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Monday 7 March 2016

Lundi 7 mars 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 mars 2016

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Maybe the member from Sarnia–Lambton will be introducing this gentleman as well, but we have a mutual friend, Lorne Given, here from Sarnia–Lambton.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll allow that; that always happens.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Ajax page captain Bianca Padilla's family. We only have two of them inside. The rest are coming in. They were waiting outside.

I'm going to ask the two members of the family, the aunt and the brother, to stand—come on, stand right up. Are you standing, Carlo? Oh, that's not Carlo; he's outside as well. He's a former page, and he's here today. Also here are her aunt Joyce Gutierrez and cousin Ava Aquino. They're sitting in the members' gallery today.

At the same time, I've got to tell you that the full class from St. Patrick Catholic School are here today, and they will be in the gallery momentarily, and they'll be here for the photo as well. It's an honour to welcome them.

Mr. Robert Bailey: That's a hard act to follow.

I'd like to welcome to the members' west galley Mr. Lorne Given, a long-time friend and a member of my executive, and also a nephew of one of our long-time Conservative members here, Lorne Henderson.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I would like to welcome once again Cheryl Davies and Borden Craddock, who are the mother and grandmother of page Owen Davies from my riding of London West, and who have joined us today in the public gallery. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: This past weekend, the member from Newmarket–Aurora did not get older; he just got better. I'd like us all to wish him a very happy birthday.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today I'd like to welcome Sami Pritchard from the Walkerton/Hanover area, Scarlett Raczynski from Clinton, and their colleagues Jessica Kearney and James Westman, who are joining us today.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: This weekend—just yesterday, in fact—our colleague the honourable member from Durham celebrated a birthday. Let's join in wishing him a happy birthday.

Mr. Lorne Coe: Page captain Dhruv Upadhyay's mother and sister are in the gallery: Nilu and Tanisi.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd hoped they would have joined us right now, but they are on their way in. The head of the provincial building trades in Ontario, Mr. Pat Dillon, and his right-hand person, former OLIP intern Igor Delov, will be joining us today.

M^{me} France Gélinas: She is making her way in. Her name is Darquise Frappier from École secondaire Felix-Ricard. She is one of the Ontario Junior Citizen Award recipients, and she will be receiving her award this afternoon. She's not quite in, but that was the end of introductions.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to introduce my friend Jeff Mole, who's in the visitors' gallery. Jeff is an activist around community energy solutions and community conservation, and a great citizen of Ontario.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Acting Premier. I had the privilege—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm very much aware of the happenings in the province, and I'm going to ask that we spend a moment just to reflect on what my job is. I would like to be able to provide all questioners and those giving answers with the appropriate attention that they deserve.

Leader?

Mr. Patrick Brown: I had the privilege of touring the Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre this past weekend. I was moved by the work they do. But the truth is that mental health care facilities in Ontario need the government's help. The geriatric hospital wing at the Royal has a three-month waiting list. Drug addiction services have an even longer waiting list.

I asked the staff and the physicians at the Royal what we could do, what we could raise at Queen's Park, and they said, "Tell the government, and tell the Minister of Health to stop cutting our mental health facilities."

Will the government commit to supporting mental health in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm hoping, based on that question, that the official opposition will support us in our budget, because, in fact, we are increasing our funding, not just generally in hospitals—an additional \$345 million to hospitals—but specifically to our in-patient mental health hospitals across this province.

We have made a substantial new increase this year, and I would hope that the member opposite would recognize that it's important for these hospitals in the context of the transformations that we're undergoing. They're moving with us, in terms of reform to funding models, focusing more on outcomes and what truly benefits patients.

We're also moving more and more of the patients who we can provide support to into the community, where they can be best cared for. The evidence demonstrates the outcomes are better in the community. So we're making these reforms with our hospitals.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, you want to talk about outcomes? The outcome and the reality is the government's not doing enough. There is not enough when mental illness affects one in three people during their lifetime. The funding is not enough when one in three hospitalizations is caused by mental illness. We know that 70% of mental health issues emerging are in the teen years. The government needs to make the resources available for our youth, but this government has done the opposite. They have cut mental health.

My question to the Acting Premier or the Minister of Health is, will you commit to stopping the cuts in our mental health facilities?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Once again, we're increasing our funding to mental health across this province. We're in the middle of a new expansion program, a new \$138 million in our mental health and addiction services in the most recent budget that's been tabled. We've increased, specifically, an allocation wholly dedicated to our mental health hospitals.

The Royal, as well, has benefitted from a substantial new investment in a dedicated CT scan that will benefit patients who are challenged by mental illness. There are many, many things that we're doing to transform our mental health services across the province, including at the Royal in Ottawa.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: No one believes this government is doing enough on mental health. The reality is, mental health is just as important as physical health, but this Premier and this government don't recognize how cruel it is that they go out during Bell Let's Talk month and say, "Come forward. Have the courage to ask for treatment," and then they cut that treatment. How hypocritical. How wrong. You want to talk—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader will withdraw.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: The reality is, when you actually go and visit these centres—when I visited Ontario Shores, they said the cuts were too much. They had to fire staff. At the Royal last year, they had to cut 18 staff

members who are needed on the front lines dealing with mental health in Ontario; 18 people were cut.

The question is, I appreciate you've got your talking points, but every mental health facility is cutting staff.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And if you continue, I'll have to deal with you.

Now, I've already mentioned it once. I'll mention it a second time, and that will be the end. While I'm trying to speak and I'm standing, giving people instructions, the minute I sit down, I hear heckling. I'm going to go after those individuals.

Number two, would the member please address the Chair.

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's right there in the budget document on page 117, the important investments, the new investments that we're making in our mental health and addiction services, including in our hospitals.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important to also recognize that mental health is evolving in the sense that the outcomes—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As the finance minister is reminding me, more than \$16 million to mental health services, in addition to \$138 million that we're investing in community care, because I would hope the leader of the official opposition would recognize that we need to follow the evidence and the science and what best outcomes exist for those with mental health challenges. Often, that's moving them into the community and providing supportive care, like the 1,000 new supportive—

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

Interjection.

Member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

New question?

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, since I can't get a straight answer about why every mental health facility in Ontario has had to cut staff, let's try something else.

A recent Forum poll had some interesting information. It said that there is strong disapproval for the Liberal version of cap-and-trade. It said nearly 60% of the people in Ontario disapprove of cap-and-trade as a cash grab. If you want to get public buy-in, if you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Making references to "you" means you're not speaking to me. I need to be included in this. Please, it helps. As far as I'm concerned, if it continues on this side, I'm doing the same thing.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, if the government wants to get public buy-in for their environmental policies, it can't simply be a cash grab. It has to be revenue-neutral. Will the government commit to making their cap-and-trade policy revenue-neutral?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do want to start by sincerely congratulating the Leader of the Opposition for his change of heart on the environment. I think all of us were heartened to see your position on that.

The tricky part, though, is this: There have been some flip-flops. Now he's supporting the environment, but for nine years, as a member of the Harper caucus, he sat on his—

Mr. John Yakabuski: This has got to stop—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No. You do.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: He sat on his hands when—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Huron—Bruce.

Please finish.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The now-Leader of the Opposition sat on his hands when Harper withdrew from the Kyoto—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

I'm going to take a position on this that I want to talk about government policy. If there are going to be responses or questions that lead to that, I'm going to say fine. If it doesn't lead to that—talk about government policy, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is about policy, because Canada's reputation was harmed—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm not going to debate this: provincial government policy.

Start the clock. Wrap up, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, now the Leader of the Opposition says that he believes that climate change is a major threat to Ontario, but when he ran for leadership not that long ago, he said, "It would not be my plan to bring in a cap-and-trade system or a carbon tax."

Now the PC leader says that we have to do something about climate change, and that something includes putting a price on carbon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question was on revenue neutrality. I wasn't asking for smears, attacks or insults. This is a serious public policy question.

The reality is this government's proposal will cause the average family in Ontario to pay \$387 more. That's not right. This plan must include corresponding tax relief for individuals and businesses if you want to have the public's buy-in.

Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have to stop making life more expensive for everyone in Ontario. Why won't this government give families a break? Will you commit that this will not be a Liberal slush fund and that you will give it back to the people of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: So, Speaker, on Saturday we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I get the attention, it's not the moment for you to then start interjecting. It's actually when you're supposed to stop.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The PC leader said on Saturday that there was practically universal support in the caucus for carbon pricing, but just last week, the environment critic said that it was PC policy not to support cap-and-trade.

"Premier," the environment critic said, "will you heed the advice of the PC Party of Ontario and commit to not implementing a carbon tax?" So, Speaker, it's pretty hard to tell the flips from the flops, but we're glad that you decided—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Acting Premier: Once again, I did not get an answer on revenue neutrality.

1050

Let me say, our environment critic is a phenomenal MPP, and what she said last week was that we don't need a cap-and-trade policy that's simply another Liberal slush fund. So let me say this very clearly: This plan can't be another Collegate; it can't be another Metrolinx slush fund. It can't be like the business grant program that the Auditor General says was completely abused and not transparent. The money can't go to Liberal pet projects. A revenue-neutral plan must be subject to independent oversight.

Will the government agree here today that it will not be another Liberal slush fund, it will be conditional on oversight, and that the government will actually give it back to the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, there seem to be some big holes in the opposition's position. The first one is this: As you know, the Financial Accountability Officer reported last week that, by regulation—and I'll send it by the page over to the member of the official opposition—this is a regulatory fee; this money can only legally be spent on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It would be nice, now that the Leader of the Opposition knows that, if he could be honest.

But I am curious. Did he tell people on Saturday that his tax would be \$160 a tonne, 10 times what it would be under a cap-and-trade system? How did that work out with the people that he promised he would never

introduce a carbon price tax, because the carbon tax doesn't have a—

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. The Liberals are nearly doubling drug costs for most seniors. On top of that, on page 180 of the budget, it says that the government is cutting \$200 million from the Ontario drug benefit that helps seniors pay for their medication. How much of that \$200 million will be coming out of seniors' pockets?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our drug program that provides nearly 5,000 different medications to Ontarians, including our seniors, but many others of low income that are deserving of those medicines. It is a program which we continue to invest in, about \$150 million a year, or a 3% increase in that budget on an annual basis.

We've made important changes and measures in this budget so that an additional 170,000 people will go from paying a \$100 deductible to paying a zero-dollar deductible. That's an important measure that's going to benefit so many Ontarians. It will bring to that category almost 500,000 seniors who will not pay any annual deductible at all. I would hope that that's something that the third party would appreciate. It provides support to those who truly need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What the minister is not admitting to is that under the Liberals' plan, more seniors will be paying more for their prescription drugs. On top of nearly doubling what most seniors will pay, the Liberals are cutting \$200 million from the seniors' drug coverage. Why doesn't this government focus on expanding prescription drug coverage and protecting universal access to health care instead of cutting supports for seniors?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We continue to increase our drug program, including for seniors, year after year after year, and I think it's important that Ontarians understand that we have the most generous drug program for seniors in the entire country. It's true that the out-of-pocket expenses, on average, for a senior are approximately \$277 in Ontario. The next closest province is approximately \$600. That includes provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Quebec, which are more than double the out-of-pocket expenses for seniors. So we have the most generous program.

We need to make some changes in order to ensure the sustainability of the program. I believe Ontarians appreciate that we should direct our greatest effort to those who need the help the most. That's what we're intending to do with this budget.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, not only are the Liberals planning to make seniors pay more for medication; their plan is to cut \$200 million from the Ontario drug benefit. That means less funding for seniors' medication.

Why are the Liberals cutting \$200 million and forcing seniors to pay more for their prescriptions instead of investing in expanding coverage so that more seniors have access to affordable medications?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: While we are continuing to increase our funding for drug programs, including for our seniors, what we're doing is we're shifting somewhat the responsibility for those seniors who can most afford it to help 170,000 more seniors pay no annual deductible.

But that's not all we're doing for our seniors. We're also increasing our funding by \$75 million for hospices and palliative and end-of-life care. We're adding the shingles vaccine, a free vaccine, an estimated \$170 saving to each senior. We're removing the debt retirement charges, which will save our seniors, on average, an additional \$70 per year.

We actually reduced the number of prescriptions that a pharmacist is allowed to charge for monthly, from up to 12 down to four. That's going to save an enormous amount of money in the reduced co-payment costs for our seniors—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —needing to go to pharmacists less.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. It's been 12 days since the Premier announced her plan to nearly double the cost of medication for seniors in Ontario. It took her five days to realize that that was a mistake. Now she's giving herself until the end of March, Speaker, to figure out whether a senior making \$19,500 a year is affluent.

Has this Liberal government realized that their plan will nearly double medication costs for struggling seniors, or do they need 24 more days to figure out whether or not a senior earning \$19,500 a year is actually affluent?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I was a bit taken aback when the deputy leader of the NDP announced that they would proudly vote against this budget.

What that means is that the NDP is voting against free tuition for low-income students and reduced costs for middle-class families. They're voting against the biggest infrastructure investment in Ontario's history, one that's going to create 110,000 jobs each year. They're voting against increasing health care funding by \$1 billion, including \$345 million for hospital funding. They're voting against \$178 million for affordable housing and homelessness initiatives. They're voting against lowering hospital parking fees. They're voting against the shingles

vaccine. They're voting against 170,000 more Ontario seniors getting zero deductible—

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

Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We will proudly be voting against a Liberal plan that will leave seniors paying more for their drug costs. The Premier has given herself more than three weeks to figure out what everyone in Ontario already knows: that struggling seniors cannot afford to pay more for their medication. And on top of making seniors pay more, the Liberals are planning to cut \$200 million from the seniors' drug benefit.

These are things that New Democrats don't support, Speaker. It should be no surprise to the Liberals that New Democrats actually believe in pharmacare and in more opportunity. Universality is what we believe in. The Liberals have no such belief.

Will this government stop cutting and instead make medication more affordable for more seniors?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It seems to me that the only criticism the third party has of this budget is an item that the Premier has already said we're going to take another look at. So they're voting against making the shingles vaccines free for eligible seniors. They're voting against \$100 million to help people reduce their home energy bills. They're voting against eliminating the Drive Clean \$30 fee. They're voting against reducing auto insurance. They're voting against 250,000 four- and five-year-olds having access to full-day kindergarten. They're voting against supports to an innovative program for high school students to assist with financial literacy. They're voting against \$75 million for hospice and community care. They're voting against \$333 million to support kids with autism.

1100

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Acting Premier doesn't have to worry, Speaker. New Democrats will be talking quite a bit over the next number of days about all of the things in this budget that we have serious problems with.

However, today I'm asking specifically about the fact that seniors have seen their drug costs double. Seniors have also seen wait-lists for long-term care get longer and longer. They're waiting months on months for home care. If the Acting Premier wants the list, I'll give it to her. They've seen physiotherapy services cut. They're struggling to pay their heating bills. And now, the Premier is increasing their medication costs and slashing the Ontario drug benefit.

When will Ontario seniors get the respect that they deserve from this Liberal government?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the NDP are saying that they are going to vote against \$250 million more to home and community care. The NDP is saying they're voting against free tuition for the kids in the lowest income—actually, income up to \$50,000 a year. This is a life-changing initiative in this budget. The old NDP would have been standing up and cheering this

news. The new NDP is just stuck on one issue that we've already said we will review.

There are other things in the budget, including GO service to Niagara. Now, I am a bit surprised that the NDP would not be supporting GO service to Niagara, considering that they've been big advocates of this. There's a lot in this budget. It's an important, progressive budget—

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Minister, I have a document here that outlines an RFP issued by the LCBO on February 24, one day before the budget was released. It states that the LCBO is seeking a real estate vendor to sell 250 LCBO store locations right across the province. Section 3.2.1 states, "The LCBO's main intention is to sell properties," and 3.2.3 says the LCBO will consider leasing out properties that are deemed unsaleable or if they can generate high revenue from a tenant.

Speaker, can the minister tell us just how much money he expects this sale to bring in for the province, what will happen to these LCBO locations and how many jobs will be cut or otherwise affected as a result of this sale?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, who I believe recognizes the tremendous contribution that the LCBO provides our province by way of dividends, recognizing that the expertise of the LCBO is operating a retail organization that has tremendous value. We recognize the work it does as a distributor for the benefit of Ontarians, who then realize on some of those proceeds for hospital investments, for education—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Hon. Charles Sousa: —and for infrastructure investments. That's their priority, Mr. Speaker. They're doing a good job and—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Answer the question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Right after I asked the member to come to order, he just kept yelling, so I'm going to say second time to the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

Just wrap up, please. Are you finished? Thank you.

Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, I can take from the fact that we didn't get an answer about the 250 stores that they're selling 250 stores across Ontario. That's plain and simple. It's curious that the RFP went out before the budget was released, yet none of those details were in the budget: no details on which 250 locations, no details on how many thousands of jobs will be cut, no details on the financial impact this will have on the bottom line.

Speaker, I wonder: Is this more Liberal furniture-burning to heat the home? Is this another part of the Liberal plan to balance their budget? I ask the minister: Why were you keeping details of this sale of LCBO stores secret from the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, I think you're getting close.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Here comes scandal number five.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, second time.

Hon. Charles Sousa: There's no secret that this side of the House supports the LCBO, supports the work that they're doing. We are continuing to provide all the supports necessary for the LCBO to succeed. It's why they are the wholesalers of the distribution that's being advanced to grocery chains, for example.

The member opposite makes reference to secrecy. Well, there may be some market and commercial sensitivities. This I can say, though: LCBO stores and the distribution network will continue with the same complement that it has now because it benefits all of Ontarians. What may occur in respect to a leased premise or an owned premise will be up to the LCBO to determine the best value for taxpayer money and the best value for our returns. The member opposite, as finance critic, should know better.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Education. Speaker, students and families in London are contacting my office, concerned about the possible closure of the Robarts School for the Deaf and the Amethyst school in London. Families wonder why the minister has cut off enrolment into provincial and demonstration schools if she is really only just consulting. They wonder why this government capped enrolment at 42 when the program has space for 138 students.

Children in London have been waiting and hoping for months, only to learn that they may never get these specialized services in the schools. The closure of both schools leaves students in southwestern Ontario with nowhere else to turn.

Speaker, why is the minister trying to balance the budget on the backs of some of our most vulnerable students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to start out by assuring everyone that at the moment we are consulting on the future of the programs to make sure that we serve deaf children in Ontario and children with very severe learn-

ing needs in the best way possible. No decisions have been made. I want to emphasize that.

While we're doing the consultation, we have put a pause on accepting enrolments because we need to figure out the best way to deliver the programs going forward.

I've been visiting the demonstration schools, which deal with children with very severe learning disabilities. The demonstration schools have some wonderful programs. The problem is, though, that we have thousands of kids in the province who need support with reading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Parents are concerned. They're concerned, they're contacting my office, and they want us to be the voice so that this minister will listen.

Speaker, back to the minister: Students who want to attend specialized schools like Robarts or Amethyst should have the right to do so. These are some of the most vulnerable kids in our province. They deserve better. Their families deserve better.

Thousands of parents have signed petitions online begging the minister and her government to keep these important schools open. This weekend we heard from Becca Haggit, a student who attends Amethyst and has benefited deeply from it. She is advocating for herself and for the rights of other children with unique needs who need to access these schools. The minister needs to listen to students who are directly impacted by these specialized programs.

Speaker, will the minister guarantee today that neither Amethyst nor Robarts will be closed because of consultations—yes or no?

Hon. Liz Sandals: If I could just talk a little bit about the Amethyst school, which, just to clarify, is for children with severe learning disabilities, many of the children who are at Amethyst are six or even eight grade levels behind, in terms of their reading skills. They're kids who are intelligent kids, but they just haven't been able to learn to read.

We know that the kids who are at Amethyst are not the only kids in the province who are struggling with learning to read. We know that there are other kids in the province who haven't had the opportunity to go to Amethyst who are struggling to learn to read. We need to figure out how we help all the kids who are struggling to learn to read but have average intelligence. There is a bigger group, and we need to think through our programs carefully.

1110

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. John Fraser: Ma question est pour le ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts. Minister, the 2016-17 budget contained many positive measures to grow our economy for Ontarians. Among them was continued support for your Ministry of Natural Resources.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry oversees industries that Ontarians rely on every day, industries like aggregates and wood products that build our schools, hospitals and homes, and that thousands of Ontarians rely on for jobs. The ministry also works to protect the public, its plants and its wildlife while providing opportunities to experience our natural heritage.

Can the minister share how this government's budget is supporting the activities of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. As most people will know, certainly most people in northern Ontario will know, the forest industry really felt the downturn of the recession two or three years before the 2008 recession really took hold in the rest of the province. As a result of that, our government came forward with a broad suite of programs, many of which are still in existence, valued at well over \$1 billion, which continue to support, and have supported, the forestry industry in Ontario.

Currently, we're working very hard representing the interests of our industry on the international stage. As many will know, the softwood lumber agreement is currently being renegotiated. We're doing our best to represent the Ontario industry in that regard. We still have a very significant roads funding program in place to support the industry.

As well, Speaker, I would add that we have created a new program that supports the forest industry here in Ontario. The Forestry Growth Fund is a new program under the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, which will help forestry on a go-forward basis with our capital projects.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the minister for his response.

Minister, there has been some confusion in the media recently with regard to service and licence fees within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. I know that service fees collected by your ministry support activities valuable to many Ontarians. Amongst the most visible and impactful are Ontario's parks.

Can the minister correct the record in this Legislature around the fees and the activities that such fees support?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I want to thank the member for the question and the opportunity to correct the record. I've done this at least once before, Speaker, and further about the things that such fees and the broader budget do support.

First and foremost, recreational fish and wildlife licences are not going up as part of budget 2016. Further existing fees are used exclusively to support the management of fish and wildlife for today and tomorrow.

There's a planned increase of about 50 cents per car per night for visitors to Ontario parks. These fees, as well as seasonal lot fees, contribute to Ontario parks' ability to be more than 85% self-funded. I think that's important to remember.

More than that, the budget also contains new money for important parks infrastructure that will enhance the

experience of visitors to Ontario parks. Ontario parks, like Rideau River and Fitzroy, near the member's riding, are among my ministry's best contributions to the province and provincial parks piece.

This budget's investments in parks, along with a balanced approach to service fees, ensure that parks' operations are sustainable for future generations.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, the government's rationing of health care has created a crisis in Ontario. Last week in London, 22 mental health patients were left waiting for beds. They were placed in a classroom because there was no space. Guelph's emergency room was shut down when 11 mental health patients required in-patient admission but the hospital had nowhere to place them.

Mental health patients deserve the same care as physical health patients. Why are you failing our mentally ill across this province by failing to deal with the crisis in our health care system today? Minister, will you stand up and stop rationing the health care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm not exactly sure how a \$1-billion new investment in our health care system can be described as anything at all in relationship to what the member opposite is alleging.

I think he was in the Legislature last week when we talked about the situation in London, where I reminded the members of the Legislature of the new investment of more than \$1 million in capital, as well as the operating budget, to develop a brand new crisis centre for mental health patients in London and in the Middlesex area.

Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to make these important investments. I would hope that the member would, again, acknowledge that often it is in the community, with strong community supports, where the best outcomes are achieved. It's not necessarily in the hospital.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: I was here last week when your government turned your back on everybody suffering from rare diseases.

The situation worsened over the weekend. Pete Verberne, who suffers from Alzheimer's, spent eight nights sleeping on the Victoria hospital floor while in restraints because there were no beds or enough front-line health care professionals to look after him.

Your government has had many photo ops promoting mental health support, but the government is failing terribly. The health care system is being rationed because of your government's financial mismanagement. Over \$2 billion have been wasted on eHealth, \$26.9 million on a diabetes registry and billions more on Ornge. Could you only think of the mental health services we could have in our province if you hadn't wasted that money?

Minister, will you stop the waste and rationing and look after our most vulnerable, who are slipping through the cracks of your mismanaged health care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The billion-dollar increase to our health care system includes many important investments, whether they be in palliative care and hospice care, whether they be in mental health—an additional multi-million-dollar investment in mental health services in this province—or whether they be the capital investments of \$12 billion over the next 10 years.

We've had an independent study by ICES which has shown that the reforms that we're making are having a positive impact: a shorter length of stay in hospital, increased numbers of patients treated, minimal impact on re-admission rates, and, importantly, a statistically significant reduction in nurse-sensitive adverse events. That's important because that's about the safety of our front-line health care workers. The evidence shows that our reforms, our transformation, and our quality agenda over the past few years are making an important and positive impact.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Liberal cuts to health care are hurting patients in Hamilton. Hamilton Health Sciences is cutting nearly 100 full-time positions, St. Joe's is cutting 136 positions, and mental health services are being moved out of my riding and out of east Hamilton. Those services are a lifeline for people in need, but now the whole east side of Hamilton will be without psychiatric care. Patients will be asked to take the bus for an extra hour each way to the remaining facility on Hamilton Mountain. These additional burdens of time and money will only discourage patients from getting the help they need.

