by the Lougheed family to be used by the community free of charge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. All members are able to correct their record.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1201 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to introduce a visitor from the great riding of Oxford: Chaplain Stewart Deller. He's here today to meet with Tim Schindel, who is a volunteer chaplain here at the Legislature. I want to thank them both for being here at Queen's Park today. Welcome.

Mr. Lorne Coe: In the Speaker's gallery, I'd like to introduce Sherrill Difelice, Steve Madeley, Lorraine McEwen and Jim McEwen. They're here to listen to the debate on Bill 9. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce—they're not here yet, but a high school of mine is coming. Regina Mundi will be here this afternoon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: We are joined here today by Wendy Preskow, the founder and president of the National Initiative for Eating Disorders, and Lynne Koss, also of NIED. Both Wendy and Lynne are passionate and dedicated advocates joining us for the introduction of my bill calling for the first week of February to be proclaimed as Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

Also joining us is Leonida Sheffield, a student journalist from Centennial College, who came to Queen's Park today to report on the introduction of this most important bill.

Please join me in welcoming our guests to the Legislature.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to take a moment to recognize all the representatives of the Bangladeshi community who will be coming here for the reading of the bill later on this afternoon. I'm sure they'll be in the House shortly.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FOOD CUPBOARDS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: "Neighbours Helping Neighbours" is the motto of many of the local Ottawa food cupboards, particularly in my community of Nepean-Carleton. I've always been a proud supporter of our local food cupboards, and never before has it become more important for us, as people are choosing between heating their homes and putting food on the table. This is a big concern for many of the food cupboards across Ontario. That's why at this time of year "Neighbours Helping Neighbours" goes a bit further. At this time of year, when we celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah, just having finished Diwali and Eid, we are focused on the betterment of mankind and protecting the people who cannot protect themselves. That's why I'm urging all Ontario residents to look at their local food cupboard and consider a donation.

I know many food cupboards are now asking for financial contributions so that they can get fresh produce and other fresh foods, but they also like to have non-perishable food items. But I urge Ontarians that if they do take that route for non-perishable food items, that they don't give expired food. I recently did a food cupboard fundraiser in Barrhaven for the Barrhaven Food Cupboard, and unfortunately a couple of hundred pounds of that food was actually expired and it didn't go very far.

At this time of year, in Nepean-Carleton, please support FAMSAC, the Barrhaven Food Cupboard, the North Gower food cupboard, the community food bank in Manotick and the Osgoode food cupboard. These people are doing a lot of work with very few resources, and they do need your help. That's why this Friday I'll be doing another fundraiser for the Barrhaven Food Cupboard. Unfortunately, after the Christmas parade was cancelled last Sunday, they lost an opportunity to raise food, and they were expecting quite a bit.

I urge all Ontario residents to look at their neighbours, help their neighbours and join their local food cupboard.

EATING DISORDERS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is my pleasure to rise today and speak about a bill that I am tabling this

afternoon, to declare the first week of February as Eating Disorders Awareness Week in the province of Ontario. Too many Ontarians are suffering in silence from these potentially fatal disorders, and it's time we begin to shine a light on these fatal mental illnesses and educate the public about them.

However, last week the Ontario Auditor General reported, "The lack of needed services in Ontario between 2011-12 and 2015-16 resulted in the ministry spending almost \$10 million to send 127 youth to the United States to obtain mental health services (primarily for severe eating disorders) as the needed specialty services were not available in Ontario."

Today, Dr. Woodside from Toronto General Hospital's Eating Disorder Program told us that the \$10 million this government spent to send 127 youth to the US for help could have helped more than 500 people suffering from eating disorders right here in Ontario. The chilling fact those numbers prove is that this government is failing families and children. It's time to tackle this problem head-on and ensure that our health care system is there for Ontarians when they need it.

I also want to recognize the Hope's Garden Eating Disorders Support and Resource Centre, from my hometown of London, for the incredible work they do in providing services free of charge for individuals 18 and older who struggle with disordered eating or have been affected by an eating disorder.

My hope is that this bill will be a good first step towards healing. We are here to help people and—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker.

CHARLES WALTER "WALLY" CARRUTHERS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I pay tribute to a constituent of mine who passed away on November 15 at the age of 89. Charles Walter Carruthers, or "Wally," was born in Barrie and was passionately involved in his community, serving as a long-standing member of Rotary, Probud and Kerr Masonic Lodge.

As an athlete and a sports enthusiast, Wally's contributions led him to become a Barrie Sports Hall of Fame inductee. He was a respected businessman, both owning and operating Carruthers Cartage and Carruthers Rent-All.

Wally loved to sing. He belonged to the barbershop group in Barrie for many years, and neighbours at his cottage on Gibson Lake heard him singing merrily as he went visiting from cottage to cottage. He loved jazz and to dance, and would often ask Phyllis Rolls, "Come on, Phyllis. Let's go show them how it's done."

Wally was a devout Christian. When he was worried that people weren't saying "Merry Christmas" anymore, he decided to go around delivering Merry Christmas signs to convenience stores. He was surprised and pleased when all of the convenience store clerks enthusiastically allowed him to display the signs prominently.

Wally is one of the people for whom we are changing the election finance rules, as he appreciated the democratic process and would always contribute what he could afford.

Wally lost his wife of 65 years, Audrey, and is survived by his children, Wendy and Scott, and his grandchildren and great-grandchild.

Wally was an unsung hero. We will miss him greatly. Merry Christmas, Wally.

MIKE BRENNAN

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, several years ago, before being elected to this place, I was at a hockey coaching clinic in Kingston with another guy from Belleville. A couple of weeks ago, Mike Brennan, who I've been friends with since we met at that coaching clinic, saw his neighbours' house burning and sprang into action.

At this time of year, the Christmas lights out on Blessington Road in Thurlow are one of the real wonders of the season. It's no surprise that when Mike Brennan stoked the fireplace at his home at 2:40 in the morning a few weeks ago, that's what he thought he saw out of the corner of his eye. It soon became obvious to him that the bungalow of his neighbours on nearby Forsythe Road had gone up in flames.

Mike screamed, "Fire," to alert his wife to call 911. On his way out the door, she handed him his robe and he ran over to his neighbours' house. When he got there, the garage roof was collapsing and he was worried the whole house was going to come down. One of his neighbours had come out of the window and was on her hands and knees on the ground, while the other was hanging about halfway out the window. Mike got to him and helped leverage him out of the house. By this point, the bedroom was starting to burn.

Temperatures in the home, according to Belleville fire prevention officer Dave MacMullen, would be equivalent to inside of a broiler, he said. Mike even went back in the house to get the family's dog out. Officer MacMullen says he intends to nominate Mike for an award from the Ontario fire marshal's office.

The amazing thing is, it's not the first time that Mike Brennan has rushed into a burning building. Almost two decades ago, while working as a security guard at a Wellington group home that had burst into flames, he entered the burning building, retreated from the smoke and broke a window to save a man from the fire. If he gets his award from the fire marshal's office, Mr. Speaker, his mantel is going to start to get a little bit crowded.

We commend him for his heroism.

DIABETES

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, 4.6 million Ontarians have diabetes or pre-diabetes. Diabetes contributes to 30% of strokes, 40% of heart attacks, 50% of kidney failures requiring dialysis and 70% of non-traumatic lower limb

amputations. It also is a leading cause of vision loss in Canada.

It is so important that we do everything we can to prevent diabetes and to manage it properly. For children with diabetes, a supportive school environment is critical to keeping them safe and healthy. Proper diabetes management reduces the risk of life-threatening emergencies, prevents or reduces the risk of serious long-term complications and ensures that students with diabetes are able to learn and fully participate in all school activities.

1310

In Ontario, some schools and school boards have policies in place to address the needs of students with diabetes while others have none. This means that supports vary widely from one school district to the next. As a result, students with diabetes are often put at risk, and many parents are left struggling to find adequate support for children who are unable to self-manage their diabetes.

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, British Columbia and Newfoundland and Labrador all have province-wide policies or guidelines to support children with diabetes. It's time for Ontario to do the same.

FRANKLIN A. LANG

Mr. Arthur Potts: I stand in the House today to speak about Franklin A. Lang, a trooper in the Elgin regiment of the Canadian Forces, and his great-niece, Meghan who is here today in the gallery.

Frank joined the Canadian Forces in 1942, just after he turned 18. He served Canada with pride during the Second World War, the Korean War and during the Cold War in France. Unfortunately, Frank found life difficult once his service was complete, and he tragically passed away in 1977 at the age of 52, having never married and with no family to call his own.

Fast-forward many years and Meghan, with a young daughter of her own, began a scrapbook project to teach her about the family's storied military history, which is where she learned about her great-uncle Frank. She discovered that Frank's war medal had been issued but never received, and so she worked tirelessly with Veterans Affairs Canada over many months, eventually having it awarded to her, along with his service badge.

This was just the beginning of her search for Frank, whom she discovered was buried in an unmarked grave, not far from his own parents, in St. Thomas.

On October 31 of this year, thanks to her hard work, Meghan stood with the family, some of whom she had discovered during her search for Frank, as a military marker was placed upon his final resting place.

Meghan continues her tireless advocacy in this area in the hopes of inspiring others to look into their own soldiers and find their own Uncle Franks.

I would like to thank her for sharing Frank's story with all of us today, and for her advocacy on behalf of all veterans. You are both a shining example of what it means to be Canadian.

MEDICALLY ASSISTED SUICIDE

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Earlier this year, the federal Liberal government implemented Bill C-14, which legalized medically assisted suicide across Canada. It specifically included a stipulation that health care professionals should not be compelled to provide medical aid in dying if they have conscience objections.

But in Ontario, our doctors and other health care providers are being deprived of that protection. Instead, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has adopted the effective referral protocol for medical aid in dying, which may force doctors to choose between their profession and their faith, conscience or commitment to the Hippocratic oath.

This effective referral protocol is globally unprecedented and it's unnecessary. There are viable alternatives for the provision of effective access that would allow these health care professionals to continue to practise with ethical integrity.

I want to urge every member of this House to advocate for the rights of doctors and health care professionals who may be compelled to perform euthanasia or other procedures, or risk losing their licence to practise medicine.

We need a collaborative process that respects patients' wishes while not infringing on freedom of conscience. I support doctors' conscience rights, and I stand with the thousands of doctors and medical professionals across Ontario who are concerned about this new law. I strongly encourage the government of Ontario to take action to protect the integrity of our health care system and the rights of Ontario citizens.

FAMILY SKATE

Mr. Bob Delaney: At least twice a year, we invite our neighbours in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville to bring their skates to one of our local arenas for a free family skate. Young and old alike get some exercise, I say hello to the moms and dads and try to coax some of the new skaters into enjoying the quintessential Canadian activity of ice-skating.

On Sunday, December 4 at Meadowvale 4 Rinks, about 300 people came out to share our Pre-Christmas Family Skate. I spent some time skating with Allen, a little guy whose dad was himself new on skates. Allen is a natural skater, and he took to the ice like a duck to water.

Folks in western Mississauga now recognize Merlin, our family's 13-year-old pure white cat. Merlin came for a few spins around the rink in my arms and said hello to all the kids who rushed over to pat him.

From Andrea and I, and from my office staff—Andrzej, Monika, Magnolia and Manraj—who serve families in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville, a very Merry Christmas, joyeux Noël and a happy, healthy and fulfilling 2017, as together we celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canada and of Ontario in Confederation.

HOCKEY TOWNS

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a privilege to share good news from my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. The city of Owen Sound, also known as the Scenic City, has been named as one of the 22 must-visit hockey towns in North America in an online article by Expedia.ca. The Expedia list included six American cities, such as Detroit, Pittsburgh and Buffalo, and the remaining 16 are all in Canada. Sadly, Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto, all homes to National Hockey League teams, were passed over.

The good news, however, is that the article describes Owen Sound as “tiny but mighty.” Owen Sound and area “is big on pride when it comes to the Owen Sound Attack,” the article explains. “It might be the smallest market team in the Canadian Hockey League, but it has the largest percentage” of fans “attending home games.”

The city—and every small town, in fact—has excellent outdoor and indoor facilities, and backyard rinks are a part of the landscape. In other words, the Owen Sound area “lives and breathes hockey,” the article concludes. The article also says Owen Sound has a long association with hockey, and due to its long winters, cold temperatures and open water, most residents “grew up with skates and sticks.” It's a hockey bastion, a hockey hotbed.

It mentions that the city was honoured to be selected as a Rogers Hometown Hockey site in 2015, and is home to such stars as Harry Lumley, whom the Bayshore Community Centre is named after, Cyclone Taylor, Chris Neil from Flesherton, Paul MacDermid from Sauble Beach, the Owen Sound Mercurys, the Greys, the Wiarton Redmen—it just goes on and on.

My constituents are very honoured to be acknowledged as one of the must-visit hockey towns in North America. I invite all members—and all people, in fact—to consider putting Owen Sound on their Christmas bucket list, visiting a rink in their area or in our great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, or perhaps, a Canadian tradition, playing a game of shinny over the holidays. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on Toward Better Accountability (Chapter 5, 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario) from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Yes, Mr. Speaker. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today entitled Toward Better Accountability (Chapter 5, 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Monte Kwinter; Harinder Malhi; Peter Milczyn; Julia Munro; and Arthur Potts.

The committee extends its appreciation to the officials of the Treasury Board Secretariat for their attendance at the hearing.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in the Legislative Research Service.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption. We'll pass this document to Charis.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act/ Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 24, 2016, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I beg leave to present the third report, 2016, from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Dickson presents the committee's report and moves its adoption.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Joe Dickson: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Dickson moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

KICKSTARTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 DE DÉMARRAGE DE LA PARTICIPATION CITOYENNE

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to enact the Kickstarting Public Participation Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 77, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 de démarrage de la participation citoyenne.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: This bill requires the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to maintain a website to facilitate the funding of projects that benefit local communities through the use of crowdfunding. The bill establishes the requirements to submit a proposal for publication on the website, as well as the manner in which the minister is to collect and distribute the donations via the website.

EATING DISORDERS AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION AUX TROUBLES DE L'ALIMENTATION

Ms. Armstrong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to proclaim Eating Disorders Awareness Week / Projet de loi 78, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation aux troubles de l'alimentation.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The bill proclaims the week beginning February 1 in each year as Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

NANJING MASSACRE COMMEMORATIVE DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DU MASSACRE DE NANJING

Ms. Wong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act to proclaim the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day / Projet de loi 79, Loi proclamant le Jour commémoratif du massacre de Nanjing.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Soo Wong: The bill proclaims December 13 in each year as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the order of the House dated October 6, 2016, referring Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated October 20, 2016, referring Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on General Government be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That the order of the House dated November 3, 2016, referring Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged and that the bill be ordered for third reading; and

That during orders of the day on Monday, December 5, 2016, the orders for third readings of Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act; and Bill 34, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents; and Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month; and Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day; and Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month; and Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points; and Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month; and Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week, shall be called and considered consecutively; and

That 15 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of each bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That at the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of each of the bills without further debate or amendment; and

If a recorded vote is requested, all divisions shall be stacked and there shall be a single five-minute division bell; and

That no vote may be deferred.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? I almost heard a no.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the use of sign-language interpreters in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber today to interpret statements by the ministry and responses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I rise today in honour of the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

I would also like to recognize the rich and enduring history of indigenous peoples in Ontario. Toronto is a sacred gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island, and I would like to pay particular respect today to the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

On December 3, Ontario stood in solidarity with governments around the world. Le 3 décembre, l'Ontario a manifesté sa solidarité avec des gouvernements des quatre coins du monde.

We came together to promote the inclusion and equality of people with disabilities. We believe it's an

issue of human dignity, a matter of social justice and a driver of economic prosperity.

The year 2016 marks the 10th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. More than 160 states have signed the convention and endorsed its ideals.

It's worth noting that the convention defines "disability" as an evolving concept instead of a fixed reality, one that results from the interaction between an individual and the obstacles that prevent his or her participation in society. The more obstacles there are in society, the more disabled someone becomes. That's a powerful thought because, at some point in our lives, we will all know someone, live with someone or become someone with a disability.

In this sense, "disability" becomes something we must address collectively, for ourselves and for others. That's why Ontario is focusing on breaking down these obstacles in a systematic way, in a sustainable way that brings all of society together as agents of change.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, our government is working with people with disabilities, families, stakeholders, businesses, not-for-profits and governments to create new accessibility standards for society, ones that help eliminate obstacles people with disabilities face.

For 11 years, Ontario has been working collaboratively to establish and implement five standards in key areas of everyday life, and we're about to add a sixth. This is no small feat. The standards—information and communications, transportation, design of public spaces, customer service, and employment—are all moving parts on a different path to reach a single goal: an accessible Ontario by 2025. They affect the one in seven people in Ontario who live with disabilities, their friends, their families and communities.

En Ontario, une personne sur sept est handicapée, et ces normes touchent ses personnes ainsi que leur famille et leur collectivité.

And they engage and obligate some 400,000 organizations province-wide.

It's a process, a continuum of change from introduction to full implementation that takes years because it needs to be done right, and because it's never been done before in any jurisdiction in the world.

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It's also a process that we're beginning anew—and that is to look at establishing Ontario's first accessibility standard for health care. We're creating this new standard in response to recommendations made by people with disabilities. Provost Mayo Moran, in her formal review of the act, recommended this as well.

The health standard will remove obstacles that make it challenging for people with disabilities to receive services in an accessible way. Reviews are an important part of the process. They ensure that standards are working as intended and allow us to make adjustments collaboratively and transparently. It reflects the evolving concept of disability, Speaker, and our commitment to inclusion.

The year 2016 saw us complete the review of the customer service standard and the initial review of the transportation standard. I'd like to thank the committed individuals who have been working for months to assess the accessibility of customer service and transit in Ontario. Now, as we move into the new year, two more reviews are scheduled: one to evaluate the information and communications standard, and another on the employment standard.

The employment standard took effect last January for large businesses and not-for-profit organizations. Small businesses and organizations are required to comply by January 2017. Their review will help us ensure that accessibility is built into the employment cycle, from recruitment to career development.

We are living in an age where digital technology is transforming both employment and communications. The information and communications standard review will take account of all of these changes. It will help ensure that the standards make it easier for people with disabilities to readily obtain and share information.

Technology is evolving at a dizzying rate for all of us. What is not keeping up is the employment rate of people with disabilities. Unfortunately, many employers have yet to discover how much embracing accessibility can help them grow their businesses and strengthen our communities. Today we know that 29% of small businesses in Ontario report having difficulty filling jobs. Yet, close to 70% of Canadian small business owners have never knowingly hired someone with a disability. This disconnect, Speaker, is one of our government's priorities, and we're working to address this.

Everyone in this House knows that people with disabilities have remarkable talents to offer, and that many are able and willing to work. But they're being shut out of the labour market, often because they lack the experience and training that would help them build a resumé and get a job. Speaker, it's time for action.

We're developing a comprehensive provincial Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities. That strategy will help to connect more people to tailored training, and more employers to a talented labour pool. It will be the beginning of a long-term plan that will take into account the diverse abilities and aspirations of people with disabilities, and the business needs of employers.

One thing that can increase the employment rate faster, and help achieve our goal of an accessible 2025, is a cultural shift or change in attitudes. That's why we're raising awareness among businesses, and the public at large, that we are really ready and on a landmark journey to create an accessible province.

More and more businesses and organizations are realizing accessibility is more than an obligation—it's an opportunity.

Les entreprises et les organismes sont de plus en plus nombreux à se rendre compte que l'accessibilité n'est pas qu'une obligation; c'est une opportunité.

Consider an organization called BioTalent Canada. This association identified a skills shortage in the biotech

sector, so they're working with us as an EnAbling Change partner. EnAbling Change projects provide financial support and expertise to industry, organizations and professional associations to help educate businesses about their obligations, promote a cultural shift towards accessibility, and cultivate champions who can carry the message through an industry. The Retail Council of Canada's EnAbling Change project, for instance, continues to educate retailers on customer service and employment standards.

Speaker, the result is that companies will be better positioned to recruit more candidates with disabilities and fill those key positions. With half of Canadian biotech companies located in Ontario, the partnership is a great opportunity to advance inclusion in the province and help it take hold in a globally competitive sector. It's another of the 152 strategic projects that have been delivered across the province since the start of EnAbling Change, and it's an example of the innovative actions we'll continue to take to help make inclusive employment and accessibility a part of our economy and our culture.

As we move forward, Speaker, I want to assure everyone that accessibility remains a top priority for this government. It brings ministries together, it forms the foundation of countless programs and services, and it's something I'm honoured to lead as Ontario's minister responsible for accessibility. An accessible province by 2025, with social and economic opportunities for people of all abilities is the future we want, and it's the future we will achieve as we come together to pursue our goals. By working together, we can and we will build up Ontario for people of all abilities.

As I close, Speaker, I just want to mention that I'll be sharing my remaining time with the Minister of Community and Social Services. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further ministers' statements? The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which occurred this past Saturday, December 3. Since 1992, this day has been recognized around the world as a reminder of our goal to build a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities. The theme for the 2016 International Day of Persons with Disabilities is "Achieving 17 Goals for the Future We Want." This theme notes the recent adoption of the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals and the role of these goals in building a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities.

In Ontario today, nearly two million people have some type of disability, and approximately 70,000 of those are people with a developmental disability—and my remarks will concentrate particularly on this population. Our government continues to make meaningful progress to remove barriers to inclusion for those with disabilities so they can take part in every aspect of social, economic, political and cultural life.

Les ministères du gouvernement oeuvrent de concert pour promouvoir l'inclusivité au sein de nos collectivités ainsi que pour concourir à l'indépendance de toutes les personnes handicapées et hausser leur qualité de vie.

We want to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have a secure and safe place to live, can join community recreation programs, find employment, go to school and live independently in their communities.