Will the minister explain to us why this government is making it harder for people in east Hamilton to get the mental health care they require?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I first want to address the comments made at the beginning of the member's question with regard to Hamilton Health Sciences generally. We do know that they reviewed 230 different options for finding efficiencies and for staying within their allocation. They decided on a number of those options. Of more than 200, they decided on a handful of them. It does result in some job losses, approximately 90, but almost 50 of those are unfilled positions, so the true number is closer to between 40 and 50. The Ontario Nurses' Association says that only a "very small number" of the affected jobs at HHS are in nursing. There are non-union positions which are being removed as a result of this change.

I think we need to recognize that we need to give the tools to our hospitals to make the changes they deem necessary to provide the best-quality patient care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Interesting. RNs, RPNs, social workers, child care workers, technologists and lab staff and many other workers are all threatened by cuts at St. Joseph's, and they know the impact that this will have on

their community. The closure of East Region Mental Health Services is a body blow to my riding, which is the second-poorest in Ontario.

Poverty breeds poor health, including mental health. This clinic exists to provide community-based support. Instead, we're asking people to travel an hour each way out of their community to get help. Gary Birch from Binbrook contacted my office and pointed out that these patients have reached a mental or financial state such that they can only access a mental health service that is near them. They will not venture very far, yet this government is telling them to hit the road.

1120

This pattern of short-term cuts with long-term costs and consequences is the hallmark of this Liberal government, and it is occurring across our province. How long will patients in Hamilton have to suffer just because the Liberal government can't get its priorities straight?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: My understanding is that this is one of the changes that St. Joseph's is contemplating to its mental health system. Of course we know that on the Mountain there is a more than \$1-billion investment in the mental health services that provide support to people not just from Hamilton but for the entire region.

We need to also acknowledge the importance of moving those programs, services and supports out into the community. We've been doing that through an investment of \$20 million over six years in the Medical Psychiatry Alliance, which is going to provide tens of thousands of individuals better access to mental health services.

I'm surprised that the member doesn't talk about the Mobile Crisis Rapid Response Team that's set up in Hamilton, which has ride-alongs of mental health workers with our police officers so that if there is a mental health crisis involving somebody who otherwise would end up in the justice system, they get involved. They often divert away from hospitals to begin with, to provide the important community supports that also keep that person out of prison.

CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

This budget made significant investments to help children and youth across the province. Many families in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora are glad to hear that we will be providing \$333 million in new funding for autism services. I think often of the parents and children with autism who come to see me, and the challenges and struggles they face each day. I'm sure they'll support this government's additional investments for children and youth with special needs.

Can the minister please inform the House of the important investments her ministry is making to support Ontario's children?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for this very excellent question.

He's absolutely right: The new investments that have been mentioned are very, very good news for children, youth and families in Ontario. This year's budget increases the children and youth budget by 2.1%, and this is very, very good news for families across the province.

As mentioned, we're investing \$330 million in new funds to support children and youth with autism. We've worked really hard with the experts to develop a plan for new funding, and we'll be announcing those details shortly. We've also invested an additional \$17.8 million for children with special needs, which is just part of the nearly half a billion dollars we provide to support children with special needs and their families across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to thank the minister for her answer.

These investments will certainly make a difference in the lives of my constituents, particularly those caring for children with special needs or autism. The overall increase for the budget of her ministry of 2.1% is impressive and certainly money well spent. I'm happy that I'll be able to report this good news to my community.

I also imagine that these new investments are being well received more broadly. Can the minister please explain how people are responding to the initiatives she has just mentioned?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member again for the question. He's absolutely right. I'm very pleased to report that our investments in children and youth are being well received and supported by stakeholders in the sector. For example, Margaret Spoelstra, the executive director of Autism Ontario, said, "Families raising children with autism have been waiting a long time this announcement.... This investment will set the stage for continuous learning for years to come."

The leader of the official opposition called our investments "appropriate" and well received, and he also recognized that the \$17.8 million for special needs is "a step in the right direction." The NDP member for Kitchener-Waterloo called these investments for autism "a positive step." Despite all of that, I'm very disappointed that we've heard that both opposition parties have indicated they will not be supporting our budget and therefore will not be supporting these very important initiatives.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. Norm Miller: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Whenever it is time for the annual Prospectors and Developers Association convention, this government always seems to rediscover the mining sector. But this year in the budget, the only significant mention of the \$60-billion Ring of Fire project was a re-announcement from 2014. The same page in the budget has essentially been copied and pasted for three years. This wouldn't be so disappointing except for the fact that not a single

dollar of these promised infrastructure funds has been used to advance the project.

Will the minister explain his government's total lack of urgency on developing the Ring of Fire?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for the question. The member knows well what a priority not just the Ring of Fire is but the entire mineral development sector is. That's why the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada's conference is such an important gathering. Yes, indeed, we are very proud of our continued \$1-billion commitment towards the Ring of Fire and we're going to continue our discussions, certainly with the federal government, with the First Nations and with industry as we move forward.

There are important discussions going on that the member well knows about. They're going to lead us forward. They're going to also lead us to other mineral development prospects that we are very, very excited about. The fact that we also have \$120 million that is committed to the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program is also crucial. The fact that we have a record-breaking investment in infrastructure development is also crucial for the mining sector.

So while we see continued challenges to the mining sector, if the member was down at PDAC yesterday he would recognize that, indeed, there is a very positive atmosphere about future development in the mining sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: The minister continues to insist that progress is being made, but where's the proof? He just admitted that not a nickel has flowed. In fact, over the past three years alone, you've missed your own government deadlines in every measurable area of the project. The Auditor General used her 2015 report to single out your ministry for its ineffectiveness and inaction.

Speaker, continued talk by this government won't develop the Ring of Fire. If that were the case, we'd already have the 5,500 jobs per year that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce estimates will be created by the project.

Why can't this government get anything right, especially on a project as important as the Ring of Fire?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The mic wasn't on. Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows full well, we are doing very, very important work with the Matawa First Nations. We have put a regional framework agreement in place that allows us to move forward with important discussions. The fact is we need to have the communities embracing this development. This is an extraordinary resource development project in a remote part of the province that has never seen development before, so

there are many considerations at play. But what we have is positive development moving forward in terms of that regional framework agreement, including discussions about regional infrastructure development, about resource revenue sharing, about socio-economic supports, and that's again why we are so encouraged by our relationship with the new federal government.

I had an opportunity to see a number of ministers yesterday and a number of federal members yesterday, and there was great eagerness in continuing those discussions. We are going to move forward on this project as we are on so many projects in terms of the mining sector. We're excited about it. We're going to stay positive. We sure wish you would as well because, at the end of the day, we are going to see a great development in northern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Stop the clock. Be seated.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Attorney General. Tomorrow is International Women's Day, but in Ontario, instead of moving forward, women have been made more vulnerable by the Liberal government's decision to cut funding to Partner Assault Response. If this government was serious about ending domestic violence, it would recognize the need to hold abusive partners responsible for changing their violent behaviours.

Last week, a provincial survey revealed that almost half of Ontario men believe that victims are to blame if they stay in an abusive relationship. Does the Liberal government support this view? And if not, why is the Attorney General cutting funding for PAR, the only government program for men who abuse?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This program, PAR, is a very important component of our government's plan to end violence against women. I wanted to say to the public that this government has increased money into this program. In 2014-15, more than 11,000 offenders were referred to this program. We are committed to collaborating with stakeholders on ways to further improve PAR.

1130

I have listened to stakeholder concerns about the program, and some service providers are concerned with declines in referral rates and the data the government relies on to determine funding allocation. My ministry took these concerns into consideration and has adjusted the funding allocation for 2016-17 in order to minimize the impact on agencies. So we have not reduced—

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The minister knows that overall PAR funding has been cut, as much as 50% for the Windsor PAR Program and 25% in Elgin. These cuts came after the Premier stood in this House on December 2 and declared that there are no cuts to PAR.

Why did the minister ignore the calls of violence-against-women experts and front-line agencies to halt any further changes to PAR? Why did she ignore the Premier, who said there would be no changes to PAR allocations, and instead cut the 2016 allocations for PAR provider agencies?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Our government's annual investment in the PAR Program has increased by 47%, from \$7.2 million in 2004-05 to \$10.6 million in 2015-16.

There is a concern about this program. We've listened to the concerns. We will be convening a stakeholder meeting on April 20, 2016, with all of our PAR providers, violence-against-women stakeholders and experts to discuss concerns about the program and also hear their ideas for improvement. We've always wanted to improve the efficiency of the program, and we will continue to listen to the stakeholders.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as we all know, the number of Ontario seniors aged 65 and over is projected to more than double to over 4.5 million, or 25% of the population, by 2041. With that growth, we know that an increasing number of our parents and grandparents may one day require specialized care provided by one of the province's long-term-care facilities.

We also know that, as this demand for long-term care increases, organizations like the Ontario Long Term Care Association are telling us that the number of long-term-care residents coming into care with cognitive impairments has increased significantly, with more than 60% of the residents in our long-term-care homes currently having Alzheimer's or some other form of dementia. As more and more families in my riding are turning their thoughts toward the care their parents and grandparents may need in the future, I would like to reassure them that their loved ones will continue the highest level of care.

Minister, can you please tell this House about the new funding and how it will be used to provide the highest level of care for our loved ones?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Let me begin by thanking the member from Brampton-Springdale for this important question and her ongoing advocacy for seniors in her riding.

The member is absolutely right: Over the last decade, we have seen an increase in the instances of people with dementia entering long-term care exhibiting what are called "responsive" behaviours, such as aggression, wandering and agitation. That's why long-term care is one of the areas where the Ministry of Health has consistently been increasing funding, and this year is no exception. In fact, this year we are providing exceptional funding to the long-term-care sector, including a 2% increase across the board to every single long-term-care home in Ontario for the personal care needs of residents, but more

importantly, we are also increasing our investment in Behavioural Supports Ontario by \$10 million.

I have to say this, Mr. Speaker, if the opposition is really serious about—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you don't. Supplementary?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Minister, that's wonderful news. The residents of my riding, I'm sure, will be happy to know how important a priority the safety of our loved ones is for you and for your ministry.

But, Minister, I know you're responsible for the well-being of Ontarians, and I know that making Ontario smoke-free is a goal that you're quite passionate about. I know smoking prevalence has decreased from 24.5% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2014, representing 408,000 fewer smokers. As a member of this government, I'm proud to say that Ontario has the third-lowest smoking rate in the country.

But, Mr. Speaker, the use of tobacco products remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. More than two million Ontarians still smoke, and thousands of youth still take up smoking every year.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House what our government announced in the budget last week to help us continue striving towards the goal of Ontario achieving the lowest smoking rate in the country?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Again, I want to thank the member for the question.

As the minister responsible for health and wellness in Ontario, I'm very proud to continue the legacy of protecting Ontarians, especially young Ontarians, from the harmful effects of tobacco. That's why, Mr. Speaker, I'm so pleased to announce to this House that we're going to increase funding for smoking cessation by \$5 million if this budget is passed.

Whether it's long-term care or whether it's health promotion, this government is increasing funding. This is what I have to say to the opposition: If they're really serious about supporting our seniors, instead of asking sanctimonious questions in this House, I would ask that they stand up and support this budget. Talk is cheap, but they have the opportunity to really support seniors by standing up for this budget.

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, why are you allowing Metrolinx to give away millions of taxpayers' dollars in grants?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member, as I always do, for the question.

It was unfortunate I didn't hear the last part of the question, Speaker. I understand it was about Metrolinx and the tremendous work that Metrolinx is doing right

now to make sure we continue to build the province up and continue to invest in transit.

There are long lists of items, Speaker, since 2003, on which the team at Metrolinx and GO Transit have worked very hard. For example, since 2003, we have built 14 new stations. We have rebuilt four existing GO stations. We have extended our rail network by more than 90 kilometres since 2003. We've added more than 31,000 parking spots across the network. We've added over 200 new railcars and over 150 new single-level buses, and over 250 double-decker buses will be added over the next five years. This will support communities right across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, including Kitchener-Waterloo, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, it was only recently that Metrolinx was wrapped up in a scandal, when it made public that they were using taxpayer dollars to sponsor TIFF and Buffalo Bills games in Toronto in a deal where staff were given free tickets.

Today, we've learned that Metrolinx has operated outside their mandate once again by giving away millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in grants. Scandal after scandal, and you still haven't learned your lesson: UP Express has empty trains, there are sheds too small for their electric trains at Union Station, and now we have this slush fund.

Metrolinx's sole job should be to plan, build and manage transit, and it's the minister's job to provide the necessary oversight and transparency.

Speaker, how much more taxpayer money do we have to watch Metrolinx toss away before they finally do something about it?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: From my perspective, I appreciate, again, the member's follow-up question.

I understand that there were changes that were made by my predecessor more than a couple of years ago, Speaker, with respect to some of the concerns the member opposite is raising with respect to Metrolinx not only having that clear mandate but also, frankly, delivering on that mandate.

There are a couple of other items I didn't mention earlier. For example, other recent investments include:

—14 new weekday train trips added on the Kitchener GO corridor between the Mount Pleasant GO station and Union Station during off-peak midday hours;

—new and enhanced GO bus service that is being added in the Milton, Highway 407, Barrie, Lakeshore and Stouffville corridors;

—the opening of the West Harbour GO station last June, in time for the Pan and Parapan Am Games; and

—announcing the extension of GO Transit service on the Lakeshore West GO line to a new GO station at Centennial Parkway in Stoney Creek.

The list goes on and on.

This is a government and this is a Premier that are committed to building the province up. I would expect that member to support our—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Just a comment for those who continue to seek, from the Speaker, advice on whether or not an answer is satisfactory: I don't have the authority, but I'm going to make it clear to you that I will deal with people who are not dealing with policy. After that, it's up to them to decide how to answer their questions. Just remember that.

New question.

FOOD SAFETY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique.

Speaker, today marks a really, really sad day. It is the first anniversary of the train derailment, the explosion and the oil spill in Gogama in my riding. The residents woke up at about 3 a.m. the morning of March 7 to a wall of flame that turned the sky orange and to the smell of burning oil.

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has been extremely quiet while the people of Gogama are seeing their real estate prices tank and are concerned about their environment, their food and the water quality. The situation is bleak. This is the biggest train derailment in the history of Ontario, yet no amount of troubled suffering seems to trigger a response from this government.

The people of Gogama want to know when the minister will commit to standing up for them and answer a simple question: Are the fish caught in the Makami River safe to eat? Yes or no?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We are very, very concerned about the folks in Gogama who have now seen not one but two train derailments with CN. This is a standard of safety we do not think is acceptable, and I and the Minister of Transportation have raised this issue with the government responsible in Canada—that's the federal government. As the member knows—I appreciate her leadership and her work on this and the sincerity of her question—we have been trying to get the federal government to do its job in this area. Under the previous government, we got very little progress.

My ministry has done something it hasn't done before: It has taken the fish and has been testing them themselves. This is not normally what we do in our labs. It's not a provincial responsibility, but we got so fed up and so frustrated with inaction that we took those actions. I'm hoping that my legislative assistant is hearing me and will rush over those results before the end of question period for me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, point of order: During question period today, in response to our leader, Patrick Brown, the Minister of the Environment claimed that the PC climate change policy would cost an additional \$160 a tonne. Would the minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. First, that is not a point of order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to rule here, please.

First, that's not a point of order. Second, any member has, at any time, the ability—not quite any time if it's question period—to correct their own record. I thank you for that.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to take a moment to re-engage the House along with my deputy Speakers. We've had this discussion and I want to redirect the idea that you're speaking to the Chair. Please, if you need some lessons or if you need some guidance, the table is always willing to do that. It does not help the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to finish.

It does not help the debate by moving into finger-pointing at individuals, telling them what they have to do. It actually escalates things. So if you're going to help in this place, direct your questions and comments to the Chair. The deputies have been advised and they're going to be working on that. If you need some help, the table has indicated that sometimes it's very difficult to speak in the third person, so do so by speaking in the first person to the Chair and design your questions and answers around that, please.

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

The House recessed from 1144 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Arriving shortly in the members' gallery will be Khushali Shah and her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Shah. Khushali will be a page in the next session. She is here to tour the House and get familiar with her surroundings. She's excited to be here in two short weeks.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Doing her homework.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PHARMACISTS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: March is Pharmacist Awareness Month. It's the perfect time to celebrate the important part pharmacists play in our health care system. This year, the Ontario Pharmacists Association is encouraging everyone to "Know Your Pharmacist."

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care professionals. The majority provide services and consultations without the need of an appointment.

This government needs to utilize the abilities of pharmacists and expand their current scope of practice.

Pharmacists are willing and able to work with this government to find cost savings in the health care system, and this can be derived through an expanded scope of practice. Pharmacists are an integral part of our health care system. We should be using their abilities, knowledge and community connection to create a collaborative, cost-efficient health care system.

For the second budget in a row, this government has announced that they may expand pharmacists' scope of practice to include travel injections. This government has been big on announcements but very slow on action.

I've been a pharmacist for over 20 years, and I'm proud of my profession. It's a pleasure to stand up here today to recognize the great work of pharmacists across the province. I encourage everyone to take a moment to celebrate and get to know your pharmacist.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We've seen this before: OSPCA was going to euthanize 100 dogs just because they had ringworm. We fought them; we won. Now they're going to euthanize 21 dogs that were the victims of a dogfighting ring, despite evidence to the contrary and adoptive families all over the place who are willing to take them in. Michael Vick's dogs, we remember, were all rehomed but one. It's because of this draconian, breed-specific legislation that this government still insists on upholding that that's coming to pass. Legal challenges abound.

It's not just dogs, Mr. Speaker; it's lions. A lion was shot by an owner of a roadside zoo. Why? Because we have absolutely no oversight over roadside zoos. This government, again, has overlooked two private members' bills—two and counting—about that very fact, and has done nothing. And Kiska the orca is still at Marineland.

From this side of the aisle, all I can say is that somebody has to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves. If that falls to us, then we're proud to uphold that in the New Democratic Party because, absolutely, there's a home and a place for every animal. Being euthanized as victims of a dogfighting ring is not the way to go.

MEMBER'S NEWSLETTER

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have the privilege of alerting my own residents in Etobicoke North. I know that my mother is watching right now as well as my youngest son, who is two and a half, so a salute to them. I alert my colleagues, residents, family members and everyone—the great supporters in Etobicoke North—of the impending excellent newsletter that is about to be mailed to 50,000 residents in my riding.

I'd like to, first of all, thank my excellent staff—Peter Murphy, Kosta Chialtas and Palvinder Singh—for their help in compiling the many facts that are embedded in this newsletter, which include highlights from the budget. Particularly of interest to my area is free university and

college tuition for families earning income annually of \$50,000 or less. This is, by the way, part and parcel of the \$90-million infrastructure project that we just authorized and celebrated at Humber College, north campus.

We have many other items. Of course, as you'll know, Speaker, as part of the \$1.2-billion expansion of the Finch LRT, we have eight—count them: eight—new stops coming to the great riding of Etobicoke North. They are Humber College, Highway 27, Westmore, Martin Grove, Albion, Stevenson, Kipling, and Islington. This government is on the move for Etobicoke North, paralleling the member himself.

There are many, many things to talk about, including a \$200-million expansion at Etobicoke General Hospital, and more.

JAMES GILLIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today, I'd like to recognize Dr. James Gillies, who was born in Teeswater in 1924 to Dr. Midford Gillies and his wife, Gladys. In fact, I use Mr. Gillies's home as a landmark to help people find the 6th of Culross so they can make their way to our farm.

But back to James: James had an immense impact in the worlds of academia, business and politics. When James was 17, he attended the University of Western Ontario, where he majored in economics until World War II broke out and he joined the RCAF as an air crewman. Afterwards, he returned to finish his degree and would continue his academic career in the United States.

In 1965, after serving as assistant dean at UCLA, he returned to Ontario to work at York University as the founding dean of the faculty of administrative studies, now the Schulich School of Business. Today, the school has grown to more than 27,000 graduates, working in more than 90 countries worldwide and is a testament to the far-reaching and lasting effect Mr. Gillies's legacy has had 50 years later.

In 1972, Mr. Gillies found himself on the campaign trail and was elected to his first term as the representative for the riding of Don Valley at the federal level. He would go on to serve a second term. He also ran for the leadership of the federal Progressive Conservative Party, but ultimately backed Joe Clark in the end.

After serving as senior policy adviser to Prime Minister Joe Clark, he returned to the world of academics and was awarded the Order of Canada for his contributions to education.

But with all his achievements, Mr. Gillies was happiest to be known as just a boy from Teeswater who had a chance to make a difference.

CAMP EAGLE NEST

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today, I rise to draw attention to Camp Eagle Nest, a First Nation non-profit organization located about two hours north of Sudbury, near the Benny Forest in my riding, in Nickel Belt. Camp Eagle Nest organizes cultural and wilderness skills training

camps for young people, mainly aboriginal youth from around the north.

The future was looking bright for Camp Eagle Nest until logging operations were started in the Benny Forest. Unknown to the local residents, the 2010-2020 Spanish Forest phase 2 forest management plan had not taken into account the residents and businesses operating in the area and the area was given up for logging. Camp Eagle Nest was simply overlooked, Speaker.

I understand that sometimes mistakes happen, but it is up to the Ministry of Natural Resources to own up to their mistake.

The area has a strong aboriginal history. Clyde McNichol, a First Nation elder from Camp Eagle Nest, has centuries-long family ties to the area. With his wife, Barbara McNichol, they are trying to protect the trees in the area of his ancestral home and current business from lumbering.

Forestry and related activities in the area have significantly infringed on Mr. McNichol's right to hunt, fish and gather. They now threaten his ability to use his camp for spiritual and cultural practices, including teaching traditional knowledge to youth.

Mr. Speaker, the government and the MNR should admit the mistake and start trying to fix it.

WESTERN MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Bob Delaney: Last summer, Dun and Bradstreet showed us in precise numbers that our western Mississauga neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville led the city of Mississauga, the province of Ontario and the country of Canada in business growth and employment growth.

Manufacturing has grown by more than 44% in northwest Mississauga, 15 percentage points higher than the rest of the province and the rest of the country. Employment in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville is up 21% since 2014; sales are up 13% in the same period. Since the bottom of the recession in 2009, the number of businesses in the riding has grown an astonishing 64%.

Homegrown aerospace manufacturing heavyweight Cyclone Manufacturing is growing at 20% per year. Multinational life sciences businesses Amgen, GSK, Contract Pharmaceuticals, Roche Canada and Patheon are bringing home high-wage, high-skilled, full-time, challenging and interesting career opportunities.

1310

Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville are now a larger population and economic region than the province of PEI or the city of Kingston.

Ontario's economic plan has worked for us in western Mississauga. Ontario's 2016-17 budget will do the same for communities all across Ontario.

MAPLE SYRUP

Mr. Monte McNaughton: In Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Sarnia-Lambton and across Ontario, the first crop of the year is being harvested. Over \$50 million of maple

syrup is produced in our province annually, and I'm proud to have many producers in my riding. These are mostly family-owned businesses that contribute not only to the local economy but also to our communities.

Pancake breakfasts in local churches and community centres, tours through sugar bushes and, of course, many maple syrup festivals all bring families and school classes out to enjoy the warm weather and some delicious maple syrup. It is a uniquely Canadian tradition.

I want to congratulate Fort Rose Maple Co., McLachlan Family Maple Syrup, Williamson Farms, the Lumsden Brothers, Eagleson Farms, Rolling Ridge, Ryan's Sweet Maple, Stanley and Clara Wortner, and Earl and Bill Elgie, all from my riding, in what is shaping up to be another great season.

Kate, Annie and I always look forward to this time of year. I encourage everyone to visit their local sugar bush or maple syrup festival to learn more about this quintessential part of Ontario's heritage.

ROYAL OTTAWA INSPIRATION AWARDS

Mr. John Fraser: On Friday night, I was pleased to attend the Royal Ottawa Inspiration Awards Gala that celebrates the exceptional individuals who have contributed to advancing the cause of mental health in our community and beyond.

At the gala, we honoured and celebrated:

—Gayle Grass, author of *Iris the Dragon*, a series of children's books aimed at starting conversations about mental health;

—psychiatrist Dr. Abigail Ortiz, who is researching mood fluctuations in patients suffering from depression and bipolar disorder, with the goal of being able to predict and prevent major manic and depressive episodes;

—men's health advocate Jean-François Claude, who has campaigned for men's mental health day as an annual lead-up to Father's Day;

—peer support worker and educator Tyrone Gamble, who has drawn on his own experience with bipolar disorder and psychosis to help others;

—Ruth Maxwell, a champion advocate and fundraiser for mental health in our community;

—and Jason Fam, a student who uses his own experience with PTSD to educate others.

We also honoured Margaret Trudeau for her efforts to break down the stigma that often surrounds mental health.

All of these individuals display courage and conviction, and I want to thank all of them for inspiring us.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Granville Anderson: I want to rise today to highlight the importance of page 71 of this year's budget. The line I most enjoy reads: "Subject to agreement with freight rail partners ... extension of GO rail service to Niagara and Bowmanville."