In 2014, our government made an unprecedented investment of \$810 million over three years to improve and expand community and developmental services. Thanks to the support and hard work of our agency partners, we have already begun to see results. We eliminated the 2014 wait-list for the Special Services at Home Program in just eight months, well ahead of the two-year goal stated in our 2014 budget. We funded 18 housing projects recommended by the Developmental Services Housing Task Force to help address the growing need for a broader range of housing solutions that offer individuals more choice and flexibility. We are supporting a pilot project that will enable 1,100 adults with a developmental disability to develop their own person-directed plans to help them choose what they want to do in life, connect with their communities and reach their goals. And through this pilot project, more than 450 people are working with independent facilitators to plan their futures. We have launched 38 projects under the employment and modernization fund to foster a culture of change in the developmental services sector. Earlier this fall, we released a second proposal call to fund further projects.

We're investing in the skills, development and personal growth for thousands of Ontarians, while building their independence, empowerment and inclusion in society. By working co-operatively with agencies, families and individuals with developmental disabilities, we have begun to gradually move away from sheltered workshops towards inclusive employment and meaningful community participation.

Nous sommes toutefois bien conscients que certaines circonstances financières peuvent faire obstacle à l'accessibilité.

That is why my ministry provides approximately 480,000 Ontarians with support under the Ontario Disability Support Program. ODSP provides financial and employment supports for adults with disabilities in order to help them find a job and keep it.

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We continue to make this program work better for individuals with disabilities. Just this September, we raised ODSP rates by another 1.5% for individuals with disabilities. That's a 20% increase in ODSP rates since 2003. In particular, many adults with developmental disabilities rely on ODSP funding supports. In fact, more than 19% of ODSP recipients have a developmental disability.

That is why we are taking steps to improve people's experience with our developmental services and social assistance systems. As of this past September, once a

person is eligible for adult developmental services, they will no longer have to go through a second process to prove they qualify for ODSP.

Our Passport Program also provides direct funding to give families and individuals more choice and the flexibility to purchase the supports that best fit their needs. Today, more than 19,000 individuals with developmental disabilities receive Passport funding.

Just last week, I hosted a developmental services housing forum with people with developmental disabilities and their families, developmental service agencies and supportive housing experts here in Toronto. The forum provided an excellent opportunity to share ideas on how to help remove barriers, improve opportunities and support the creation of innovative and inclusive housing for adults with developmental disabilities.

We held parallel forums in communities across Ontario, including Chatham, Ottawa, Orangeville and Thunder Bay. Many others watched online or joined the conversation on social media. I was extremely pleased with the discussions and feedback. We will be posting the ideas we received during these discussions on our ministry website.

Looking ahead, the Ontario government and service agencies are committed to supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families to shape a pathway to make services easier and ensure the experience always puts the person first.

Nous allons continuer de déployer de grands efforts pour monter constamment la barre en matière d'inclusion.

In the coming months, we will be working with our partner agencies and Developmental Services Ontario to explore new ways we can improve people's experiences, making it easier to navigate the system and access services.

Similarly, we are looking to improve how we can better administer direct funding programs like Passport to better serve individuals and families to manage their funding more independently and streamline how they are reimbursed for services.

I'm sure everyone here would undoubtedly agree that people with developmental disabilities have the right to live as independently and safely as possible in their communities. Looking ahead, we will continue to work to create new opportunities and build a better future for all people with disabilities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's time for responses.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise today as the long-term-care, seniors and accessibility critic, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus and leader Patrick Brown, to recognize Saturday, December 3, as International Day of Persons with Disabilities and to celebrate our progress to date.

Since being proclaimed 24 years ago by the General Assembly of the United Nations, the observance of the day has ushered in a new era with the passing of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act in Ontario and a commitment to make our province accessible by 2025.

As we continue to promote an understanding of disability issues and to rally support for dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, and to celebrate the anniversary of the AODA passing, we need to take stock of the fact that, in Ontario, there continue to be many accessibility challenges we need to resolve.

There is the pressing issue of providing timely treatment and support services to children, youth and adults with physical, developmental and communication challenges. There are unacceptably long wait times to access supports for services from autism to residential living.

We have heard disturbing stories about adults with severe special needs who are ending up in jail, homeless shelters and hospitals because no care or services were available for them here in Ontario.

We also continue to face delays with the Assistive Devices Program that impact some of Ontario's most vulnerable, severely disabled citizens—people like Jeff Preston, who was left to wait one year for a new wheelchair, wondering every day why he was made a prisoner in his own home.

Such backlogs are sombre reminders of the long way we have to go to truly practise what we preach. Moreover, the government continues to struggle with the need to provide access to affordable housing, and, as heard just last week, more disabled people are relying on food banks in Ontario. Meanwhile, some 600,000 students in our great province continue to go without educational standards in accessibility.

Today, and three weeks ago, I raised this concern in question period and challenged the Premier on the continued lack of standards in education, which her government has been ignoring for years despite repeated promises to act on it. Without it, enforcement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act will continue to exclude our children and youth and workers in the education system.

Finally, there's the issue of mental health. This is an issue that most of us are very passionate about, yet, as the Auditor General reminded us last week, this government continues to chronically underfund this critical area. As a result, children and youth with mental illness continue to go without access to the psychiatrists, beds and mental health resources they so desperately need. Sadly, it is this chronic underfunding that is perpetuating much of the stigma around mental health in this province.

In my community of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, we have people like Yolanda and Jamie Cameron of Wes for Youth and organizations like HopeGreyBruce and the CMHA doing amazing work every day to provide clients—that's people with special needs and disabilities and mental health and addiction needs—the best services they can with the little resources they have. But I don't think this government realizes just how hard life is getting for all of them every day.

So, Mr. Speaker, what are the true goals this government wants to achieve in accessibility, and are they being matched with the needed resources?

Last week, I issued a call for action on mental health resources in Bruce-Grey and across all communities facing huge gaps in services. As I informed the House, the long-standing problem of the shortage of beds, psychiatrists and outreach is putting the safety of patients and workers in dire straits. Dr. Boron of Hanover and District Hospital called it a crisis and warned that it could easily turn into a publicity nightmare for the province.

So, in spite of the best efforts done by everyone else, it's really all up to Premier Wynne and the government to practise what they preach so they can say with all sincerity that we are an inclusive society that strives every day to identify and remove any limitations and any barriers facing our friends and neighbours and any person who lives with a disability.

In closing, I invite the House to reflect today on the ways this government promotes accessibility and the way it actually delivers the needed supports to empower people with disabilities, their families and caregivers.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I rise today with mixed feelings to talk about the 2016 United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

New Democrats have long supported and continue to support full accessibility for all. People with disabilities have a fundamental right to full and equal access to participation in our society. That includes employment and housing and participating fully in public life. We know that one in seven Ontarians identify as having a disability. As our population ages, it is more important than ever that we work to create a more inclusive province. This Liberal government committed to do more, and they must follow through on their commitments.

Inclusion includes ensuring that everyone has access to the workforce. Nearly half of all adults who have a disability are not currently participating in the workforce due to barriers that they face—50%. We must challenge ourselves as a province to improve employment opportunities and career pathways that lead to stable, well-paying employment for people with disabilities. The government should lead in this regard. I have heard the minister talk about a culture shift. That culture shift should happen here, in the people's House.

We enthusiastically supported the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 10 years ago. We supported it then and we support it today. New Democrats, in consultation with David Lepofsky at the AODA Alliance, continue to raise the issue of compliance and enforcement. In fact, there is now a group of community organizations that are advocating for an education accessibility standard across Ontario. They are advocating for this because too many students with special needs face enormous obstacles to receiving the education they should be receiving as Ontarians. Not only do students with special needs face accessibility hurdles like access to playground equipment, smart boards that aren't legible, or classroom doors that can't be opened; these same barriers to education contribute to the high unemployment rate among Ontarians with disabilities.

I was very proud that our member from London West, Peggy Sattler, welcomed the creation of a local chapter

of the AODA Alliance with a brief statement. She said, “While the government’s recent agreement to develop a health standard in accessibility is welcome, another standard is meaningless if it is not enforced. There has been no commitment on the development of an essential standard for education, both K to 12 and post-secondary.”

We can do better and we must do better, Mr. Speaker.

Concerns about lack of accessibility were a central part of the Ontario NDP’s critique of the 2015 Parapan games. We know that there were para athletes who could only gain access to less than 20% of the businesses with less than 20 employees in the GTA, and yet this government proudly trumpeted the fact that those games were the most accessible in history.

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Ontario’s NDP has consistently raised AODA compliance issues and will continue to do so.

Percy Hatfield, the MPP for Windsor–Tecumseh, introduced a PMB titled Municipal Action on Accessibility for Persons With Disabilities Act in 2015, following consultation with the AODA.

Despite its commitments, this government requires pressure from the opposition to follow through on what they have said that they would do. It doesn’t inspire confidence, Mr. Speaker.

However, I was inspired to create a petition calling for the expansion of AODA service animal protection in 2015, after many constituents in my riding of Kitchener–Waterloo reached out to my office to share their experiences of indignity related to their service animals.

While the AODA represents a good first step, those who rely on service dogs or other accessibility accommodations in order to live dignified lives require the legislation to be consistently enforced.

While the throne speech was to act as a chance for this Liberal government to hit the restart button, it is disappointing that we heard absolutely nothing about accessibility and disability rights. Thousands of people in this province continue to struggle to access services in ways that their able-bodied counterparts do not. This is discrimination in its clearest form. If this government truly cared about full inclusion, they would initiate oversight for their own act.

Ultimately, the United Nations’ International Day of Persons with Disabilities is about inclusion. Inclusion should not be optional in the province of Ontario. Everyone in Ontario deserves the right to feel like they belong in any building, in any business, in any workplace. With inclusion, everyone can live their full potential. That’s what we need to strive for in Ontario, and we have a lot of work to go forward.

PETITIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), one in eight Ontario schools is at risk of closure; and

“Whereas the value of a school to the local economy and community has been removed from the PARG; and

“Whereas the PARG outlines consultation requirements that are insufficient to allow for meaningful community involvement, including the establishment of community hubs; and

“Whereas school closures have a significant negative impact on families and their children, resulting in inequitable access to extracurricular activities and other essential school involvement, and after-school work opportunities; and

“Whereas school closures have devastating impacts on the growth and overall viability of communities across Ontario, in particular self-sustaining agricultural communities;

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

“To place a moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG has been subject to a substantive review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the health of our communities and children.”

I fully support this, will sign my name and send it with page Sage.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition, and I’d like to thank Mrs. Brittany Jackson from Whitefish, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of citizens from northern Ontario oppose the sale of Hydro One;

“Whereas the majority of citizens of northern Ontario oppose the rate increase which is the direct result of successful initiative to conserve and reduce electrical power consumption;

“Whereas the majority of citizens of northern Ontario oppose the installation and continued use of the smart meter program due to the unreliability of their metering and billing as well as incidents of causing fire;

“Whereas the majority of citizens from northern Ontario oppose the current inclusion of the delivery fee charges on power bills due to the unfair and confusing policies;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Call upon the Liberal government to stop the sell-off and privatization of Hydro One, stop further rate increases caused resulting from lower-than-expected consumption, stop the practice of billing rural customers for line loss charges, and reverse the ill-conceived decision to install smart meters without passing on the expense for replacing equipment to customers.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Charlie to bring it to the Clerk.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Grant Crack: I'm pleased to stand today, representing my constituents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and particularly the group Sauvons La Nation.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Premier recently stated that it has been a mistake that government policies have caused electricity bills to rise so dramatically, resulting in hardship for thousands of Ontarians; and

“Whereas on September 27, 2016, Minister Thibeault announced that because Ontario has a sufficient supply of all forms of energy to meet demands over the next decade, he was suspending the LRP-II process; and

“Whereas according to the IESO and the government, the trend has been toward declining energy consumption in the province, decreasing the need for new generation; and

“Whereas overpayment for unneeded wind and solar energy in Ontario is causing Ontarians’ electricity bills to rise to increasingly unaffordable levels; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours to the south at a significant loss; and

“Whereas many LRP I projects were approved by the IESO without community support or agreement, without abutting landowner agreements, and without prior local First Nations support, although these priorities were well-advertised in the process; and

“Whereas the ‘Notice to Proceed’ stage which triggers most of the IESO commercial commitments has not happened; and

“Whereas the IESO’s payments of pre-NTP costs would be a tiny fraction of the projects’ avoided capital investments;

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

“To immediately cancel all LRP I contracts, such as the Eastern Fields project in The Nation municipality and those in North Stormont and Dutton Dunwich.”

I affix my signature to this petition and gave it to page Fallon.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It’s my pleasure today to add my voice to those in my constituency on long-term care. A petition to the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“Whereas chronic understaffing is the number one concern of families and friends of residents in long-term care;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum standard of care—but falls short of actually creating one;

“Whereas current care levels fail to recognize the increased levels of sickness and rates of Alzheimer’s and dementia of LTC residents;

“Whereas the most detailed and reputable studies of minimum care standards recommend at least four (4) hours of direct care per day;

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

“(1) Amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) so that a long-term-care home will have to provide its residents with a minimum of four hours a day of nursing and personal support services, averaged across the residents, as outlined in Bill” 33, “Time to Care Act;

“(2) Calculate the average number of direct hours of nursing services and personal support services as prescribed by the regulations and exclude hours paid in respect to vacation, statutory holidays, sick leave, leaves of absences and training time;

(3) Increase funding to long-term-care homes so they can achieve the mandated staffing and care standard and tie public funding for them to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meet the legislated minimum care standard

“(4) Make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory to ensure accountability.”

I’ll present this to page Giulia and I will affix my signature, as I agree with this.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: “Petition for a Universal, High-quality Child Care System in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 commits Ontario to ‘a system of responsive, safe, high-quality and accessible child care and early years programs and services that will support parents and families, and will contribute to the healthy development of children’;

“Whereas recent community opposition to Ontario’s child care regulation proposals indicates that a new direction for child care is necessary to address issues of access, quality, funding, system building, planning and workforce development;

“Whereas Ontario’s Gender Wage Gap Strategy consultation found ‘child care was the number one issue everywhere’ and ‘participants called for public funding and support that provides both adequate wages and affordable fees’;

“Whereas the federal government’s commitment to a National Early Learning and Child Care Framework provides an excellent opportunity for Ontario to take leadership and work collaboratively to move forward on developing a universal, high-quality, comprehensive child care system in Ontario;

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

“To undertake a transparent policy process with the clear goal of developing a universal early childhood

education and child care system where all families can access quality child care programs; and

1400

“To publicly declare their commitment to take leadership in developing a national child care plan with the federal government that adopts the principles of universality, high-quality and” comprehensive care.

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Calida to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the vacant unit rebate on property taxes is widely acknowledged as contributing to the high number of empty neighbourhood retail storefronts (i.e., residential/condominium above a commercial space) and reduced economic activity in our community; and

“Whereas the vacant unit rebate precludes short-term and flexible leases, which have been proven to revitalize neighbourhood commercial strips by providing a more accessible entry point and fostering entrepreneurship; and

“Whereas the vacant unit rebate is widely acknowledged as a contributor to the lack of interest or necessity among landlords in lowering commercial lease rates and/or improving commercial properties; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto, in the course of public hearings in 2015, formally requested the province of Ontario amend the vacant unit rebate provision ‘for commercial and industrial properties, in order to enable the city to establish graduated vacant unit rebates that will induce and incent owners and tenants to meet eligibility criteria that align with the city’s economic growth and job creation objectives’; and

“Whereas there are millions of dollars in property tax revenue being lost that could help alleviate problems of homelessness, food security and other local issues; and

“Whereas the decision to amend or end the vacant unit rebate in our community ultimately requires the province of Ontario to amend the City of Toronto Act;

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

“That the province of Ontario amend the City of Toronto Act, granting the city of Toronto the power to delineate a specific category for neighbourhood retail commercial properties, and allowing them to set, amend and/or eliminate the vacant unit tax rebate for this category.”

I certainly agree with this petition. In fact, Speaker, as you may know, Bill 70 contains a provision which will give effect to this fantastic petition. I’m happy to sign my initials to it and leave it with page Helen.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a save our schools—Honey Harbour petition. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and the Trillium Lakelands District School Board both plan to conduct pupil accommodation reviews with the intent of closing both Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School and Honey Harbour Public School;

“Whereas the loss of both schools in Honey Harbour will further destabilize the community and impede on elementary students’ ability to attend school within a reasonable distance;

“Whereas the lack of a local school will negatively impact those students with special needs, accessibility challenges, students of a young age and those living below the poverty level;

“Whereas the prosperity, productivity and participation of local children depends on a viable, accessible school;

“Whereas there are no other elementary schools to serve Georgian Bay township’s population within less than a 55-minute bus drive;

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

“We petition the Minister of Education to work with said school boards to co-locate both schools into one location in Honey Harbour, thus protecting the quality and child-focused education that the residents of Georgian Bay township require and deserve.”

I’ve signed it and will give it to page Reagan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses ... and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I sign this petition and give it to page William to deliver to the table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further petitions? I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'll see if I can make this two full minutes so the member opposite doesn't get a chance. Sorry. Speaker, thank you—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The petition.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes. Thank you, Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sorry?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Read the petition, please.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I was being interrupted.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the good folks in Cambridge.

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario's labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker's age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

I sign my name for this petition and leave it with page Kaitlyn and leave eight seconds on the clock.

ENERGY CONTRACTS

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Premier recently stated that it has been a mistake that government policies have caused electricity bills to rise so dramatically, resulting in hardship for thousands of Ontarians; and

“Whereas on September 27, 2016, Minister Thibeault announced that because Ontario has a sufficient supply of all forms of energy to meet demands over the next decade, he was suspending the LRP-II process; and

“Whereas according to the IESO and the government, the trend has been toward declining energy consumption in the province, decreasing the need for new generation; and

“Whereas overpayment for unneeded wind and solar power energy in Ontario is causing Ontarians' electricity bills to rise to increasingly unaffordable levels; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians' power bills are regulatory, delivery charges and global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours to the south at a significant loss; and

“Whereas many LRP I projects are approved by the IESO without community support or agreement, without abutting landowner agreements, and without prior local First Nations support, although these priorities are well-advertised in the process; and

“Whereas the ‘Notice to Proceed’ stage which triggers most of the IESO commercial commitments has not happened; and

“Whereas the IESO's payment of pre-NTP cost would be a tiny fraction of projects' avoided capital investments:

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

“To immediately cancel all LRP-1 contracts, such as Nation Rise Wind project in North Stormont.”

I agree with this and—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

END AGE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
STROKE RECOVERY PATIENTS ACT,
2016

LOI DE 2016 VISANT À METTRE FIN
À LA DISCRIMINATION FONDÉE
SUR L'ÂGE ENVERS LES MALADES
SE RÉTABLISSANT D'UN ACCIDENT
VASCULAIRE CÉRÉBRAL

Mr. Coe moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act / *Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.*

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Whitby—Oshawa.

Mr. Lorne Coe: It's a privilege to rise in the Legislature this afternoon to debate Bill 9. Speaker, in Ontario, if you're between the ages of 20 and 64, access to post-stroke rehabilitation services such as publicly funded treatment and physiotherapy is greatly restricted. Moreover, qualifying patients only receive a small fraction of their physiotherapy treatment, which can cost thousands of dollars per month.

Bill 9 aims to correct this and calls on the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to oversee and promote an evidence-based approach to the provision of physiotherapy services for post-stroke recovery patients of all ages. Bill 9 also places the control of stroke treatment in the hands of physicians, where it belongs.

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It has certainly been a long road to get here, Speaker. Just last week, Jim McEwen, who is in the Speaker's gallery, was telling me how he first raised this issue with former MPP John O'Toole, who became a great advocate on this issue, bringing it to the attention of the Minister of Health at that time. Then, a year and a half ago, my predecessor Christine Elliott tabled a motion, unanimously adopted in this Legislature, which called on the government to find the necessary in-year savings to ensure that those between the ages of 20 and 64 were receiving the care they needed when recovering from a stroke.

The actions of these former parliamentarians, as well as the advocacy of Jim McEwen and others who have joined us here this afternoon, and those across Ontario, are what led to the development of Bill 9—the need to enshrine in the Minister of Health's responsibilities the duty to take care of patients who are recovering from a stroke. This afternoon, it's my hope that for all post-stroke survivors, members of this Legislature will make Bill 9 a reality; that they will vote in favour of allowing the access to care that is desperately needed by so many recovering from the devastating effects of a stroke.

Along this journey, I've had significant support for Bill 9, and I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the town and city councils to date who have written to me to express their support: towns and cities like Uxbridge, Addington Highlands, Bluewater, West Grey, Brock, Central Huron, Thessalon, Pickering, South Bruce Peninsula, O'Connor, Vaughan, LaSalle, Stirling-Rawdon, Seguin, Brighton, Oshawa and, of course, the town of Whitby.

Every area of challenge gives out a ray of hope, and the one unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.

Today, we have an opportunity, together, to give hope to those who are struggling to make it all the way back, to end the impediment that if you're between of ages of 20 and 64, you have less access to rehabilitative services than those who are not. Our young adults are Ontario's

future, and they deserve better treatment in a publicly funded health care system.

Efforts are not enough without purpose and direction, and it has been a collective effort on both sides of the Legislature that brings us this afternoon to the third reading of Bill 9 and, finally, the adoption of the bill.

The late President John F. Kennedy once said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try."

Thank you, Jim McEwen, for being that difference in the lives of post-stroke recovery patients, lifting up the hopes of so many in the province. My hope this afternoon is that my colleagues on both sides of the Legislature will stand up once again for what's right in our province.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to stand up and support the member from Scarborough—Rouge River on Bill 9, the post-stroke recovery for all act, 2016.

I'm particularly delighted that the member, in his first term, coming in on a by-election, has so very quickly got to a PMB success story. He should be commended on that accomplishment in itself. As we all know, it's difficult at times to get private members' bills through the House, and your success in doing this is a testament to your expertise in understanding and negotiating your way around these halls. So congratulations for that, and particularly for bringing forward a bill that was previously sponsored by Christine Elliott, who is a great friend of all of us. Her husband, Jim Flaherty, of course, was a great friend of the family's and he showed up at my father's funeral, which was quite unexpected as he was the finance minister. I know we can support a bill like this, that Christine Elliott would have brought forward—and the member for bringing it forward.

Of course, my congratulations also to Jim McEwen for your hard work in bringing forward this initiative. It's much regarded by all members of this House, and you'll be assured that our side of the House will be certainly supporting this.

I would like to point out, Speaker, that our government is committed to providing quality care for all stroke patients. I had a staff member who worked for me for the first year and a half, a wonderful woman, Janice Findlay. She used to work for my brother. She had had some health issues in the past, and it was wonderful—she hadn't worked for a while, but she was able to come on to my staff and she was an extraordinarily effective constituency representative. She helped a lot of constituents solve issues that they were having—a tremendous, tremendous asset to my office—but then tragically suffered a stroke herself, and found the experience of moving through the system actually quite gratifying, getting to the various emergency care and rehabilitation services. She has no use of almost the whole left side of her body and she will be dependent on others for care for the rest of her life, but she is quite satisfied with the kind of service that she got, partly because she is supported with long-term disability plans and other supports that she could rely on and utilize outside of the immediate work in the medical community.

In our Patients First Act, we are taking some steps—I believe it's almost through committee. The plans that are outlined in that bill will be making more direct investments in support services for stroke victims. We are publicly funding more physiotherapy and other rehabilitation services for persons who are in the post-acute phase of stroke recovery. They are offered currently in five different settings. They are offered in hospitals, hospital outpatient clinics, home care, long-term-care homes, and community physio clinics.

Through this process, Speaker, we're ensuring that the individuals who need it are receiving the kind of post-recovery care that they need to get back as much of their activities as they had in the past as is physically possible, and to help deal with the adjustments that have to be made in their lives as they move forward post-stroke recovery.

Currently, I think there are in the order of 258 community physio clinics that are providing services in over 150 communities. Annual funding is about \$44 million that's provided by our government directly for post-recovery.

Again, I'm absolutely delighted that the member brought this forward and that his House leader and our House leader—we have all agreed that this was a very timely bill to come forward. I look forward to supporting it. Congratulations.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to add a few comments on this bill, Bill 9, End Age Discrimination Against Stroke Recovery Patients Act.

In particular, I'd like to thank Jim McEwen for being here. I was privileged enough to be on the committee last week and to have participated in listening to his personal story and the challenges and the peaks and valleys that he has experienced throughout his therapy that he tried to access.

It was quite surprising to me that there was actually a barrier in health care because of age with regard to heart attack and stroke. For him to be that forthcoming and persistent in identifying the problem and carrying the battle through the Legislature to try to get this bill passed and to have representatives like the member from Whitby–Oshawa present it is really good to see, because as MPPs, especially on this side of the House, we don't often get to see our bills come to fruition. It does speak to the fact that if we keep fighting hard enough, we can do good things on this side of the House for our constituents. This is an example of that.

Congratulations to everyone who worked together to get this bill forward, and a special congratulations to Jim McEwen for bringing this forward and fighting the good fight and making sure it got passed. Thank you, everyone.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I would like to correct my record.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member has every right to correct his record.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I inadvertently referred to your riding as Scarborough–Rouge River, where of course it's Whitby–Oshawa. My apologies to you.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member has a right to correct his record.

Further debate? Further debate?

Seeing none, Mr. Coe has moved third reading of Bill 9, An Act to amend the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Third reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion. Congratulations.

CHILDREN'S LAW REFORM
AMENDMENT ACT (RECOGNIZING
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
GRANDPARENTS), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI
PORTANT RÉFORME DU DROIT
DE L'ENFANCE (RECONNAISSANCE
DE LA RELATION
AVEC LES GRANDS-PARENTS)

Mr. Mantha moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 34, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents / Projet de loi 34, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance en ce qui concerne la relation entre un enfant et ses grands-parents.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always stand in my place to give credit where credit is due. I want to start out by recognizing the member Kim Craiton, who was a prior MPP; Christine Elliott; and our member from Parkdale–High Park for their tenacity and their work that they've done on this bill over the course of years.

I don't want to take up much of the time, but what I do want to do is put a voice to grandparents across this province.

This is from grandparents Samy and Rita: "The well-being of children is too precious to ignore. Without Bill 34, Ontario judges don't have the means to support families. Bill 34 could be the pathway to mediation for some families. It works in Quebec and other Canadian provinces. Ontario children deserve it as well. Thank you for caring about our children.

"Please pass Bill 34. Stop parents using children as pawns in family disputes and denying them access to grandparents and family. This is recognized as abuse by [the] Children's Aid Society....

"We don't wish this pain on anyone." That is from grandma and grandpa Donna and Barrie.

"I encourage the standing committee to pass Bill 34. I feel it is important that grandparents be able to participate in their grandchildren's lives irregardless of the relationship with the adult child.... As grandparents, we enrich our grandchildren's lives and are able to provide them with memories, love and a wealth of knowledge from our life's experiences." That is from grandpa John and grandma Janet.

"My husband and I are alienated grandparents and have never met our second grandchild and have also been prevented from seeing our precious 3-year-old mainly because our son's wife is the alienator and our son has been manipulated by her....

"This is emotional and psychological abuse and must be stopped now! Especially the abused are the grandchildren. Please make sure Bill 34 is passed and let this dream finally become a reality."

"Please pass Bill 34. Stop parents using children as pawns in family disputes and denying them access to grandparents and family. This is recognized as abuse by children's aid." This is by Helen.

"I support the call for Bill 34 to be passed in order to make it possible for grandparents to visit with their grandchildren.

"And—let's say this in another important way—this bill will finally allow children to have a relationship with their grandparents.

"I know how important I am in the lives of my grandchildren. The very thought of losing this relationship is unbearable." Grandma Kate.

"I am a 69-year-old grandfather who retired nine years ago, hoping to spend my retirement years with my ... grandchildren. Nine years ago, my ... sons walked out of my life, with no response" and no explanation. "Today I have four grandchildren whom I have never seen, nor have I ... been told of their birth...." It's "child abuse; grandparents' abuse. Stop the use of children....

"This has to stop. Now....

"When something is brought forward to the government six times, somebody has to start listening to the population of this province. Please make number seven the last time" this Bill 34 will come to be presented "and make Bill 34 law in ... Ontario."

The list goes on and on and on. Speaker, it's time. It's time. I am so happy that we're finally here. What exactly we're going to be doing is providing the tools for our courts and our judges to look at a relationship between a child and his grandparents and say, "I deem it that in the best interest of this child that this relationship needs to flourish." That's what we're doing with this particular bill here today, and that's so important. That nurturing, that loving, that special relationship that a child has when he looks up to grandma or grandpa: That is an amazing love. It's something that is absolutely flourishing and so beneficial to the child's upbringing.

The other thing that we're going to be able to do is that by adding grandparents under the law, the judges and courts will now have to look at grandparents in a different way, because they were never identified within

the context of the law. We are moving the stakes forward. We are making sure that children and grandparents will have that nurturing and loving relationship for the many, many, many, lives that are going to be impacted by this.

Seven times is lucky. Here we are at number seven. Are we going to be that lucky? I'm wearing this tie for a reason. Let's box this one up. Let's wrap it up. Let's put a nice little bow on it, let's grab it and let's put that box under the Christmas tree because grandparents across this province deserve a really, really nice Christmas gift.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very happy to stand here and speak in support of Bill 34. I want to thank the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for putting forward this important bill. I want to thank all the members that he mentioned who worked very hard on this bill as well.

Speaker, I also want to thank Darlene Sparling in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Darlene is a grandmother and has been a strong advocate for this bill and the predecessors of the bill. She's got many, many petitions signed, so Darlene, this is for you.

I also want to thank Lea Clarke, Frank and Sonya Cianciullo, and Wanda Davies of Alienated Grandparents Anonymous for their advocacy and for coming to the committee and working with members on this important bill.

Speaker, I have very fond memories of my grandparents, who played a very important part in my life, especially my nani, my mother's mom, who lived with us. I see the important role my parents and Christine's parents play in our kids'—Rafi's and Ellie's—lives. Their lives wouldn't be complete without that love. I'm sure we all can share those stories about our grandparents.

Speaker, from the beginning when we started the debate on this bill, our government was clear that we supported the ability of grandparents to seek assistance from the Family Courts in cases where they have been unfairly denied access visits to their grandchildren. At the same time, we wanted to ensure that any decision about access to a child will continue to be made in the child's best interests. The law must always focus on the needs of children. That was the approach we took to this bill. I know that every member of this Legislature agrees with that statement.

To provide some background to all members, under Ontario's Children's Law Reform Act, a grandparent already has the ability to obtain an order for access to their grandchild if it is found to be in the child's best interest. Under the current law, our courts must consider the "love, affection and emotional ties" between a child and any person who is applying for custody or access. This includes grandparents in any instance where the child's grandparents are an active part of the child's life. I want to stress that particular point. So this is not an entirely new concept. It does already exist in law.

This bill is about supporting the ability of grandparents to seek assistance from the Family Court and

ensuring that any decision about access to a child will continue to be made in the child's best interests. We have always supported this bill's purpose because, Speaker, it would be a shame if a loving and caring grandparent was not able to have access to their grandchild. We want to ensure that in these cases, we are facilitating this relationship that is focused on supporting the best interests of children.

The reality is, while in many cases grandparents play a necessary and positive role in the lives of children, there are circumstances where it is not practical or appropriate to extend this legal authority. That is why, Speaker, we put forward an amendment at committee that would make it clear that grandparents have the ability to seek a court order for access to their grandchild under the Children's Law Reform Act. At the same time, it would ensure that a court remains focused on determining what arrangement would be in the best interests of the children involved.

I know that the member from Algoma–Manitoulin agrees with that approach and has worked very closely with us in making certain amendments to the bill. I thank him for that.

Speaker, as we learned over the course of the debate on the All Families Are Equal Act, there is a wide array of family structures that exist. That means many people, both family and otherwise, can be important people in a child's life. There can be so many determining factors. It may be a very strained relationship between a parent, or both parents, and either set of grandparents. That's why, as we debated and discussed this issue, it was clear that we needed to strike the right balance with this bill and recognize the role grandparents can play, but ultimately prioritizing the needs of the child.

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We wanted to make sure that the changes being proposed were not overly prescriptive and that judges would be able to continue to be allowed to make the nuanced and difficult decisions that they need to, to protect the children who are there in front of them. We were able to make some important changes to this bill so that it continued to protect the best interests of children by allowing judges to exercise their judgment while recognizing the important role grandparents play.

This bill is a result of hard work and compromise. I want to dedicate this bill to all grandparents and to my children's dada, amma, berta, granddad and grandma. It reflects the relationship that my children have in their lives to their grandparents, and all children in our province and their grandparents.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: Bill 34, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child's grandparents: This bill aims to recognize that we must do more to ensure that grandparents can maintain a relationship with their grandchildren.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to start off by acknowledging my colleague Michael Mantha from the riding of

Algoma–Manitoulin. As he referenced in his opening, this is the seventh time this has been debated. So I'm hoping, my friend, that this is the lucky seven, and I commend you for all the efforts you've put in. I also want to pay homage and give appreciation to Christine Elliott, our former colleague from Whitby who was a co-signer of one the original bills, and especially to the grandparents who have come out and actually put their voice, their story, in front of us.

I have heard from many grandparents in my riding, and in fact across Ontario, who want us to protect those relationships and ensure they receive recognition from the courts. One of them shared with me a copy of a petition that showed this change in the law was supported by 3,765 grandparents in Ontario, and I'm sure there were lots more who just didn't get to the petition by the time this one was filed.

These are mostly people who have enjoyed the privilege of being involved in their grandchildren's life and understand the value of such relationships. They got to do those fun things with their grandchildren, from playing games, baking treats, shopping, babysitting and going on holidays together to something as simple as just sitting and talking about their family history. We know that the grandparent-grandchild relationship can be nurturing and satisfying, rather than conflictual. It is this positive that we are focusing on with Bill 34.

At the same time, I do want to acknowledge that in certain circumstances the relationship can be complex and involve complex legal considerations. So it wasn't a slam dunk; there are ramifications and inadvertent situations that we have to think of when we do that legislation. I hope we have been able to capture that and, if we haven't, always go back and revise and do the right thing at the right time.

An example I want to share, Madam Speaker, is when a family separates. The breakdown doesn't just happen between the parents, but in the end also has an impact on the extended family, which includes grandparents. With no recourse in the law, grandparents can lose connection with their grandchildren forever. We heard a number of people come to us in front of committee and share those types of stories where they've had no connection to their grandchildren. I can't fathom that. I'm not a grandfather yet—hopefully someday, Madam Speaker—but I can't fathom that I wouldn't have that access. This legislation would ensure the courts consider individual cases to grant access based on whether contact would be appropriate in the circumstances. As I shared in committee, the need and the priority always must be that of the child.

I was privy to the hearings on Bill 34 last week, and I heard first-hand a number of stories. I heard, from a lawyer who came to present to us, that judges actually, despite wanting to, had no ability in the current legislation to actually enact—because the law had limited them and restricted them in what they could make a ruling on. So we need to fix that. We heard of vindictive situations where there was sometimes a nasty split between the parents and one of the spouses, for whatever

reason. Sometimes it was a sibling of the grandparents, sometimes it was the ex-in-law, who actually took vindictive action and said, “We’re going to do this and we’re going to restrict you,” and, sadly, were using the children as pawns. The way the former legislation was written, it actually allowed them to do that.

It certainly is a case where I believe the legislation today is going to look at those situations. It should be case by case and allow the judges to hear each particular story. If they feel at the end of the day that the grandparent is who, truly, should be the guardian of that child and that it’s in the child’s best interests, then certainly that’s the way I would go.

Madam Speaker, I just want to make sure that I always reflect a little bit when I have the opportunity here on issues of this type of important legislation. My grandma Jones, my mom’s mom, and my grandma Walker, my dad’s mom—it’s sad I didn’t get to see my grandfathers; they were both gone before I was born. They were both so positive—favourable and fond memories. It was part of my childhood that I reflect back on now. I can’t fathom. Then my dear, departed mom, who passed three years ago, and my boys, Zach and Ben: I can tell you just from standing alongside, watching that interaction, the love, the nurturing, the guidance, the unconditional emotion and support for them is something that certainly has shaped both of their lives and all of their cousins’. I have too many to reference and name in here; we could be here for another day if I did the whole family. But seeing those relationships, the law should always make sure that what we’re doing is trying to afford the best person, the person who’s going to make sure that those children are best taken care of, and I believe this legislation will do that.

In closing, I want to again commend all of the grandparents who came out who have worked diligently behind the scenes across the country and across the world to ensure that this legislation was put in place. To Mr. Mantha from Algoma–Manitoulin, congratulations. I think it’s a great piece of legislation. I hope this serves all of the children and all of the grandparents as well as it can.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Seeing none, Mr. Mantha has moved third reading of Bill 34, An Act to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act with respect to the relationship between a child and the child’s grandparents. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear “carried.”

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

Third reading agreed to.

ALBANIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT,
2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS

Mr. Qaadri moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month/ Projet de loi 36, Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine albanais.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would salute the extraordinary endorsement—somewhat rare—from the honourable member from Nepean–Carleton. I’d also like to salute my colleagues who have been so supportive. In particular, with your permission, Madam Speaker, I’d like to recognize many members of the Albanian-Canadian community who join us in the public gallery. I would like to welcome Dr. Ruki Kondaj of the Albanian Canadian Community Association, who has been an extraordinary force of nature, bringing forward not only the culture, the heritage, the language and the precious inheritance of the Albanian community, but also someone who has helped to publicize that, not only to us here in the Legislature but also beyond.

I’d like to as well recognize my honourable colleague the MPP from York South–Weston, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Laura Albanese, or, as I will translate, Laura the Albanian. I would like to thank all of them.

I’m joined very strategically, I can see, by the MPP for Etobicoke Centre—just to the south of me—the honourable Yvan Baker, who is also an extraordinary proponent, advocate and facilitator of Albanian-Canadian heritage. So I thank you, Mr. Baker, for joining me once again for your moral support. Mirëdita to all of you for joining us today.

As I’ve mentioned, we have so much to celebrate, but everything has not been so fluid for the Albanian-Canadian community or the Albanian community worldwide. They have gone through their share of struggles. November 28, 1912, was when Albania actually declared its independence. Of course, we celebrate that with Albanian flag day, which just occurred very recently. I remind the House as well that on November 29, 1944, Albania was actually liberated from Nazi Germany.

There have been many, many other challenges. For example, people will know or recall historically that the Albanian community has been dominated by various empires: Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman. Despite it all—despite a group of them migrating even to Italy, known as the Arbëreshë, which we had the pleasure of meeting and welcoming and sampling some of their delicious foods, baklava and all the rest of it right here in the Legislature—they have maintained their heritage, their culture, their language, their dances and their multi-cultural mosaic. It’s really just adding to the richness, the fabric, the quilt that makes up this great province and this great country of Canada.

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Now, of course, I’ve already talked about Laura the Albanian. Perhaps my favourite Albanian—and there’s

so many, many to choose from—is the Man Booker prize author Ismail Kadare. Of course, I pronounce his name perhaps a little bit similar to my own, Shafiq Qaadri, as you know, and I'm sure there's probably some distant relationship, as both of us are actually in fact writers. But in any case, I look forward to learning more and more through his writings of the long struggle, as I mentioned, whether it's through the Ottoman, the Byzantine or the Roman empires, and of course, despite all that, maintaining the heritage and the culture so that we in Toronto can continue to benefit from it.

Speaker, as you may know, the Albanian Canadian community is very vibrant and very loud and very boisterous. They comprise something on the order of about 30,000-plus people, mostly settled here in the GTA. Their first wave of immigration came in the early 20th century, immediately post-World War I, and then, of course, considerably after World War II. From, by the way, the former Yugoslavia, there are members of the community from Kosovo, which had its own political upheaval, as you will remember, Speaker.

In any case, we are honoured, delighted and thrilled to have not only all of the Albanian Canadian community members here but also, through them, representing the entire community in this country. You are us, we are you, and we welcome you and honour you and salute you.

Interruption.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Before I go on to further debate, I just want to remind all our visitors that we welcome you in the chamber, but there's no participation in any form in the debate.

Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure today to join in support of Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month. I offered to speak to this legislation today, and I volunteered for a very important reason: because we have a growing population of Albanian Canadians in Nepean–Carleton. We actually have an Albanian-language school that operates on Saturday mornings and which my daughter's best friend is part of because our family is great friends with Albana and Besnik Petregova and their children, Anna, who is on my daughter's hockey team, and her older brother, Gazim.

I've gotten to know this family over the past number of years that my daughter has been going to school—grade 6 now. One of the things I really like about this is that when we have a diverse community, which I'm very fortunate to represent, you get to learn from other people's cultures, some of their traditions and how they came to Ontario and how they came to Canada. I get to sit down quite a bit with Albana and with Besnik, and we enjoy some of the best Middle Eastern food one could ask for. They've even allowed me to try, on occasion, some grappa that's been made in the garage.

But, you know, they're not alone. There are over 30,000 Canadians of Albanian origin who contribute to our diversity and our prosperity in the province of

Ontario. Since the early 20th century, as my colleague noted, the Albanian community has been enriching the economic, cultural and social fabric of this province. Each year, during the month of November, it's very important for the people of Albanian heritage to celebrate the Albanian declaration of independence or liberation day. Recently, we celebrated Albania's 104th independence day with a flag-raising here at Queen's Park.

I'd like to point out that one of the most well-known Albanian Canadians is from the city of Toronto and has inspired hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of young hockey players throughout the world, and that, of course, is Tie Domi—and his up-and-coming son, Max Domi. So not only are Albanians Canadians integrated into our education system, our health care system and all of that; they've also been very much welcomed and are providing, I think, excellence in hockey as well.

A few things about Albania and Canada that many people may not know: Although they've had sometimes a very troubled and maybe struggled past, in the early part of this century they were both granted status in the European Union as well as NATO, so they are our allies. We have had military and defence co-operation between Canada and Albania, and Albania has participated in Canadian military training assistance programs and language training for Albanian military officers in Canada.

We've also assisted them with money to destroy some 10,000 tonnes of small-arms and light-weapons ammunition throughout the years.

In Canada—in particular, here in the province of Ontario, which has the largest Albanian population—the Albanian Muslim Society of Toronto was actually founded in 1954, and the Albanian Canadian Community Association was founded in 1990. We also have the Albanian Canadian Organization in Ottawa. I must say, Speaker, that just a few short steps from my home we have a lovely Albanian bakery, which my daughter asks quite frequently for us to visit so that she can get some of the wonderful tasty treats—which I have to stop eating at my age, but she can certainly work it off in her hockey games. I think it speaks to how wonderful this province is.

I'm going to conclude like this: Like the previous speaker, my family came from a different part of Canada than Ontario. We came from Nova Scotia, and I grew up in a small community where the diversity was literally whether somebody was a Scottish Catholic or a Scottish Presbyterian. One of the wonderful things that I've been able to give my daughter is the ability for her to meet people of various backgrounds, and that has enriched her life. For her to have a best friend who is Albanian and to go to a school with 70 Syrian refugees and to meet kids who have come from every corner and every walk of life—there's no greater gift you can give your children than understanding and the ability to learn from other people. I think it makes us all richer.

That's why I'm here, very proud to stand with my colleague Shafiq Qaadri in supporting Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage

Month. I look forward to celebrating it next year as it is law.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to put a couple of things on the record here. I want to follow up on what the member from Ottawa—wherever her riding is; I can't remember—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Nepean–Carleton.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Nepean–Carleton; thank you.