Now, while I'm thrilled for the members from St. Catharines and Niagara Falls for this news, I am overjoyed for the residents of Durham and all the wonderful things that it means for our wonderful community. The residents of my riding have been asking for this extension for quite some time, and I am proud that their hard work may pay off now.

I have been working tirelessly to make sure their voices are heard. The Minister of Transportation knows this well. I am glad that we are moving forward with a project that we know will bring access to growth in Courtice and Bowmanville and the Durham region in general.

I look forward to a future agreement with our freight rail partners, and I thank the residents of Durham for bringing me to Queen's Park to champion this project, which I will continue to do.

PETITIONS

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Family Responsibility Office (FRO) is outdated, ineffective and the provincial government needs to conduct a review of the entire system;

"Whereas many families are either paying too much in child support or receiving too little, due to the ineffectiveness of the system;

"Whereas families are forced to become their own caseworkers to investigate information that is required by the Family Responsibility Office before they can enforce action;

"Whereas many of the federal and provincial databases do not link up, causing misinformation which affects the money paid or owed in child support for many families;

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

"We call on the provincial government to strike an all-party supported select committee to conduct a review of the practices of the Family Responsibility Office to improve and streamline the collection of child support in the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

LEAMINGTON KETCHUP

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to introduce a petition signed by hundreds of Ontarians, entitled "Put Leamington Ketchup on the Table at Queen's Park."

Applause.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas supporting the agri-food industry is good economics, good environmental policy and social practice;

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature has a rich history of promoting Ontario products such as craft beer, Ontario wine, fruits and vegetables; and

"Whereas the ketchup being served in the dining room and cafeteria at Queen's Park is currently not an Ontario product; and

"Whereas French's ketchup proudly uses tomatoes grown in Leamington, Ontario; and

"Whereas the promotion of French's ketchup would greatly support local tomato producers, local workers and communities across Essex county;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Speaker direct the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as part of its procurement policy, to direct Dana Hospitality to exclusively serve Leamington French's ketchup."

I know there's an appetite for a petition of this sort here in the chamber. I want to thank all those who signed the petition and I send it to the Clerk's table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wish I could comment—but I'm not.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it and leave it with page Erin.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000” emergency department “visits and experiences in excess of 33,000” ED “visits annually; and

“Whereas the government-implemented Places to Grow Act forecasts massive population growth in New Tecumseth, which along with the aging population will only intensify the need for the redevelopment of the hospital; and

“Whereas all other hospital emergency facilities are more than 45 minutes away with no public transit available between those communities; and

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals; 1320

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

“That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area.”

I agree with the petition and certainly will sign it.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

“Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

“Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

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

“To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation.”

I wholeheartedly agree and will send the petition down with page Delaney.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition sent to me by some of my Mississauga dentists. It’s entitled “Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water,” and it reads as follows:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I’m very pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Suzanne.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by the people in Thunder Bay. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

“Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, to be attended to for” toileting, feeding etc.;

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province” varies greatly, is inconsistent and unregulated;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident ... to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January” of next year;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I thank the people of Thunder Bay. I will ask Jessie to bring it to the Clerk.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I agree with this, I’m glad to pass on the support, and I’ll give it to page Laura.

CAREGIVERS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are over 2.6 million caregivers to a family member, a friend or a neighbour in Ontario;

“Whereas these caregivers work hard to provide care to those that are most in need even though their efforts are often overlooked;

“Whereas one third of informal caregivers are distressed, which is twice as many as four years ago;

“Whereas without these caregivers, the health care system and patients would greatly suffer in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP Gélinas’s bill to proclaim the first Tuesday of every April as Family Caregiver Day to increase recognition and awareness of family caregivers in Ontario.”

I am going to sign my name to this petition and give it to page Tristan.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

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

“Whereas demonstrative schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special education needs; and

“Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstrative schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and hiring of teacher staff;

“Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstrative schools and other essential support services;

“Whereas the freezing of student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students behind;

“Whereas the situation could result in the closure of many specialized education programs, depriving children with special needs of their best opportunity to learn;

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

“To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstrative schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Bianca Nicole.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here from people across Durham region. Specifically, Sharon Broadbent has put her name to this. It’s a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I am pleased to affix my name to this and send it with page Julia.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Sayeem.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

1330

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

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

It’s signed by people from all over my riding: Coboconk, Lindsay, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Burnt River, Oakwood and Omemee. I present it to page Jordan.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT
(SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT), 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LE PLAN D’ACTION
CONTRE LA VIOLENCE
ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS
(EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS
ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE
ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Ms. MacCharles moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I look to the minister to lead off the debate at third reading.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: This afternoon I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Brampton–Springdale as well as the member for Kitchener Centre.

I am very pleased to rise today to say a few words about the third reading of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2016. As my contribution to this important debate, I do want to look at the desire of Ontarians to end sexual violence and harassment, and the real progress we are making toward that goal. Since that day in December 2014 when Premier Wynne called for the development of an action plan to end sexual violence and harassment, Ontario has been on a journey of discovery and progress.

Il y avait du bon travail contre la violence et le harcèlement à caractère sexuel, mais on avait besoin d’un nouveau dévouement avec le but d’éliminer la violence contre les femmes.

The Premier’s announcement succeeded in bringing the topic out of the shadows and into the broad light of day. We needed to start that conversation. When we did, it turned out that many Ontarians were unsure about what constitutes sexual violence and harassment, many survivors were unsure about their legal options and supports in the community, and many institutions in our province needed stronger policies to deal with the issue. Our government got to work and the result was our three-year, \$41-million Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, which our government launched one year ago. This plan is called It’s Never Okay.

I can sum up the Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment in a general way by saying that we will be helping to change deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours; we’ll also provide more training for professionals in many sectors to provide better support for survivors; we’ll improve supports for survivors who come forward about abuse and we’ll make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints.

Since the action plan was launched last March, the focus has shifted to implementing it’s 13 key recommendations. I am very pleased to report that we’ve made great progress and we are building great momentum. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is investing more than \$1.1 million a year for the next three years in hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres. This investment will enhance specialized counselling services and community outreach for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. The Ministry of the Attorney General is providing an additional \$1.7 million per year in funding for the province’s 42 sexual assault centres so that they can enhance services for survivors. And to underscore the importance of student

safety and learning, the government announced over \$2 million in funding to support seven public education projects across Ontario's education sectors. This funding includes five public education projects that specifically target post-secondary campuses.

One of the goals of our action plan is to engage Ontarians in the discussion about how to stop sexual violence and harassment by encouraging them to undertake initiatives that will help change attitudes and inspire behavioural change. To that end, Ontario has launched a \$2.25-million Creative Engagement Fund. Administered by the Ontario Arts Council, the Creative Engagement Fund will partner with artists in provoking dialogue and action on issues such as sexual consent, rape culture and misogyny. The projects may include all forms of artistic expression, such as performance, writing, music, photography, theatre, videos, online engagement, installation, painting, graffiti arts, murals, visual arts, and indigenous art.

We also launched a \$3-million innovation fund to test new approaches to improving supports to survivors of sexual violence and harassment. Funded projects will be announced in the spring, and they will test new or innovative approaches to support survivors of sexual violence and harassment, while building a body of evidence about what works to improve service delivery outcomes. Up to 15% of the fund is available to support indigenous organizations to develop projects.

We know that we cannot stop sexual violence and harassment overnight. We know that it will take a generational shift to end deep-rooted misogynistic attitudes and behaviours.

Speaker, students arriving on campus last fall benefited from a \$2-million action plan commitment to provide information about preventing sexual violence and harassment during their first week of classes, during orientation week, and throughout the rest of the academic year. That was important to me personally, too, because my twin children both started post-secondary education this academic year at Carleton University.

Another key part of Ontario's action plan is an updated health and physical education curriculum. This enhanced curriculum is helping students to gain a deeper understanding of gender equality, healthy relationships and consent.

When a survivor of sexual violence or harassment reaches out for help, service providers need to be ready. The government is also investing more than \$1.7 million in training for front-line workers.

Speaker, over the past year, our government announced that the Ontario network of sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres would receive an additional \$1.1 million annually to better support survivors.

A key part of our action plan was an award-winning public education campaign aimed at young people ages 18 to 29. The first phase of this multimedia, multilingual campaign was launched last year on the same day as the action plan, and it's called *It's Never Okay*. The

campaign was built around the Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp and was aimed at bystanders who witness sexual violence or harassment, urging them to come forward and help survivors. Although the campaign is aimed at youth, the universal message is that we all have a role to play in ending gender-based violence. That includes everyone here in this Legislature, Speaker. So far, the TV ads have had well over 2.5 million views on YouTube, and that's just in English. Altogether, our Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp has reached more than 85 million people, not only in Ontario, but around the world, and the ONgov Facebook posts reached over 1.9 million. The video was viewed over seven million times within the first 10 days, and the total #WhoWillYouHelp tweets have exceeded 40,000.

Research conducted in 2015 by Ipsos Reid on behalf of the government of Ontario indicates that, months later, two thirds of Ontarians surveyed recalled seeing the campaign. Furthermore, the campaign is still having an impact on attitudes and behaviours.

Speaker, phase 2 of the public education campaign was launched by the Premier at the Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment in November of last year, once again with a thought-provoking video aimed at young adults aged 18 to 29. This ad campaign aimed to help Ontarians identify sexual violence and harassment when it happens, so that they're able to step in and help. We commissioned a study by Ipsos Reid which showed that while most Ontarians believe they have an obligation to intervene if they witness sexual violence, many Ontarians are still unsure whether certain behaviours constitute sexual violence or harassment.

1340

It's apparent that we all have work to do to change long-held misconceptions and attitudes about what constitutes sexual violence and harassment. The Twitter hashtag for the new part of the public education campaign is #ItsNeverOkay, because it is never okay when one in three women will experience violence in her lifetime. It's never okay that 460,000 sexual assaults take place in Canada each and every year. It's never okay that for every 1,000 sexual assaults, only 33 are ever reported to the police, only 12 of those result in charges laid, only six are prosecuted and just three lead to a conviction.

All of us here today know that sexual violence is never okay. I'm confident that if the House votes passage of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015, Ontario will take another huge step towards stopping sexual violence in the province.

Il y a encore du travail à faire. There's more work to do, but we are much closer today than we were one year ago towards a vision of an Ontario, often articulated by our Premier, Premier Wynne, where all people can live without fear, in safety and with dignity and respect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton–Springdale.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I am pleased to rise today to speak at third reading of the proposed Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. If passed, this legis-

lation would support the right of all Ontarians to feel safe and be safe from sexual violence and harassment in their homes, campuses, workplaces and communities.

Bill 132 is the product of much deliberation and consultation. It was introduced in the House last October and underwent public hearings across the province in the month of January, and finished clause-by-clause review at the Standing Committee on Social Policy on February 29. As a result of the public hearings, several changes were made to Bill 132, which I will reference as I go along today.

The proposed legislation would amend six existing acts, fulfilling commitments made in It's Never Okay, Ontario's sexual violence and harassment action plan, as released in March 2015.

Ending sexual violence and harassment is an urgent priority for our society. One out of three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. This is not okay; it is never okay.

Our government is working hard to address sexual violence and harassment. We announced a three-year, \$41-million action plan almost one year ago. Our plan involves challenging attitudes and raising public awareness, improving supports to survivors and making workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment. Over the past 12 months, we have begun implementing our plan.

This bill is an important part of our action plan. The proposed legislation, if passed, would amend six existing acts, putting the strength of the law behind important ways and means of helping to stop sexual violence and harassment in Ontario and improving supports for survivors.

Bill 132 offers better protection in the workplace. If passed, our legislation would make workplaces safer by amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Every Ontarian deserves the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. Currently, the act requires employers to have a workplace harassment policy and program and to provide information to workers about the contents of the policy and the program. Our proposed changes to the OHSA add a definition of "workplace sexual harassment" to the act, enhance requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and add specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment. This includes the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

At committee, the OHSA schedule of Bill 132 was strengthened. The committee has passed a motion that requires an employer, in consultation with a joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative, to develop and maintain a written program to implement the required policy with respect to workplace harassment.

If passed, Bill 132 would also promote safer campuses. It is also a fact that sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of

35. Our proposed legislation would require every publicly assisted college, university and private career college in Ontario to have a policy—developed with student input and reviewed with student input at least once every three years—addressing sexual violence on campuses.

I know that at public hearings, the Standing Committee on Social Policy heard that the original drafting of Bill 132 was too restrictive. Originally, the legislation required colleges and universities to have a policy that "specifically and solely" addressed sexual violence involving students. I'm glad to hear that Bill 132 has also been amended to strike out "specifically and solely," allowing these institutions the flexibility to determine whether the policy should apply to faculty and staff and others in addition to students. It is excellent that the committee was able to address this feedback from stakeholders. This solution struck the right balance. It gives colleges and universities the flexibility to expand the scope of their sexual violence and harassment policies to include other members of the campus community, but maintains our deliberate and appropriate focus on students.

As I mentioned, incidents of sexual violence disproportionately affect young women, women of university age. It is important that they are able to point to a piece of legislation like Bill 132 and know that the government is taking steps to protect them.

If Bill 132 passes, colleges, universities and private career colleges would be required to report to the minister and/or a superintendent on instances of sexual violence, as well as on initiatives to address sexual violence and their effectiveness.

Another positive outcome of the clause-by-clause process is that Bill 132 has been amended to give the government the power to require colleges, universities and private career colleges to conduct a campus climate survey to measure the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence among college and university students. The bill was also amended at committee to require that every college or university shall provide its board of governors with an annual report on the prevalence of sexual violence on campus and the effectiveness of the institution's supports and services for students facing sexual violence and harassment.

Another important element of Bill 132 is the changes it would make, if passed, to the justice system. This bill would remove barriers for victims of sexual assault in accessing the justice system. It would remove the limitation period for all civil proceedings based on sexual assault, and in certain cases sexual misconduct or assault, so that the survivors can bring their civil claims forward whenever they choose to do so.

I know that the committee heard concerns from the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association that Bill 132, as it was originally drafted, did not make it clear enough that there would be no limitation period for civil claims against institutional defendants. I am pleased that the committee passed amendments to make it absolutely clear that there

will be no limitation period for civil claims against institutional claimants.

Speaker, time does not heal all wounds, but time does give some survivors the perspective and the distance they need to decide whether or not to confront their perpetrators in civil proceedings. Bill 132, if passed, would eliminate the two-year limitation period for applications based on sexual or domestic violence brought to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Again, we believe that time should be on the side of the survivors, not the perpetrators. Survivors would be able to seek compensation regardless of when the crime occurred.

Bill 132, if passed, would also shorten the time it takes to end a tenancy agreement for people experiencing sexual or domestic violence, to make it easier for survivors to flee abuse. We want to make sure that women in an abusive relationship are able to get away from their abuser more quickly and easily.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who brought a private member's bill forward on this subject when he was an MPP. It's an important element of Bill 132, and he has shown extraordinary leadership on this issue.

Finally, during clause-by-clause, the official opposition brought an excellent amendment to change the definition of "sexual violence" in Bill 132 so that it includes gender identity and gender expression. We are happy to support this change. It reinforces the principle that all Ontarians should be protected against violence related to gender identity or expression.

To conclude, Bill 132 offers safer workplaces, homes and campuses, and a more robust and accessible civil claims process. We need this bill as one of many measures to end sexual violence and harassment. That's our goal, and Bill 132 can help us reach it and bring us closer to the day when all Ontarians feel safe from sexual violence and harassment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm pleased to join the discussion on the issue of sexual violence and to add my voice in support of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. This is a very important act that will affect many lives in Ontario.

1350

We know that one in three women in Canada will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. You heard my colleague speaking about this. Last year, 7,600 Ontarians reported being sexually assaulted, and we know that 90% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. This is a much bigger issue than police stats tell us.

Bill 132 is a strong step forward to dealing with sexual violence and harassment. The bill is very important to me personally. Last year I had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. In the fall of 2014, there were a number of high-profile media cases that moved the issue of sexual violence and harassment to the front burner—in fact, it boiled over.

While Canadians were talking about this, here in Ontario our government took action with the select committee.

We travelled to nine Ontario communities. We heard from 147 witnesses, survivors, counsellors, those in policing, the judicial system and experts. They shared with us their experiences and their expertise. Based on their feedback, that information served to inform us as we drafted Bill 132.

One critical piece to addressing sexual assault is the role that power plays. The feeling of losing power during and after an assault: This is critically important to addressing the issue of sexual assault. The bill addresses the power dynamics of the workplace by amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include important definitions and increase employer obligations in addressing sexual assault. This support is critical to workers who face harassment by their supervisors or their employer, who feel that there's nowhere to turn or fear that by speaking out, they might lose their job. This bill is for those people because it's never okay.

In my early working career as a young reporter in a newsroom that had very few women—it was mainly full of men—I faced harassment, as did the few women who were in that newsroom, on a daily basis. We had to listen to language that was rude and crude and inappropriate. I remember that in one of the edit suites there was a poster of a nude woman. As strange as this may seem, if you wanted to keep your job you had to put up and shut up.

While our select committee was doing its work last year, I heard from so many women in male-dominated fields like policing, the armed forces, and in factories who reached out to me to share similar stories of what they were facing. Bill 132 will now hold employers responsible for ensuring that all workplaces in Ontario are harassment-free.

The bill addresses the power dynamics in housing by amending the Residential Tenancies Act. Those people who are living in situations where they are subjected to sexual assault in their own homes will be granted greater agency to get out of those homes and away from those who are inflicting violence upon them. An estimated 80% of all sexual assaults happen in the home.

This bill also addresses the power issues of students who are out on their own, often for the first time, not knowing where to turn when they are assaulted at their institution, by ensuring that those schools have policies in place to address issues of sexual assault on campuses. These individuals need to see a clear message from their institutions that it's never okay.

Finally, this bill seeks to improve the power relations with survivors and our legal system by eliminating the limitation period for survivors to report their assaults. This gives survivors the time that they need to come to terms with what has happened to them and to seek justice accordingly. Whether the assault happened last week or last month or last year or last decade, it's never okay.

I'm proud to see that our government is taking action to address sexual violence and to see support from members from all parties on this. Everyone can see the

importance of this bill—that it's for all Ontarians—and to see support for the fulfillment of our commitment under our *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*. As an Ontario legislator and as the mother of a 22-year-old young woman, I will be supporting Bill 132, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to join in the debate on Bill 132, the *Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment)*, 2015.

I'm going to also share my time with some of my colleagues: the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Which may come back in a second rotation around.

Now that the housekeeping is out of the way, I do want to say from the outset, as we said when it was in second reading debate in the Legislature, that this is an important piece of legislation that we will be supporting. It's very much a long-overdue topic that needs to be addressed legislatively. Bill 132 is a positive step. For far too long, the stigma has made victims and survivors feel embarrassed or ashamed and, worse, guilty.

Some of my colleagues who were with the select committee have spoken and have mentioned the recommendations we have made. That's even another component to address sexual violence and harassment. Some of the recommendations we made from the select committee are in Bill 132, and we appreciate that. Bill 132 does reflect the Premier's commitment to an action plan, and this is the formalized legislation that was brought in to do this. I bring that out because we know there's more that needs to be done and this is certainly a start and a positive step forward. We certainly want an Ontario, and we all need to work together for that Ontario, where we can live free from violence or harassment.

The bill affects six important pieces of legislation that affect our society. We wanted to make some amendments, and some were agreed to by the government, so I do appreciate that and will address that a little later.

We have an article, actually, that came out today, by the *Canadian Press*, highlighting the crisis that is happening across our country. Many Canadian universities still lack stand-alone sexual assault policies, which are crucial in responding to incidents and supporting victims. Only two dozen of more than 100 universities and colleges have stand-alone policies. Institutions like McGill and the University of British Columbia only began to develop policies after high-profile allegations.

I think we can go back to—I'm losing track of time, but when the Ghomeshi scandal broke and the allegations came, we pushed for the select committee to be brought forward, and it was represented by all parties in the

Legislature. We travelled the province, as my colleague has said, and made recommendations. That also pushed the Premier to bring forward some legislation like we see here today. I'm very pleased that a large part of the bill is about colleges and universities and certainly their policies in relation to sexual violence and harassment. We had made some recommendations to effect that.

Nineteen groups actually expressed concern that—this is from our public hearings, where we went to London and Peterborough, and in Toronto. Nineteen groups expressed concern that the bill addressed only sexual violence involving students, leaving out faculty, staff and others on campus who may find themselves seeking support. It was unfortunate, we felt, and we agreed with those stakeholders or those presenters that it should be amended to include not only students but faculty and staff, and should involve local sexual assault centres in the development and implementation of campus sexual violence policy.

1400

As we heard, a campus is not just for students. It's broad; oftentimes the lines are blurred between staff, faculty and students. I know that members of the third party also brought forward some amendments which I'm sure they'll speak to, but along similar lines: an increased campus community, not just for students. The government chose just to have the definition for students, but I'm sure there'll be other opportunities to make better legislation to protect against sexual violence and harassment, both for men and for women.

The fact that society is plagued still with such misogynistic attitudes and really, to some degree, the prevalent rape culture that we have—we have to do more.

In this bill, although we were disappointed that the amendments didn't make any changes to include the bigger campus community—some of the groups that made presentations were Colleges Ontario, the Canadian Federation of Students, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, WomenatthecentrE, and several of our universities, to make those amendments that were brought forward.

We did get an amendment brought forward when we heard in Peterborough a request to change the definition of sexual violence to actually include “gender identity or gender expression” in the definition, after “targeting a person's sexuality.” I was very thankful that the government agreed with that presentation that came forward.

We also want to bring forward that I had made many amendments about the definitions in respect to human trafficking, trying to get it included. The bill is very limited in the sections that affect—I understand; I just want to say this little piece—the compensation for victims. That's one of the pieces of legislation that is being affected: compensation for victims.

I did bring many motions forward to have a definition of human trafficking included in compensation for victims. That wasn't accepted by the government. I know that they are looking at bringing forward some strategy against human trafficking in June, so I'll wait to see that.

I did have a private member's bill a couple of weeks ago that would allow for compensation for victims of human trafficking as well as the ability to sue. I won't get into all the details—but again, highlighting the fact that human trafficking has to be addressed in several pieces of legislation that we have. It's a crisis in Ontario. It's a huge exploitation of children and adults—predominantly women, but I do include men; I'm not excluding that at all. My private member's bill was called Saving the Girl Next Door because, in reality, over 90% of the victims and survivors of human trafficking are Canadian-born, and that has to be addressed by the government.

I will continue to push that issue, for recognition of human trafficking in many pieces of provincial legislation, and I wait to see what the government brings through in June.

Certainly the pieces of legislation that were passed by all parties on human trafficking in the Legislature—my motion for a provincial networking task force, with police, crown attorneys and victims' services, the government could do any time. Also, the amendments I made a couple of weeks ago to protect a victim further could be done at any time by the government, so I encourage them to do that.

I do have a couple of my colleagues who are going to speak about what changes they'd like to see with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I know that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had brought forward a bill that would keep victims of violent crime safe by compelling offenders to sign their certificates before being released back into the community. Electronic monitoring would also be required for offenders convicted of sexual or domestic assault.

I know that Senator Runciman, who chairs the legal and constitutional affairs committee, is currently studying the issue of court delays, and that provincial jails are backlogged with offenders awaiting a bail decision or trial. Electronic monitoring can help provide public safety and relieve the congestion in our court system and save significant tax dollars, but it is also another protection for the victims of domestic violence that we have in the province. That predominantly—I know my colleagues are going to follow up with this—affects women in rural Ontario because of geography, poor cellphone service, the minimum number of probation officers that they have to watch these violent offenders. We have to do better, and those suggestions that were brought forward by my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke actually need to be enforced now, and the government can make those changes right now.

I know that Bill 132, as I said, is a great step forward. We're all supporting it. We didn't get some of our amendments through that I mentioned—but there's still much that needs to be done in this province of Ontario to protect women and men from sexual violence and harassment.

I'm going to share my time with my other colleagues; first, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join this third reading debate on Bill 132 this afternoon. I want to commend my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I was allowed to join her on the committee that did the committee hearings after second reading on this bill. I also want to commend the members of the government side and the member for London West.

I was really, really impressed with the work of the committee, and I want to particularly say about my colleague—not that I've got any problem with the government members, but I was sitting on the other side with my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for London West, and I really appreciate the passion with which these two members dealt with this issue. It's a challenging, difficult issue, and I really appreciate the passion. If we're going to get rid of these kinds of heinous crimes and acts in our society, it's going to take some passion, because it's been here for generations and we've made little progress over the years—little progress.

Forty years ago, we were talking about sexual harassment and sexual violence—maybe not to the extent we are today, but we are still talking about it today, and you have to ask yourself, why has it taken so long to change the cultural attitudes that exist in our society when it comes to the treatment of women? What has been the problem? Is it the messaging or is it us? Men have to take a lot of the responsibility; there's no question about it. To a large degree, we have failed in our role as leaders as well.