I think it's important to make this distinction: Canada, compared to the United States, has a very different approach when it comes to immigration and a very different approach when it comes to how we treat immigrants. In the United States, it's a big melting pot where everybody is supposed to somehow come together under one flag and one sort of identity.

In Canada, what we've done—and I think we've done that for a number of reasons. I think it's partly the way that we're wired as Canadians, is that we say, "Come here, be proud, work strongly for Canada, but don't forget who you are." I think that doing these kinds of things and recognizing Albanians in this country for their continued contribution to this country is important, because if you forget who you are, you kind of get lost.

Myself, I'm a francophone. Our family came here to Canada in the 1600s sometime. We emigrated, as they did back then. But all of these generations later, even in Ontario, we still speak French. We've kept that connection with who we are as francophones.

Am I a Canadian or a francophone first? I never got into those kinds of debates. I'm a proud Canadian who happens to be of French descent. I find being able to identify and understand who I am, what my culture is, what it's all about and what it does for me and the rest of the community in the greater community of Ontario—I think it just makes us all stronger.

In the days as we lead up to January 20, when the new President-elect is going to be sworn in in the United States, I think we should look at ourselves with a bit of pride and say—you know, we have our problems in Canada. Racism does exist. Xenophobia does exist. We understand all of those things, but we are at least trying as a society, and in all parties, to find a way to move forward so that all Canadians—Albanians, French Canadians, Chinese Canadians, whoever you might be—can do so together in a way that respects everybody's differences and allows people to be themselves and find their place within Canada at the same time.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Qadri has moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

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

Third reading agreed to.

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PANDAS/PANS AWARENESS DAY
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA JOURNÉE
DE SENSIBILISATION AU PANDAS/PANS

Mr. Bailey moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day / Projet de loi 43, Loi proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation au PANDAS/PANS.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I am very happy that we're all here today to discuss Bill 43, the PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day Act. I only have a few minutes to discuss Bill 43; that's okay because the PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day Act is a very straightforward bill, but it's about a very important subject.

If passed later today, October 9 in each year will officially be recognized as PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day in Ontario. I will get into why that's so important in just a few minutes, but first I want to draw everyone's attention to the members' west gallery. I would like to introduce Kerry Henrikson, Lena Henrikson, Erin Kwarciak and Ellen Nicol, who are joining us here today. Other people who wanted to attend but couldn't today because of business and travel: Leslie Best, Beverley Monsegue, Brandon Monsegue and Jasmine Monsegue. I also want to pay particular attention to my legislative assistant, Anthony Rizzetto, who worked with these people, to help these mothers and parents draft this bill.

Those are some of the people who make up the PANDAS/PANS Ontario network. They have all faced the challenge of dealing with the symptoms of PANDAS/PANS either personally or in caring for a loved one. Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park.

PANDAS, which stands for pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorders associated with streptococcus—it's quite a mouthful—describes a subset of children or adolescents who have either had an abrupt onset of obsessive-compulsive disorder or tic disorder symptoms or an acute worsening of symptoms following a streptococcus infection.

PANS, which is the other part of the title, stands for pediatric acute-onset neuropsychiatric syndrome. It describes the sudden acute onset of any neuropsychiatric condition—for example OCD, anxiety, depression, irritability or regression—that cannot be explained by any other neurological or medical disorder.

That is a lot to take in, so let me simplify it just a bit. Children and adolescents are infected with the strep virus, which we all know is very common. In fact, a member of my staff was just off a few weeks ago for three days as the strep virus went through his household, infecting all five people, including his three young children. However, after the strep infection has run its

course, some parents are noticing that their children are acting differently. They're showing behaviours and traits that they didn't have before the strep infection was present, things like obsessive-compulsive behaviour, generalized anxiety, joint pain, restrictive eating, tics, separation anxiety, hyperactivity, sleeping difficulties, and regression in language and their behaviour. This is obviously very concerning for any parent.

Parents are going to their doctors and pediatricians and asking for help, but because awareness and understanding of the PANDAS/PANS symptoms has not permeated the mainstream thinking of the medical community, the symptoms that these children are displaying are often being confused with other conditions. As a result, these children are potentially being misdiagnosed and they end up taking medication to deal with their symptoms, but the root of the problem is never being addressed.

Of course, no parent wants to see their child medicated needlessly, and that is why it is so important to raise the awareness of PANDAS/PANS as a possible diagnosis in these situations. I know any parent is going to say that they want to know that everything is being considered when it comes to the health of their child.

Once diagnosed, treatment of PANDA/PANS may be as simple as antibiotics or an anti-inflammatory medication. The impact on the child can be seen almost overnight. This is important stuff, and potentially life-changing for those affected.

Before my time is up, I want to mention that the major driver behind this bill was PANDAS/PANS Ontario, an organization that was started in my riding by Kerry Henrikson, who I introduced earlier. Kerry saw these dramatic changes in her children and knew something wasn't right, so she started asking those questions, making those phone calls and organizing people around the province. Now, with the help of Erin and Ellen and many others, they are doing a lot of great work getting the word out about PANDAS/PANS. I hope that members from each party will take a few moments to say hello to Kerry and the other visitors from PANDAS/PANS Ontario to learn more about their personal stories.

If and when Bill 43 is passed today, Ontario will join dozens of states in the US and one other province in Canada recognizing October 9 as PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day. I think it is the right thing for the members of this Legislature to do and I ask for your support on Bill 43.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm happy to speak to Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PANS Awareness Day, brought by the member opposite. I want to speak to the awareness issue because until this bill was brought to my attention some days ago, frankly, I hadn't given the PANDAS/PANS issue a lot of thought. In fact, I was one of those people who were, in effect, unaware of it. So when I did my research, looked into it and read over the materials that you so graciously provided, I thought of a

number of possible scenarios of children of friends of mine who may in fact fit the diagnosis.

I didn't know of it. For me, it's been an exercise in awareness, and that's the intent behind your bill: to make people like me, others and members of the general public aware. But also, it's for the physicians. The syndrome is so rare that, as I understand from my reading, it's a difficult diagnosis to make. It's confused with other issues. In fact, with all due respect to the medical community, there are physicians who often miss the diagnosis. Why? It's because they have the same issue of awareness that the layperson does. So I compliment the member for bringing this forward.

All too often, children with PANS and PANDAS are misdiagnosed as having a psychiatric illness and may be treated solely with psychotropic drugs to manage their symptoms. There's nothing worse, if you have a medical condition, than to be treated with the wrong medication, because that leads to a whole host of new issues without correcting the original issue that the physician was trying to deal with.

Unfortunately for PANS and PANDAS patients, this does not, if it's treated as a psychiatric disorder, address the root cause of the symptoms. The root causes of the symptoms are physical. It's an infection-triggered auto-immune condition. Studies have shown that when given the appropriate anti-infective or immunological treatment, PANS and PANDAS patients experience symptom resolution—symptom resolution because they've had (a) the right diagnosis, and (b) the right prescription of medicines to deal with the symptoms.

The symptoms then, if they're recognized and receive the right chemical medication, are reduced dramatically. So we're back to this piece of the awareness: obtaining the correct diagnosis, getting the correct diagnosis.

It's obviously an issue in the lay community and it can be an issue in the professional medical community. That's because the symptoms of PANDAS/PANS mimic many other symptoms. Typically, the symptoms revolve around psychological and psychiatric issues.

Again, I thank the member for bringing this bill forward. In fact, I passed on your information to some friends of mine and said, "You may be interested in this," because I knew they were struggling with a child and they weren't sure which way to turn.

We can't say how many kids with psychiatric symptoms have underlying immune or inflammatory components to their disorder. That's what Dr. Chang, a professor of psychiatry and behavioural sciences at none other than Stanford University medical school, said. That's one of the top medical schools in North America. If he's of that opinion, that at a medical school like that, they have trouble making the diagnosis, what does that say for the academic medical community across North America?

But given the new research indicating that inflammation drives mood disorders and other psychiatric problems, it is likely, according to Dr. Chang—the symptoms—to be a large subset of children and adults that are diagnosed with psychiatric disorders.

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Once again, I want to thank the member for coming up with this awareness bill. I think of all of the awareness debates that we've had in this chamber, this is probably one of the most remote but one of the most useful.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Bailey has moved third reading of Bill 43, An Act to proclaim PANDAS/PAN Awareness Day. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

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

Third reading agreed to.

BANGLADESHI HERITAGE MONTH
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE BANGLADAIS

Mr. Berardinetti moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month / Projet de loi 44, Loi proclamant le mois de mars Mois du patrimoine bangladais.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Scarborough–Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'm greatly honoured to rise in the Legislature today and lead off the third reading debate on Bill 44, An Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month.

I have to say, Madam Speaker, it's been an exciting journey so far, and I'm really pleased to see that this proposed bill has received such positive support.

With your permission, I'd like to start off by acknowledging and welcoming some distinguished guests from the Bangladeshi community who are here to join us on this special day: Farhana Khan, Serajuk Islam Kazi, Mahbub Reza, Nasar Ahamed, Kafil Uddin, Shakti Deb, Tapan Roy, Sami Chowdhry, Jamal Hussein, Emad Hussein, Aftab Ahmed and Aditi Zahir. I'm very pleased they're present here and that they want to hear the third reading of this bill. I'd like to thank you all for coming here today to hear the third reading debate.

I'd also like to acknowledge two MPPs in the Toronto area who have large communities of Bangladeshi Canadians. They are the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Glen Murray, and MPP Arthur Potts, from Beaches–East York. They share with me the opportunity to have very large Bangladeshi communities in their ridings.

Bangladeshi immigrants have been coming to Canada and proudly calling Ontario home since the 1970s. Today, community estimates put their numbers at around 50,000 people. That's 50,000 talented, hard-working and dedicated new Ontarians. They are our artists, our doctors, our scientists and our business and community

leaders. All of them help to drive Ontario forward and make this a better province for us all.

Their impact is especially significant in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, where they represent the largest visible minority. I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to personally meet and interact with so many of these wonderful, talented and dedicated community members.

Their infusion of culture, of shared values and of an incredible work ethic have strengthened my riding of Scarborough Southwest and truly made it a more unique and special place in which to live. I'm proud that today in this Legislature, we have the opportunity to recognize the numerous contributions and lasting impact that they have made on this province.

Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say a few words about how I first got to know the Bangladeshi community. It was way back in 1997, when I was a city councillor. I was approached by a member of the Bangladeshi community, and he asked me for a favour. He said, "I want you to help me close down a small side road"—a dead-end street; a small street—"just off of Danforth Avenue in the riding of Beaches–East York." I asked him why and he said, "We want to celebrate Canada Day."

I spoke to city officials, and they allowed the closure of one street. I was invited to attend this Canada Day event. I went to it, and I was surprised how many people from the Bangladeshi community were present—way back in 1997—just to be able to be a part of and celebrate Canada Day.

The Bangladeshi community is unique. It just integrates very quickly into our culture and becomes part of our culture. It's very interesting to see how fast and how much they've embraced the values that we share here in Ontario.

I'm very pleased that they've also invited myself and Arthur Potts, the member from Beaches–East York as well as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and others here in the Legislature, to so many functions that they hold. The functions are unique, whether it be listening to musicians, artists displaying their literature or the release of a new book or novel. I have been to so many of these events over the years, and I will continue to be part of this community and part of their proud tradition here in Canada.

I'm very hopeful that this coming March people around the province will join us in celebrating Bangladeshi Heritage Month. Why March? March is the month when Bangladesh celebrates its independence day. So I'm looking forward to the month of March. We will host events. Some will be here in the Legislature and some will be elsewhere. And we get to celebrate this event every March from now on.

Today the Bangladeshi community will finally be given the recognition it so richly deserves here in the province of Ontario. I couldn't be more proud to be an Ontario MPP today, and I look forward to hearing further debate on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I am proud to rise on behalf of my leader, Patrick Brown, and the PC caucus in support of Bill 44, the Bangladeshi Heritage Month Act, presented by the member for Scarborough Southwest.

Ontarians of Bangladeshi descent have left and continue to leave an important mark on our province. Your welcomed contributions span communities across Ontario and are reflected in our economic, academic, social and cultural life. They include Amit Chakma, president and vice-chancellor of Western University, and Ahmed Mustaq, founder of Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services.

I believe in an Ontario where all people—people from different communities and walks of life—work together, understand and support each other. By proclaiming March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month, we'll help teach more Ontarians about this culture that does so much to enrich the multicultural fabric of our society. It also presents an opportunity for others to learn more about Bangladesh's history, ranging from the partition of Bengal to the later restoration of democracy, in 1991.

Canada established diplomatic relations with Bangladesh in 1972. Diplomatic exchanges grew with recent visits, including a visit by Canada's parliamentary secretary of foreign affairs to Bangladesh in 2009, a visit by the minister of international co-operation in 2011 and a visit to Canada by Bangladesh's foreign minister in 2011.

Canada's commercial relationship with Bangladesh has grown over the last decade. In fact, bilateral merchandise trade has tripled, to \$1.7 billion in 2012.

Your community can count on a strong relationship with the Ontario Legislature and the PC caucus. I look forward to our shared journey to build a better Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Berardinetti has moved third reading of Bill 44, an Act to proclaim the month of March as Bangladeshi Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

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

Congratulations.

Third reading agreed to.

PROTECTING REWARDS POINTS ACT
(CONSUMER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PRÉSERVATION
DES POINTS DE RÉCOMPENSE
(MODIFICATION DE LA LOI SUR LA
PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR)

Mr. Potts moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points / Projet de loi 47, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du

consommateur en ce qui a trait aux points de récompense.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I turn to the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm absolutely delighted to have this opportunity to speak at third reading on Bill 47. I want to start by thanking the House leaders, the Premier and the minister for helping us fast-track this bill through. As you all know, it was extremely important that we act expeditiously on this bill in order to address an impending deadline of January 1, when LoyaltyOne was seeking to expire points for the Air Miles customers they have across Ontario. So I'm absolutely delighted we were able to move this thing forward.

1510

But this is not really a victory for me and this House, in bringing forward a private member's bill quickly. This is a victory for consumers across Ontario and, indeed, in Canada and across the world. It's a real victory because Air Miles backed down. Last week, just after we were at committee, Air Miles agreed not to expire their loyalty reward points on January 1, causing consumers across the province—across the world—to celebrate, because it takes all that anxiety away from them, as they were seeking both to find out how many points they might have had expiring or seeking ways to redeem them in the few weeks that were remaining before the expiration.

So it's a great victory. It's a victory that came about because consumer advocates right across the province—I'm thinking about Michael Judd from Oakville, who has been seeking for seven months, trying hard to find flights to go off to New Zealand to visit his family, and getting increasingly frustrated with his inability to get onto their websites, which kept on crashing, or to get a hold of a person, a live voice, at LoyaltyOne to find a way of redeeming his points. He's been a dedicated loyalty reward point user for years and has never had trouble before. But leading up to this expiration date of December 31, 2016, suddenly he was finding that the website wasn't—and it may be the incredible volume, all of a sudden, because people were pressured now to try and get in there, pressured in order to do this. They were so concerned—the website was crashing—that they had to make some changes.

The bill last week did go to committee and we made two very significant amendments. One was to make sure that part of the consumer agreement is that a third-party provider of the loyalty reward points is now captured by the consumer agreement. Secondly, we adjusted the regulation-making provisions of the bill so that we could address things like the diminution of value, because there may be significant opportunities where we do legitimately want to expire points and we need to have proper, consumer-friendly rules in place to do so.

On that note, I think I'll sit down and let the minister speak to it when it comes back to us in rotation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points.

Let us be clear: It is a novel bill that everybody wants to support in this Legislature. But like everything else this government does, it moved ahead without proper consultation. I shouldn't say "without proper consultation"; maybe the proper words would be "with no consultation." We saw through our committee, in the limited time we had—just a matter of minutes to hear the various deputations. This bill should have been a win-win for everybody, for consumers and the loyalty companies, but unfortunately, it's not turning out that way.

This government is so desperate for a good-news story that it rushes something like this out. It takes over a bill. You can imagine pushing a bill like this through and not consulting with any of the industry. I heard afterwards that they promised, in the new year, to actually consult with some of the industry. We already saw in the *Globe and Mail* on Friday where Air Miles is actually diluting their points.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Well, it's when you take a plan that's international in nature and you expect to put rules in place in Ontario that are different.

We spoke of this in the committee: We did not want to see the [*inaudible*] thing not available in Ontario, because these are enjoyed by very many people. These are important to a lot of my constituents. I have family members that go down and they pay for flights south. I know farmers in the area that purchase throughout the year and were able to get quite a number of points, and able to get cheap flights. We see now with Air Miles that everybody will be penalized because everybody's points will be worth less. It's clear.

I know that the Auditor General's report came out last week and I know it was very damning. I know there was a lot of embarrassment, but it doesn't take something like this just to make everybody forget. When you're putting through meaningful legislation, it means more than just throwing something on the floor and hoping it works out for the best. But we've seen this many times.

One of the major ones that comes to mind is the cancellation of the power plants, where they threw something out on the floor for an election to save a few seats. It ended up costing the ratepayers of this province over \$1 billion. Look at the ramifications. We have a government that thought they could bury this. They couldn't because of a minority government that led to the proroguing of the House. It's just—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I need to remind the member that he needs to debate the bill, okay? I return back to the member.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker, and I will come back. This talks about, when you rush through legislation, what happens.

We've already seen some of the issues here, with the loss of points, the loss of value. There's a better way of doing things. Unfortunately, we aren't seeing this. The

people who enjoy reward points will now have to bear the brunt of another failed government bill. The practice of jumping in with failed legislation has become a hallmark of this government.

There are numerous chances to fix something. You consult with the industry—talk to them—and that's what they were asking for. We heard in committee that they would have liked the opportunity to talk.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I guess the member opposite is talking about the donations they received, but that's not what government is about. We heard about \$19.2 million raised by this government in donations. It shouldn't be a requirement in good legislation that it depends on how much somebody has given back to the government.

The government ignored the consequences of this bill, and now we're seeing it. One of the companies said that there was a promise of consultation in the new year, well after this bill has been passed. We hope that there is something on that that makes these rewards points keep some value.

The people who use them properly have a habit of getting in there and taking as big an advantage—I think the legislation should allow for that, instead of penalizing everybody.

We were hoping for more from this government, and I guess we were disappointed once again.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege to stand on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin. On this particular issue, we're getting into our winter months. A lot of people are starting to ask questions as to how they're going to escape out of those winter months. People have been paying—

Interjection: Points.

Mr. Michael Mantha: That's right; points. That's how they're looking at it. They've been asking a lot of questions. This has really lit up my phone lines over at my constituency office. People wanted to make sure that their rewards points were going to be honoured.

I do want to say to the member that his bill that he had proposed, Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, with respect to reward points, has generated a lot of conversation. It has actually pushed me to look at the amount of points that I have, and I have a lot of points. I'm going to be able to use a lot of those points over the course of the holidays, or actually gift them to a family member, which is something that I'm looking at doing.

Making sure that an individual, when you do take that card, and you do make the effort of collecting those points—I go down to Shoppers Drug Mart. I stop in at several gas stations. There's a lot of travelling that I do across my riding, Speaker. It's 87,000 kilometres square; it's a vast area. I put a lot of miles on my vehicle, and I also put a lot of miles on my card. I want to make sure that each and every one of those points—which are going

to be honoured—that they go towards the things that I'm looking forward to.

Also, the individuals across my riding who have actually raised this wanted to make sure that their points were protected and that they will be able to benefit.

I want to just put a shout-out. Like I say, I don't do it often but I always put credit where credit is due. I want to commend the member for bringing the bill forward because I do know that this is something that is important to many people across my riding of Algoma–Manitoulin.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: It's really a pleasure to stand today and, I would say, to further congratulate our colleague the member from Beaches–East York for his leadership in introducing private member's Bill 47, the Protecting Rewards Points Act.

1520

This is something that I know many consumers feel very strongly about. Many—and as we heard, many of us, actually—have been collecting their rewards points for years in order to get that special gift or a special trip for themselves or their loved ones.

With the holiday season now upon us, this is definitely on the minds of many. These consumers chose their respective rewards points programs in order to earn what they wanted. As loyal members, they changed their shopping habits to earn the maximum amount of points. This benefited the rewards points companies and all retail partners immensely. Therefore, I thought it was unfortunate that some of these companies are trying to take away the benefits that consumers were promised when they were first signed up.

My priority as the Minister of Government and Consumer Services is to put consumers first. Madam Speaker, you can see why I was very pleased when the member from Beaches–East York brought this bill forward. I believe that all members present, with the exception, maybe, of a few, can agree that ensuring a fair and informed marketplace is a priority, and something that must be done to protect Ontarian consumers.

We know that rewards points have value, which is why banning their expiry is an easy decision. I know this is a good piece of legislation, and something that I hope all three parties can and should get behind.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Potts has moved third reading of Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, I think the nays have it.

A recorded vote has been requested. The vote on this bill will be taken at the conclusion of the debate on all bills named in the motion from earlier today.

HINDU HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HINDOU

Mr. Dickson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month / Projet de loi 56, Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine hindou.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Ajax.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I would like to make a couple of comments, this being the third reading, to a very special group of people—a very special day for these people who helped make Ontario the wonderful place that it is to live.

I want to say, first of all, that I want to stand here and debate private member's Bill 56, Hindu Heritage Month Act, proclaiming November of each year to be Hindu Heritage Month. This is the third reading of all political parties in this Legislature as they approve the previous appropriate announcements and readings. I thank them and I acknowledge all other parties equally with the government because they have been so supportive.

You know, ladies and gentlemen, Ontario is now home to more than 366,000 Hindus—which enrich the lives of the diverse landscape that we have here in Ontario. Among the existing religions, Hinduism is one of the most ancient, enduring today as a healthy, spirited and colourful group of traditions. In the case of Hinduism, it draws its life force from tradition and heritage, and remains more an open culture than a fixed code of conduct. Hinduism is a way of life, one that is open, non-violent, inclusive and tolerant. It is a family of many diverse traditions.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of those good people in this place that assisted me this time. The list of those who not only prepared but in most cases were able to speak directly to Hinduism and what it means to Ontario included Minister Damerla; Minister Naidoo-Harris; MP Vic Dhillon—sorry, you got a federal promotion, Vic—MPP Vic Dhillon; MPP Harinder Malhi; and MPP Dr. Shafiq Qadri, in addition to Minister MacCharles and MPP Bob Delaney. I have to tell you, all of these were registered to speak, even though the large number of speakers could not be accommodated, because of the time restrictions.

Ladies and gentlemen, also it should be noted that Premier Wynne spent the best part of a day, just a couple of years ago now—actually, in 2014—as she attended the Devi Mandir, one of the two temples that are prevalent with Hinduism in the Ajax–Pickering area. She drew a record crowd, and they were most gracious. It was only a couple of weeks before that I asked her if she would be good enough to look at this. She looked at it very quickly and said, "Joe, I'd like very much to go there. They're wonderful people, and I'd like to be part of that." So we did that, and it has worked out well.

I should mention a few other members who are coming today. There are a couple of community leaders that I would like to mention. One is a young fellow by

the name of Cecil Ramnauth, and another one locally as well is a young gentleman by the name of Jack Greenberg. Cecil is a man about town who does just about everything, and I would be lost without him. He's a member of the temple and a known community leader in Ajax. I'm honoured to have presented him with the Ontario Senior of the Year for Ajax Award in 2015. He also holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the city of Pickering and a Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

His friend Jack Greenberg is a specialist in immigrant work. Some people, just like Jack, do so much work on their own to help other people, and I'm very, very proud to know them.

Some of the others are Pandit Rabindranauth—we call him Rudy—Tiwari, a priest from the Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Center. That's the temple in Ajax, and of course that's one of the two, the other one being the Devi Mandir in north Pickering.

There are so many people that I could say thank you to, but I want to just emphasize the fact that in this place each person that had the opportunity to speak, regardless of which party it was, stood, and we spoke in unison to acknowledge the great effort that Hindus do—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, to speak to Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month. I want to first begin by thanking the member for Ajax-Pickering for bringing the bill forward. I want to congratulate him on the fact that we're poised here this afternoon to pass third reading of his bill. I think it's a great day for the member, and again I want to congratulate him.

It's also a very special day for Ontario's nearly 400,000-strong Hindu community. I want to thank those members of this wonderful community for being here today with us. Thank you so much.

The Leader of the Opposition, Patrick Brown, has a long history with the Hindu community, both here in Ontario and in Canada, as well as in India. In fact, Speaker, I think, at last count, Mr. Brown has been to India 16 times.

I spoke during second reading debate on how I've come to know the community over the last year and a half. It has been a wonderful experience for me to join the members of our caucus and the leader of our party at many special events and festivals in Ottawa, over the GTA and in other parts of the province.

I see some familiar faces here today. Again, I want to welcome you. I really want to take this opportunity—I can't thank you enough or tell you how much I appreciate how gracious you have been in opening your doors, your temples and your events to me over that last year and a half. You have really opened your hearts and you have made this MPP from eastern Ontario feel incredibly welcome to take part in parties, whether it be Diwali or a Garba, including our first annual Ontario PC Garba that

we held right here at Queen's Park. Thank you all for what you do.

1530

The experience really allows us to know a little bit more about the Hindu community and why it's such a wonderful community in our province. You have so many incredible events. We have so many incredible cultures to celebrate here in our province. By opening our doors and hearts to learn more about each other, we're truly making Ontario an even better place to call home.

People might ask, when they are watching the debates this afternoon—we've got a number of proclamations that we are essentially passing at third reading. They might question what the value is of setting aside a month, in this case November, as Hindu Heritage Month. I think part of the answer can be found in the faces of our guests from the Hindu community today and our special guests who have come for not just this debate, but also second reading debate. You can tell how much this recognition of their community's incredible contribution to all facets of our society in Ontario means to them. They should feel tremendous pride for all that they have given us, and I'm going to speak to some of that in the few moments I have left.

What's so valuable about this bill is that it's another chance for us to recognize Ontario's diversity. The people of Ontario are justifiably proud to call ourselves a welcoming and inclusive province. We can only build on that society through an understanding and appreciation of each other and how our differences really aren't that different. This bill and our debate today are an important opportunity for us to talk about what unifies and unites our communities.

I mentioned how much of an impact the Hindu culture has on our society. Certainly, there is an incredible entrepreneurial spirit that we have seen in Hindu Ontarians, who have become some of our most successful business people. Every day, the businesses that they have started and the investments that they have made in our communities ensure that thousands of Ontarians have good jobs to go to.

Beyond the business world, members of Ontario's Hindu community have made remarkable contributions to every field, including academics, politics and the arts. And you can't forget that yoga, so much a part of daily life for many Ontarians who attend studios in villages, small towns and cities across the province, comes to us from the Hindu religion.

In closing, I want to again take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Ajax-Pickering. I want to congratulate members from all parties for coming together. It's a great honour for the Hindu community. I want to thank you very much for being here, and I want to thank all members for this debate this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my pleasure to rise on behalf of the entire NDP caucus and our leader, Andrea

Horwath, to speak to the bill before us, Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November Hindu Heritage Month.

I'm not going to say a lot because there has already been a lot said. Frankly, we would just like to get to the vote on this and see November declared Hindu Heritage Month. We don't want to drag it out.

I wanted to welcome those who have come for the debate today and for this historic moment. I just wanted to mention the Hindu temple. Although it's not in my riding—it's in the neighbouring riding of Windsor—Tecumseh—it's in the same city that I serve. We have people who come from great distances to come to the Hindu temple in Windsor. I can tell you, I was amazed. It's a fairly new temple. I was amazed during a visit there at the beautiful building and the incredibly welcoming space that they have created, not only for Hindu people but for people of all backgrounds and all faiths.

I certainly appreciate the standing invitation that I received. Every Sunday, they do a lunch that's open to the entire Windsor and Essex county community. I haven't been able to make it for lunch yet. I have visited a few times; I haven't made it for lunch yet, but I'm looking forward to our break from having to be here in Queen's Park so that I have an opportunity to get to the temple and take them up on that offer.

Again, I cannot say enough how much we support this bill, how much I personally support this bill. After seeing what a great asset our Hindu temple and the Hindu people of Windsor and Essex county are to my community and those outside of Windsor and Essex county, I look forward to celebrating Hindu Heritage Month with anybody who comes to Queen's Park in the future but also at the temple in my riding. I'm sure there will be lots of celebrating going on. I encourage everybody from my community to take the temple up on their offer to come for a visit or come for lunch. Come and learn what it is they are about and what it is that they bring to our community, because they bring a lot to our community. They contribute a lot to our community.

Again, thank you to everybody who has come for this debate, and I look forward to the vote.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Dickson has moved third reading of Bill 56, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Hindu Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "carried."

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

Third reading agreed to.

NURSE PRACTITIONER WEEK
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE
DES INFIRMIÈRES PRATICIENNES
ET INFIRMIERS PRATICIENS

Mme Gélinas moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week /
Projet de loi 63, Loi proclamant la Semaine des
infirmières praticiennes et infirmiers praticiens.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We return back to the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I just thought I would use some of my five minutes to talk about nurse practitioners in Ontario. There are about 3,000 nurse practitioners in Ontario; 2,000 of them—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My daughter is one.

M^{me} France Gélinas: His daughter is one, yes.

Two thousand of them work in primary care. You will find them in community health centres, family health teams, aboriginal health access centres and, of course, nurse-practitioner-led clinics, as well as in nursing stations, some correctional services and in children's aid. About 1,000 of them work within our hospitals. We have about 100 of them in long-term-care facilities, although the government has announced more. They have yet to hire more, but we should get to about 150 soon.

Nurse practitioners, by virtue of their nursing education, place an emphasis on promoting health, preventing illnesses and injury and reducing complications from illness. On average, nurse practitioners in Ontario have spent 14 years working as a registered nurse and then have completed the two years of additional education in graduate studies.

I want to applaud our nurse practitioners because 14% of them work in northern Ontario. I'd like to put into the record the names of Roberta Heale and Marilyn Butcher. They were the two nurse practitioners from Sudbury who opened the very first nurse-practitioner-led clinic just down the road from the community health centre where I used to work. I also want to thank Jennifer Clement, who is the new executive director for the Sudbury nurse-practitioner-led clinic.

This is a female-dominated profession; 96% of nurse practitioners in Ontario are women, and that raises the issue of pay equity or lack thereof. Nurse practitioners working in primary care have not seen an increase in their compensation for the last eight years. Yes, you heard well, Speaker: eight years if they work in primary care, which makes compensation a top issue for a lot of them. As well, a scope-of-practice issue that I thought had been dealt with when we passed Bill 179, but unfortunately it has not: To this day, nurse practitioners still do not have open prescribing; to this day, they still cannot do point-of-care testing. You and I can go into a pharmacy, buy one of those little pregnancy kits and use it, but if you bring it to the nurse practitioner, no matter where she works, she is not allowed to use this.

The same thing with defibrillators: If, God forbid, you are in need of a defibrillator because of a heart attack, the secretary in the nurse-practitioner-led clinic will have to use the defibrillator that is in each and every one of their clinics, because they are not allowed. While we made the changes to the scope of practice, the government is really, really slow at rolling this out.

1540

As well, we presently have 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics that serve about 54,000 Ontarians. But I can tell you that we have many more communities that would love to have a nurse-practitioner-led clinic, starting with a community on just the western edge of my riding called Nairn Centre, who would love to have a nurse-practitioner-led clinic. Yet although the government will say all sorts of nice things about nurse-practitioner-led clinics, we have been stuck at 25 for a long time.

So when we talk about compensation for nurse practitioners working in primary care, this compensation has to be brought up. The \$85 million over three years that the government had promised ends up being about a \$400 increase on the pay of a nurse practitioner who presently stands to lose about \$10,000, minimum, if they choose to work in the community rather than in long-term care, in CCACs or in hospitals, and often way more.

The nurse practitioners want to have an opportunity to bring those issues forward, and the Nurse Practitioner Week that will be celebrated the second full week of November every year will give us this opportunity to bring those issues forward so that we can not only thank them for the great work that they do, but recognize them and pay them for the great work that they do.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge this afternoon to add my support for Bill 63, to proclaim a week of our year to the nurse practitioners. In doing so, it raises awareness about the important role that nurse practitioners play in the province. I wanted to thank the member from Nickel Belt, MPP Gélinas, for bringing this important bill forward.

I have had the pleasure of working with nurse practitioners, and I continue to hold a registered nursing registration here in the province of Ontario. In the line of work that I used to work at, as a critical care nurse and also with the community care access centre, I worked very closely with nurse practitioners. I was there in the emergency department when we first started a trial having nurse practitioners in to take some of the less urgent patients off of the doctors' roster, to be able to see them and get their care done and get them out the door more quickly. I was also there when we ran a nurse practitioner pilot in the intensive care unit, where nurse practitioners were able to come in and do some of the less urgent work, to be able to assist us in the ICU. But I've particularly enjoyed working with my local nurse-practitioner-led clinic in the city of Cambridge.

As a CCAC care coordinator, I often had to deal with many clients who had a lot of challenges, and sometimes they weren't able to find primary care. They had applied to and been declined from certain practices. But the best care for these patients, I found, was taking them into the nurse-practitioner-led clinic. They not only gave them a lot of time and effort, but as a nurse and as a colleague, I was able to work with the expanded scope of the nurse

practitioners to be able to come in to surround my patient with care and sometimes meet at the patient's house. So I wanted to give a shout-out to all the nurse practitioners in the province of Ontario. They do very important work.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that has come alongside nurses since 2003. One of the reasons I ran to be in politics was to be able to debate and weigh in on important policy decisions in the health care field in the province of Ontario. One of the things I'm proudest of as a nurse was to be able to see the expanded numbers: We've got 26,000 more nurses in the province since 2003. We have also seen the scope of practice increase, not only for registered nurses and registered practical nurses but, again, nurse practitioners. They give excellent care across the board. Again, those nurse practitioner clinics have been vital in providing primary care and excellent care in our communities.

I know as well that they are going to be essential as we move forward with the Patients First system and delivery of care here in the province. We're trying to transform our system into one that puts patients at the centre. Nobody does that better, in my estimation, than nurses here in the province.

We've also seen the Attending Nurse Practitioners in Long-Term-Care Homes Initiative. They launched here in the province, and that's very, very successful. Nurse practitioners are more often available but give excellent care to our folks who are living in long-term-care homes.

I also know that with the investments we've been making in nursing, the Patients First strategy will ensure that patients continue to be able to access and improve primary care access. We've put a lot of thought and effort into ensuring that the Patients First philosophy and system of care in the future is going to ensure a robust nursing scope of practice.

I just wanted to touch, basically, for the last few minutes of my time, on the expanding role of nurse practitioners. I know that there is draft legislation in play to ensure that we develop an evidence-based framework to review all of the requests for the scope of practice. That ensures that our patients have an excellent delivery of care. We make sure that patients' safety is first and foremost, but we will also ensure that we are using our nurse practitioners to the full extent of their scope.

Again, my congratulations for this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today and speak in support of proclaiming Nurse Practitioner Week in the second week of November, and thank the member from Nickel Belt for her advocacy for nurse practitioners.

As a registered nurse myself—I know the member from Cambridge just said we have a lot of nurses in the building, which is never a bad thing—I'm certainly pleased to support this initiative to recognize and celebrate the over 3,000 nurse practitioners in the province of Ontario.

As was mentioned, nurse practitioners are registered nurses with an expanded scope of practice. They deliver

nursing care at advanced levels specific to patient populations in a variety of settings under primary health care, adult, pediatric and anesthesia. That means you see them in our communities much more than we used to see them, even in the time that I've been in the Legislature: family health teams, community health centres, urgent care units, in-patient and outpatient units, and public health units.

I'll give a shout-out to nurse practitioner Amy Pruett, who looks after my mom in long-term care. That has been new just in the last year or so.

They have a unique authority to communicate medical diagnoses, order diagnostic tests and prescribe some medications and treatments. They've been working in Ontario since the early 1970s. In fact, I was at the celebration of their 40th anniversary in 2013 with the now Deputy Premier. We were at that event one evening in November, and I was happy to be there and to celebrate with them.

Their role was designed originally to work in northern underserved communities, where access to health care was limited. The successful model there translated into many more nurse practitioners being seen in all of our communities throughout the province.

I remember that most people didn't know what a nurse practitioner was in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock when I was first elected. Now they love their nurse practitioners. In fact, we'd like more nurse practitioners for my clinic, because they deliver high levels of care. They're educators. They certainly are the first entry to primary care—all our areas, and certainly mine, are underserved for doctors in rural Ontario. They're diligent, they have competent practice, and that is why they are appreciated by all their patients.

We have seen, though, nurse practitioners continue to face barriers, and the member from Nickel Belt mentioned a few of them. They want to expand their scope of practice. They want to perform point-of-care laboratory tests; apply specific forms of energy, like defibrillation; be able to order CAT scans; be able to order MRIs; and perform psychotherapy as a controlled act. They have a vital role to play and they need to be able to fulfill that role. They have been, unfortunately, held up by this government.

They are asking for scope-of-practice changes to the list that I just mentioned. They're also asking for a scope-of-practice change to prescribe controlled substances. That government made those changes federally to allow nurse practitioners to prescribe controlled substances in 2012, but Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the country, and quite possibly in North America, actually, that doesn't let them. I think that the government should address that.

I've had many nurse practitioners come my constituency office from Apsley, from some of my more outpost areas—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Outpost areas? Do you want to know what outpost areas are?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I already mentioned northern Ontario there.

But their salaries have been frozen for eight years. The difference between acute care and primary care wages is such that a lot of nurse practitioners seek other employment. That's a shame because they have a huge role to play in primary care as well as acute care in the province of Ontario.

Nurse Practitioner Week will allow us and all Ontarians to learn more about the work of our nurse practitioners, express our appreciation for nurse practitioners, and encourage more nurse-practitioner-led clinics. I'm hopeful that the government does deal with some of the challenges and barriers that they face.

I just want to say thank you to all the nurse practitioners that are both in school and practising in all of our communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Madame Gélinas has moved third reading—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Whoa, whoa.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to introduce a member of the Bangladeshi community who is here today—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): No, this is—sorry, please be seated.

Madame Gélinas has moved third reading of Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week. 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.

PROTECTING REWARDS POINTS ACT
(CONSUMER PROTECTION
AMENDMENT), 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PRÉSERVATION
DES POINTS DE RÉCOMPENSE
(MODIFICATION DE LA LOI SUR LA
PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR)

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Potts has moved third reading of Bill 47. Call in all the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1552 to 1557.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Members, please take your seats.

Mr. Potts has moved third reading of Bill 47, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 with respect to rewards points. All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bailey, Robert

Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy

McMeekin, Ted
McNaughton, Monte
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Miller, Paul
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Moridi, Reza
Barrett, Toby	Jaczek, Helena	Munro, Julia
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jones, Sylvia	Naqvi, Yasir
Bisson, Gilles	Kiwala, Sophie	Nicholls, Rick
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Marie-France	Oosterhoff, Sam
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Qaadri, Shafiq
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Rinaldi, Lou
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Malhi, Harinder	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Todd
Del Duca, Steven	Mantha, Michael	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Des Rosiers, Nathalie	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Yakabuski, John
Dong, Han	McDonnell, Jim	Yurek, Jeff
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	

TIME ALLOCATION

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Government notice of motion number 6.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of this House relating to Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

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

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 6. Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 41, the Patients First Act. What our colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London spoke about when he did his leadoff was the lack of consultation between doctors and patients, and how do you truly make sure that it's a Patients First Act if there hasn't been proper and full consultation throughout that, Madam Speaker?

The other thing with a lot of this is the Liberals have a pattern of shutting down debate. Even when we came back to the Legislature from the summer, they actually prorogued. They tried to shut down debate fully, Madam Speaker. This is a tired, self-interested government that is desperately trying to change the narrative. They want to hit the reboot button on their 13 years of mismanagement, scandal, waste and a series of OPP investigations.

The Premier has said, "We've made mistake"—but no word on what she will do to fix the province's energy crisis particularly and on a number of the other boondoggles that have happened under her leadership.

Madam Speaker, I'm just providing some comment to show some correlation between what my concern is on this bill and what we've seen in precedents of other bills. The pattern of avoiding consultations with the Ontario public—we go back to when I first got elected, the wind turbines. Thousands of industrial wind turbines have gone up without express support from local communities.

This was not the first time the Liberals refused to consult Ontarians, but it has become the epitome of the Liberal government's autocratic legacy. We're concerned that Bill 41 is going to be the same. Sadly, it's also become the epitome of waste, whereby the industrial

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The yeas are 71; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend various statutes with respect to election matters / Loi visant à modifier diverses lois en ce qui a trait à des questions concernant les élections.

An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act, the Vital Statistics Act and various other Acts respecting parentage and related registrations / Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance, la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et diverses autres lois en ce qui concerne la filiation et les enregistrements connexes.

An Act to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 and the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance et la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario.

An Act to revive 289619 Ontario Limited.

An Act to revive Liberty Tire Recycling Canada I Ltd.

An Act to revive Stoneridge Development Corporation.

An Act to revive Simple Stopwatch Inc.

An Act to revive All About Water Ltd.

An Act to revive Sound Bay Properties Inc.

wind turbines are costing us billions and billions of dollars that could be going to front-line health care. You can see the correlation: lack of consultation; didn't really go out and do their homework; billions are going to be wasted; and now people are standing in line, whether it's looking for a specialist, whether it's trying to get into a long-term-care facility, whether it's our hospitals, and they're struggling to say, "Where is this government going? Am I better off now than I was 13 years ago?"

And certainly a lack of consultation in regard to school closures: The education minister's actually refusing to hear from the impacted communities and the concerns they're expressing before more mistakes are made. Again, the general health of all people is going to be impacted. A third of the school space in my riding—18 schools within the Bluewater District School Board—faces the threat of closure. Across Ontario, it's 600 schools that they may shut down, yet the minister brushes them off with her statement that solutions "won't be found at Queen's Park."

Parents, students, community and business leaders are very disappointed in her dismissal of the crisis facing rural schools. They're asking questions such as, "Why won't the education minister consult with us? Why doesn't the minister visit our community schools? Why does she not believe that her Toronto office can work with rural Ontario on a solution?" This is an example of how a party can move from hope to ridicule when its ministers have elitist and out-of-touch thought processes and don't consult. We're concerned about this again—that a catchy title, the Patients First Act, is a title, but if you really go down into the detail, it's not really there.

We're concerned about cuts in support services for special education—again, a lack of consultation, resulting in a negative impact to the health of our communities. In Bruce and Grey, the government's \$2-million cut to special education meant the loss of 50 educational assistants, and too many times special-needs children were sent home due to a lack of resource staff to support them in the classroom. Truly, it could become a health care issue.

They cut autism therapy for kids over five. High-handedness was revered. There was such an unfair, petty and unnecessary fight. They actually came back, which is good, Madam Speaker, and I'm glad they overturned their original decision and the mistake they made, because the health of kids was front and foremost. Yet it showed once again how elitist and out of touch members on that side have become.

So the Patients First Act—hospitals, doctors, health units and nurses have been unanimous in stating that this government did not truly consult them prior to tabling this bill. We're trying to understand and figure out, if they didn't consult all of those key stakeholder groups—I think the general public would expect that if the doctors, the nurses, the health units that are doing public education for the most part and promotion of health care, the hospitals themselves, the front-line care for many people were not consulted, how can you truly stand there

and say, "We know better. We know what you're going to do and what's going to benefit you"?