The culture has to change, and it has to start with the men; there's no question. The boys of today have to think differently than the old boys of yesterday—I'm not suggesting everyone. Please, it's not universal; it's not everyone. But for anyone who does think that way, it's got to change, and the only way we can rid our society of those kinds of wrongs is to start with our kids.

I'm so fortunate. My wife and I talk about how fortunate we are that our two daughters are married to wonderful men who treat them with such utmost respect. We're so impressed every time we see them with how their husbands treat them. Actually, it makes me look bad sometimes, to be honest with you—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Because we also hear from them about friends of theirs who are in relationships that are not so good, where the female partner of that relationship has on more than one occasion considered leaving the relationship because they do feel they are being abused within that relationship—and in some they have.

There's so much that we have accomplished but so much more to do. But this committee and this bill—and I thank the government for bringing it forward. This bill will help. Every little bit will help to change that attitude that is so damaging to our society and so damaging to even future generations if we don't change that attitude.

I want to thank my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for the tremendous focus that she’s had on the human trafficking issue. I have to be honest with you, Speaker: When she first started to talk to me about human trafficking, I certainly did not understand how pervasive and local it really was. I really had the picture, like probably a lot of people out there, that this was something where people from foreign lands were brought in and treated as sex slaves here in Canada or somewhere else in the western world. Then you start to delve into it and, through the work that Ms. Scott has done, you find out that—is it 90%?

1410

Ms. Laurie Scott: Over 90%.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —over 90% of these young girls—and in most cases it’s young girls. I cede to the minister who has also pointed out that young boys can be victims of trafficking—absolutely, no question about it. It is wrong no matter who it is and it needs to be stopped. But for the most part, it is young girls.

To have been able to be educated myself, and through my colleague, about how local and how pervasive this is, is actually helpful. Then you know that we really need to take a look inside. We had a short time during the debate when my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton talked about the people who run these hotels and how they should be ashamed and they should be watching. He’s right, that if somebody is a frequent flyer, as they say, if it’s an adult, then we know they’re up to something wrong; and if it is a child, then we know that if they’re a frequent visitor to that hotel, they’re being abused. We know that, and that should send up any kind of a signal for those people to stop that behaviour.

But even more important, anybody—anybody—out there who believes that sexual activity with a child is right is wrong. That is something that has to be pointed out, too. It is not just the pimps of these poor victims, but it is anybody who would actually take advantage of them, and that has to be stopped. That has to be stopped.

I brought out a private member’s bill that dealt with a different part of this equation. That is about when people are released from prison and how we might protect their victims so they wouldn’t be re-victimized in acts of serious violence. This was brought on, of course, by the murders of three women in my county on September 22 of last year. Electronic monitoring, we believe, would have—could have—prevented those deaths. As I say, and I don’t want to monopolize the clock—have I got a little more time?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can’t say absolutely, but those crimes may have been prevented if that person, when he was released from prison, had an electronic monitoring system, so the police could have known if he was moving in the direction where he was prohibited from being, where those women lived. If they could have got the jump on him, maybe, just maybe—I’m not a fortune teller; I’m not a soothsayer—those crimes could have been prevented. I do know one thing: It would afford better protection than we have today.

That’s what we always have to look for: Is there something here that we can be doing better on? I believe there’s a lot of things we can be doing better on. This bill is a significant step forward. There are so many more things we can improve on and, hopefully, in my lifetime we will reach a time when there is no such thing as the abuse of a woman because of her sex, there is no abuse for a spouse, there is no abuse of a child, and we live in a world where everybody—everybody—is treated with the respect they absolutely deserve. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Lanark–Frontenac—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m sorry? I thought that he—

Ms. Laurie Scott: There’s a change-up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. There’s a change-up.

The member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your indulgence. And thank you to my colleague from Lanark, Frontenac and Addington for giving me a few minutes.

I participated in the clause-by-clause and some of the public hearings on Bill 132 and, Speaker, I have to say that I was very disappointed that what we were hearing in clause-by-clause has not been translated into what I think could have been some very positive amendments with Bill 132.

So I’ll focus on that because, quite frankly, it touched on many of the amendments that both the NDP critic and, of course, Laurie Scott from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes tried to bring forward through amendments and were shut down very consistently. And that was the need to ensure that not only the students were part of the discussion, but that we had to bring in the experts who were already working in the field and in the community. It really spoke to me that every time we tried to say, “Absolutely, make sure that the students are engaged and part of the process, but also tap into those experts in the field,” we were shut down.

Finally—I guess probably out of frustration—I read into the record, and I want to do it here today as well, all of the individual presentations that suggested that we needed to make sure that consultation was wide and inclusive. The stakeholders that were calling for campus community inclusion included, and I will repeat for the record:

- Advocates for a Student Culture of Consent;
- Canadian Federation of Students;
- Colleges Ontario;
- Council of Ontario Universities;
- Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children;
- Lakehead University;
- METRAC;
- members of the Carleton community;
- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Sexual Assault Network;

—Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres;
 —Society of Graduate Students at Western University;
 —Trent Central Student Association and Canadian Federation of Students—Ontario;
 —Trent University;
 —University of Guelph;
 —University Students' Council, Western University;
 —Western University;
 —WomenatthecentrE;
 —Wilfrid Laurier University; and
 —York University.

Speaker, I've been at Queen's Park long enough to understand that there are many debates that we hive off and they become very political, but when there are 19 groups that are suggesting that we need to ensure that there is wider consultation and participation and, quite frankly, to tap into their expertise, I find it quite disappointing that when the Liberal members of the committee had that opportunity through Bill 132 amendments—because, let's face it, that is actually what the public consultation and the clause-by-clause is all about, right? You go out and you hear from the experts. You hear from people impacted by the proposed legislation. Then you react and respond. I always thought the idea was, in clause-by-clause, we were listening to those deputations and then translating them into rational and reasonable amendments to the legislation.

I will suggest to you that the fact that the NDP member of the committee as well as the PC members were bringing forward the same type of amendment suggests to me that we actually got it and we were listening to the deputations and we saw an opportunity to improve the legislation. But by the end of clause-by-clause for Bill 132, I will admit I was getting a little frustrated. Perhaps I was getting a little frustrated to the point that I took an opportunity, and I suggested that the title of the legislation should be changed because what in fact this legislation was doing was, it was improving some things, but it was improving it to the detriment of other individuals.

I actually suggested that the title of the bill be amended slightly and, instead of saying "sexual violence and harassment action plan" it should be "for students," because if you are a visitor to a college or university campus, if you are a non-paid staff, if you are a staff person, there are no changes in Bill 132 that are going to protect you. I will say it again—I said it in committee—that I think that that is such a missed opportunity. We could have done better. I suggested in committee that in fact I believe and my prediction is that you will see a human rights case come forward because we have done one very narrowcast, focused thing with Bill 132. We could have widened it. We could have made it better. The government committee members chose not to go that route.

I don't like making predictions, but my prediction is that you are going to see a human rights case come forward because we didn't expand the breadth of this piece of legislation. I wanted to focus on that and I really

wanted to bring that up in the broader discussion that we're having here today because both the NDP and the PC critic—we listened. We heard that in deputation, and we heard it, as I said—I'll repeat again: 19 different, separate individuals came forward, representing organizations, saying, "Good bill, good start. Don't forget us." We didn't do that, and I think it's a terrible shame.

1420

With that, I'll thank my colleague and PC critic the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and hope that down the road, we can see a little more give on the government side, to ensure that everyone is protected, not just a narrow cast of students.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It has been a pleasure listening to my colleagues from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Dufferin–Caledon.

I had the opportunity to be on this select committee, on behalf of my party. It was a very difficult committee to be on, hearing those personal stories of tragedy and fear, and the failings that so many of these women experienced. It was hard to understand what they actually did experience, even though they gave compelling testimony.

My colleague from Dufferin–Caledon said that we can do better on this bill. I'm going to say to you and everyone that we must do better than what is in this bill at the present time.

As the representative for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, my job is to represent my constituents. One of the most effective ways that I've learned how to represent my constituents is to share my stories.

Domestic violence is often one of those things that we believe only happens to someone else. It happens to everyone. It has happened to me and my family. Last October, I missed a week of being in this House. Myself, my grandchildren, my daughter, my wife—we all were in hiding.

The night of October 4, we experienced a very violent home invasion. The partner of my daughter had assaulted her a few days previously, and came to our house and attempted to burn our house down, and came armed. It was a violent episode.

Thankfully, my daughter had a place to come back to—the family home—after she experienced the assault on her and her children. I provided safety as best I could.

There were restraining orders in place. Her partner had been charged and had conditions placed, but conditions are only a piece of paper, Speaker. They are not very effective.

As a result of that night, he was eventually apprehended and faced 16 charges. Four of them were for a maximum of life in prison—plus various other charges. He was convicted on December 19 just past. He was sentenced to a year for those 16 charges by way of a joint submission by both the crown and the defence.

Tomorrow, he has his parole hearing. We've met with all the agencies, all the police enforcement and the crown, to find ways to help my family—my daughter, my grandchildren, my wife—not to live in fear. But if he's not out tomorrow, he'll be out not long from now.

There are many failings in our system—many, many failings—and this bill does little to address those failings. I've had significant discussions with the crown, with the OPP, with victim services and with the judges in my area. I want to share with the House some of my experiences and what I see that could be done and must be done in order to help families who are living in fear and, hopefully, to prevent victims in the first place, but certainly, to prevent reoffending from occurring, or to limit it as much as possible.

It was interesting, Speaker: This person who was convicted—by way of a joint submission, they agreed that his term would be best served in a treatment facility for addictions and mental health. So they took that into consideration for his year term. However, when he was convicted and sentenced, there was no room at the treatment facilities. So instead, he was just sent to another facility. But the point here is that the crown expected him to go to a treatment facility and had no way of knowing whether there was room at the treatment facility or not.

There is no feedback mechanism from our corrections services to the crown or the courts. There has to be a feedback mechanism so that the crown is not sentencing people to things that we don't have. That's number one. It needs to be done. It's just absolutely—what's the right word? To be sentencing somebody with an expectation, but the expectation cannot be fulfilled, and there is no mechanism to know if it could be fulfilled—but it goes on.

One of the real oddities of my experience was that the court gave very specific direction and orders but also very broad latitude to probation and parole that they could compel this individual on probation to any sort of treatment or program. Talking with probation afterwards, they told me very specifically that, unless it is detailed in the court order, they will not do anything else—things such as random drug testing. Although this person has a three-year ban on alcohol and drug use, the probation will not do any drug testing unless it's explicitly detailed in the court order. This broad latitude is not sufficient for probation. Speaking with the crown last Friday, she informed probation that, if they don't do it, she'll go back to court and get a court order for drug testing.

The expectation of the crown and our courts and the realization in probation and corrections are miles apart. They don't know what each is doing. There is, again, no mechanism for the courts or the crown to understand what's happening in probation unless there is a significant breach of probation. One is doing it completely differently than what the other is expecting.

During that meeting last week, the crown asked for the court documents from probation—we were in the same meeting together—and probation refused to give the court documents to the crown attorney, even though it's a

public document. She said, "I don't have the authority to give you that." Anyway, the crown immediately got a copy and read it out loud to everyone. They have the authority to do that, but probation will not do it.

1430

As for the case of electronic monitoring, that's just a total myth. We have no live electronic monitoring program available in this province. It doesn't exist. The best we have is a passive electronic monitoring where we know when the person comes home and when he leaves. That's it. What sort of monitoring is that? It's easily removed. Nobody is talking about this. This bill doesn't address this. We actually don't have a program for monitoring. This is absolute craziness, in my view. Again, the courts are expecting one thing; probation or corrections are doing something entirely different.

We need to start having people in the administration of our justice actually communicating with one another. I know we can't legislate that—well, I guess we could. We could. I don't think it requires legislation, but it does take the ministers to get together and to find out what the failings are and then deal with them. It's not just money. What I'm talking about is not money. This is talking about effective management, effective administration of our justice system.

Another thing: I became quite surprised when I gave my statement and when my family gave their statements to the crown and to the police. Not once were we ever called back and asked for clarification or asked for details. I'm assuming that those statements were read and understood, but I have no way of knowing. There was never any interchange; there was never any discussion. I think I'm a pretty good writer, but I don't think I'm perfect. I know I'm not perfect. When I described the events of that night, I was shocked that nobody called me up and asked for further explanation or clarification. It wasn't just myself; it was also my wife and my daughter.

We need to do better. We need to do much better. That became very clear to me during the Jian Ghomeshi trial, where we saw that the crown did not seek clarification from the statements. We don't know what will happen in that case, but it was clear it was not a one-off. It wasn't just me that they didn't ask for clarification from; they just don't.

Also, the police are completely excluded from having any influence in the plea negotiations; they are not sought out for advice on what is the danger that this individual poses to society. Unless the judge orders and has cause to order a pre-sentence report, the police are excluded from any involvement in our judiciary, any involvement in the negotiations or the sentencing or the conditions afterwards.

Those are just a few of my experiences.

This bill, although we all appreciate the government taking this issue seriously and bringing it to the Legislature, has to do better. It has to do much, much better. I'm glad and proud that I'm in a caucus that understands how serious this is. We have colleagues spending significant efforts advancing laudable goals to end violence against women, to end families living in fear.

Member from Kawartha, this is amplified in rural Ontario. Our geography makes it so, right? That night, I don't know how long it took the OPP to get to my place. It felt like eternity as I fought off an armed individual who was pouring diesel into my house, and smashing doors and windows. However, I know geography played a role in that length of time.

We have to look at how we can help all families, all women, but it can't be a blanket approach. We need to understand that rural perspective as well. I'm looking forward for this bill to come to committee. I am looking forward and I'm going to expect that we make it better—much better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to start off by thanking the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for his courage in sharing that personal experience and the insights that that provides into the debate that we're having here today.

I'm very pleased to rise as the NDP critic for women's issues to participate in this third reading debate on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. As we've heard from those who have spoken on the bill, this is legislation that we all support. It is welcomed by many stakeholder organizations across the province, many individuals who have experienced sexual violence, workers who have been subject to sexual harassment in the workplace and the agencies who support those individuals. The bill received strong support when it was first announced by the government last November, and virtually everyone who appeared before the Standing Committee on Social Policy during the hearings on the bill in January or who wrote to the committee spoke in favour of the bill.

On behalf of my caucus, I want to say that absolutely we support Bill 132. We supported it at second reading and we continue to support it today. That does not mean, however, that we view the bill before us today as perfect. During the hearings of the social policy committee, we heard from stakeholders about the many opportunities that were available to improve and strengthen the bill. I'm going to focus on some of those suggestions that were made, that were reflected in the amendments that I brought forward, but in particular I'm going to be talking about schedules 3 and 4, as those are the schedules related to post-secondary campuses and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Speaker, we were very disappointed that not a single amendment that was proposed by the NDP caucus to those two schedules—or to any of the other schedules, in fact—was supported by the government. I brought forward 34 amendments, amendments that were developed in direct response to the feedback that was provided to the committee, and not a single one was approved by the government members. I do want to recognize and thank the PC members who sat on the committee with me, who recognized the merit of many of the amendments that I

proposed because they spoke to the issues that we heard about at the committee. Certainly, they understood the need to honour the time that people took to prepare presentations to the committee and the expertise that they brought to the deliberations.

Bill 132 implements most of the legislative commitments that were outlined in the government's It's Never Okay action plan, which was announced almost exactly one year ago, to address sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, on post-secondary campuses, in rental housing and in civil court proceedings.

1440

As I said, the bill has six schedules, although I will be focusing mostly on schedules 3 and 4, which were also the schedules that the majority of the deputants who appeared before the social committee talked about.

I do want to briefly touch on schedules 1 and 2, however. Those schedules of the bill deal with the civil claims process. Schedule 1 removes the two-year limitation period from the Limitations Act to allow survivors of sexual violence and domestic violence to apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board at any time.

Schedule 2 allows survivors of sexual assault to pursue civil proceedings at any time. Certainly, Speaker, there was no controversy about these schedules. In fact, they allow Ontario to catch up with several other provinces that have already acted to put these changes in place. BC, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have all already removed limitation periods for sexual assault. The two-year limitation has unquestionably been a legal barrier that has prevented sexual abuse survivors from going through the court process to seek compensation and acknowledgment of the harm that was perpetrated against them.

One of the issues that I raised when I spoke to this bill at second reading is that the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board compensation awards and any monetary damages awarded by the courts can be factored into the calculation of assets for Ontario Works, ODSP and rent-gear-to-income housing. Abuse victims who are in receipt of ODSP or Ontario Works and receive civil damages are actually required to reimburse the government for the amounts they receive if they want to remain eligible for assistance.

I want to read a letter from a lawyer whose client is in exactly this situation.

"My client is a poor and disabled Ontario woman in her fifties who, while in the care of a children's aid society, was sexually assaulted and impregnated by her foster father. In 1979, my client gave birth to the child resulting from her foster father's sexual abuse. My client was only 15 years old at the time. She decided to keep and raise the child on her own and without support.

"In 2010, my client reported her former foster father's sexual abuse to the police. DNA evidence proved he was her child's biological father. Thereafter, the former foster father was convicted and sentenced.

"I subsequently assisted my client to file a criminal injuries compensation application. I also commenced a

civil lawsuit on her behalf against the involved children's aid society and the former foster father.

"Recently, I received a letter on Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Community and Social Services, and Ministry of Children and Youth Services letterhead from the legal services branch, advising me that my client is subject to a claim for reimbursement of over \$125,000, this being what she has received as ODSP income support payments since the early 2000s, and that because she continues to receive income support payments, I can expect the ministries' claim to increase."

Speaker, what this means is that survivors of sexual abuse who pursue civil claims and are on ODSP or Ontario Works face having their benefits either reduced or possibly being disqualified from continuing to receive benefits in the future. What we're doing is forcing low-income survivors of sexual violence, and also survivors living with disabilities, to choose between pursuing their perpetrator through the civil courts or jeopardizing their access to benefits. This is an issue that the select committee heard about, and we heard it again during public input on Bill 132.

We know the statistics about the increased risk of sexual violence for marginalized groups, for racialized women, for indigenous women, for sexual minority women, for women living in poverty. We know that four out of five women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted at some point during their lifetime.

This is an issue that the government can address immediately through regulatory changes to the ODSP and Ontario Works acts. I would encourage the minister to look at this and move this through quickly.

I mentioned the 34 amendments that I proposed that were not supported by the government. One of them was an amendment that was suggested by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, OCASI, who pointed out that many immigrants and newcomers are not aware of their legal rights. So clarifying that Bill 132 applies regardless of immigration status would certainly be helpful, in their view, and, in my view, it would be helpful to encourage immigrant and newcomer women to come forward.

Representatives of victim services organizations who spoke to the committee—specifically with relation to schedules 1 and 2, because they will cause more cases of historic abuse to come forward—raised concerns about ongoing funding for victim services organizations. The survivors of historic abuse require much more intensive counselling and more comprehensive kinds of supports. So there will be a need for the government to ensure that the funding is there, to enable those services to provide the supports that survivors need.

I want to just remind members that schedules 1 and 2, certainly, are important in creating a more responsive justice system. I mentioned the lawyer who had written that letter to us. However, it's important to always keep in mind that very, very few survivors ever report to anyone what happened to them, much less to the police or the courts. It is unlikely that women will be lining up

any time soon to file civil suits as a result of these changes.

There are many other changes that will be necessary to ensure access to justice for survivors of sexual assault, and I want draw the government's attention to recommendations 10 through 15 of the final report of the select committee, which set out some important additional changes that could be and should be implemented to improve the responsiveness of the court process.

Now, schedules 3 and 5 of Bill 132 require that all post-secondary institutions have stand-alone sexual violence policies to protect students from sexual violence on campus. Schedule 3 deals with Ontario colleges and universities, and schedule 5 deals with private career colleges. These schedules offer a definition of "sexual violence" as "any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality ... whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation."

One of the government members did mention that that definition was amended to reflect the input that we heard from Egale to acknowledge that individuals can be targeted for sexual violence because of their gender identity or gender expression. I certainly am very pleased to see that amendment reflected in the bill before us today.

However, there were many other suggestions for changes and improvements to the definition of "sexual violence," in particular some kind of explicit statement that sexual violence can occur online, through social media—it can take cyber forms—and also to recognize the intersection between sexual violence and domestic violence, the reality that sexual violence often occurs within the context of a domestic or intimate partner relationship.

Certainly we know that in the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, that recommendation was made as long ago as 2010, that there be public education campaigns on post-secondary campuses to educate students about dealing with intimate and dating violence. This would have been a great opportunity to include that in the sexual violence policies that campuses have to have, but the government has chosen not to do that.

The other major amendments that I proposed that were not supported are around the application of the sexual violence policy. Seventeen organizations, by my count, came to the committee and emphasized the importance of having a policy that was broader than just the students who were enrolled at a particular institution. They talked about applying the policy to faculty and staff, students who might be visiting from other institutions, visitors to the campus and volunteers on the campus.

1450

Of course, I had proposed an amendment, as did the PCs, to expand the policy to all members of the campus community. The government continued to insist that the policy should focus only on students. Meanwhile, we

were hearing from students at the committee that the policy would make them vulnerable if it did not have broader application. We heard, for example, that students who are elected to student government are not technically students enrolled at the institution; they are, in fact, employees of the institution. So the sexual violence policy would not apply to them.

Another concern that was raised repeatedly was the need to clearly distinguish between formal reports to an institution and confidential disclosures of an experience of sexual violence. With formal reports, there is an expectation that action will be taken. With confidential disclosures, the survivor's only purpose in disclosing may be simply to share that this happened to them. They may not expect any kind of official follow-up or documentation of the disclosure. We heard, over and over again, that the legislation, as currently written, does not provide room for these kinds of confidential, undocumented disclosures. It assumes that all incidents and complaints of sexual violence are going to be tracked and recorded by the institution, regardless of the wishes of those who had the experience of sexual violence on campus when they disclose. We have to respect the rights of survivors to determine how they want their experience to be addressed by the institution.

Another amendment: The institutions, currently, are expected to consider student input in the development of their policies and to review their policy at least once every three years. In response to input that we received at the committee, I proposed amendments to ensure that input was not only considered but incorporated in the development of the policy, that it be solicited broadly from students, survivors—from a diversity of student voices across the campus community—and that community organizations, like sexual assault centres, rape crisis centres and domestic violence/sexual assault treatment centres, should also be consulted in the development of the policy, because there is a good likelihood that students who experience an incident of sexual violence on campus may not access any campus resources at all; they may go directly to the community. So there is knowledge that exists within the community and there is expertise in the community that should be tapped into in the development of these stand-alone post-secondary campus policies.

I also proposed a two-year review cycle rather than a three-year cycle in direct response to the input from student organizations, another amendment that failed.

The other big piece of the input we received on Bill 132, on schedule 3 and, to a lesser extent, schedule 5, was about the collecting of data by means of an anonymous climate survey rather than as counts across many different campus departments and divisions about who accessed what. We heard from the institutions that there may be logistical barriers to collecting this data, because students could potentially go to any number of people or units on campus to disclose experiences of sexual violence: They could go to a residence don; they could go to campus security; they could go to student

services. So consolidating all of this information from so many different sources is going to be challenging and onerous for institutions.

But again, as I mentioned earlier, the real issue is the power that this takes away from survivors, who lose the right to determine what is done with their experience. As I mentioned, they may only wish to disclose confidentially. They may not want the details of their experience recorded for statistical purposes.

My amendment required the minister to administer an anonymous survey every two years to collect data on perceptions of safety on campus, experiences with sexual violence that perhaps a student never disclosed to anyone, experiences accessing sexual violence services that are available on campus or exist in the community and then, of course, experiences reporting incidents and complaints. My amendment also clarified that the only data that will be required from institutions is with regard to formal reports to the institution. So, taken together, these amendments, the client survey plus only requiring data on formal reports, would provide a much richer, much fuller picture about what is happening on post-secondary campuses.

Instead of approving my motion, the government passed its own motion, stating that the minister may conduct a survey relating to the effectiveness of the college or university sexual violence policy. At committee, I expressed serious concerns about the wording of the government's motion, its use of the noncommittal "may," its lack of time frame for the implementation of the survey and its silence on whether the survey is to be a single snapshot in time or conducted on a regular basis, because the whole point of doing a survey is to create a baseline so that the institution can measure itself against the baseline and understand how it's doing with its sexual violence policy and whether students actually feel safer on campus and feel supported by their institutions.

I am disappointed with the wording in the current bill, but I will be monitoring closely to ensure that the government follows up on the implementation of a climate survey—not just once but on an ongoing basis.

I now want to turn to schedule 4 of the bill, which amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to specify that workplace harassment includes workplace sexual harassment and also adds a new definition of "workplace sexual harassment" to the act. These amendments address some of the flaws in Bill 168, which amended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to add explicit reference to workplace violence following the murders of Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont.

Bill 168 clarified that workplace harassment is a hazard covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it did not explicitly require employers to take reasonable precautions to prevent harassment and investigate complaints. Basically, all it said is that employers had to have a policy and a program in place. There were no legislative provisions to monitor the quality of the policy and no authority to order employers to investigate complaints and carry through on the results of the investigation.

Bill 132 addresses this very real gap and does require employers to investigate and address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. It also sets out a process that employers are supposed to use to deal with incidents or complaints of workplace harassment, including—and I appreciate that this was written into the bill—when the employer or the supervisor is the harasser.

Employers are required to investigate and address incidents and complaints of sexual harassment. They are required to inform the parties in writing of the results of their investigation and the actions they took subsequently. They are also required to review their workplace harassment program at least once a year to ensure that it adequately implements the policy that is in place. There are also some confidentiality provisions to ensure the protection of personally identifying information and requirements as to how the worker and the alleged harasser are informed of the results of the investigation and corrective actions that may have been taken.

One of the most welcome and important provisions of schedule 4 is that it includes the authority for occupational health and safety inspectors to order employers to conduct investigations and retain an impartial third party at their own expense. This addresses that flaw that was present in Bill 168 that did not have that power to order an investigation.

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I want to address some of the missed opportunities that we identified in schedule 4, but I want to begin by highlighting the lack of consistency across definitions of “sexual harassment” and “sexual violence.” This is problematic across all the statutes that are in place in the province, if we are to be able to effectively address sexual violence and harassment.

So there are six schedules included in the bill that we have before us today, and all of them define “sexual violence” somewhat differently: Schedules 3 and 5 define “sexual violence” as including sexual harassment but excluding intimate partner violence or domestic violence; schedule 4 makes a complete separation of sexual violence from sexual harassment; schedules 1, 2 and 6 reference both sexual violence and domestic violence, acknowledging the reality that these forms of violence frequently co-occur.

As a result, even within this single bill, Bill 132, what we have is almost a two-tiered system of legal rights, depending on which statute applies to the sexual violence that was committed.

One of the amendments that I brought forward in response to the input that was provided at committee was to try to introduce a little bit more consistency into these definitions and to acknowledge that harassment can be physical or psychological in nature. Curiously, although schedules 3 and 5 of the bill acknowledge that sexual violence can be physical or psychological in nature, this proposed change to the definition of “sexual violence” in schedule 5 was rejected by the government members.

I also proposed an amendment to recognize reprisal or threat of reprisal for refusing a sexual solicitation or

advance as sexual harassment. Of course, this is an important nuance that was brought to the committee during public input, but it too was voted down.

Other amendments that I proposed were, again, reflective of the input that was received and also consistent with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment’s final report. I brought an amendment to the committee to require mandatory training for all managers, supervisors and workers on the impact of sexual violence and domestic violence in the workplace and how to respond to disclosures of sexual violence and domestic violence.

There has been, throughout all of the consultation processes that the government is currently engaged in—the Changing Workplace Review; closing the gender wage gap; the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which has wrapped up its work; the public input in Bill 132—in each of those consultation processes, we’ve had input reinforcing and emphasizing the importance of requiring mandatory training in particular on domestic violence in the workplace. I do want to call the government’s attention to the fact that its own 2011 Sexual Violence Action Plan includes a recommendation that there be mandatory training on responding to sexual violence.

So my amendment to bring this mandatory training to all workplaces in the province is very consistent with our final report and with other government plans, but again, it was not supported by the government members.

What we heard in defence of the government’s position during the social policy committee was that Bill 168 already requires employers to make information available about workplace violence. However, during the hearings of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we heard that there is, in fact, a very clear and compelling need to make this training and education mandatory in the workplace.

We had a presentation from Barb MacQuarrie, who is a researcher from the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children. She is working with the Canadian Labour Congress on a national survey of all workplaces across the country. The survey was conducted online. They had a really significant response. That survey showed that 43% of workers who were experiencing domestic violence at home disclosed the violence to a co-worker.

When we think back to Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont—the murders that led to the implementation of Bill 168—in those cases the violence that those women were experiencing at home followed them right into the workplace. If there had been education and training for their co-workers on how to recognize the signs of domestic violence, how to respond to disclosures of domestic violence, we might have saved those women’s lives. There is an urgency to ensuring that this training and education gets into Ontario workplaces.

When Barb MacQuarrie came to the select committee and talked about her research, she told us about this great program that the government has funded called Make It

Our Business. It is an evidence-based training program that is supported by robust materials and available to all workplaces in the province. When I asked her how many workplaces are taking up those materials and distributing them to the employees who work there, she said about 1%. That means that about 1% of all Ontario employers are accessing the training that has been funded by the government that is available to educate workers about domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace. That is unacceptable. It is too low. We need to do better to ensure that all workplaces in the province understand the implications of domestic violence and sexual violence in the workplace.

I just want to take a moment in case any of the government members regret having voted against that amendment. They will have an opportunity to support my private member's bill that I will be introducing tomorrow. It will be debated on Thursday and it does exactly what these amendments tried to do; that is, to require mandatory workplace training on domestic violence and sexual violence. So it's not too late.

Speaker, it is estimated that Canadian employers lose \$78 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence, and about \$18 million a year because of sexual violence. There are huge costs in terms of lost productivity, absenteeism and distractedness. Women who experience domestic violence often report disrupted work histories. They change jobs more frequently. They are more likely to be poor, more likely to be working in precarious jobs or contemporary mobile employment. Perpetrators of domestic violence also report that their job performance is affected. They have difficulty concentrating, which leads to increased risk of workplace accidents. So domestic violence and sexual violence have a direct impact on the workplace, and Bill 132 would have been an opportunity to mitigate those impacts by introducing the mandatory training.

One of the concerns that I raised about schedule 4 of the bill, the Occupational Health and Safety Act amendments, was around the lack of the acknowledgment of the role of the joint health and safety committee or the health and safety representative, and the knowledge that the people who participate on those committees bring to the process of developing, implementing and reviewing policies. I had recommended that employers should be obligated to consult with joint health and safety committees when they are developing their policies, and they should be required to notify the committees of any incidents or complaints of workplace harassment that they investigate. This was echoed in the input that came to the committee and, as a result, I proposed specific amendments to create a much more proactive role for the joint health and safety committee. Unfortunately, again my amendments were voted down.

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I also proposed that the person who's conducting the investigation should be impartial and selected from a list of designated impartial persons, because we know that the effectiveness of this schedule, the effectiveness of

Bill 132 is going to rely in large part on the quality of the investigations and ensuring that the investigations are conducted appropriately and with concern for impartiality on both sides.

Another important amendment that I suggested was to require employers to take reasonable measures to actually prevent workplace harassment. The language of the bill is interesting. It says that employers are obligated to protect workers by investigating complaints. This is not protection as we would normally think of it, in taking preventive measures; this is after the fact. The legislation sets out the process that is to kick in once there has been an allegation of harassment. My amendment called on employers to take "all reasonable measures to prevent workplace harassment and to promote respect and dignity in the workplace, recognizing that all workers have a right to work in an environment free of workplace harassment." This was reflected in the government's own It's Never Okay action plan, which does state that the government's legislation would include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from harassment.

In the last few minutes of my speech, I wanted to focus a little bit of time on the importance of economic security in enabling women to leave abusive and violent relationships. It is often the implications of what leaving means that prevent women from ending abusive relationships. They potentially lose their home, their belongings, their friends. They lose access to family health and dental benefits, which is a particular concern if they're not working. We know that women who leave abusive relationships are 20 times more likely to be reliant on food banks after they leave and nine times more likely to go on social assistance, so there are real economic implications to leaving an abusive relationship.

Providing women with opportunities to achieve economic stability and financial independence is a critical strategy to address sexual violence, as is recognizing the need of women who are employed to receive medical treatment for the injuries resulting from the violence, to access counselling, to consult with police or pursue legal action, and to relocate to a safer place. They need to have the assurance that they can access these kinds of services without potentially jeopardizing their employment, if we are to truly make a dent in addressing gender-based violence.

I'm happy to say that my private member's bill on Thursday will provide all members with an opportunity to recognize that women—or anybody who's experiencing domestic violence and sexual violence—need to have these protections in the workplace so that they don't jeopardize their employment if they have experienced violence.

At the same time, New Democrats are very concerned about the lack of a gender lens in the government's 2016 budget and the failure of the budget to improve women's financial security. We know that child care has been universally recognized as an essential strategy to enable women to participate in the labour market and achieve

some kind of financial independence. If the government had applied a gender lens when they were developing the budget, they would have recognized that ignoring child care; cutting public services that tend to be dominated by women workers; stretching the poverty reduction funds over six years instead of five; allowing people on social assistance, who are disproportionately women, to fall further behind each year; failing to ensure that health care funding keeps pace with inflation and population aging; reducing female-dominated services like educational assistants and health care providers; refusing to fund pay equity for broader public sector workers—all these things have a disproportionate impact on women and jeopardize their ability to gain financial independence.

I just wanted to close on one final issue, and that is the issue I raised this morning during question period. The Liberal government has introduced cuts to the Partner Assault Response Program. If we are serious about ending domestic violence, we need to look at other ways to hold perpetrators responsible and accountable for their violence other than just jailing them. The research shows that even if the partner who was abused leaves, the abuser will go on to abuse again. So we need to change those behaviours. The Partner Assault Response Program was the one—the only—government program that gave us any kind of ability to start making those changes, and it has been cut by the Liberal government.

Certainly we welcome the amendments, but we will continue to push for a much more coordinated and integrated response to violence against women.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. MacCharles has moved third reading of Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

I wish to inform the House that I have received from the chief government whip a deferral notice asking that the vote on third reading of Bill 132 be deferred until the time of deferred votes on March 8, 2016.

Third reading vote deferred.

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION
AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION
DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE
ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Today I will be sharing my time with the President of the Treasury Board, the Chair of Cabinet, and the member for Etobicoke Centre.

Ontario is moving into a topic—that being putting a price on carbon—where the rest of the world has finally come to recognize some things that Ontario has known all along. While people are going to be talking about the cap-and-trade bill from various viewpoints, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy I just want to start with one facet that deals with the way the province generates electricity.

In the last several years, one of the accomplishments that Ontario has been able to celebrate has been the gradual shut-off of our coal-fired generating stations, and two years ago the last coal-fired generating station in Ontario was turned off permanently. Indeed, just to nail the coffin shut, you can now no longer legally generate electricity in Ontario by burning coal. That's a good thing.

1520

Let's look at some of the situations faced by the jurisdictions around us. Ontario is bookended by Quebec and Manitoba, two jurisdictions that generate all of their electricity using surplus hydro power, of which they have abundant amounts. But in the Great Lakes basin that we share with such states as Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, North Dakota and Minnesota—in that area—when we look at the way our surrounding jurisdictions generate electricity only one such jurisdiction doesn't generate more than half of its electricity by burning coal. That one US jurisdiction is New York—and not by much. For example, in the state of Indiana, nearly all of its electricity comes from burning coal. In West Virginia, nearly all of its electricity comes from burning coal. In most of the Ohio Valley, more than two thirds of the electricity comes from burning coal.

The United States is also one of the 195 countries, I believe, that are signatories to the Paris climate change accords. That commits every such nation, every jurisdiction, to taking its coal-fired generation and they've got to turn it off—all of it. So here's one of the advantages to Ontario for having been such a first mover in climate change: Ontario no longer generates any electricity by burning coal.

Let's look at it a different way. When it comes to making that transition away from coal-fired electricity, here in Ontario we bought tomorrow's electricity-generating and transmission infrastructure using yesterday's money, and financing it over its useful life at interest rates of nearly zero. If you're in the surrounding jurisdictions in the Great Lakes basin in the United States, and indeed throughout the United States, you're going to struggle and scramble to buy today's electricity generation and transmission assets with tomorrow's

money, and finance it at interest rates that have nowhere to go but up. In this respect, Speaker, Ontario did pretty well.

Over the weekend, as I was preparing some things in the riding, I found an index of electricity prices in some of the states around us. I thought, “What happens if I convert this to Canadian dollars?” I looked up: Just how much does it cost to generate a kilowatt hour of electricity? For example, in my home city of Mississauga, where we deal with Enersource, our winter off-peak—which means 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. and all day weekends and stat holidays—those rates are 8.3 cents per kilowatt hour; our mid-peak rates are 12.8 cents per kilowatt hour; and our on-peak rates are 17.5 cents per kilowatt hour. As it happened, I happened to get my electricity bill at around the same time. I looked at it and some two thirds of the power that we use at home—and I suspect that’s similar to most of my neighbours; we’ll consume something like 1,000 kilowatt hours during the course of a single billing period—are off-peak rates.

So in looking up through the U.S. Energy Information Administration, as of December 2015, and assuming a 75-cent Canadian dollar, let’s look at some of the prices today for electricity in the United States: Connecticut, 25.9 cents; Maine, 20.7 cents; Massachusetts, 26.1 cents; Vermont, 22.9 cents; New York, 23.4 cents; Pennsylvania—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Point of order, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I believe the member is not speaking to the bill at hand. I refer him back to Bill 172, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Well, I think he is.

I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Speaker. This is actually all about climate change, and while Ontarians, having already paid the costs of making the move in our electricity generation to a carbon-free electricity-generating system—we have done that and still have power rates that are below those in the surrounding US states.

This is the same type of opportunity that faces so many different sectors. As we remember in our baby boomer generation, the dramatic changes with the onset of the information technology revolution—it changed the way we do a lot of things today. In that same manner, it’s reasonable to assume that the move from a carbon-intensive economy to a carbon-neutral or a carbon-free economy by shifting the costs of moving to those who generate carbon emissions is going to give rise to the same type of innovation that drove the IT revolution. And Ontario, being the first mover, is likely to be one of the beneficiaries on a scale similar to that of the first movers in the IT sector 35 years ago.

There’s a lot of reason for optimism if you’re an Ontarian today. First of all, your air is cleaner—and I’m talking again about one of the first steps that all nations

will take to remove carbon from their economies, which is to clean up their air by stopping generating electricity by burning coal. We’re already there.

Now, as we move into looking at the industrial, commercial and institutional sector, as we move into the residential sector and the transportation sector, then we have a blueprint and a template in which we can see how to take our carbon emissions out of those sectors.

I thank you very much for your time, Speaker. I know there are others who have some very interesting comments to add to this topic.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m pleased to recognize the President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. I’m very pleased to stand to speak to this bill today. I really do think that this is absolutely the right thing to be doing, and I was delighted to hear that the Progressive Conservative Party actually has adopted putting a price on carbon as part of their platform. So I think we’re all on the same page: that we do need to move forward and take the steps necessary to protect this planet as best we can.

There’s been a lot of discussion about the proceeds of this bill—of the revenues, actually, of cap and trade—and there’s been some, I think, lack of clarity from the opposition side on what actually the proceeds can be used for. I was delighted to see that this bill makes it very clear what the proceeds of cap-and-trade can be used for.

I was very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in a couple of announcements last month about how we’re going to use proceeds. It helps give people a sense of where this money will be used. One of those I’d like to particularly highlight today: We’ve allocated \$325 million as a bit of a kick-start of the proceeds of cap-and-trade—\$325 million that will be invested in projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And \$100 million of that \$329 million is going to help homeowners save money by cutting down on their energy costs—\$100 million that we are giving to homeowners across the province to conduct the energy audit, help fund the cost of retrofits and save energy costs.

This is great news for a number of reasons. Obviously, it reduces greenhouse gas emissions—that’s the primary goal. But it does more than that: It saves people money. In fact, we anticipate that hundreds of dollars every year could be saved by making retrofits such as putting in insulation, installing high-efficiency heating systems, air sealing. We’re thinking that a homeowner in Toronto whose home was built prior to 1990 could see annual bill savings, on an average, of about \$400 by taking those necessary steps.

1530

The other part of this I think very wise investment of \$100 million is that it creates jobs. In fact, when we made the announcement, we were joined by people who insulate pipes. They talked about how they’re going to hire more people and train more people to install this insulation. They talked about how the insulation itself is actually made right here in Ontario. So this is money that will be reinvested back into the Ontario economy,

creating jobs, cutting greenhouse gas emissions and saving homeowners money. It actually is a win on all fronts.

As we do move forward with implementing cap-and-trade, there will be revenues—no question about it—but we're going to make sure that every penny of the revenues that come from cap-and-trade is used to actually reduce greenhouse gas emissions. I think that's essential. The money will be recycled back into the economy. We'll be reducing GHG emissions by putting a price on carbon but also by investing in initiatives that do reduce our carbon footprint.

I think, like many people here, our kids are teaching us how important this issue is. I have three children. They are all very concerned about the environment. They are very active in environmental causes. My son, actually, has a business called Strategic Sustainable Investments. He helps people invest their money in green companies. He has been my tutor when it comes to understanding the environment, understanding how serious climate change is, and how we're already paying a very high price by letting climate change occur. We're paying it in our insurance—we're paying it in a number of ways. So we do have to take action now.

This action, I think, is strong action. It will benefit our environment. It will benefit the people who care about the environment.

I think the notion that the polluter should pay is a principle that is well established in Ontario. We have fees on several types of pollution, and we will be adding carbon as another form of pollution.

Speaker, I'm very optimistic about the future. I'm very optimistic that the PC Party has at least acknowledged that this is action we must take. We will have, I'm sure, lots of debate about what kind of action that is, but I think that we have landed it very well. We're partnering with Quebec. We're partnering with California. We're creating a very large market. I think that we'll look back a decade from now, and we will say that we did the right thing by bringing in this legislation and by bringing in cap-and-trade.

Now, Speaker, it's time for me to wrap up, and I will pass it on to one of my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's a privilege to follow the President of the Treasury Board in speaking about this really important and what I think is a landmark initiative and landmark legislation. It's going to make a difference, not only in the years to come but for generations to come.

Speaker, before I get into the bill itself, I just wanted to share with you a short story. Over the weekend, I was speaking with constituents. I was returning phone calls on Sunday to a number of folks who had contacted my office. I contacted one individual. She was a senior, and we spoke about a range of topics, mostly around the budget. One of the things that was interesting was—we had been on the phone for quite some time; I think it was probably close to 45 minutes. We finished talking about a

range of topics and I thought that was it, and she said, "No. There's one more topic I want to talk to you about. This is the most important." She says, "What are we doing to address climate change?" The way she put it was: How do we ensure that we hand over this planet in a condition that our children can use it, was something along the lines of what she said. I started to tell my constituent about this bill. I started to tell my constituent about the cap-and-trade program. When she heard about that, she said, "That's really great. That's fantastic."

The reason I tell you that story is because, very often, when we think about climate change, we think about the impacts decades down the line. We think about the next generation. I was speaking to a group of young Liberals in Guelph about a week ago or so. This was top of mind for them. It's top of mind for a lot of young people I taught when I was teaching at York University.

What's interesting is, as this issue has come to the forefront, particularly recently with the introduction of this bill, many seniors in my community have raised this issue as well. I think the point here is that this unifies people of all ages and backgrounds. We have one planet that we share and we need to do something to make sure that we protect it and hand it to the next generations in the same condition, if not a better condition, than the way we found it. To me, that's what this bill is about.

When I think about this bill, there are two main components, and I really appreciate these two components that the bill addresses. The first is making sure that we have emission reduction targets that are in place and that we have action plans attached. That's a critical first component and that instills not only goals that must be met but accountability to make sure that we meet those objectives and those outcomes—and, then, the cap-and-trade program and how those proceeds are going to be used.

I just want to speak briefly in the couple of minutes that I have remaining about each of those two components. In terms of the emission reduction targets and action plans, this would establish in law the government's existing emission reduction targets. For the sake of my constituents who are watching, that's 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, 37% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. These are meaningful, quantifiable, measurable targets that we are instituting in law.

The bill would establish a framework for reviewing and increasing targets as needed as well as the establishment of interim targets. As someone who has been in business, I know sometimes you set long-term targets and those are important, but of course setting some interim targets can help make sure that we're on track, and the bill accommodates that. It requires the government to prepare a climate change action plan to make sure that we're achieving those targets. It's not enough to set targets. We actually have to meet them, and the plan has to define how we're going to do that.

It actually prescribes the content to be included in the action plan. The words "action plan" are not being used

loosely. It's being defined very specifically in law to make sure we have a timetable for each piece of the implementation plan.

An estimate of emission targets resulting from each action is what in business we would call an implementation plan: a specific set of actions with outcomes attached that will get us to our long-term objective. It's instituting accountability appropriately to make sure we meet those reduction targets.

And then there's the second piece of the bill, as I outlined earlier, which is the cap-and-trade program and use of proceeds. There are a number of things in here that I'd love to highlight and I won't have enough time, but here are just a few quick highlights: First of all, this allows for agreements with other jurisdictions so that we don't have a patchwork system; we have a system that's working in alignment with other jurisdictions. The President of the Treasury Board spoke about collaborating with Quebec and California but one can imagine in the future there will be more jurisdictions. This allows for that.

It sets out the types of initiatives that can be funded through this. This is really important. The proceeds cannot be spent however the government of the day should like. They have to be spent on specific types of initiatives and they have to be likely to reduce or support the reduction of greenhouse gases to be eligible to be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account. I think that's a really important point.

I think this bill, Speaker, ensures transparency with respect to how the proceeds will be used from the cap-and-trade and it will require the publishing of a report that will be released publicly to show each year how the funds are flowing in and out of the fund. It's really important for transparency but it also ensures that we're actually delivering on what this bill is supposed to do, which is set those climate targets, meet those climate targets and give our planet to the next generation in as good or better state than we found it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm glad to give a two-minute question and comment on what I've just heard from the members opposite. My ears did perk up when the President of the Treasury Board spoke about her children. I have five grandchildren. The last one was just born last July. The oldest ones will teach me every once in a while to do some things green. I appreciate that. I have walked along in parks and have had a can in my hand—an empty pop can—and I'll go to throw it in this garbage container when there are two there. They will say, "No, Grandpa. Don't do that. It goes in this one." So they are aware that we need to protect our environment, and I appreciate that.

1540

What this government doesn't tell them is that as soon as my last grandson was born, he was \$23,000 in debt because of mismanagement by this government. Unfortunately, that is the legacy that we've seen over the years. This scheme—

Mr. Bob Delaney: You've got to talk to the bill, Randy.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm talking to the bill—this scheme, Speaker, is nothing but a cash grab on the good folks in Ontario. It is going to be used to pay for some of the debts that they have accumulated over the years. We've seen what's happened with other things that they have been involved with. The health tax is a perfect example; that went into general revenues.

I do believe that the people of Ontario are not being told the whole story here, and they should be told the whole story before this legislation proceeds. I'm afraid, Speaker, that it's not going to be told, and we're going to be into another mess where the people of Ontario are being gouged billions of dollars over the next few years, if this bill passes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to address a couple of the comments made by some of the members.

The environment has always been a huge, debatable subject over the years. I can remember the days when I used to fight against industrial landfills, hazardous materials and the dumping of that throughout our province and all that. Where the problem lies with these types of bills is enforcement. The Ministry of the Environment has very few inspectors. They don't enforce things. I remember in the dispute on the Ontario landfill in Hamilton, we went from one inspector—he'd come in on a night shift and maybe once on a day shift, once a week. Mind you, they were bringing in about 100 trucks a day, maybe more; sometimes on a night shift—120 trucks dumping with no inspector.

Then they decided in the EA process that they are going to have a citizens' liaison committee created. Once again, the Ministry of the Environment didn't follow through. They put people who were either connected or knew the company on this environmental assessment tribunal they had created locally for the municipality, and they were always ruling in favour of the company. There was really no enforcement. All the citizen members slowly got moved out the door, and they basically created a company liaison committee. It's like the fox guarding the henhouse.

So the problem with all these great ideas about cap-and-trade and all that is that this province doesn't enforce their own laws environmentally. They haven't for years. They slap them on the hand and give them a \$10,000 fine, which is chump change to some of these companies, and they don't care. They just keep going about their business.

I'll be really watching to see how they're going to enforce this and police this. It will be very interesting.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm glad to add my voice to the conversation.

I want to start by addressing what the official opposition was saying. They were talking about schemes.

“Scheme” is a word that denotes something that is going to be hidden, a secret. There’s no secret here. If passed, the proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act would ensure transparency and accountability by committing to invest the proceeds into projects that go to reducing greenhouse gas pollution.

The mandatory climate change action plans would need to include details that are related to how the proceeds would be used, the estimated amount of funding for each action, a timetable for implementation, an estimate of the emission reductions and the cost per tonne of potential reduction.

Building on further accountability to the public, the act would require an annual report on funds flowing in and out of the GGRA and a description of initiatives that are funded, including their relationships to the climate change action plan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we speak about fighting climate change, about protecting the environment. What does that mean? I speak to many constituents myself. My area was hit hard in 2013, for example, by the flash flooding that hit Toronto—severe thunderstorms. People can relate to that.

We are committed to investing the proceeds from the cap-and-trade program into initiatives that will make greener, lower-carbon alternatives more affordable to households. That’s why we are investing specifically in programs that will help homeowners save money on their energy bills, but also help them retrofit their homes so that they won’t have as much damage in situations of that sort.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes, I do, Speaker. I’m pleased to join this ongoing debate on climate change and Bill 172, the climate change act.