There was talk, again—and I heard a lot about this in my riding—of them actually blending the CCACs. The Auditor General came out last year said that 40 cents of every dollar goes to administration. That's not front-line care; that's to administration and bureaucracy. And they're now rolling them into the LHINs. People are asking me, "How is that going to translate into more front-line care? What's that going to do to get me a better opportunity? What am I going to get from the perspective of actually getting better health care and better service at the front door?"

We're concerned, Madam Speaker. We're hearing across my riding and certainly across the province about the rationing of health care. The ongoing cuts to health care mean the government is not putting Ontario patients first. Cancelled surgeries—that's not putting patients first. The cut to physiotherapy services for seniors: As a result, more seniors are suffering falls and requiring hospitalization. That's not the way we wanted to get more front-line care—by creating the actual challenges for the patients. Think of how much more health care we could have had at the front line, truly putting patients first, if the Liberals didn't rack up so much debt that it's costing us \$11 billion a year in interest payments.

The Wynne Liberal cuts to doctors means patients are being forced to visit emergency rooms instead of clinics, and a lack of available long-term-care beds means elderly patients are left for months in hospital beds: 24,000 seniors remain on a wait-list for long-term care. If I had seen in Bill 41 that they were actually putting more beds in place, better opportunities for people, shorter wait-list times, more access to specialists and front-line care facilities, utilizing some of the models, like community health centres, that are working really well in ridings like Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, in Markdale, then I would have been much more comfortable that they truly had consulted and they truly were putting the needs of patients first in front of us, and not their own ideology and just doing it with a title.

1610

A lot of my colleagues want to speak to this bill, so I'm going to turn off here at the point of saying I really, really wish that I could believe that Bill 41 was truly going to result in improved realities and truly put patients first.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to speak to the time allocation part of this bill, but before I do, I've just got to say this place always amazes me. I've been here for 27 years now. What comes around sort of goes around. It's a big loop that goes around the place.

I just remember my good Conservative friends being the guys who were shutting down hospitals, the guys who were privatizing health care services, and now, all of a sudden, they're trying to be the New Democrats. Anyway, maybe it will work, but once a Tory, always a Tory. But we'll see where that goes.

I just want to speak to the time allocation part of this. You've heard me before. I know the government House leader and I and others have had this discussion, where I think some of the best work that's ever been done in this Legislature is what we do in committee. There used to be a time, not that long ago, when I first got here—and that's not that long; it's not ancient history. Are you saying I'm ancient history, Madam Speaker, by smiling?

Anyway, if you had a bill like this, you would refer it to committee and you would debate it at second reading, let's say, in the fall session. Sometimes, the debates weren't even long. Even back then, there were no rules for time-allocating in the way that we have now.

We didn't really have big, long debates at second reading, because we knew that part of what happened at House leaders was that the parties would decide which bills they were interested in and which ones they wanted to make a difference on. The government, obviously, wanted to get their bills done, so we would negotiate that the bill would then go into committee in the intersession.

So the bill would leave the House, let's say, in the fall, after passing second reading. The bill would then get referred to a committee. The bill would be in the committee—and you know what they used to do back then? The committee used to travel. Can you imagine that, committees going to communities across Ontario to talk to Ontarians and engage with them about what it is that this Legislature is doing and what the government is trying to do?

Your average committee time in hearings, hearings in Toronto and clause-by-clause—you might take two or three weeks in the intersession to do that particular bill, but what it did is it made a better product. I've sat on committee both as a government member and as an opposition member. As a government member, as I sat there and I listened—I'll take one for an example: the sustainable forestry development act. There was a member here at the time, Mr. Chris Hodgson. He was from—I don't remember the riding.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Haliburton.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Haliburton? Anyway, he was the newly elected Conservative member in a by-election, who went on committee. We travelled that committee across northern Ontario for about two or three weeks, and into central Ontario. He was doing a lot of good work and looking at the bill. Yes, he was being oppositional—I understood that—but he actually did some really good work with stakeholders, where stakeholders were pointing out there were better ways of doing what it was that the government was trying to do.

What was interesting in that process was, at the end—I know, because I sat on the cabinet committee that dealt with this bill—we sat down with the minister and his staff and some people from the ministry, and we actually amended the bill. Imagine that: We actually amended the bill using suggestions from the opposition—in this case, the Conservatives and, yes, even from the Liberals, who were opposition at the time.

What we ended up with, first of all, as a government, was a bill that stood the test of time. We passed that bill

in 1993-94. It is still the gold standard for forestry in Ontario and across the world. We have the best system of managing forests of anybody in the world. We actually look at the forest; we don't look at the tree. We say, "All right, you want to cut trees in the forest? We have to look at this from the perspective of not just the economics of what it means for the forest company, but what it means to our ecology and what it means to our environment."

We ended up developing a system where we made companies responsible for their action in the bush. We made sure that their harvesting techniques kept up with time so that we would do what's right when it comes to the forest and harvesting those trees.

There's nothing wrong with cutting a tree. It's like a farmer having a field and he's cutting grain or wheat or corn, or whatever it might be. There's a cycle. It happens to be that our forests have a cycle of 70 to 100 years. What you cut today and you replant, you're going to go back and recut 70 years from now. It's kind of like farming.

My point is, because the committee process allowed the people of Ontario to come to our committees and speak to us in places like Kenora and Fort Frances and Timmins—we went to Kapuskasing—because we went to forestry communities, to people who could engage with us about this, foresters, forestry workers, technicians and others, we were able to hear on the ground exactly what it was that people thought of this bill.

Was there opposition? Absolutely. There were some forest companies back then that wanted nothing to do with this legislation and thought it was quite an onerous thing that the government was doing. But we managed to get people to understand that by having good forestry practices, it would help us in being able to sell the wood products that come out of the forest after. Ontario doesn't have a problem accessing markets across the world due to our harvesting practices. We have trade issues with the United States—we're about to have a big one now, as my colleague notes. But the point is that we made a good bill.

The government: Who are they fooling when they say, "Oh, we have to have time allocation on Bill 41"? They're really fooling themselves, they're fooling this Legislature and they're trying to make fools of the public. I don't think that's the way this place should run.

I understand that the government gets elected. If, God bless, they get a majority, they have the right to pass their legislation. I don't argue that for two seconds. I've sat on the government side and I've sat on the opposition side. I've seen bills that really made me mad, that I really didn't want to see passed. I had an opportunity to debate, but I always understood that the government, at the end of the day, gets their way. That's how this parliamentary system was established. The government proposes a bill; the government brings it in the House. They not only have a responsibility—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I can't read without my glasses. Somebody gave me a note. You have bad handwriting. We'll have a chat about that in one second.

The point I'm making is that the government is not helping themselves and they're not helping the end product that they're creating by time-allocating this bill.

There were good points being raised in committee by the members of the public who came to Toronto—because the bill didn't travel, obviously. We're not really getting a chance to hear them out properly and to really reflect on how we are able to make this bill better. Then the bill comes back in the House and we time-allocate it for one hour of debate.

I've just got to say to the government: It's a lot better if you do these things properly and utilize our parliamentary institution the way it was designed to be used, and that is to make sure that we empower members and we empower committees to empower the public to do what's right for the people of Ontario. We're not here to represent the government or the opposition parties; we're here to represent our constituents. I would just ask the government to please recognize that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. James J. Bradley: I'm delighted to be able to participate in the debate this afternoon.

I would first say, in commenting on the comments of the member for Timmins–James Bay, that in theory that is correct. The three parties liked to get together—in the old days, at least—to determine which bills should take a long period of time, much committee time and perhaps some travel, and which bills shouldn't. The practice has been, on the part of the opposition—and all are guilty who have sat in opposition at any time, so I'm not just saying the present opposition—to stall every bill there is. If they stall every bill, you can't make—and may I confess that it might have happened when we were in opposition as well. Therefore, what he said in theory would be very good in theory, but in practice, they stall on the least important bills as well.

Before the Patients First Act was drafted, we spoke with and consulted thousands of Ontarians. In fact, over 6,000 Ontarians were consulted. This was before the bill was even presented to the House. We held consultations, round tables and various meetings right across the province of Ontario.

1620

I want to say at this time, because I'm looking across at the Chair of the Committee, that I want to commend him on doing an outstanding job. The Chair of the Committee is an opposition member but did, I thought, a very fair job as Chair of the Committee. He moved things as he should.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I voted on your behalf.

Mr. James J. Bradley: He even voted against something that his party was proposing, following the appropriate protocol of committee. I thought he was genial as the Chair of the Committee and fair as the Chair of the Committee.

We spoke with doctors, nurses, personal support workers and, of course, patients about the challenges that

exist in health care right across the province. Those challenges have been there almost forever.

Over the last two weeks at committee, we heard from even more patients and health care professionals and from our colleagues across the floor on the Patients First Act. All of those contributions were valuable. It was an important listening exercise and also an important opportunity for us to respond to the comments and concerns voiced from all sides.

I think what we have achieved through this listening process is a bill that, if passed by this assembly, would allow our government to make the necessary system changes to improve health care for patients in Ontario.

We've achieved a lot since 2003, but we know there's more that can be done to improve Ontario's health care system. That's exactly why it's important that we work together to pass the Patients First Act, to allow the government to continue to move forward in improving Ontario's health care system. We know that there's more we can do to put patients first.

Better care for patients requires some necessary changes, and changes are always difficult. The Patients First Act will help provide patients and their families with better access to a more integrated health care system. That has been the goal that we have endeavoured to achieve to this point in time. I commend this bill to the committee.

There's also another portion of the bill that we have to go through. The bill passes the House, if the House deems it appropriate. First of all, it was introduced after much consultation, and it was developed with that consultation. First reading is almost routine in this House. Second reading was extensive. Committee was very extensive. We added hours in the committee and added to the number of people who would be able to speak to the committee. I thought it was important to do that as well. Now we will be proceeding to third reading. This exercise this afternoon, this particular allocating of time for the bill, also allows people to add their comments.

But there's yet another stage, and that is the stage which involves the promulgation of regulations that go with the bill. The government plans to consult widely as it develops the regulations that go with this bill. Now, when you're in opposition, you think everything should be in the bill. When you're in government, you think that it's important to keep some as regulations. We do look forward to further input from those who are concerned about or who have ways that they wish the bill to be improved. That is the goal that we have.

I know that members of the opposition want an opportunity to further address some of the issues, not only in the allocation motion, but perhaps—and we're always lenient in this, as a Legislature—in talking about the individual bill itself while the time allocation is going through.

Even though, in theory, one would confine them only to the time allocation motion itself, I certainly enjoy hearing members use the time to further develop their

arguments and their suggestions as to how any legislation can be improved.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the time allocation motion on Bill 41, the Patients First Act, although I must first comment on the previous speaker. You know, I've never actually heard debate being called a filibuster. But we'll move on from there.

As a result of years of cuts and mismanagement under this government's watch, our province's health care system has suffered. Last year, Health Quality Ontario examined the state of our province's health care system and found that many areas of our health care system have not seen any improvement, with some in fact deteriorating in the last four to 10 years.

We also found that the level of care a patient receives is dependent upon where they live, and that home care patients struggle to find care and more often are relying on family and friends when their care needs are not being met. This is certainly the case in Dufferin-Caledon.

It's important that we mention last year's special report by the Auditor General, which uncovered a number of issues with the province's 14 community care access centres, more commonly referred to as CCACs. Some of the major findings include inconsistent levels of care across the province and that nearly half of all spending by all CCACs went to administrative services rather than front-line care.

Now, after continuous pressure, the government has decided to make changes to our health care system by introducing Bill 41. However, Bill 41 does little to address the fundamental problem with the province's CCACs and our overall health care system.

Bill 41 would see local health integration networks—or LHINs, as we call them—which have a mandate that includes a responsibility to plan, integrate and fund local health services, absorb CCACs to deliver home care services through 80 sub-LHINs. That's right, Speaker: sub-LHINs. Yet the Auditor General reported that LHINs are failing to meet their existing mandate. So it's surprising that the government is rewarding them with additional responsibilities.

Even more concerning is the fact that the minister's role will expand under Bill 41, by allowing the minister to issue policy and operational directives to the LHINs and make suggestions for LHIN supervisors. The minister will also be able to deliver directives to hospital boards when it is deemed to be in the public interest—a part of Bill 41 that I have serious reservations about. To put it bluntly, this government is replacing one level of bureaucracy with two, which will effectively take away resources from patient services.

Since the introduction of Bill 41, I've received a number of complaints and concerns from constituents, which is why I wanted to participate in today's debate.

One individual wrote, "With no consultation, the Wynne government has introduced Bill 41 ... which will significantly impact the relationship between patients and

their doctors. Bill 41 will allow the government to waste more on the expansion of bureaucracy instead of investing in front-line care. There are five things about Bill 41 that deeply concern me as a patient. (1) Access to my doctor will be decided by government employees; (2) my confidential patient health records can be assessed by bureaucrats; (3) funding will be taken away from hospitals and the front-line care provided by doctors and nurses to instead hire more government bureaucrats; (4) provincial medical standards will be decided by bureaucrats and politicians instead of by medical experts; and (5) the government will have control over all aspects of my health care with more emphasis on saving money instead of saving lives."

That was from one resident in Dufferin-Caledon.

Another wrote, "Do not increase the number of government managers and administrators in health care; we have enough already. Bill 41 adds bureaucracy while ignoring my family's real health care needs. Do not invade my medical records; those are private between me, my family doctor and the other health care professionals involved in my care. Bill 41 contains provisions that threaten the privacy of my medical records. Do not stand between me and my family doctor and make decisions about my health care. I trust my family doctor and health providers, not the government bureaucrats or agents that Bill 41 gives power to issue directives on health care."

A third email from my riding: "As a doctor in your riding, I am writing to you regarding Bill 41, which will impose significant change to how primary care is planned and delivered in this province. I am deeply concerned that Bill 41 was created without any input from doctors, who provide care on the front lines every day. I am dismayed that the Ontario government chooses to ignore the experience, knowledge, and ideas that doctors bring to the table. Instead of a meaningful consultation the government has ignored our calls for amendments, and continues to push through Bill 41"—which, of course, we're seeing right now with time allocation. "This is yet another example of this government's inability to work constructively with doctors.... I am opposed to Bill 41 because it allows politicians and bureaucrats to prioritize their decisions about the health care system over the core needs of patients. It gives government the power to override the expertise of physicians and local health care providers in order to ration care and stay within their budget instead of putting the well-being of patients first. Additionally Bill 41 as it is currently written will allow government investigators to access personal health records without patient consent in the name of 'public interest.'"

That's from a physician in Dufferin-Caledon.

1630

Another physician publicly raised concerns about Bill 41 and said, "I believe it is my obligation to speak out against Bill 41.... This bill will directly impact patients and their health care. Patients can wait for 18 months to see an orthopedic surgeon to correct a shoulder rotator

cuff tendon tear, one year to see a psychiatrist when they are suffering from depression that is difficult to treat, and months to see a cardiovascular surgeon for bypass surgery.

“The government’s solution to address these challenges is to create more health care administrators and to give the local health integration networks (LHINs) more responsibilities without clear process to ensure they are performing properly. There will be approximately 80 sub-LHINs created and the cost to run these smaller government agencies will eat up more limited health care dollars.

“The government argues this is about front-line care, but LHINs and sub-LHINs are not caring for patients. Doctors, nurses and personal support care workers do. Under Bill 41, not only will government employees determine patient health care needs, but it will also be okay under this bill for government employees to examine patients’ personal health care records without patient consent. All of this is contrary to helping and caring for patients.”

Again, Speaker, that’s from a physician.

When our province’s doctors—the very people who we trust to treat us and provide the best medical care—are concerned about the impact Bill 41 will have, we have a problem. We should take this and question the effect Bill 41 will have, and if there is a better solution to improving health care in our province.

Another individual from Dufferin–Caledon: “As a concerned resident in your riding, I urge you to speak out in the Legislature against provincial health care rules that put the beliefs of hospital administrators ahead of Ontarians’ rights.... It’s time for the provincial decision-makers to do their part to protect Ontarians who are being let down by their local health care institutions. Please commit to defending the rights of our province’s most vulnerable residents.”

It’s clear that Ontarians, doctors and others have concerns about the impact Bill 41 will have on the health care system. Unfortunately, the government has limited the ability for individuals and groups to voice their concerns about Bill 41. On November 2, the government used their majority in the committee to drastically cut back the amount of time available for public consultation. This effectively limited the ability for patients and health care providers to have their voices heard about this important piece of legislation.

As I said before, this legislation will do nothing to help improve our health care system. The government needs to listen and address the issues we all hear from our constituents.

I’ve received a number of emails and letters from individuals about the government’s cuts to our health care system. One individual wrote:

“I am writing to express my concern for the continued cuts to registered nurse (RN) positions and chronic underfunding of our health care system. Since the beginning of 2015 alone, more than 1,500 RN positions have been cut. To put that in perspective, Ontario hospitals

have cut 90 RN positions per month or three RN positions every single day. That’s the equivalent of three million annual hours of front-line RN care eliminated.

“We are hearing about the transformation of our health care system, but the reality that everyday Ontarians experience tells the real story. Quite simply, it’s getting harder to get the care we need. RN positions are being cut in favour of lower-cost workers who do not have the same level of education or skill. Fewer RNs mean even longer wait times, more medical errors, complications and readmissions that ultimately cost our health care system more.

“As our population ages and has more complex needs, this situation will only get worse. RNs are educated to care for such patients—those who suffer from multiple health conditions and whose health outcomes are unpredictable. We need more front-line RN care, not less. The evidence is clear. More RNs mean improved health outcomes for patients, reduced readmission rates, reduced death rates, fewer complications and a shorter length of hospital stay....

“Enough is enough. The books should not be balanced at the expense of the care we urgently need. Patients are paying the real price.”

As you can see, Speaker, individuals feel very strongly about Bill 41, and that’s why I’m so concerned that we are limiting the debate on this bill.

This is another individual who wrote me:

“I depend on my doctor to provide me and my family with quality care. But the government’s ongoing cuts to funding for physician services are threatening my ability to access the quality, patient-focused care that I deserve. I’m worried about my ability to continue to access quality health care. I’m left asking, will I be able to receive health care when I need it most? Doctors are critically important to me and my family. My doctor is my champion for my health and well-being. Without my doctor, the quality of my health care would seriously deteriorate. Worse yet, without my doctor, I’m not sure I’d be able to access the care my family and I need. The Liberal government’s cuts must stop.... The government should work with Ontario’s doctors to protect and improve health care in our province.”

In March of this year, I dealt with a constituent of mine who has had health problems and was diagnosed with aortic stenosis, which is a thickening of the artery to the heart. My constituent needed to see a cardiologist. His doctor set up an appointment for him to see a cardiologist for September. That meant my constituent had to wait six months just to see a specialist. That’s not acceptable. If my constituent wanted to get out-of-country health care services, he would need a letter from the cardiologist, so my constituent was stuck. This speaks to the unacceptable wait times Ontarians are experiencing for potentially life-saving treatment.

Just last week, the Auditor General released her annual report for 2016 and raised many issues with the province’s health care system, including unacceptable wait times. The AG report included that one in 10 people

who go to an Ontario emergency room have a condition serious enough to be admitted, but these patients wait excessive periods of time in the emergency room after admission before being transferred to intensive care or other acute care wards. The Auditor General also noted that wait times for elective surgeries at all 57 large community hospitals in the province have not improved in the past five years. For example, in 2015-16, 90% of urgent neurosurgeries were completed within 63 days, twice as long as the ministry's target of 28 days.

The AG also found that as of March 2016, about 4,110 patients were occupying hospital beds, even though they no longer needed them—bed-blockers, as we call them. Half of these people were awaiting placement in long-term-care homes and the other half were waiting for home care or accommodation in other institutions. These patients have a relatively high incident rate of falls and over-medication while in hospitals as compared to long-term-care homes. We calculated that hospitals could have treated about 37,550 more patients, if patients were not waiting in hospital for long-term-care-home placements.

Additionally, the AG noted for 2014-15, Ontario hospital patients had the second-highest rate of sepsis in Canada, only after the Yukon. It doesn't sound like a world-class health care system to me.

But this is what happens after nine years of chronic underfunding and four years of frozen hospital budgets by this government. It's meant our province's health care system has deteriorated and led to the problems raised by the Auditor General. Ontarians deserve better, but Bill 41 simply won't do it. How about, instead of creating bureaucracy after bureaucracy, this government actually works to improve front-line care and to ensure every patient in Ontario receives the best care when they need it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I too want to put a few things on the record under this very, very limited time they have given us about a bill that showed so much promise. When Patients First was first introduced last spring, everybody had been waiting for it. There was such a pent-up demand to see that bill, because everywhere you went in Ontario, we all agreed our home care system is broken. Our home care system fails more people than it helps every single day.

The government had agreed to do something about this. They had agreed to look at home care and change things for the better. It was with great anticipation that everybody read Patients First the first time.

It was introduced in this House just as we were going out the door for—although it had been promised in the spring, it ended up being at the very tail end of the spring session, in June, and then we broke for the summer recess. The rest of the story is: We come back, the House prorogues, we wait another two months and the bill is reintroduced.

Unfortunately, the bill, when first introduced, had serious flaws. The bill as it stands now still has those serious flaws.

1640

Everybody agrees that our home care system is broken. I will read into the record what a broken home care system looks like. I have this email from Lloy Schindeler. She's the senior director responsible for clinical services. She responded to my email related to how long children have to wait for occupational therapy through the home care program.

As of November 2, 2016, there were 51 children whose first language is French in this region—that is, in and around Sudbury/Nickel Belt—and the median wait time is 727 days. For children that are about two years old, for whom the language has not started to develop, they will wait, really, a lifetime, because the median child will be on the wait-list for 727 days. I think everybody will agree that this is too long to wait.