In many ways, it is an ongoing and somewhat never-ending debate. The reason I say that is, we’ve been debating this issue since 1953. I don’t know whether many in this House are aware of that. A friend of mine, Robert McKaskell, lives down in Windsor, and he sent me a book. It was a compilation of newspaper articles from back in 1953. On May 15, 1953, in the *Globe and Mail*, the headline of that year was “Carbon Dioxide in Air Making World Warmer.”

So this debate has been going on now for 63 years. For some people here, it’s perhaps a newly discovered issue. Maybe it’s not newly discovered if you had the opportunity to study environmental science in our high school system. I know I was hired in 1969 to teach that course, and part of the course—this was in the late 1960s and early 1970s—was the impact of carbon dioxide and methane on our environment. At that time it was referred to as the “greenhouse effect.”

So we continue on today as legislators. It’s been 63 years now. We have a model before us today. It is a tax grab: no talk of any oversight, no talk of returning any of that money to the good people in Ontario, who do expect something, certainly, after 63 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. I enjoyed the comments both of my own colleagues and those of my friends across the aisle.

Certainly, on behalf of the government, the member for London North Centre talked about some of the partnerships that Ontario has formed and some of the alliances within which we’re sharing our experiences and addressing some of the challenges.

The member for Etobicoke Centre correctly called it landmark legislation and showed very clearly that he was thinking it through in terms of the implementation details of the legislation.

I was a little confused by the remarks of my colleague from Perth–Wellington in speaking about a program that, by and large, his own party just embraced less than 72 hours ago. He seemed to imply that he wants the benefits of it but still thinks that somewhere or other there’s someone else who will pay for it.

My colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek raised what I thought was a reasonable concern in terms of the enforcement of its provisions. There are certain market mechanisms that are spelled out in the legislation, as well as the stronger legal framework within which the cap-and-trade formula will be allowed to work.

The member for York South–Weston’s comments show that she too is thinking it through and looking at how to make this proposal work. It’s not as if there’s another world to go to if we lose this one. This is it. This is the only one we have.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, again, seems to be reluctantly accepting that we’ve got to do this.

I think one of the most interesting comments that was made came from committee last week or the week before, when there was a First Nations member speaking about their experience with ice roads. He said that 10 and 15 years ago we could depend on reliable ice roads to get to the north for about three months, and this winter we’ll be lucky to have ice roads that are usable for three or four weeks.

So, Speaker, it’s time to get on with it. Thank you.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It’s a pleasure to stand in this House and speak on Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. This bill would amend the Environmental Protection Act by repealing the definition of a greenhouse gas, along with the amendments the Liberals passed in 2009 to set up an emissions trading scheme.

The Liberals have not presented Ontarians with a credible plan to tackle climate change. The Premier’s cap-and-trade scheme lacks accountability and creates a new slush fund that can be used to finance Liberal pet projects. While Ontarians are willing to do their part to reduce emissions, it’s wrong for this government to raise

money in the name of the environment and then use it to pay for years of Liberal scandal, waste and mismanagement. With billions of dollars of new revenue every year, we know that we cannot trust this government to prioritize the environment over their spending addiction.

Ontarians expect and deserve a government that will take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. Under a cap-and-trade scheme, the government sets gradually decreasing limits or caps on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions allowed from companies that meet a certain threshold. In Ontario, that threshold is 25,000 tonnes for major emitters. Companies that exceed those limits must purchase emission allowances from companies that come in under their cap. These purchases or trades put a market price on carbon. Companies can also exceed their caps by purchasing offset credits, which in Quebec include capturing methane from manure storage facilities and landfills.

Despite the concerns of industry, the Liberals rushed to table Bill 172 on February 24 and release the draft regulation on February 25 so they could pat themselves on the back for a photo op on March 3, when the Premier attended the first ministers' meeting in Vancouver. The focus of that meeting was on energy, the environment and carbon pricing. This bill was intended to be rammed through the Legislature to get their cap-and-trade scheme up and running and to generate new revenue by January 1, 2017. This scheme would be linked with those already operating in Quebec and California under the Western Climate Initiative.

The government intends to raise \$478 million from cap-and-trade in the 2016-17 year. By 2017-18, this government will increase cap-and-trade revenue to \$1.9 billion, up from the \$1.3 billion they projected in the fall economic statement. This revenue will cover the government's spending spree on the Green Investment Fund, as well as other major projects and programs that are supposed to be outlined in the government's upcoming climate action plan.

This proposed cap-and-trade scheme would cover roughly 150 large emitters and would operate within three-year compliance periods, the first being 2017 to 2020. Under this system, the government will set an overall limit on emissions and both sell and give free allowances to companies to emit up to that limit. Each allowance is equal to one tonne of greenhouse gas. According to the Liberals' budget, they will set the initial carbon price at \$18 a metric tonne.

During this compliance period, emitters would be required to meet caps that decline between 4% and 5% a year. If emitters cannot meet those caps, they must purchase allowances to ensure that they hold enough allowances to equal their permitted emissions during the compliance period. Ontario's trade-exposed industries like cement, steel and chemicals have received free emission allowances and therefore will not face higher costs to meet declining caps. However, Liberals are requiring the natural gas and petroleum industry to purchase all

their emission allowances during the first compliance period. That is why the cost of natural gas, gasoline, diesel and propane will go up. It is projected that the cost of gasoline will increase by four cents a litre, diesel by 4.7 cents and natural gas by \$60 a year. Private sector estimates show that the long-term cost to families will be much higher, increasing the cost of gasoline by \$400 a year and home heating by \$475 a year.

This government has long wanted to impose a cap-and-trade scheme in the province. They also signed on to the Western Climate Initiative in 2008 to link an eventual emissions trading program with initiative partners like California and Quebec. To follow through on their commitment, this government passed amendments to the Environmental Protection Act to set up a cap-and-trade scheme and establish the reporting regulations for GHG emissions in 2009. They are now seeking to repeal the 2009 amendments to the EPA with Bill 172, but they're keeping the 2009 regulation as part of the reporting requirement for major emitters under the new cap-and-trade scheme.

This cap-and-trade scheme is command-and-control economics under the guise of a market-driven solution. In short, the Liberals design the game, set the rules, select the players, appoint the officials and pick the winners and losers. Obviously, in our opinion, the game is rigged, and those who stand to benefit are this government and companies with consultants that have close ties with this government.

Speaker, virtually every aspect of this scheme's design is left to regulation. That means that at any time the government could change the structure of this scheme, the trading rules, the mandatory participants and/or the powers of the minister to intervene in the carbon market.

The reporting regulations are already in place, and they have released a draft cap-and-trade program regulation for comment that sets up the parameters—

Mr. Paul Miller: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order: the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Sorry to interrupt, Randy, but I do believe there isn't a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'll ask the table staff to determine if a quorum is present.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We return to the member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker.

Bill 172 gives the government authority to appoint new directors in the bureaucracy to manage registration, reporting and verification requirements. According to the bureaucracy, the environment ministry would need nearly 40 staff members for these areas.

The government has included the government's emissions targets in the bill, but they are not legally enforceable. The targets are as follows: 15% below 1990 levels by 2020, 37% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels in 2050.

I want to talk about a bill that reached second reading. I believe it was back in—it was the MPP from Sarnia–Lambton. This addressed some of the issues involved in greenhouse gas emissions. It was actually quite a bill; it reached second reading. It was called the Natural Gas Superhighway Act of 2015.

What it said, essentially, was that natural gas is an affordable, safe fuel. New engine technology is allowing North America's cargo transportation sector—medium- and heavy-duty trucks, trains and ships—to use natural gas as a cheaper fuel. Lower transportation costs have the potential for Ontario's manufacturing sector to get their products to market at more competitive prices. It also said that estimates of the North American gas fields suggest accessible deposits of low-cost natural gas could meet North American demand for the next 100 years. This would ease reliance on foreign oil.

1600

As a transportation fuel, natural gas represents a cleaner alternative to traditional fuels, especially diesel, for medium and heavy trucks, trains and ships. It's approximately 20% to 30% cheaper and 20% to 30% cleaner, thus helping to eliminate greenhouse gases. British Columbia and Quebec have already adopted legislation to promote natural gas as a transportation fuel, as well as American jurisdictions such as New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Colorado, California, Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. The member from Sarnia–Lambton did a tremendous amount of work on this bill, and I must congratulate him for that.

According to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, the transportation sector in 2010 was responsible for the largest volume of greenhouse gas emissions province-wide. He also said that this sector has witnessed a significant increase in emissions since 1990, while some sectors, such as electricity and industry, have seen a decrease. Medium and heavy-duty vehicles make up 3% of the vehicles on the road today, but contribute 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions from on-road sources. It is estimated that heavy-duty trucks running on natural gas reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 20% to 25% compared to their diesel counterparts. While the initial costs to purchase natural gas vehicles can be higher for operators, the savings associated make conversion a very attractive option, with an expected fuel cost savings of 20% to 30%.

Major American trucking companies are already taking the important first steps to transition to natural gas as a fuel source. Moreover, private investment is building a network of dedicated fuelling stations across the US, linking important manufacturing regions and transportation corridors. If Ontario doesn't take steps soon to open its borders to the same type of investment, it risks being left behind, and our businesses will lose their ability to get their products to market at competitive prices.

I just wanted to bring this to the attention of this House, since this bill reached second reading a couple of years ago. Actually, it was ordered to the Standing Com-

mittee on the Legislative Assembly. This is innovation. These are things that would help us control our greenhouse gas emissions. This is something that the transportation industry is quite interested in. These are the types of innovative things that we believe can help reduce our carbon footprint and certainly get rid of greenhouse gas issues. There are things that I would like to see in this bill to help with innovation. Truly, there is nothing in there with quite the scope that this bill would have.

I also would like to point out some other things that we have found out about this bill. Addressing climate change requires a credible plan that will reduce greenhouse emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy. Unfortunately, this bill has done the opposite. The government plans to impose a new tax on gasoline and home heating to bankroll this government's cap-and-trade slush fund, which is exactly what it is. With this government's track record of waste, mismanagement and scandal, we know that this government's cap-and-trade scheme is just about the money, not the environment. We cannot support this cash grab and will vote against this bill.

Addressing climate change requires a credible plan that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions while protecting taxpayers and our economy, which this is not doing. To effectively reduce emissions, the Ontario PCs understand that we must advance innovation—just as what I've talked about with the trucking industry—and increase energy efficiency and improve energy conservation.

Regulation and product standards, like lead in gasoline, have been successfully employed to reduce emissions elsewhere. This means investing in transit, modernizing buildings and working with industry to improve the efficiency of production processes.

As we all know, the former PC government led the way in phasing out coal in Ontario.

These are all proven ways, Speaker, to substantially reduce emissions, unlike cap and trade. Ontarians know that this government's cap-and-trade scheme is just about the money, not the environment. This Premier has broken her promise to Ontarians not to raise gas taxes. The Liberals swore in 2014—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the government members to please come to order. The member of Perth–Wellington has the floor; I have to be able to hear him.

The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker.

The Liberals swore in 2014 that they would not gouge taxpayers to feed the government's spending addiction. This Premier is attempting to impose a new tax on gasoline and heating to bankroll the Liberals' cap-and-trade slush fund. This government has betrayed the trust of Ontarians and failed to present a credible plan to address climate change. Ontarians expect and deserve a government that will take action to effectively reduce emissions in a way that protects taxpayers and our economy.

This government's cap-and-trade scheme puts a new tax on energy bills that will make life more unaffordable for Ontarians and increase the cost of doing business in our province. In fact, long-term estimates show that cap and trade will increase energy bills for families nearly \$900 each and every year.

In private sector analyses, analysts believe that small manufacturers will be hit with \$170,000 in new energy costs every year. This additional expense could mean the loss of three good jobs at each company. This cap-and-trade scheme will put jobs at risk, shut out investment in our province, and increase the cost of gas, groceries and home heating fuels. We need a government that will effectively reduce emissions in a way that protects taxpayers and keeps our industry competitive within the North American marketplace.

Speaker, I would like to talk a little bit about agriculture. You will know that I come from a very heavily agricultural-based economy in Perth-Wellington. Farmers our way have adopted and embraced GPS technology. What that does is, if they're out spraying crops, the GPS takes them along and tracks it so that they don't overspray. They keep their chemical use down. When they are spreading animals' manure on lands, they use the same GPS technology to make sure that they don't over-apply manure and so they can know how many gallons or litres they're putting on an acre of land.

What it also does is it reduces their fuel consumption because they're not going over the same land all the time. My son is involved with that. He said that their costs to reduce putting too many chemicals on land and also with the spreading of manure and that type of thing—cutting hay and corn—more than pays for the GPS technology that they've had to put in their tractors, which is certainly expensive.

Farmers have embraced this, and that's something the government should do: Go out to the agriculture industries, go to factories and manufacturing industries, and get their ideas. Consult with them so that we don't end up with issues which are very suspect and we don't end up with things that, in our opinion, are just going to be an extra tax burden on the people of Ontario.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: My understanding of cap and trade is that if I have a company that's polluting and I meet my emission threshold and I have extra credits, I can sell those credits to another company that's not meeting their threshold or need them to meet their threshold. I'm a little confused with this, because if I have a company that cannot install proper equipment, cannot afford to put in the stack emission controls that maybe some of the larger companies can to meet their threshold and I see that installing that equipment is going to be more expensive than what I have to pay for the credits in cap and trade, I might have a tendency to continue to pollute and buy the cap-and-trade credits so that I can meet the threshold doing that. So I'm really not quite sure how this is going

to work and I'm very concerned about how you're going to enforce it.

Once again, I've lived through many landfills and many things over the years. It starts off with good conditions where they are going to inspect and all that, and then a year later, all of a sudden you don't have enough inspectors, they don't go as much, they don't go around and there we have pollution. Then we have the underground springs being polluted. We have lakes, we have rivers being polluted, to the extent where we can't recover, in some cases; and if we do, it will take 100 years. They talk about liners in landfills that are going to last 300 years. Well, we proved that wrong: The one in Hamilton didn't last five years and it was supposed to last 300, the Taro landfill.

That's the kind of thing that goes on. This government does not go into enough depth and detail on how to figure out how you're going to enforce the cap and trade on companies that can't physically, or don't have the technology to, make the changes they require to meet their threshold. They'll just buy credits and keep pumping it out. It's pretty scary, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I appreciate the comments made on cap and trade. With your indulgence, Speaker, this whole issue of greenhouse gases, global warming and air quality—if you might allow me to speak with reference, first of all, as a physician, because I have to say that the extraordinary impact that we are seeing on human health is something that really needs to be addressed.

As an example, the government very recently undertook trade missions, and members of this caucus were in both Beijing, China, as well as Delhi, India. In those jurisdictions the air quality is not subjected to the same level of scrutiny, rigour and regulations as we are now imposing, whether it's the restriction of coal-fired generation or the further management of cap and trade, the further reduction of greenhouse gases.

This is kind of an atmospheric or a breathing version of Flint, Michigan. This is a slow and steady poisoning of those particular populations with particulate matter which is, by the way, cancer-causing—or carcinogenic—with just the fumes, for example, inducing asthma attacks or attacks of COPD, emphysema and chronic obstructive lung disease.

As an example, we in these types of jurisdictions are seeing more and more individuals having to rely on puffers, on inhalers; more and more attacks; more and more urgent care visits, even to the point where the incidence of these conditions is increasing at an astronomical, tsunami level. In Canada itself two million Canadians as of this moment have asthma, and the number continues to rise. The number rising in countries which do not have greenhouse gas emissions legislation is astronomical, exponential, comparatively.

All of these reasons speak to why we need to support these bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to comment and commend the member from Perth–Wellington on his dissertation on Bill 172, and also thank him for recommending and mentioning my bill, Bill 76, which is going to be at committee this week. It is a tangible way to reduce greenhouse gases. It's in effect already in jurisdictions in Quebec. There are trucks that come every day into the city of Toronto from Robert Transport that are powered by LNG, liquid natural gas. A number of facilities, a number of municipalities in Ontario—Hamilton, for one—power their garbage trucks by compressed natural gas, CNG. So this is a tangible, real-life way that we could reduce greenhouse gases. It can work.

I'm looking forward to the committee. There are a number of major companies that are going to come and present this Wednesday and on March 23. I look forward to input from the other two parties as well. I think that this is a way that government, either with my bill or amendments to my bill or part of their own bill, could actually help industries who want to make improvements to do that.

It's not just truck traffic. It's open to marine traffic and also rail traffic. CN and CP are already doing experiments and looking at something like this.

This is a way that the opposition and both parties—the third party, ourselves and the government—could work together. You could extend the message to industry. It's not punitive. It's something that industry wants to do. They just need some reassurance from government that they're not going to move in a taxation position if they were to go to LNG. It's going to be a little more expensive for these motors, but through taxation and through measures like that that's where we could reduce the cost to those motors.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and look forward to Wednesday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: While the NDP supports cap and trade as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we want to ensure that it's a system that is actually going to work for everyone. We want it to be a fair system, an effective system and a transparent system.

If you look at what has been presented to us in this piece of legislation, the government has proposed to give all large emitters, not just trade-exposed emitters, a four-year exemption from paying the carbon emissions while little Ontarians, some of whom live on very low incomes as we've heard in debate around the seniors drug' issues, will have to start paying as soon as January 1, 2017. That does not seem in any way to me equitable or fair.

We know that Ontario is competing in a very difficult world right now. But unless these exemptions are being allocated in some way—we know how long these exemptions are actually going to last—it's really the little guy that's going to pay the freight.

The other piece is that, although the government says that it is going to dedicate these funds to greenhouse gas emissions, there isn't anything in this legislation that

gives us any satisfaction that that in fact will be the case. In fact, even the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, is questioning whether or not these funds will actually go to projects that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions or whether they'll just go into the general government slush fund.

There are a lot more questions to be answered than there is currently in this document before us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Perth–Wellington for his reply.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I want to thank the members from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Etobicoke North, Sarnia–Lambton and—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Welland.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: And Welland. I'm sorry; I didn't write that down.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Oh. Anyway, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I certainly agree with you about the inspection issues here. This is going to be another Liberal bureaucracy set-up. We've seen how things were handled in the past, certainly with some of the issues and investigations going on with this government right now, and what can happen.

To the member from Etobicoke North, nobody disagrees with what's going on in the rest of the world. I haven't been to the Far East, but I've certainly seen pictures of it, and it's terrible over there. Nobody disagrees that we've got to be careful with our climate.

The member from Sarnia–Lambton—a great bill, and we need to get this looked at. But that's what innovation can do. If you give people the help, they can invent technology and grow their businesses with initiatives like the member from Sarnia–Lambton puts forth in his bill. But this government doesn't understand things like this because this government has devised a scheme to bring in billions of dollars on the backs of Ontario taxpayers. That's all this is. It's going to be more expensive to live in Ontario with this energy bill.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As always, I'm honoured to be called upon to speak in Ontario's provincial Parliament on a very important issue to the residents of my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh.

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas, will enact the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act. Allow me to state, right at the beginning of this presentation, Speaker, that New Democrats in this House would be supporting a cap-and-trade bill to combat climate change if the language was improved. We will be suggesting a number of ways that this bill can be improved in order to gain wider acceptance by the voters in this province. We want a system that is seen to be fair, effective and transparent, and I'll return to those themes throughout my discussion here this afternoon.

I wasn't here in the House back in 2007. That's when the Liberals introduced an action plan to deal with

climate change. I wasn't here in the fall of 2009, either. That, as you know, Speaker, is when the Liberal government of the day first announced the cap-and-trade bill to deal with climate change.

Let's skip back to 2007. The Liberal environment minister was Laurel Broten from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. She got the Liberal ball rolling on climate change. She was replaced in the environment portfolio by the member from Kingston and the Islands, Mr. Gerretsen, who said climate change was his government's most critical priority and absolutely had to be dealt with. That was back in 2009, Speaker. Mr. Gerretsen passed the environmental baton to John Wilkinson, the former member from Perth–Wellington. The esteemed member from St. Catharines, the dean of the Ontario Legislature, the current deputy House leader and minister without portfolio, Mr. Bradley, walked in the environmental footsteps of Mr. Wilkinson. This brings us to today and this bill, Bill 172, introduced by my friend the member from Toronto Centre, Mr. Murray.

Speaker, as you know, Minister Murray is a former mayor of Winnipeg, and I must say—and he would be the first to tell you this, Speaker—he's a former New Democrat. New Democrats at the municipal, provincial and federal levels have always been environmental champions. We believe in combating greenhouse gases and climate change. We also insist that any tax and cap-and-trade policy must make sense. It must be fair, effective and transparent.

We accept that climate change is real. We accept that impacts from human-induced climate change are being felt the world over. We accept that if world leaders don't get their act together on this problem and if the planet's average temperature jumps by two degrees Celsius, irreversible harm will occur.

That's why it is so important and so vital that we get this bill right, that we take the politics out of the legislation and that we all work together on improving the language in this bill—not for ourselves, but for the generations who will follow us.

Speaker, let me just touch for a moment on a generation which came before us. My riding of Windsor–Tecumseh was formerly known as Windsor–Riverside and Sandwich–Riverside. From 1967 to 1977, it was held by a visionary named Fred Burr. He was one of the first environmentalists to serve in this provincial Parliament. I know the member from St. Catharines will remember Fred Burr as being ahead of his time by talking about mercury poisoning in Ontario's lakes and rivers and by being the first to talk about the dangers of side-stream or second-hand tobacco smoke.

Speaker, let me quote from Fred Burr's inaugural address to this House back in 1968. He was warning us then about the dangers we faced if we didn't take action to combat air pollution.

Fred Burr, in 1968—nearly 50 years ago—said, “Mankind will die of massive epidemics of respiratory diseases and suffocation within the next hundred years. There is an aerial sewer 12 to 14 miles thick all around

the Earth and there is just no more space to dump this pollution in the” atmosphere.

Air pollution destroys our atmosphere, and climate change is a threat to us all. Many of us say that we must do something about it. But when we take action, as this bill purports to do, we must do so in a way that we can all understand. We must justify our actions with proof that the money we're taking for these actions is accounted for in a transparent fashion.

We can't allow the big polluters to get away with it without paying their fair share. We can't allow the funds we collect to be administered by an appointed body without any proper financial oversight by Ontario's Auditor General. We must have the entire cap-and-trade program studied and tested for its efficiencies by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. We—all of us, every man, woman and child in Ontario—must know what bang we're getting for our buck. We must be satisfied and convinced that the money collected is not just being used as a Liberal slush fund by the Liberal government.

If this government is true to its word—and how many times have we heard the Premier say that she wanted to run a government that is open and transparent and accountable? That is a familiar refrain in this House, Speaker. The previous Liberal administration of former Premier McGuinty was anything but, and the proof of that is in the gas plant scandals, the deletion of evidence from the computer files, the unaccountable tendering of the eHealth file and the financial unaccountability of the Ornge air ambulance service.

The Premier said that we had turned a corner in this province. Of course, that was before she changed her mind and started the sell-off of Hydro One, something she said she'd never do, something 80% of the people in the province are opposed to, something 200 municipal councils have passed motions in opposition to.

But I digress, Speaker. If the Premier and her cabinet, and my good Liberal friends who, like me, are not favoured by a seat on the front bench, really want to prove that they are part of an open and transparent administration, they will accept the changes that we on this side are proposing, so we will all be more comfortable in supporting real change to combat global warming and climate change.

Please don't try to pull the wool over our eyes. Don't ask us to trust that you have our best interests at heart and would never take our money and use it for something it wasn't meant for. Let the legislative experts—the Environmental Commissioner, the Auditor General, the Financial Accountability Officer—have input, invite them to scrutinize this new plan and justify it to the people of Ontario. If you have nothing to hide, don't try to hide it.

Make sure that the less well-off in this province are not penalized. Low-income households, people living in the north and families in remote areas need special consideration. This new system must be fair, effective and transparent.

New Democrats want a cap-and-trade system that is fair, that is effective and that is transparent. So far, this bill doesn't pass the smell test.

Representatives of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce will be here on the 4th of April, meeting with us to discuss their concerns with this bill. I've scheduled my meeting with the chamber delegation already. The chamber has a serious concern with this bill, and it's over the changes that we have been calling for, Speaker.

A chamber document says, "Cap-and-trade proceeds should not be directed into general government revenue." The chamber also states, "It is important that the allocation of the revenue be objective and transparent." I couldn't agree more.

1630

Climate change is too important to each and every one of us to start down this road before we have made the right and proper choices. We cannot afford to make mistakes when we design this legislation. We can't allow the perception that the wool is being pulled over the public's eyes. We must be upfront, we must be open to scrutiny, and our decisions and results must be publicly evaluated by the legislative experts whom we have hired to make us all accountable.

If there is nothing to hide—if this is not a cash grab—then do the proper thing with this bill. Insist that the Auditor General have access to the information. Insist that the Environmental Commissioner be allowed to examine the books and the results of decisions made to combat climate change. Make sure that the Financial Accountability Officer can have a say as well. Don't ask us to accept this on trust or blind faith, because no one on this side of the House will do that.

We've learned from your mistakes. We hope that you have learned from your past mistakes as well. Open and accountable government that is transparent and justifiable is a goal we should all have. We should set aside our political differences on this file, but we can't do that if you won't be open with us and the public on how much money you are collecting, where it is being spent to fight climate change, global warming and cleaning up our air, and what the results are of those efforts. Are we making a difference? Are we spending the money in the right places? Is there more we can do? Or are you just grabbing this money and using it for projects that you've had on the books for some time, and then, with a paper shuffle, pretending you're good stewards of our tax dollars because the provincial books are in better shape than a year ago, because of the money you've raised under the pretension of actually fighting climate change?

Honesty, as they say, is the best policy. Honesty comes from being open and transparent. Honesty comes from being fair to everyone, especially the lowest-income earners and those living in remote areas. Rebates are given to low-income families where they have similar bills in Alberta and British Columbia. California sees to it that a designated percentage of the revenues derived from cap-and-trade legislation is directed to the programs that service and benefit disadvantaged communities. If

they can do these things in California and British Columbia and Alberta, why aren't we doing it here? Change the language in this bill; make it fair and transparent and effective for us all.

Honesty is when your decision-making has effective results that can be justified to the public so that we all feel good about what we're doing; or, at least, we feel better about what we're doing because a cloud of secrecy has been lifted. We can't do this behind closed doors, with no accountability to the public. We must do better than that. Don't allow the whispers to gain weight that this bill is designed to be no more than a government slush fund. Open the books to us all; put it in writing now. Open the books and prove to the public that these are wise decisions. I tell you, if you don't—if this bill isn't improved, if you fail to be open and transparent and effective—you will not gain the public trust and you will pay the political price.

Many people in this province are looking at this bill with a suspicious eye. Some may be in favour of spending a little more money at the pumps to fight climate change, but they don't want to be taken for granted, and they don't want to be taken in either. They don't want this Liberal government to use the money they raise at the pumps—an extra 4.3 cents a litre, at least in the beginning of it. They don't want that money used as a cash grab by the Liberals to bail the government out of debt. They don't want to be taken advantage of. They don't want to pay for past expensive mistakes made by this Liberal government. That's why we in the NDP say that changes have to be made in this legislation so that the language is seen to be fair, effective and transparent.

There was a poll published last week—I hope the Liberals in the House are taking note if they haven't already—done by Forum Research, mentioned in a column in the *Toronto Star* by Thomas Walkom. That poll shows that 68% of the people in this province disapprove of the Liberal plan on cap-and-trade because it will mean we're all paying a higher price for gasoline and higher prices for those who use home heating oil. I hope the Liberals are getting the message, Speaker. You haven't sold this new idea very well, and it can't be sold to the people in this province without changes to make it be seen to be fair, effective and transparent.

The people in this province have gone through five Liberal Ministers of the Environment since they initiated the conversation leading up to this piece of legislation. I have faith in the latest minister, Mr. Murray, and I know that the environment minister is now called the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. There are a lot of good orators in this House, some more theatrical than others, and we have a very few passionate ones. In my humble opinion, few can match the passion that this minister has when he speaks about the need to tackle this issue head-on. He gets it. He knows what will happen if Ontario isn't a major player with climate change and global warming.

His legislation, in order to be truly successful and appreciated, has to be supported by a majority of the

residents of Ontario. Right now, that isn't the case, and it may never be the case if we don't show them that their concerns have been heard and that this program will fall under the scrutiny of the Auditor General, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Financial Accountability Officer. That's a short list. There may be one or two others who should be granted oversight as well, but let's start there. Let's make this legislation fair, effective and transparent.

New Democrats want the money collected for this purpose to flow into a separate account that is audited in a very public way so that everyone is aware of the projects which are funded by this money and how greenhouse gas reductions were measured, what results were achieved, and how they were verified and scrutinized by the Auditor General, the Environmental Commissioner and the Financial Accountability Officer of Ontario. That's not a lot to ask, in my humble opinion. I say change the language and improve the bill, or risk all of what's left of your credibility with the voters of Ontario.

Speaking of credibility, I was reading some of the press clippings coming out of the Conservative convention in Ottawa last weekend. Earlier, I suggested that we set aside our political differences so we could all seek out ways to improve this legislation. I learned this morning that that may very well be more difficult than I had imagined. I read in the *Globe and Mail* that the member from Simcoe North, Mr. Brown, the leader of the official opposition, had no sooner announced support for a revenue-neutral carbon pricing plan than my friend from Toronto Centre, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Mr. Murray, sent out a number of tweets. In one, Mr. Brown was called a climate denier. Of course, that may have been because the minister didn't like his proposed bill to be labelled a slush fund and a cash grab by the leader of the official opposition.

According to the *Toronto Star*, the minister called on the Leader of the Opposition to flesh out the details of the Conservative plan. Speaker, it is unfortunate we can't seem to play nice together in the same playground at times, but, as I said earlier, this issue is too important for us to be playing these silly political games.

New Democrats are interested in working with the minister and suggesting ways that this bill can be improved in order that it becomes more open, understandable, accountable, transparent and effective. The minister may feel it's that way already, but a vast majority of the people in this province don't feel the same way about Bill 172 as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change feels about his own bill.

1640

That being said, I would hope the minister and his Liberal colleagues would agree to work with our energy critic, the member from Toronto–Danforth, Mr. Tabuns, and indeed all of us here in the NDP caucus to fashion a better bill. Unfortunately, at this point, the bill hasn't been sold to the public very well. It's been seen more as a bully bill, and bully bills will never win support from the majority of the voters.

I hope my friends in the official opposition can see their way fit to offer practical solutions as well. Let's all of us, for once, work together and show the people in this province that we can do that when the stakes are high and the issues are too important for partisan shots and political gamesmanship. I know we can do it if we put our minds to it; it just takes the political will to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I am delighted for this opportunity to respond to the comments made by the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. We heard from the environmental critic earlier about these three pillars: a fair, efficient and transparent system. I welcome very much his enthusiasm to work with the government closely to improve the bill. I would make that commitment. I am always listening to opportunities to make the bill better, and certainly we'll continue to keep the kinds of great suggestions that are coming forward in mind as we move forward.

The polling issues: You talk about the polls, but I think that poll was extremely misleading, because it basically asked the question: "Do you want to see your energy rates go up?"—without showing the other side of the equation. When I made my introductory remarks a week ago, I talked at length about the polls in my riding, where 87% of the people agreed with the cap-and-trade program. Across the province, it was closer to 79% who think that this is the right direction to go, and not the kind of program that we were going to see from the Leader of the Opposition as he announced over the weekend—a tax-and-dividend type of scheme.

The reality is, I think the opposition party, to their credit, is responding in a favourable way by testing the air and testing the waters, and saying, "You know what? Ontario is behind this. If we have any chance of forming the next government, we need to get behind cap-and-trade." As uncomfortable as it may make so many members of their party feel, they're getting behind it.

We know that we have the support of the third party to work forward. I agree with the notion of the member for Windsor–Tecumseh to depoliticize this as much as possible so that we can move forward and have the best possible bill coming out of this.

He quickly referenced the minister's conversion from the NDP to the Liberals. I'm reminded of Churchill's quote, which said that a man, when he's young, who isn't a member of a socialist party has no heart, but the man who continues to be a member in later life has no common sense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Mr. Speaker, I see this bill as very flawed, and pretty obviously it's about the money. The government has defined in their budget that this bill is expected to generate for them \$1.9 billion in the first year, 2017. They are planning on a decrease in the cap of carbon dioxide by 4% to 5% a year, going right out to 2050, so we will have a target of 80% less carbon dioxide produced compared to 1990.

This is going to increasingly put more and more pressure on companies to make the products they produce—in this case, it would seem gasoline, diesel and home heating fuel are the most obvious ones; there are exemptions for some of the other large companies, for the time being. It's going to make life more expensive in the province of Ontario for companies doing business and producing the things that Ontarians need. It's going to make life more expensive for consumers in Ontario and the citizens of Ontario to buy the basic things they need and the energy they need; in this case, to drive their cars and heat their homes.

They've already been coping with and faced with the highest electricity costs in the world because of another Liberal bill, the green energy bill, which has wrongly driven up the price of electricity to the highest in North America. It has had the effect of driving jobs out of North America, causing unemployment, and impoverishing people with very high monthly bills. This is going to be more of the same. It's going to reduce carbon dioxide because it's going to remove companies because they won't be able to afford to do business here, just as the Green Energy Act has done. Ontario will become a bleaker and more dismal place, and an undesirable place to live and do business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thanks, Speaker. I'd like to commend the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. It's amazing that, in 1968, Mr. Burr stood up in this House and warned us—him and a lot of other people at the time—about what could happen down the road. With all fairness to the member of Etobicoke North, he even stood up and said, “Just travel around the world and look at the airshed. It's terrible.” So I guess Mr. Burr was way ahead of his time.

Do you know what? I commend the government for doing something, but you've got to understand that if we don't get countries like China and India on board—two thirds of the pollution is coming from there. Until we can get the bigger nations to co-operate on the airshed, we're going to have a real uphill battle. But we've got to start somewhere, so I give them credit that they're doing something.

Once again, when we get to these bills and it goes to second reading—and I'm sure it'll pass with all-party support—it'll go to committee. But so many times since I've been here, I've seen it go to committee, and the ruling party has more members on the committee and they have a tendency to go ahead with what they want to do regardless of what the people of Ontario think or regardless of what the opposition parties think. They go ahead and push it through the way they've set it up. Very seldom, they're open for amendments, and it's a very few times that we get amendments. As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh stated, this is something that affects us all: our grandchildren and everyone who comes after us. We have to do something now before—some scientists say it is too late, and that's unfortunate. But maybe

something done now may salvage a few more centuries out of this planet.

We definitely have to do something and we have to do it fast. The sooner we set an example for the rest of the Legislatures throughout the world to do this, the better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm pleased to respond to the remarks from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh on our cap-and-trade bill. As I've been talking to people since this bill was tabled, I'm finding a lot of interest in it. People are saying, “How does this work?” I find that one of the most important things is that they realize that there are some fees involved and there will be some proceeds that flow to the government. The thing that they're really interested in is the assurance that, right in the law, we actually will be setting up a separate account, the greenhouse gas reduction account, which is where any of the fee revenue will go. Any revenue from fees will not go into general revenue; it will go into the greenhouse gas reduction account.

In fact, it's actually right in the act. The bill sets out the types of initiatives that may be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account established from cap-and-trade proceeds. Initiatives must be reasonably likely to reduce or support the reduction of greenhouse gases to be eligible to be funded from the greenhouse gas reduction account.

An initiative could be in a variety of areas. It could be related to reduced energy use. It could be related to more efficient buildings and land use. It could be related to infrastructure around, for example, transportation that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It could have to do with helping industry, agriculture or forestry reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. It could have to do with waste management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from waste management, or—near and dear to me—education, training, research and innovation. Those are all the things that we would be interested in—making sure we reduce greenhouse gases.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's our last question or comment. I return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh to reply.

1650

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The member for Beaches–East York gave a quotation from Winston Churchill. Mr. Churchill had a lot of good quotes. Another one I'll throw back is that Mr. Churchill had a few drinks in him at a party, and a woman came up to him and said, “Mr. Churchill, you are very, very drunk,” and Winston Churchill said, “Yes, and you are very ugly, and tomorrow I'll be sober.” Winston Churchill was very colourful, and you had a good, colourful quote.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills talked about how expensive this bill could be, but I say to the member: My friend, if we don't take action now, if we don't take steps to combat climate change and global warming, how expensive will it be for all of us down the

road just with our own bad health effects that we'll get if we don't start cleaning up the air?

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek talked about Fred Burr, a real gentleman. I know the member from St. Catharines, when Mr. Burr passed away, paid a really nice tribute to him in the House. I appreciate that very much.

The Minister of Education: All I can say, Minister, is that you just have to do a better job of convincing the voters in Ontario that this separate account is going to be separate, and that it's going to be audited by the Auditor General and by the Financial Accountability Officer. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario is going to have a look in there and see if we're really getting a bang for our buck, if we're really showing in a transparent fashion that what we're doing is for the best interests of it all: This is how we spent the money; this is why we spent the money; these are the results we have achieved by spending the money that we're taking from your wallet every time you put gasoline in the car, or every time, for those with heat other than electricity—home oil or propane—we drive up their bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Ottawa–Orléans and the Chair of Cabinet.

It gives me pleasure to speak about our future when it comes to climate change. What we're here to do is to make sure that our kids, grandkids and great-grandkids have a place where they can live, breathe, play, work and enjoy life. Sometimes, as I said a minute ago, it does take time for the public to accept major shifts—this one, in particular, with the environment.

I want to use a couple of personal examples, and I think some of the members in this House have heard me mention this before.

Back some 30 years ago when my kids were still young—now they are all gone; they're adults with kids of their own—the discussion around the kitchen table at night was, “What did you do at school today?” Frankly, one day one of my sons said, “Well, Dad, we talked about recycling and how we need to sort things,” and all those kinds of things.

Well, I'm not afraid to admit it. I lived out in the country where we had a burn barrel in the back. I'm sure most of us who live out in the country did as well. I said to my wife, “I thought school was to teach kids how to read and write, math, history and all those things, yet they're talking about garbage.”

Fast-forward some 35 years later and it's become a common household thing that we do today; we would not look at it any other way. Change is difficult at times, but I think that we need to think a little bit forward and make sure that we do that kind of planning.

Secondly, I want to talk about one of my grandkids. About a year ago we were driving through Trenton, where we have a Norampac paper recycling plant. I was with my grandson, who was probably about nine at that time. There was what he called smoke coming out of a

smokestack, and he said, “Grandpa, look at the smoke coming out of the smokestack. That's not good for the environment.” So Grandpa, knowing better, said, “Well, A.J., that's not smoke; that's steam,” because I know Norampac uses a steam reformer to process the paper to recycle. He went quiet for a little bit, and then he said, “Grandpa, you can spin it whichever way you want. It's still stuff going into the air and it's not good for the environment.” I take great pride in having a lesson from my 10-year-old grandson.

This is something that I just wanted to talk a little bit about since the bill was introduced and the budget was introduced dealing with cap and trade. I'd be remiss if I did not say that some people in my riding question the direction we're going, that possibly gasoline and natural gas might increase in cost—to try to protect the environment. But I'm quite surprised, actually, by the number of people who know that this is something that we need to do. After we have a little chat, it is encouraging to know that they do understand.

Of course, it's something that you cannot touch and feel right away. As a society, when we spend a dollar we want to be able to count the widgets that that dollar buys. But it is interesting today how much more people accept the fact that we need to deal with our environment in a way that protects us.

I just want to add to the conversation a couple of quotes. Some leaders in industry—for example, David Paterson, vice-president, corporate and environmental affairs, for General Motors Canada, said when we announced the cap-and-trade program, “GM Canada sees tackling climate change as both a necessity and an economic opportunity. As Ontario moves to place a value on carbon, we will work together and support the development of market mechanisms that are effective, protect our manufacturing competitiveness and support consumers interested in adopting new technologies, like our Chevrolet electric vehicles.”

I've got other quotes here—but as we move toward this environment, I think we need to be really, really cognizant.

I heard some of the previous debates, where we said, “Well, there are other parts of the world that are not doing anything, or doing very, very little.” It's true. It is true, which is unfortunate, but the reality is that we cannot afford to sit idle waiting for somebody else to do it for us. I think we need to show some leadership.

Ontario is not the only one. The majority of people in Canada—after this piece of legislation comes into play, on January 1, 2017, over 80% of Canadians will be under some kind of carbon-control mechanisms. I'm not so sure that we need to wait for China or India to come on board. I'm delighted to see that they are seeing the light, that they are recognizing that they need to do something, and that is really, really encouraging.

I would just say that we need to move forward in a measured way—and I think we're doing that—and we need to pass this legislation, because the longer we wait, the worse we get.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm very proud to rise today and speak to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, an act that my constituents of Ottawa–Orléans are very interested in seeing passed to protect our environment.

Last week, the official opposition critic for the environment and climate change brought up some points that I would like to address today. She stated that "Ontario's global share of greenhouse gas emissions is about 0.38%." There are a few things wrong with the logic of this. If everyone said that they were simply less than 1% of the problem, then every jurisdiction would continue to increase greenhouse gases and contribute to climate change. It would be similar to having 0.38% of my yearly crop fail due to a disease, and saying that we don't need to do anything about the disease because it is costly to fix.

In fact, Canada as a whole contributes 1.6% of GHG worldwide. There are more than 100 nations in the world, so our per capita emissions put the country in the top 10 list of global polluters.

1700

I also want to point out that we reached a terrifying milestone in global warming last week. Eric Holthaus, a meteorologist reporting on satellite image results and data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association, reported in Slate magazine on the dramatic new record that we just set. He stated: "It appears that average temperatures across the northern hemisphere have breached the two degrees Celsius above 'normal' mark for the first time in recorded history, and likely the first time since human civilization began thousands of years ago."

The two-degree mark was the agreed-upon climate change goal for the nations of the globe and the mark that climate change scientists set as the demarcation line for massive environmental disruption and change. We just briefly hit that mark last week.

We must also realize the climate change impact on our safety and our economy. The damages from abnormal weather events—events caused by climate change—have cost Ontario, I would say, close to \$1 billion in the past five years alone. In 2011, a tornado tore through beautiful downtown Goderich. Unfortunately, this tornado injured 37 people and, sadly, took the life of one. Economically, the damage to the town was nearly \$130 million. In 2013, a torrential downpour slammed Toronto, causing a significant amount of damage across the city. The total cost, according to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, topped \$850 million. So, Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there are so many reasons why we must act and why we must act now to make sure that the polluters are those that pay.

Over the weekend, the Leader of the Opposition stated he would be in favour of supporting a carbon tax. There are a few curious things about this statement.

Firstly, if this was the true belief of the leader, then why did he not once stand up for Ontarians and the en-

vironment when he was a member of the Harper government?

Secondly, while the party opposite talks about our plan, where are the specifics about their climate change plan?

Thirdly, what the opposition is proposing seems to me as taxing everyone, Mr. Speaker.

Our bill, Bill 172, if passed, would set up a cap-and-trade initiative that would see reductions in GHGs. The cap-and-trade system would make sure that polluters pay a price if they do not meet the targeted reductions. Subsequently, the revenue generated would go to a transparent fund that sets up nine different schedules for the use of the fund. Through the greenhouse gas reduction account, the government will reduce greenhouse gases through initiatives related to land use and buildings, waste management, research and innovation, and energy use—just to name a few of the nine different schedules.

Upgrading and transforming our public transit system helps everyone reduce their individual carbon footprint while equally reducing traffic congestion. The use of this fund can spur economic growth, and, as seen in other jurisdictions, cap and trade is a good system.

While the opposition is decrying the fund that will be set up, all projects that will be funded out of that will need to produce a reduction of greenhouse gases or they will not be eligible to be funded. These investments can help encourage growth, spur the economy and help out our environment.

Therefore, as most members can see, the cost of inaction is great. If we do not do something, we will continue to be part of the problem and we will pass a world of possible environmental chaos on to our children. As a mother, Mr. Speaker, I feel that it is my duty to do something to help her future.

So I encourage all members of this Legislature to support our initiative because, if we're trying to do nothing, if we don't try to save anything, I'm not sure that the environment will be there for our future generations.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Chair of Cabinet.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm delighted to offer a few words about this particular piece of legislation, which I think is both progressive and responsible.

I must say that on the weekend, I could feel the ground shaking. I think it hit 6.0, 6.1 or 6.2 on the Richter scale. Something had happened around Ottawa. I thought it was perhaps an earthquake that had happened and I thought, "Was that a result of global warming? Was that a result of climate change?" Indeed, it was not. It was, instead, the Leader of the Opposition saying the words "carbon tax" to the people of the province of Ontario—carbon pricing. Apparently, the seismic action that took place was the number of people falling off their chairs at the convention at the thought that there was going to be a major change in Conservative policy.

I welcome it. I must say I welcome it because—not you of course; you're neutral in the Chair—some of your colleagues who sit on the other side were what I would

call climate change deniers, and they have denounced this government. As late as last week, they were denouncing the government over the thought that perhaps a price would be put on carbon and that that money could be reinvested to ensure the environment was being protected in this province. So I welcome that change.

Some people call it a flip-flop; I don't like doing that. I simply note from biblical times—because a few people over there are aware of what happened in biblical times—the road to Damascus was a place where there was a conversion taking place. It appears that not only the road to Damascus from biblical times but the road to Ottawa represented a change. That's something I guess I should think of as positive, although, with all the denying that took place in the first place, I don't know whether there's credibility there, particularly when I look back and see the history of some members of the Legislature and where they happened to be when they had an opportunity to speak out in favour of the environment and were perhaps part of a group that was anything but in favour of the environment. So I look at that and say that one must take that into consideration.

While I welcome the support of the New Democratic Party, it has its caveats in it. It says, "We want to look more at the legislation in detail. We want to ensure that all of the funding that would be derived from the cap-and-trade system would be put back into environmental initiatives which would be positive for planet Earth, and specifically the province of Ontario and our country of Canada." I welcome the member for Toronto–Danforth, who, in a lengthy speech in the Legislature, detailed as it was, indicated his general support for legislation of this kind. The New Democratic Party is onside with that.

I will be looking with interest on how the official opposition will actually vote on this legislation when it comes down to voting for something that would improve the environment considerably. That's something I'll wait to see. It may happen or may not happen.

There's no question that there is a problem out there that exists and that bold initiatives are going to have to be taken. The easiest thing is to wait and blame somebody else. There's a lot of blame to go around. I think my previous colleagues who have spoken mentioned that in some other jurisdictions, they aren't moving as rapidly as we would like to see the people moving in other parts of the world. That's not an excuse for us not to be moving forward with those countries in the world and with those subnational jurisdictions which are taking action to improve the environment.

One of the things that I have noted—and I've got to admit to even being surprised by it. The member who sits opposite me from St. Thomas is well aware of this because he has raised the issue of asthma and issues of that nature. Last year, I cannot recall a smog day in the province of Ontario. I can remember when smog days were quite common in the summer. You would drive into the city of Toronto, come into the city of Toronto on public transit or whatever way you come into Toronto, and there would be smog right over the city and often

right down to the Niagara Peninsula. I can recall the coal-fired plant in Nanticoke when it was pouring out pollution. You would see this yellow stream across the sky over the Niagara Peninsula and that would be pollution going not only on the Niagara Peninsula and Ontario, but also our friends in Buffalo, who noted that there was some considerable pollution coming.

1710

There was a great financial penalty to pay in this. Now that we're not generating electricity using coal, it is more expensive in terms of the actual production of electrical power. If all people want to look at is the cost—there are some people who know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. Speaking to those individuals who know only that, the cost to the health care system was very heavy, I must say. Such groups as the Ontario Medical Association pleaded with government to tackle the issue of smog, which is related at least to the issue of global warming.

As a result of a number of initiatives that have been taken, we see that now in the province of Ontario, last year, we had no smog days. That's very positive. I don't have those respiratory problems that some people have had, but I recall living in the city of Sudbury way back, when the smoke—it was called smoke then—would come over the city and people were literally choking on the sulphur, which is sulphur dioxide, coming over the city. The west end of the city was dead in terms of vegetation.

That has changed considerably now. The first solution was to build a smokestack and send it to Sturgeon Falls. That was not a solution. But the second was a major initiative taken by the Peterson government to deal with the issue of acid rain, which cut those emissions by over three quarters and, as a result, we see a greening of Sudbury.

I'm optimistic, that with an initiative of this kind, two things will happen. It will stimulate certain parts of the economy considerably, those which are related to the environment. The second will protect us from a problem I think most people in the world now concede is happening, even the deniers south of the border; some of those individuals are now conceding that it is a problem, and we hope this legislation will assist in overcoming that problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to add my comments to the speeches given by the members from Northumberland–Quinte West and Ottawa–Orléans, and the Chair of the Cabinet.

The words "trust" and "transparency" were used throughout these speeches, and I wonder how many OPP investigations it takes to get this government to be transparent. We have three going on right now, and we certainly had an issue in the by-election up north. This is what is troubling the voters of this province.

Some 68% of people in Ontario, I believe it was stated, do not believe the government on their cap-and-

trade initiative. This problem gets right back to transparency. We've seen too many schemes in the past initiated by this government where the money has not gone where it's supposed to go. If this was a system of helping the people in Ontario with their gas heating bills and stuff like that, maybe people could buy into this thing. But this is a cash grab, pure and simple. This money can be used for things other than what the government is talking about.

I would also like to mention to the Chair of the Cabinet that if he wants to see the road to Damascus, he just has to come out to Wellington county, and I can show him that road because it goes to a little town called Damascus.