I just wanted to put this into the record, but I could put thousands more examples of people needing home care and not getting it; of people needing changes, increases in their home care, and not getting it; of people wanting to stay home and not being able to do so because they can't get home care, or the wait time to get home care is so long that their family caregivers are just burnt out.

I have said in this House before, Speaker, that I had never seen grown men cry before I got this job—believe me, I worked in hospitals for a long time; I worked in rehab, and I saw a lot of very tragic accidents—until I started to do home care cases in my office. The number of families that come in that are just exhausted—they would do anything to get one more hour of home care. They can't get it.

Bill 41, the Patients First Act, is going to fix things? It's going to make our home care system better? The government understands that the way we have home care right now doesn't work and is putting forward a transformation bill that will lead the path to better home-care? As you read the bill, Speaker, it won't take long to realize that the first thing they did is get rid of the board of governance of the CCAC, which is the community care access centre, the agency responsible for home care. Frankly, the board has never been the issue. The board has done their governance duty to the best of their ability. They do that, except for the chair, free of charge, and they give of their time, effort and energy to make our home care system better. What is the first thing the government does? They get rid of the board.

All right, the CCACs will cease to exist, but everything wrong with the CCACs is written in the new bill, to make sure that it will continue. The fact that our home care system—we are the only province whose home care system has been privatized to the max. Well, all of those private contracts are guaranteed to continue.

So the board is gone and the name of the agency is gone, but what used to be the CEO, the chief executive officer of the CCACs, now will become a vice-president of the LHIN, and everything else stays exactly the same: the for-profit contracts, the bidding, the way that you do case coordination—everything else stays exactly the same.

For the patient who is waiting for more home care, there is nothing. For the 51 kids who have been waiting for 727 days for occupational therapy, there is nothing in this bill that will give us one more minute of home care.

What am I missing here? I thought Bill 41 was all about fixing our home care system. Getting rid of the board, saying that an agency doesn't exist anymore but keeping the agency intact and putting it under the purview of the LHINs, getting rid of the CEOs and calling them VPs—what kind of change is that? That's not change. That's moving the dominoes around. That's making a small bureaucracy so busy looking at themselves that they won't even have time to see if there's a patient at the end of this long list of bureaucrats who will now be in charge of our home care system.

To fix home care, we could have started by looking at where does the money go. The Auditor General did quite a few reports on CCACs and on home care, although, because they are private, for-profit providers, most of them refused to share their books with the Auditor General.

It doesn't matter that every single penny that is used to provide home care is paid for by the taxpayers. The minute you make a profit on it, you are shielded from any transparency or accountability. That would be something that we should have fixed. Don't you think that giving the Auditor General—I'm not saying that you have to put your books out for everybody to look at. But the Auditor General's office? I think they know how to keep their mouths shut. I think all of your trade secrets, or whatever you call them to make more profit—they would have been able to keep them secret. But no, the bill doesn't do that. The for-profit entity will continue to be a big shield from accountability and transparency.

But the Auditor General was able to tell us that \$1 out of \$10—that's 10% of our health care dollars—is being used to generate profit. Generating profit does not help the person needing an extra bath, does not help those kids waiting for occupational therapy, does not help anybody.

If you do the math really quickly, with \$2.5 billion for home care, 10%—I'm strong in math, Speaker—is \$250 million. That's a lot of 16-bucks-an-hour PSWs you could get in there. That's a lot of hours of home care.

But, no, the government guarantees that each and every one of those private providers will continue to have the same profit margin, will continue to have the same-sized contract and will continue to take money right out of the home care system into the pockets of shareholders that trade on the stock exchange. How is that transforming home care? It isn't whatsoever.

The second big issue that needs to be fixed is that home care agencies are not able to recruit and retain a stable workforce. What does that mean? That means that you are forever trying to recruit new home care workers.

I'll let you in on a little secret, Speaker: You cannot have quality care without continuity of care. If it's a different person every week that comes to give grandpa a bath, grandpa does not want to strip naked in front of a new stranger every week, so Grandpa does not want a bath anymore.

Why? Because home care providers cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce. Because they cannot recruit and retain a stable workforce, you cannot have quality care in our home care system.

You would have thought that the Minister of Health would be interested in having quality care in our home care system. Every one of us is interested in that—but not the Minister of Health, because he made sure that the contracts were going to continue the way they were.

I want to read this into the record. It's from the Windsor workers: "Home Care Workers Claim Employer Slashing Hours While Hiring More Staff."

"SEIU bargaining committee members Linda Everett ... Lucy Chamulova, Stephanie Smallman, Sheena Treminio, Suzanne Churchill and Virginia Mannina launch the ParaMed Get Real About Wages campaign during a support meeting...."

They are fearful and frustrated because their employer is holding job fairs and hiring more staff at the same time their hours are being cut."

1650

Smallman, a PSW, said that in recent months her hours have gone from 40 hours a week to 25. She makes about \$16 an hour. At 25 hours a week at \$16 an hour, she cannot make ends meet. She says that it's frustrating.

ParaMed, which is the company that got the home care contract, calls itself "Ontario's largest private sector provider of home health care," and goes on to say, "While we always try to provide staff with the number of hours they wish, we do have the need to recruit...."

Another personal support worker, Virginia Mannina, said that "the reduction in her hours means stringent budgeting at home, paying only the minimum amount on her monthly bills. She was making \$13.47 an hour and had only a 50-cent raise in almost 10 years, when the Ontario government announced a wage enhancement that boosted her pay...."

She said her hours have dropped from 40 hours a week to 25, which makes it very difficult for her to make ends meet.

"The workers say that private companies such as ParaMed get more than 90% of their money from government, yet they make big profits." In the face of that, an SEIU researcher said that "the campaign against ParaMed is intended to inform the public about the 'injustice home care workers face, across the province and in Windsor.'"

What we have right now is just a case in point about what I was trying to say. The case in point is that if you don't make home care jobs good jobs, you will never have quality care. So when the government said that they were going to fix home care, fixing home care means that we're going to have quality home care services. But they did not do that. They continue the existing contracts that give no job security to the workers, which means those workers have a choice: They can sit by the phone, hoping that they will get more clients, or they can leave the field of home care, no matter how much they love their clients, simply because they have to support their family. In

order to support their family, they need more than 25 hours at \$16 an hour. That's just not enough to make ends meet. Do we see any of that in the bill? Absolutely not.

Another issue that everybody expected to see in the bill was standards. Anybody who knows anything about the home care system—and that has been verified by the Auditor General—will know that, depending on where you live, when you have a referral for home care, there will be somebody who will assess you. The assessment system in Ontario is quite robust. It is thought through by all of the case coordinators throughout Ontario and they will rank you.

Let's say you rank at 18; that is, your level of need is ranked at 18. In Sudbury, you will qualify for nothing. In the eastern CCAC, in Champlain, you will qualify for two baths a week. In other parts of the province, you will qualify for one bath a week. It doesn't matter that your level of needs is exactly the same—that the assessment has been done and everybody agrees that your level of needs is exactly the same. Depending on where you live in this province, you will get different levels of care. That's not okay. People expected the government to put that into the bill too, but none of that is in.

Then, depending on when you are referred for home care—because the CCAC has to balance their budget. In April, they tend to be more able to meet the needs of the clients, but come February and March, when they're looking at a big, looming deficit, which they're not able to do, it does not matter that your health needs have stayed exactly the same; you will get a phone call from your care coordinator cutting your care back. Not because your needs have changed; not because you don't need the care; because the CCAC has to balance their budget and they cannot afford to give you the care you need. Yet we all agree that the most cost-effective way is to support people in their homes. The system is built that way.

We expected, with the new emphasis, that the minister had understood that our home care system was broken, that we were going to change things for the better, that this would be in the bill, that we would see standards. No, Speaker; none of that is in.

Let me tell you what is in the bill: things that have nothing to do with patients. Although the bill is called Patients First, really, we could call it patients sixth or fifth—fourth at the most, but not first. First thing they'll do is that they will give the LHINs—the local health integration networks—more power. You have to realize that the LHIN is an unelected, unaccountable bunch of people.

The theory behind the LHINs is good. The theory is that you give local people more of a voice, more of a say in the health care services that are available locally for them. The theory is something that the NDP has always supported. I come from northern Ontario: The last thing I want is for somebody from Queen's Park or Toronto or 5700 Yonge Street to tell me what we need in Nickel Belt. That's the theory; the delivery of the LHINs has

been less than stellar. We all know that we were supposed to do a review of the LHINs. It never got done. We all know that Auditor General did a review of LHINs—less than stellar. I'm trying to be politically correct and gentle on the Liberal ego when I say that, Speaker, because some of them are downright terrible.

What do we do with this bunch of unelected, unaccountable LHINs? We give them more power. Listen to this, Speaker. We have a system in Ontario where the minister, with agreement from cabinet, can appoint supervisors in any one of the 147 hospital corporations in Ontario—152 sites, if you like details. This process requires the minister to make the decision and cabinet to approve it. Then you take away the power of the board of a hospital and you appoint a supervisor. The minister is giving the exact same power to the LHINs—not to the minister, not to cabinet—people we can hold accountable—but to people who are unelected and unaccountable.

The minute they give you a bit of money, if you don't toe the line and do exactly what the LHIN wants you to do, they can appoint a supervisor. A supervisor takes away the governance of your board and then can decide to fold your agency into an integrated network. Basically, you can do whatever you want. This, I can never, never, never agree to.

First, some of those agencies only receive a part of their funding from the LHINs. I tried, through amendments, to get them to define what—at the end of the day, it was clear that if you receive 10 bucks from the LHINs, the LHINs will have the power to take away your board. It doesn't matter that the majority of what you do has nothing to do with the money that you get from the LHINs. They will have the power to take over your board. They will have the power to force integration.

I can see how an agency that does not want a voluntary integration starts to be in conflict with the LHINs. The LHINs cannot get, through the front door, what they want, because the LHIN cannot force integration; only the Minister of Health and cabinet can do that. If the LHIN doesn't get what they want through the front door, all they have to do is use the back door. All they have to do is starve the agency of money for a couple of months. The agency will start to borrow. "Oh, they're in debt. Therefore, we will appoint a supervisor." Once we have a supervisor, they can do away with whatever is there.

1700

I want to share a story. I was the executive director of the community health centre in Sudbury. One year, when Minister Smitherman was Minister of Health, I received my budget for the year. At the time, they were not called accountability agreements; they were called budgets. I read my budget. It was identical to what I expected. We had just opened up a new satellite, so there was quite a bit of new money coming in to support that satellite. Then, in one of the paragraphs that had nothing to do with anything, they wrote that our centre, which was a French centre—it was the French community health centre in Sudbury—would offer services in English and

in French. We had no intention of offering services in English; we were a French community health centre. So I struck that out, put on my initial and the board's initial and sent that back to the ministry, which responded right away that, "No, no, no," they're not going to transfer any money to our agency anymore because I had not signed the agreement. A dispute ensued. We went month after month, with the satellite already running. I was paying for the salary of a new doctor, a nurse practitioner, a dietitian, a social worker and 1.5 medical secretaries. All of this I had to pay for and the money was not coming in anymore because the minister was putting pressure on us to offer services in English and in French, which our board did not agree to.

What did we have to do? We had to go to a *caisse populaire*. Thank God they were there. They understood the situation we were in and they agreed to lend us money. Then the ministry decided that community health centres were not allowed to borrow money—all this time because the minister wanted to force a community board to agree to something they did not agree to. Fast-forward: Had we been dealing with the LHINs—because community health centres receive their money from the LHINs—I know exactly what would have happened. The board would have been taken away, a supervisor would have been put into place and a new budget would have been signed. A French community health centre that the French population had built in Sudbury would have become a bilingual institution, like the government wanted.

We won that fight, not without going to the *Maître Caza* in Ottawa, to help us legally. The community rallied behind us and we finally won. But had the LHIN been allowed to appoint a supervisor, there is no way my board would have survived. There is no way I would have survived, either. The executive director would have been shown the curb quite quickly. This is what this bill does. This bill says, "If you don't agree with the direction that the unelected, unaccountable LHIN wants you to go in, your agency will disappear." If you don't agree with a smart idea to integrate a whole bunch of agencies together, because you have a good reason not to—because health is only a small portion of what you do, because you're a French organization, because you're a religious organization or whatever else—the LHINs will kick your board to the curb and put in a supervisor. The ministry and cabinet won't even know. You will have no recourse because they're not elected, they're not accountable, and you will be gone. I cannot, for the life of me, see who would agree to that.

But don't just trust me; trust the many, many community agencies that have come and told you that this was wrong. Let me start with—there is too long of a list to go through. We have AOHC. We have community mental health agencies. We have STRIDE, TNC, TNG and UWTWR. We have about 15 agencies that have come to committee and told the government that they should not be doing that, yet that's in the bill. I cannot for the life of me see how this has anything to do with improving home care services for people.

Then there is the privatization. I've already told you that most of the big contracts in home care in this province are held by for-profit companies, which take a profit. This is why they exist: They exist to make money. They also provide home care services—

Ms. Catherine Fife: To make money.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —to make money.

But now that the CCACs will be under the LHINs—the LHINs also have a number of service agencies, but the LHINs have bylaw obligations to deal with not-for-profit agencies when they contract out health services. The bill makes sure that this provision that the LHINs have to deal with not-for-profit agencies is taken out.

When I have tried to put amendments forward to make sure this would be kept, that all of the contracts that are between the LHINs and the not-for-profit agencies would be guaranteed—just like we guarantee that all the contracts between the CCACs and the for-profits would be guaranteed—it was a resounding no from the Liberals, who told me that they think that for-profit agencies do a great job for the people of this province. Really, Speaker?

Ms. Catherine Fife: They've opened the door for more privatization.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Open the door for more privatization. You can guarantee to the for-profits that they won't lose their market share, but you won't guarantee the same thing to the not-for-profits. For the LHINs that have never contracted to the for-profits before, because the law made it impossible for them to do so, Patients First opens the door—not opens the door; Patients First says clearly that now the LHINs will be allowed to contract to the for-profits. Expect more privatization to come down from that. Nothing good will come of that.

The other part that is unbelievable is that if there's a complaint against an agency that gets money from the LHINs—it could be an aboriginal health access centre, a family health team, it doesn't matter; any health agency that is under the LHINs, that receives funding from the LHINs—they will send an investigator to investigate the problem. This investigator can request medical records. This investigator can look into the private health record of any of the patients in that family health team, community health centre or aboriginal health access centre if they see fit.

I want you, Speaker, and everybody else to realize that to have strong, robust, high-quality health care, you need to have trust between your care provider and the patient. If you don't have trust between the care provider and the patient, you cannot have quality care because patients tell their care provider, their family physician, their nurse practitioner a lot of things they will not tell anybody. They don't tell their spouses, they don't tell their employers, they don't tell their children, they don't tell anyone, but they will tell their physician. If somebody is abusing street drugs or using illegal drugs, and all of a sudden, you are dealing with pain, post-surgical or cancer pain, the physician needs to know this. Although it is illegal, people will confess to those crimes to their physicians to make sure they get the best care possible

moving forward. But once you know that an inspector—and in my neck of the woods, I'm sorry, the sub-LHINs are not that big. We already know who the inspector is. We already know that it is your ex-wife who will have access to your health record.

This is wrong. This is wrong on so, so many levels. Nobody should have access to our personal health information except through the courts or if you go through a regulated college, like we have it now; not an inspector from an unelected, unaccountable LHIN—never. I tried and tried to get amendments to close that loophole, but to no avail.

There are many other problems with this bill. Many of them have to do with French-language services. The LHINs have always been covered under the French Language Services Act, but they say that because they themselves don't offer health services, all of the contracts that they make, they do not have to provide French-language services either. That means that for my constituent in Nickel Belt—she's 93 years old, never worked, but had 14 kids. She always spoke French in her house, but now she needed a bath. When the PSW came to give her a bath, she didn't speak a word of French. How could that be? She asked for services in French. All 14 of her kids asked to make sure that the PSW was going to speak French, but the LHIN says, "No, those third-party contracts are not covered by the French Language Services Act."

1710

We had an opportunity to correct this, and we missed this. Shame on us all.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to join the debate or discussion on Bill 41. I just want to talk a little bit about a somewhat different perspective than some of my friends have been discussing.

In our larger cities, particularly the area that I'm from in Mississauga, the principal challenge that we face day to day, year to year, is growth. Working with our local health integration network, we were very successful with the LHIN being able to bring some of the decision-making from the Ministry of Health down here at Queen's Park out to where the Mississauga LHIN is centred, which is very near the border between Oakville and Mississauga.

Unlike its preceding structure, which I never entirely understood, at least this time, on no fewer than about three occasions—our key people at the LHIN either come and see me in my office or I go and see them. We have an excellent dialogue, and it has enabled us, as members, to work with our LHIN to achieve, for example, phase 2 at Credit Valley Hospital, in which we agreed on exactly what functions were needed: an expansion of complex care, an expansion of the maternity suite—a lot of things that were very unique to the needs of a growing population in which one size just didn't fit all.

This move to the sub-LHINs, which allows us to drill down even deeper without adding a single extra layer of

bureaucracy and also to gain savings of between 5% and 8%, would allow us to even more closely fine-tune and tailor decisions to our local communities—which in this case are Halton Hills, Acton, Georgetown, Oakville and Mississauga—and enable us to discuss some of our specific and unique local problems, many of which, as I said at the outset, are driven by the rapid growth in our communities.

Just looking at the urban area LHINs, any two of those LHINs, if put together, would serve a larger population than, for example, the province of Manitoba. What that means is that, for those one-million-plus populations that any two LHINs encompass, almost by definition, one size doesn't fit all.

Within those populations, you've got diverse pockets. Where some of my colleagues will talk about providing services in this fashion and that fashion, one of our challenges is, how many languages can we serve people in? If somebody comes and they're a fairly new arrival to our community and they speak only Urdu or Punjabi or Mandarin or Albanian or Croatian, can we, in fact, serve them in their language? Some of our criteria for picking staff or for choosing volunteers often take account of the fact that, while the hospital may not know who is coming in and when, they are reasonably certain that a certain percentage of people are going to require services in different languages.

So along the way, during the consultations, which were very broad and very extensive—they involved, prior to the drafting of the bill, more than 6,000 Ontarians who were consulted through round tables and various meetings and through asking people to provide written commentary—the intent was to provide patients and their families with better access to a more integrated health system.

Part of this, of course, is ensuring the integrity of patient records. Throughout the process, the government consulted actively with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on the legislation. In fact, it's the Information and Privacy Commissioner who said, "I am completely supportive of this," that these measures proposed in Bill 41 do properly protect the integrity and the confidentiality of patient information and ensure that the authentication and authorization levels are sufficient to ensure that no one who shouldn't be in the system is in the system and that anyone who is in the system should or shouldn't have authorization to access this, that or the next records.

Throughout the process, the privacy commissioner said, "I am sufficiently satisfied that the integrity of the authorization and authentication in the access to medical records is strong and robust and meets 21st-century data security standards."

On that note, I will pause here and allow some of my colleagues to weigh in with some of their thoughts on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do welcome the opportunity to address the time allocation motion directed at Bill 41, An

Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care. It sounds like a great title. It sounds like the government's first concern is patients. In fact, the short title of the bill is the Patients First Act. But the issue I raised during second reading debate: Are we truly putting patients first—

Mr. James J. Bradley: Yes.

Mr. Toby Barrett: —or are we putting bureaucrats first?

Mr. James J. Bradley: Patients.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Okay, I heard an answer. I'll try and analyze what I just heard from the opposite side.

Through the three readings of this bill now, we really don't have an answer to that question. It's fine to say, "Yes. Patients," but the broader question is, are we really accomplishing anything with reorganization after reorganization? These reorganizations have been going on, well, for 13 years under the present government. In all fairness, these reorganizations have been going back to the early 1980s, with the advent of Ontario's district health council system, the DHCs. I see a nodding of heads.

I spent a number of years sitting on various committees of not only the Haldimand-Norfolk District Health Council but also the Brant District Health Council. I asked at that time, "What did we accomplish?" Sure: lots of round-the-table discussion and lots of discussion about planning. There was a sign on the wall, as I recall, in both boardrooms indicating the mandate of the district health councils. One of the mandates, as with the integration mandate now—at that time, the mandate was coordination. I always asked that question: "When do we start coordinating services?" We never really got to that point. I guess I plead guilty. As I said, I was there as a consultant on these various committees. We really didn't achieve that goal. Here we are, many, many years later: Are we truly achieving integration with our LHIN system?

We have a Ministry of Health budget. It's a gigantic budget funding a gigantic, monolithic entity, an entity that's very difficult to change. It's very difficult to change the direction of this—it's like trying to change the direction of a supertanker. You pull the wheel and you move the rudder, and it takes at least a mile to have any impact at all. That's what we're dealing with, in all fairness.

We have a provincial budget to put money and resources, ostensibly, into front-line health care. That's what people care about, as we know. They want to go to their doctor, they want to go to their hospital—perhaps, to get surgery—or perhaps to the ER and receive service without long, long wait times, whether it be hours or whether it be months.

A case in point, Speaker: I received a letter several months ago from a concerned physician—a concern that was actually also published in our local media with respect to Norfolk General Hospital. In fact, it's titled, "Norfolk General Hospital Budget Crisis." I've approached administration about this concern. I've talked to

a member of the board and talked to the ministry. I'd like to quote in part, if I could.

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"The other physicians at our hospital and myself are very worried about the latest round of hospital budgetary cuts. Our hospital has historically been severely unfunded compared to comparable hospitals our size. Although we strive to do good work here, we are very concerned that upcoming bed closures and OR closures—the operating rooms—"are going to significantly impact the care we deliver to our patients." This was in the media a few months ago, and much of this is actually being moved forward, regretfully. "We feel that administration's hands are tied as they have no funds whatsoever. Being a rural hospital also makes us much less visible to the LHIN."