I also think that all members in this House should thank Elizabeth Witmer for her initiation in getting the coal gas plants shut down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always a pleasure to rise and make a few brief comments.

We know already that we're hearing from Ontario families who are really concerned about this piece of legislation and how it's actually going to impact them. While the NDP certainly supports a fair, effective and transparent cap-and-trade system, there are a lot of unanswered questions here.

We met today with the Environmental Commissioner. We actually had a little bit of discussion with her. This piece of legislation completely omits any mention of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and whether she'll have access to the data or the information she needs to actually write reports on this cap-and-trade system when it's implemented.

She did tell us she has the right to subpoena whatever information she wants, but it seems to me and certainly to the NDP that she shouldn't have to subpoena information. That information should be readily available to her. It's she and her staff who actually get to make the decision on what they're going to write reports on.

On the issue of transparency, this is a repeat of the Hydro One sell-off, where we see a private corporation potentially being responsible for this cap-and-trade system as well. We see none of the eight commissioners of the Legislative Assembly having any oversight whatsoever for the Hydro One sell-off piece, nor will they have any oversight for this arm's-length agency that they plan to hand the system off to.

I think it's unacceptable that we're implementing increases to the taxpayers of this province while we're not implementing anything for the polluters, as the member from Ottawa-Orléans called for, for four years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Beaches-East York.

Applause.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to my colleagues for applauding.

It gives me unbelievable pleasure to be able to respond to my seatmate, the member from Northumberland-

Quinte West, on his comments, and our government whip, and now I see the Chair of the Cabinet commenting on this particular piece of legislation. I have the privilege, of course, of acting as the PA for environment, which is why I get this great opportunity to respond more often than not to these.

We heard from the member from Northumberland-Quinte West about how it is—

Interjection.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Typically, I am in agriculture most of the time, but they've asked me to help out on this because some others weren't capable. But put that aside a little bit.

The member from Northumberland-Quinte West reminds us all about that great quote, "Out of the mouths of babes oft times comes great wisdom." Your nephew is absolutely—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Grandson.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Grandson. It's absolutely true that if it's going up, it's just full of CO₂, and he saw it better than anyone would have seen it. It's there and it needs to be addressed and needs to be looked after.

Of course, our government whip talked a lot about the greenhouse gas reduction account. This is revenue-neutral in a sense that the money that is raised into the account gets spent back out in programs that are being helpful to Ontarians across the province—in renovation tax credits, buying hybrid vehicles and investing in infrastructure hybrids, and that's so extremely important.

But then I'd also like to comment to the Chair of the Cabinet. This particular member has presided over some of the greatest environmental changes that have happened in this province going back to his time as Minister of the Environment in the Peterson government, when we brought in the Blue Box Program under his watch, a world-renowned program duplicated across North America and Europe. This man, this member, you'll remember, brought in all the changes that addressed pollution and acid rain and made fundamental changes to emissions in this province. It was one of the greatest programs to stop polluters from putting this in the air and improving the environment. My kudos to him

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Speaker, I don't know how to follow that, but my accolades to the Chair of the Cabinet as well.

We've heard a lot of debate here today about a lot of things, but I think I want to go back to something that will really reduce greenhouse gases, and that's a bill that's going to be debated this week at committee, Bill 76, my private member's bill. Like they always say, you've got to promote yourself, right?

That's a bill that would actually do something. It would reduce greenhouse gases. It would encourage industry to make those types of changes, whether it's rail transport or marine transport. It would lead to the creation of jobs in Ontario because it would build up an LNG facility in Ontario, probably in my riding of Sarnia-

Lambton, to be parochial. I've got to mention Sarnia–Lambton. Bill Davis always used to mention Brampton; I've got to mention Sarnia–Lambton.

This would actually lead to a reduction in greenhouse gases. It would take a very minimal amount of tax dollars to do this, as far as the HST on the price of those motors, to encourage industry to make those types of changes. It's a positive thing that you could do. You could win industry over. Transport traffic is only about 3% of the traffic on the road, but it generates up to 30% of the greenhouse gases. It would certainly help reduce that kind of pollution that's out there now.

1720

The marine traffic is burning bunker C. They're ready to make those kinds of investments on those freighters on the Great Lakes. They're ready to make those changes; so are the freighters in the United States. This is something we can do.

It's already taking place in the United States. All kinds of infrastructure has been built in the United States. The province of Quebec has done the same. The 400-series of highways in Ontario, from Quebec to the Michigan border and New York, is the next stretch that needs to be done. This is happening today. Robert transport runs into Toronto every day with transports with LNG.

Let's make it happen. Support Bill 76. It will help support Bill 172.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments.

The Chair of Cabinet can respond.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thanks to all the members who have responded. I want to concentrate on one particular response that I received. It opened the door to an interesting dialogue on this. That was the member for Perth–Wellington, who talked about something that happened in Sudbury: a by-election in Sudbury and an OPP investigation.

That opened the door to the fact that I can recall something that happened in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, where the Progressive Conservative Party needed a seat for its leader, John Tory—a good man and a good mayor of the city of Toronto. The party operatives went to the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and said, “We would like you to vacate your seat. As an exchange, we will give you a job with the Progressive Conservative caucus.” As time passed, the member actually left her seat. We know our friend as Laurie Scott. She left her seat, came to Queen's Park, got a good job here, and John Tory ran for that seat—not successfully, but he ran for that seat. Now, why was there not an OPP investigation in that situation that the member raised if there was an OPP investigation in the situation in Sudbury? Nobody actually got a job out of the situation in Sudbury, but somebody did get a job out of the situation in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

I wasn't going to raise the issue, but since he raised the issue, I want to know how one situation is not the same as the other. I think we all in this House like to say that turnabout is fair play, and we've had turnabout.

Anyway, I want to say that I have respected all the comments of the members. I think this is a good debate in the Legislature. I wish my friend from Sarnia–Lambton well in his particular bill, which deserves a lot of support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, I'm proud to stand up and comment on Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, the bill that would amend the Environmental Protection Act by repealing the definition of “greenhouse gas.” It would also set up an emissions trading scheme passed by the Liberals in 2009. It would also set up a slush fund for this government to spend their money.

Mr. Speaker, before I start, I'd like to commend our critic for the environment, from Huron–Bruce, who's done an outstanding job pointing out the gaps and lack of oversight in this bill, which will only cost taxpayers dollars down the road.

I would also like to commend her on her hard-working defence that she undertakes every time the Minister of the Environment decides to attack her on Twitter instead of having a face-to-face conversation with her, which would be the proper way to deal with your opposition critic.

However, I do want to go forward and talk about what happened this weekend with our party. We opened up to create and look for policy throughout Ontario with a website, forontario.ca. We've invited everybody from across the province to log on to forontario.ca and give their input—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize. The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London has the floor and I need to hear him.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I'll only be 20 minutes if they could hold their tongues for a little while.

So forontario.ca has been set up for the people of this province to give feedback and opinion so that we can develop policy that resonates with Ontarians. It's consultation. It's something that this government has stopped doing for many years, as we've seen previously in the budget that is going to be passed this month and the fact that the finance committee has yet to finish the report, writing on the consultations they received, and that this budget has already been presented. I find it quite absurd that this government has walked away from consulting with Ontarians. The Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, the official opposition, has opened up that gate, and we're welcoming people from all walks of life to go on to forontario.ca and give their comments and opinions so that we can form policy for the upcoming election.

Back to this Bill 172: We do have concerns with it. We have concerns that this act lacks accountability and creates a fund that is not transparent and that the Liberals will use to finance their pet projects. It is wrong for this government to create this unaccountable fund to pay for their years of scandal and mismanagement. We are

positively sure that this money will not go towards environmental progress, but instead will be used to pay for previous programs that this government has already committed and paid for.

Mr. Speaker, we do agree that action needs to be taken on greenhouse gases. However, simply to create a fund to go after taxpayers—a slush fund—is the wrong way to go about it. This government intends to get their cap-and-trade system up and running by January of next year. They have talked about creating a cap-and-trade fund since 2009. However, it seems to be rushing at the last moment in order to maximize the amount of money the slush fund will create. They've spent many months and many photo ops talking about a cap-and-trade scheme, but they have delivered few details. In fact, many farmers in my riding are quite concerned with the unknown that might be coming before them, because farmers are the true stewards of our environment and do take certain measures to mitigate their carbon footprint.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to mention other programs that this government could be utilizing to deal with high greenhouse gases and also improving the environment. It's something they have walked away from over the past few years, and it's quite important, in my riding especially.

I'm talking about utilizing conservation and wetlands. Ducks Unlimited is a great organization—I attend quite a number of their events in my riding and even attend the one in Toronto—for strong support for the protection of wetlands throughout this province. Wetlands are a great sink for carbon. They trap carbon from the environment naturally. They also act as a sponge to mitigate flooding. We mentioned earlier about Toronto having floods. Part of the problem in Toronto is there are no wetlands anymore. They've gotten rid of their wetlands that help mitigate that flooding. I don't know why this government couldn't invest more in wetlands, utilize wetlands. First, it's working with the landowners of this province, and, second, it would be decreasing the amount of carbon in the atmosphere. It's natural and it's not a costly burden on all Ontarians.

I brought up one of the reports, a comprehensive wetland policy summary and jurisdiction analysis, from Ducks Unlimited. It talks about each province that does invest in wetlands and has a comprehensive wetlands plan. Manitoba: yes. Alberta: yes. Nova Scotia: yes. Prince Edward Island: yes. New Brunswick: yes. Ontario: no. They have no overarching policy or framework for wetlands, no mitigation sequence. I find that quite concerning, that this government is pushing the big carbon and cap-and-trade environmental push, yet at the same time, they haven't planned for any process for dealing with the wetlands, the most natural way to deal with carbon in our system.

There are many organizations that are willing and able to help with regard to wetland preservation. We've got Ducks Unlimited, which, as I said, is a great organization; Nature Conservancy, which is really doing well; and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters—other

than farmers, probably the other greatest environmentalists are our anglers and hunters. They are the ones who want to preserve our natural environment in order to maintain the wildlife that are present throughout the communities.

1730

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. I read a report that also says that southern Ontario has lost 72% of its wetlands. That is quite a concern. That's quite a concern for all Ontarians, the fact that our natural wetlands, which are a great source of carbon sequestration, are lost. They also prevent the flooding.

The other program that would help with wetlands—and maybe the government could expand upon it—is the ALUS program. I don't know if you've heard of the ALUS program. There's a program in my riding in which the Ministry of Natural Resources works with the conservation authority to rehabilitate farmland that can no longer be farmed back into a habitat. It would either be good for bees or be good for wetlands. That is a great organization and a great program, which I hope is expanded beyond—I think it's in Norfolk county and Elgin county. The Long Point Region Conservation Authority is the head of that ALUS program.

That leads me into what this government did to the stewardship programs in this province. A stewardship program was a group of volunteers who were dedicated to the environmental land stewardship opportunities, with the advice to landowners, throughout different counties in this province. My stewardship council, the Elgin Stewardship Council, is a strong organization, and it survived what this government did to stewardship councils. This organization will work with landowners, help find matching grants and transform unusable farmland into wetlands or expand upon wetlands on people's farms. Every summer, I do a tour of the projects that are going on in my riding, and I find it just amazing the creation of these wetlands—the animals, the ducks that are around on the wetlands; the trees that are growing; the vegetation. It's just amazing what these people create.

Up till about four years ago, the government would allow the Ministry of Natural Resources a point person for these stewardship councils to utilize, to help coordinate these plans—because these are just a group of volunteers—in order to create these stewardship county councils. It would also work with these stewardship councils in order to ensure that they're functional.

Well, this government cut that program. In a budget cut a number of years ago, the environmentalist government on the other side cut the stewardship program, and many stewardship councils throughout the province were lost. Now, we're talking about trying to restore wetlands in this province, and this government cut a program that was helping to recreate wetlands. When you re-create wetlands, as I said before, you decrease the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and you also mitigate plenty of floods.

So I'm hoping this government goes forward and takes another look and utilizes the Ministry of Natural

Resources in its fight against climate change. There are so many ways that you could utilize the expertise and the abilities of that ministry to decrease the amount of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere.

Now, this one comment—I take it over to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, when he made a point about having a fund that isn't accountable or put off in another section. The Ministry of Natural Resources has a special-purpose account which takes all the hunting and fishing fees and royalties. It's supposed to re-spend that on the wildlife and the environment and reinvest it into the community, so it's supposed to go both ways. We can't get a detailed report out of this government. So even if we do put in an account for this Bill 172, this slush fund, even if there is a separate account, they aren't going to be accountable to the people of Ontario. They will not release reports.

I have been working on this government for four years to get a special-purpose report accounting of how they spend their money, to get grant numbers. I went through the privacy commissioner and his response was, "They don't keep records." If they don't keep records of how they spend their money, they're certainly not going to do it with the slush fund that they're creating. So it's quite interesting that they talk about how this is going to be a great fund to utilize. We know that it's going to be abused under this government.

I'll quickly go to what I think was quite an interesting interview two weeks ago, on budget day. I was sitting at home. I enjoy watching Steve Paikin on *The Agenda*. I find him quite interesting, he has interesting guests and he asks some pretty interesting questions. That night, he had Greg Sabora on. For those that may not know who Greg Sabora is, and I don't know how you wouldn't—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Sorbara.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Sorbara?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Sorbara.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It doesn't matter. He was an MPP from Vaughan and former finance minister. He had comments regarding the proposed Bill 172. Greg Sorbara commented that the minister said that there would be no tax increases; however, Mr. Sorbara said that there would be an increase of \$1.9 billion that would ultimately flow to the consumer. In other words, they'll create this fund, create this cap-and-trade scheme, tax the polluters, and basically that money will flow down to everyday Ontarians with higher fees and everything.

Mr. Sorbara even called out this government—his own government, his own people over there; he was part of this government for such a long time. Even then, he's saying that industries will pass the costs through the system, raising prices at the gas pumps and in our homes, and eventually raising prices for everything for consumers.

Greg Sorbara even said that there's no evidence that the cap-and-trade system significantly reduces carbon emissions. All it does is create a large bureaucracy—and this government loves large bureaucracies—and lots of money for the government. Their own member has said

that they're creating their own bureaucracy and their own slush fund. That's coming from a former finance minister. So I find it interesting that even Mr. Sorbara is skeptical of this scheme.

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Wow, Mr. Speaker. The member from Burlington is heckling me. I understand her problems over there and the fact that they think their way is the only way. We're just saying: Don't create a slush fund that we know you're going to abuse down the road as a government.

We go back and we remember that this is the same government that said that the gas plant scandal only cost \$40 million. This is the same government that created a health tax for the health care system, but that money is no longer in the health care system, it goes to general revenue. This is the same government that is saying that they're not creating a slush fund. We've got to be careful about this. We've got to be careful about the lack of accountability that this government has shown over the years, and we have to ensure that when they do price carbon, it's done in a responsible way that's not going to jack up the price of everything in this province.

It's unfortunate. This government has a way to work with the wetlands of this province, to come up with a comprehensive plan to restore the environment; to work with landowners throughout this province, who are more than willing to utilize their land and create wetlands so that they act as natural carbon sinks in this province; to work with groups like Ducks Unlimited and the stewardship councils throughout Ontario and create conservation and an Ontario that, again, could be an environmental leader.

Our party takes a lot of hits from this government on the environment. Bill Davis created the Ministry of the Environment.

Interjection: Bill Davis did. You're right.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, Mike Harris created more parkland than any Premier ever created. We've always been part of the environmental talk. It's not an issue this government likes to hear—the fact that we care about the environment on this side of the House; we care about health care on this side of the House; we care about social issues on this side of the House. This government has to realize that they aren't the only people in this world that actually want to do better for Ontarians. The official opposition, under the leadership of Patrick Brown, is going to be delivering an opposition to this government, a different choice come 2018, to ensure that the people of Ontario have a government that's accountable and transparent and that is properly funding health care, properly funding environmental programs, getting rid of the waste and scandal and working to lower the debt in this province.

1740

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in this House. This is my first opportunity to be able to

speaking on this bill and respond to the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London. Although we support this bill in principle, we share many of the concerns that he expressed; specifically, accountability, transparency and whether it's going to be fair.

I'll give you a fairness example that's really coming to a head in rural Ontario and northern Ontario. This government puts a tax on fuel, on gas, to help fund their carbon change initiative. Okay? At the same time, they announce a \$100-million program to help people retrofit their houses to be more energy efficient. Good so far? But that program only applies to people who heat their homes with natural gas.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, it doesn't.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, it doesn't.

Mr. John Vanthof: Unless you've changed it.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, we never changed it. It never did.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's through Enbridge and Union Gas.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Perfect. I'm glad we've clarified that. I will publish it on my website if you send it to me.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: This is what debate is about. I'm glad to hear that, because we've asked this question previously and been unable to get the answer. If that is, indeed, the case and the application process is actually workable—because, again, a lot of the people in northern Ontario have no connection to Enbridge or Union Gas, who are administering this program, because it was announced through them. It has not been made public how someone who heats with wood or oil or propane actually gets this program.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Same deal.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's one thing to deal with Union and Enbridge if you're already dealing with them. But how do you deal with them if you're not a customer?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to rise in this place. I wanted to join the conversation.

The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, in his rather passionate discourse, talked about areas of interest and concern to me, primarily because, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, I'm honoured to have in my mandate letter the issues related to conservation authorities and wetlands. As the honourable member may know—I just want to inform him if he perhaps missed it—we're in the midst of a robust conversation and consultation provincially on wetlands. Why are we doing that? I will agree with the member that it is an area of interest and some concern, and certainly we share that with him. Wetland preservation is a priority for this government. That's precisely why we've undertaken that consultation.

I'll also agree with him on a couple of other things. Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy of Canada

are critically important partners to our government and to our ministry, particularly when it comes to wetlands. If I may, on conservation authorities, since he mentioned them too—also in my mandate letter—I'm proud to be leading, on behalf of this government, a province-wide consultation on conservation authorities. I just came from OGRA/ROMA, where I had the opportunity to hear from municipalities that are thrilled with this government. For the first time in 20 years, we're looking at conservation authorities. Why? Because they're critical in the climate change conversation. We have to make sure that they have the tools to do that.

What else do they talk about? They talk about the fact that under the Harris government, conservation authorities were downloaded onto municipalities, which left us with a framework of uncertainty. Of course, that needs to be looked at too. We're doing that as a government because we care about our conservation authorities and the role as partners to municipalities and others in the ongoing conversation about climate change.

Finally, I'm glad to see that they have been enlightened on the other side to see that a price on carbon is the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I thought, did a very good job describing work by Conservatives on issues environmental, and specifically the Ontario government, over many, many years. The Environmental Protection Act, for example, was first brought in by the provincial Conservatives.

I appreciate his focus on Bill 172, the climate change act, offering what I consider a very practical, environmentally sound, scientifically based approach when he made mention of ALUS, which stands for alternative land use services, again providing an economic incentive for landowners, for farmers, for those who own marshland, to set aside some of that marginal land, oftentimes wetland, for wildlife habitat and linking that with Bill 172. We have the advantage in this province, in this country, of vast acreages not only of farmland but forestland, prairie land and wetland.

This is the kind of environment that absorbs carbon dioxide. I know we talk about carbon, but the real issue is carbon dioxide. Water absorbs carbon dioxide. Land absorbs carbon dioxide. A parking lot in the city of Toronto does not absorb carbon dioxide. A roof on a warehouse in Ottawa does not absorb carbon dioxide. We have these natural advantages. We need to work with Mother Nature. There are an awful lot of science-based measures that can be taken to deal with this issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's indeed a pleasure to stand and make reference to some of the comments made by my friend from Elgin–Middlesex–London as well as members of the government who stood and made comments.

I was intrigued earlier when the member from Northumberland–Quinte West talked about the Blue Box

Program. I was reminded of a meeting I had with people at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who told us there was a government plan out there to look at the Blue Box Program and where it's headed and to get a fairer deal for municipalities, because right now they're subsidizing the producers, I think up to 30% in Ontario, and they're fed up with it. They don't want to do it anymore. They told us about the example in Vancouver where the mayor of Vancouver said, "Hey, the producers own this stuff. It's their responsibility. We're getting out of the business. If they're not going to pay us 100% of the cost of recovering the material in the blue box, they can do it themselves." I think that could well happen in Ontario as well if the government doesn't take steps on this.

In response to the member from Burlington when she mentioned the ROMA/OGRA conference, we also heard from the municipality of Chatham-Kent, where they have 2,500 drains. There's a huge conflict between the Drainage Act and the Endangered Species Act, where they have to drain, repair and dredge 500 drains a year and yet, under the Endangered Species Act, they'll have to go out and hire five field biologists to do the research, examination and investigation before they can do their work of draining the municipal drains to get the water off the farmers' fields to protect the crops. The government isn't doing enough. The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario agrees that the two acts are in conflict and something must be done and must be done soon, or else we're going to have great havoc in the fields in Essex, Kent and Lambton counties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London to reply.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank those who commented from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Burlington, Haldimand–Norfolk and Windsor–Tecumseh.

I'm glad the member from Burlington mentioned that she was PA for the MNR. Hopefully she can get me the information for the special-purpose account that I've been asking for for years. I think it will be great. I throw it out to you. I hope to have it in my box by the end of the week.

We had some great programs we mentioned here that I think the government should take a hold of, working toward ensuring that our wetlands are restored, working with groups like Ducks Unlimited and the Nature Conservancy to ensure that we can work together with our stewardship councils throughout the province, to work with landowners to revitalize our environment and return the wetlands.

1750

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk again talked about the ALUS program. It's a great program. I think it's something that could be expanded upon province-wide. The members from the Long Point Region Conservation Authority have done an amazing job, as well as the municipalities of Bayham and—I'm not sure which ones are in Norfolk or not.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Oh, Haldimand—Norfolk county.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Norfolk county. Great programs working together.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention Bill 76 from the MPP for Sarnia–Lambton. It's been talked about a lot this week. It is going to committee on Thursday. There's overwhelming support on this side of the House for the bill, so I'm hoping the government works with the other parties at the committee to ensure this bill gets the proper amendments and comes back for third reading as soon as possible. It's another measure this government can take to improve the environment in this province.

I think we don't need to focus on one particular item to fix the environment. There's a multitude of ideas to choose from, to work together and achieve the goal we want to achieve, which is a healthy, safe environment for the generation of today and the generations of tomorrow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): A point of order to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to correct my record. At the end of my just-made remarks, I said Essex, Kent and Lambton counties. I meant to say Essex, Chatham-Kent and Lambton counties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane, and today on Bill 172, climate change and the low-carbon economy.

Often I've heard, in the speeches today and others I've heard about climate change—I'd just like to clarify something: We are fully in favour of doing something about the climate change issue we face today. But a lot of people talk about climate change like it's static, like when I hear people who say, "We've had a severe thunderstorm," or "We've had floods," and that's an example of climate change. It's not. For climate change, we have to look at long-term trends, but to use every individual climatic event as an example of climate change, I think, is giving a false backdrop to the issue.

I've stood in this House often and talked about where my farm is. It's in what was a former glacial lake. It was caused by the glaciers. That is long-term climate change, because where we farmed, it was all ice. Where the moraines are, the Oak Ridges moraine, is how far the glaciers got. So climate change isn't a static thing.

What we're discussing here is the climate change that's man-made. Because of things we've done as a species, we are speeding up the climate change or changing the climate. I think we have to look at this whole debate as that being the part of climate change that we are looking at addressing. Because the climate is constantly changing long-term, we have to look specifically at what we can change.

We have good examples of where we have actually been forced to take the initiative, and where we have

done it. It has come across a couple of times here. I believe that the Chair of Cabinet was speaking about Sudbury, and it's a good example, where a lot of sulphur dioxide was spewed out and they took action. I don't have the historical knowledge that some of the people here do about what happened, but I do know that even in agriculture where I live, we actually got a benefit out of the sulphur, because when you have a little bit of sulphur, it helps to grow crops. Since the Sudbury basin has created a lot less sulphur, which is a good thing, we've had to adjust our fertilizer mixtures to add more sulphur to make up for what is not coming from Sudbury.

That's an example of how climate change has far-reaching effects. I hope, if I am mistaken on this, that somebody corrects me, but there is a kind of cap-and-trade system for sulphur, and it's still working today. There's an example of how this could work.

What most people, the people I talk to—and others have expressed this: We need a policy that's effective, fair and transparent. If we can work together to get that, we can work together to solve the issue.

You can't blame people for having some questions regarding the transparency part, because this government doesn't have a very good record on transparency. I've heard the Minister of the Environment say that the money collected is going to go in a separate account, and the regulations don't allow it to be spent anywhere else. That sounds comforting. But the money that was basically wasted to move those two gas plants—I'm assuming there was some regulation to stop that as well, but that didn't happen.

I'm assuming that there was some kind of regulation somewhere that would have stopped—should have stopped—the problems we had with Ornge Air, but that didn't happen. There was a lot of money and initiative wasted.

That's an issue. It's fine to say that there are regulations, but this government has not earned the trust to be