In the community, we appreciate the concern of the physicians. We appreciate the position of administration. In many ways, they can't take on the Ontario government. They can't take on the Ministry of Health. They can't bark about this or spout off. They know where the funding comes from.

I'd like to continue quoting this letter from this physician on behalf of a number of other physicians related to their service at the hospital.

"For the past several years, since there has not even been an increase for inflation, cuts are inevitable. The most recent round of cuts involves closing all of our step-down beds outside of the ICU—the intensive care unit—"and closing an OR"—an operating room—"one day a week. This will have a huge effect on the care we provide. Patients will suffer. The emergency room, already frequently understaffed, will be the holding area for unstable patients. A series of disasters will be inevitable."

I'm told, and it's no consolation, that this has occurred with a number of other hospitals, these kinds of bed closings. That's not an answer that our area physicians would find acceptable.

I'll use another example, Speaker. I really couldn't fathom being on the receiving end of a cancer diagnosis. For some, it's a death sentence. For others, it can be curable, oftentimes, if they receive care in time. I receive phone calls at my office from people, frustrated. They have a cancer diagnosis; they're looking at a months-long wait, in some cases, for treatment. I'm sure other MPPs receive these kinds of calls.

In our party, we're on record to reduce bureaucracy, but what we have here is essentially a merry-go-round of reorganization after reorganization in the Ministry of Health, and we just don't seem to be able to get this right: Ornge air ambulance, by way of example; eHealth; the original creation of the LHINs; all reorganizations.

Ornge, I understand, is still under OPP investigation. We still do not seem to hear back from the OPP on that. I'm not aware of any charges being laid or anybody going to trial, or anybody being locked up or anybody getting the money back. Where is that money? Where did that money go?

Of course, many people know about the \$1 billion wasted on the electronic record system, eHealth. Since day one, this government has bungled eHealth. It took seven years for the government to review eHealth after the Auditor General confirmed the \$1-billion scandal. We continue to spend millions of dollars on what's obviously a flawed system. The rest of our health care system continues to face cuts—and I used that example of Norfolk General Hospital. We still seem to be falling behind other jurisdictions with respect to digital health. It's a sound concept if properly implemented; it doesn't seem to be properly implemented.

The fourth anniversary of the Auditor General's special report on Ornge, earlier this year—I spent two years on that committee with Frank Klees. Apparently the Premier is allowing Ornge to lease a helicopter from AgustaWestland, the very same company involved in the original Ornge air ambulance debacle. Given that the Liberal government's dealings with Ornge are still being investigated, as I understand, why another sole-source deal? We know the millions that were wasted. We're looking at a lease with the very same helicopter company that we were told—the CEO indicated to us—was too expensive to maintain and not suited for the job, as I recall, not high enough to get a stretcher in there with a patient. So what have we learned there?

The LHINs themselves: I'll touch a bit more on that. Again, the job isn't getting done, so we're going to create some more LHINs. I've received so many emails on this particular piece of legislation. In fact, lately, it's almost surpassing emails on electricity. Here's an email, for example:

“With no consultation, the Wynne government has introduced Bill 41, titled the Patients First Act, which will significantly impact the relationship between patients and their doctors. Bill 41 will allow the government to waste more on the expansion of bureaucracy instead of investing in front-line care.” “There are five things about Bill 41 that deeply concern me as a patient”—and I'll continue the quote from this email. There are five points here:

“1. Access to my doctor will be decided by government employees.

“2. My confidential patient health records can be accessed by bureaucrats.

“3. Funding will be taken away from hospitals and the front-line care provided by doctors and nurses to instead hire more government bureaucrats.”

Interjection: No.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I hear a no from the other side on that one too.

“4. Provincial medical standards will be decided by bureaucrats and politicians instead of by medical experts.

“5. The government will have control over all aspects of my health care with more emphasis on saving money instead of saving lives.

“I am ... concerned about the increasing Ontario government interference in my health care and I want Bill 41 to be stopped. In May, Wynne passed the health

information protection act giving Ministry of Health employees unregulated access to my confidential patient health records. This continued invasion of my privacy is unacceptable. It's time for Wynne to stop putting bureaucrats ahead of patients.”

I see a trend here in a lot of this correspondence.

Speaker, one of my staff was at the doctor's office recently and certainly got an earful about this bill. His doctor was upset and talked about moving out of Ontario. I've been hearing a bit of that during debate. As indicated, other physicians are considering doing the same.

Patients are upset. Doctors are upset. I hear MPPs this afternoon who are upset. Partly the focus is about the waste of money and really the waste in administration.

I had a meeting recently with my area LHIN representatives—quite recently. They've assured me they aren't going to have unrestricted access to patient records. I wanted to put that on the docket here. They said that would only come if they were investigating a particular doctor.

We still need to address, in that email I just mentioned, point 3, the one I consider the most important. I'll quote it again: “3. Funding will be taken away from hospitals and the front-line care provided by doctors and nurses to instead hire more government bureaucrats.” Let's hope that doesn't happen. Let's hope our Minister of Health, a very capable person, is able to get around that one.

We know the LHINs aren't integrating our health care system, as their original purpose required. I made mention of my work as a consultant with district health council systems. In many ways, we failed back at that time as well. I mentioned the mandate then, rather than integration, was coordination, and we didn't achieve that back then, and I regret that.

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During earlier debate, our health critic, MPP Jeff Yurek, said: “A concern that should be brought up is the fact that wanting to integrate care—the Auditor General has noted that the LHINs have failed in their job to integrate care. In fact, if you look at the hierarchy of the Ministry of Health and bring out their list of ADMs,” assistant deputy ministers, “they are just a mass of silos put together. I wish they could integrate their own level of bureaucracy before they try to re-create the system of a failed system. I think we're at 18 ADMs now in the ministry, and it's unfortunate that that continues to blossom and take power away from front-line workers.”

MPP Vic Fedeli talked about the North East LHIN meeting zero of the 14 metrics that LHINs were supposed to meet. He questioned why we would we give LHINs more responsibility. He gives the example that six years after the new hospital opened in North Bay, they closed 60 beds and fired 350 front-line staff. That's in an area where we have an aging population.

Ottawa-area MPP Lisa MacLeod talked about a constituent who has to fundraise close to \$4,000 for the treatment of two of her children with cancer.

MPP Lorne Coe had extensive experience in the health care field. He said, “I don’t believe that the local health integration networks’ leaders have the manpower or the experience to oversee such a massive transformation in how health providers work together. They don’t have the governance structures in place to take on hospitals, home care and community care and, in their spare time, link with public health.”

Mr. Monte McNaughton: That’s our Christmas present.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I’m running short of time, and I hear the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex speaking already. He’s up next. I better give him a few minutes.

I’d like to quote Michael Decter of Patients Canada, a charitable group focused on bringing patients’ voices forward: “However, we are hard pressed to find patients first within the actual substance of Bill 41, and we are concerned about the bureaucratization of our health care system, where decisions of care will be subject to administrative priorities and not” health “care priorities.”

Speaker, there’s so much I could say—the input that has come in from the OMA, for example, who describe Bill 41 as “deeply disturbing”—but I defer to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I’m glad to have a couple of minutes to talk about the closure motion regarding Bill 41, the Patients First Act.

As the member from St. Catharines said, I did chair the committee. We had a great committee—obviously lots of disagreement between the three parties on this bill. I would like to take just a couple of minutes to thank the members of the committee: the members from Scarborough–Agincourt, Brampton West, Ottawa South, Kingston and the Islands—I think who’s here this afternoon—Elgin–Middlesex–London and Sarnia–Lambton from the official opposition; and, of course, the MPP from Nickel Belt.

But I want to pay special tribute to the member from St. Catharines, who was on that committee. I always love to tell the story to people that every time he sees a new group of pages come in, he’ll go to the pages and he’ll say to the page, “See that member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—he was much nicer when he was a page 25 years ago.” I know that’s a line I’ve overheard him say a number of times.

I would also like to point out—I think the member from St. Catharines mentioned this—that at committee I actually did vote with the government to help defeat a PC amendment because that’s parliamentary tradition. So before everybody in our office in 403 here gets upset at me for voting against one of our amendments, that is parliamentary tradition, unfortunately. Also, we had a wonderful Clerk of the Committee—and special thanks to legal counsel, Hansard and obviously all the staff from the three different parties who worked hard on this bill.

One thing I did want to bring up just regarding the closure motion was something about the Auditor General’s report that was released last week. There’s one section of the report, I think, that needs to be highlighted: “Operating rooms are underutilized, with most hospitals closing most operating rooms on evenings, weekends, statutory holidays, March break and for two to 10 weeks in the summer. During these periods, no elective surgeries are performed, and only limited numbers of operating rooms remain open for emergency surgeries.” I think this is important for the government to pay attention to, moving forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It’s a pleasure to be able to rise in my place today and add a few comments to the Patients First Act, Bill 41, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge, but also, in particular, because of my long, long history in the health care field.

Madam Speaker, I’ve done so much in nursing, starting out in pediatrics. I’ve done community. I did critical care for many years, and adult hospitals with emergency and intensive care units. I’ve also worked as a care coordinator for a CCAC. So I’ve got a great overview when it comes to our health care system and where we’ve been.

So, Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, I’d love to be able to step back a little bit and look at what was happening during the 1990s, when two successive governments ended up cutting health care while I was raising a child with severe lung issues. While I was in community care, I was laid off and had to go find work elsewhere.

In those days, if you look back into the 1990s, between the NDP and the former Conservative governments, they cut home care. They cut medical school places. They cut nursing school places. They cut 10,000 beds out of the system. They closed 28 hospitals. They did not have enough CT scans. They didn’t have enough radiologists to manage to look at that. They did not have enough CT scans to even diagnose the patients who were eventually ending up in emergency for days to be able to do that.

We knew, as nurses, that with a burgeoning number of people coming through who were baby boomers and with decreased nurses, we were going to have a nursing shortage, which we did. We knew that when they were cutting medical school places, we were going to have a doctor shortage, and we did. Because they closed 28 hospitals and shut 10,000 beds in the province of Ontario, as the baby boomers were coming through on a wedge, we knew that we would have a shortage of all of those things. Guess what happened?

When the Liberal government came in, in 2003, their number one issue was to reinvest in health care. While we reinvested in health care, we made sure that we increased medical school places, and we resolved the doctor shortage. We made sure we opened up nursing school places, and we added 26,300 nurses in the system since 2003. We’ve added and built hospitals like

Cambridge Memorial Hospital, which is undergoing an expansion now that had waited in the wings for many, many years. We continue to invest in health care.

Home care: I know that under previous governments, home care was delisted under the NDP. There was a 5% cut across the board. Many patients that had been looked after at home in the early 1990s had to go back to the hospital to live until they could be placed in long-term care. This did not make sense to me.

I'm very proud of this government because, since 2003, we've continued to invest in home care and community care so that more patients are now cared for at home. I know that when I worked as a community nurse in the 1990s, we were very limited in the procedures and the type of care we could provide at home. Through investment after investment after investment by our Liberal government, we've ensured that we can look after very, very complicated patients in the community and that they are looked after in the home, where they want to be. We can manage very complex procedures, including dialysis, ventilators and IVs, at home—things that we weren't able to do when I first got into community care in 1989.

We have continued to make those investments happen. I look at the advances that we've had, even in scans. I remember in the mid-1990s, when I was at a downtown university hospital, that we had somebody come into the emergency department, and there were not enough beds in the hospital to place people in. But this one individual came in, and she was obviously dying; as a matter of fact, within the next 24 hours she did pass away. She was a very young woman. She was obviously suffering from breast cancer. She hasn't even had her diagnostic CT scan to diagnose the tumour that she was dying from. She eventually did succumb to that. That was shameful, and that was in the mid-1990s.

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So again, I'm very, very proud that this government stepped forward and made sure that we decreased wait times for cancer care treatment and diagnostics, that we added CT scans and we added MRI machines. We've added an MRI machine in the Cambridge Memorial Hospital in order to reduce the wait times for our particular region, and that's helped.

Now Ontarians have more access to a family health care provider—94%. We have, again, 26,300 more nurses in the province of Ontario and we had over 11,000 more registered nurses. From 2014 to 2015 alone, we've added 2,200 more nurses working in nursing in Ontario. Many of those nurses are working in home and community care, family health care teams, nurse-practitioner-led clinics. These are ensuring that patients have better health care.

We've also invested in the Wait Time Strategy for all Ontarians. As of December 2015, those who were waiting for a procedure had 284 million fewer days of waiting since August 2005 because of the investments that this government is putting in. We have gone from the worst to the first for reducing wait times, including hip

and knee replacements, cataracts, cardiac care, radiation oncology, MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds, as noted by the Wait Time Alliance. Those are things that I've seen significantly change during my tenure as a nurse, before I was elected to represent the great riding of Cambridge.

I wanted to talk just a little bit more about e-health. I know that we have invested in e-health significantly. Those investments have done things like being able to transfer patient files from the north so that radiologists and specialists in hospitals here are able to weigh in on whether they really need to provide that patient in a remote community with transportation, or whether they're able to make some of the decisions remotely by e-health. Most Ontarians now have an e-health record in the province of Ontario, and that's made for better care. The list goes on, Madam Speaker.

I want to just end off by saying this: I ran for this government because this was the first government in three successive governments that actually invested in health care. I think that the Patients First Act is a great piece of legislation. We'll be ensuring that patients moving forward will be better looked after. The local health integration networks will be ensuring that they will be allotting resources to their particular community to ensure that Ontarians have much better health care now and in the future. I fully support this piece of legislation and look forward to its speedy passage.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's a delight for me to get a few comments on the record this afternoon on Bill 41, the Patients First Act.

Let me tell you, I have a wonderful relationship with my family physician in Peterborough, Dr. Bob Neville. I was actually in to see him about a week ago. He was giving me my last shot for hepatitis. I was travelling to India and you have to have those shots. He is part of one of the fabulous health teams in Peterborough, the Medical Centre. Anytime you're in Peterborough, Madam Speaker, at 303 Charlotte Street in Peterborough, Ontario, it has the full complement of medical services. There's a pharmacy there, you can get X-rays there—it covers the whole gamut.

Of course, Bob Neville believes in putting patients first. But more important than that, he's also past president of the Peterborough Petes, that really great Junior A hockey team that's been in Peterborough since 1956. Madam Speaker, you'll want to know this: Scotty Bowman's first coaching position in his long and illustrious career was with the Peterborough Petes, and he led them to the Memorial Cup in the late 1950s. Madam Speaker, I just wanted to get that on the record.

I listened to my friends in the third party today, and I'd like to remind everybody of Roy Romanow, who was a very distinguished Premier of Saskatchewan, and of course worked with Mr. Chrétien—when he was the justice minister—and Roy McMurtry to bring about the enshrinement of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. When they were in power in Saskatchewan—the

finance minister, Dr. Janice MacKinnon, wrote a famous book called *Minding the Public Purse*—during that period of time, they closed 52 rural hospitals in the province of Saskatchewan, because the budget pressures were so great. It goes to show you that sometimes tough decisions have to be made.

Madam Speaker, I think there's a lot of very important stuff that's part of Bill 41. I know there was a quote from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk today about a chain email that has been circulating in the province of Ontario. I get them, but the interesting thing is that the emails are all exactly the same. That leads me to believe—now, I'm just a little guy from Peterborough, but let me tell you, when every MPP is getting the same chain email, the lights go on. That tells me that somebody has put this email together and is circulating it around, and just had people put their name on it to send it out, because there's nothing really original in that email. But, God bless, that's the way the email system works, and everybody is entitled to send out those emails.

But it really does lead me to reach the conclusion that these emails go out there, and have they really taken the opportunity to look at what's in Bill 41, or are they just getting fed this information from some Gru somewhere that crafted it together? Now, Madam Speaker, this is the Christmas season, and I really want to be nice this afternoon, so I'm not going to point fingers where that Gru might be hiding, but—could it be over there? Well, you never know where that Gru is hiding, but I'll leave it at that.

But can I talk about the Central East LHIN for a moment? The Central East LHIN is one of those LHINs that really needs to be reduced into some smaller areas. Madam Speaker, you well know, because you're part of the Central East LHIN, that it goes from Cobourg to Port Hope to Algonquin Park to Scarborough.

When you think about it for a moment, Scarborough has its interests in terms of delivering medical services, and I suspect that Scarborough probably should have a relationship with Toronto, because it's one big area and you have the commonality of delivering health care services in a large urban centre.

Then we look at Durham region. Well, Durham region has significant health care services at Lakeridge hospital in Oshawa, Ontario. I've had friends of mine in Peterborough who have been treated at Lakeridge hospital. It has a renowned cancer treatment centre there. But it really has a community of interest within that Durham region, and that's kind of a natural unit coming together. I hear, on both sides, distinguished members from Durham talking about health care delivery services in that area.

Then we have the jewel of the Central East LHIN. That's my hometown of Peterborough. Of course, we have a brand new hospital, the Peterborough Regional Health Centre in Peterborough. We offer cancer care services. We now offer stent surgery for cardiac treatment in Peterborough. Just recently, we recruited four brand new specialized doctors to come to PRHC.

We have a relationship with the cities of Kawartha Lakes, Peterborough and Northumberland through Northumberland Hills Hospital.

That would tell me that to better coordinate health care services in my region of the Central East LHIN, we need to take some time to look at the boundaries and how we can deliver services much more effectively within that area.

Now, I want to go back to this chain email that has been circulating from Cobourg to Cochrane, from Windsor to Winona, from Peterborough to Petrolia—

Hon. David Zimmer: All over the place.

Hon. Jeff Leal: —all over the place. One of the elements in that chain email is this issue that people are going to get into your medical records. Well, we know that that's not the case. We wanted to make sure when we introduced the health information privacy act—which puts patients first by improving privacy, accountability and transparency. So that is one element of that chain email that we want to address.

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Additionally, our government had extensive consultations with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on this legislation, and he has been very supportive throughout the process. In fact, that job is held by a person from Peterborough, Brian Beamish. I happen to know the family exceedingly well. His brother John Beamish is a highly regarded family physician in the riding of Peterborough. Dr. John Beamish has been very involved in palliative care treatment in the riding of Peterborough. I know John and Brian and their families very well.

That's one of the things in the putting patients first act. The other thing that I want to share today is that we're actually developing a brand new 10-bed hospice in Peterborough.

Applause.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank my colleagues behind me for acknowledging this initiative.

I want to give a shout-out to my good friend Betty Morris, who has been leading the capital campaign Every Moment Matters. Of course, the province of Ontario and my colleague Dr. Eric Hoskins came through with in excess of millions of dollars to provide the operational funding for that 10-bed hospice unit when it comes into operation over the next year or so.

Merry Christmas to Betty Morris, who has done an incredible job of raising money. I kicked in 100 bucks to that capital campaign to help it out and move it forward.

Interjection.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I know my friend from Lambton, Monte McNaughton—I bet if I hit him up for 100 bucks, he would kick in 100 bucks, so I'm going to hit him up before the House rises on Thursday to make a donation.

Of course, as Minister Hoskins has said, multiple people have made presentations to the committee on Bill 41. Minister Hoskins has said very clearly that there will be no added bureaucracy, and any financial savings would go to improving patient care. That's what this is

all about. On all sides of the House, all 107 members are concerned about patient care.

We also want to make very clear that there will be no cuts to front-line care. In fact, Madam Speaker, I have some numbers here that I just want to quote. This is a very good number here, Madam Speaker; you'll appreciate this. You're a former professional nurse out there in Scarborough.

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Get this, there are now, Madam Speaker—I'm going to speak slowly so that we get this number—over 26,300 more nurses working in nursing in Ontario, since taking office in 2003. This includes over 11,000 more RNs, registered nurses. That's very important. From 2014-15 alone, there are more than 2,200 more nurses working in nursing in the province of Ontario.

Our family health teams—as I said when I introduced my remarks, my family physician, Bob Neville, is part of this—are serving over 200 communities, which are providing care for over 3.2 million Ontarians, including over 885,000 who did not previously have access to a family doctor.

When I got the great privilege of representing the wonderful people of Peterborough riding in the fall of 2003, we had almost 20,000 people in the riding of Peterborough who did not have access to primary care. I can report today that through the introduction of family health teams, that number has whittled down considerably. There's always more to do, but we're in a very good position to provide those primary care services through family health teams. We have nurse practitioners—and I want to give a shout-out today. We have a

great clinic in Peterborough, the VON 360 Degree clinic, that really looks after the hard-to-reach population in the riding of Peterborough, and they provide those extensive services.

Madam Speaker, I've probably got a few seconds left on the clock, so at this particular time, I'd like to wish everybody a merry Christmas and a happy new year. All of us who sit in this Legislature are in a very privileged position. Let's remember those folks in our ridings who were having some struggles, dig in our pockets and make sure they have the kind of Christmas that the rest of us will be enjoying during this holiday season.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): "Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 6 be deferred until deferred votes on Tuesday, December 6, 2016." It's signed by the chief government whip.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing it's almost 6 o'clock, I will adjourn the House until Tuesday, December 6 at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce International
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Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Associate Minister of Education (Early Years and Child Care) / Ministre associée de l'Éducation (Petite enfance et Garde d'enfants)
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bob Delaney, Cheri DiNovo
Joe Dickson, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Arthur Potts, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Ann Hoggarth
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Han Dong, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Cristina Martins, Peter Z. Milczyn
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Yvan Baker, Mike Colle
Grant Crack, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Harinder Malhi
Jim McDonnell, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Cristina Martins
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
James J. Bradley, Raymond Sung Joon Cho
Wayne Gates, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle
Bob Delaney, Randy Hillier
Michael Mantha, Arthur Potts
Shafiq Qaadri, Laurie Scott
Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
James J. Bradley, Steve Clark
Vic Dhillon, Sophie Kiwala
Michael Mantha, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
John Fraser, Ernie Hardeman
Percy Hatfield, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
Arthur Potts
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Ted McMeekin, Mario Sergio
Bill Walker, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Ted McMeekin, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch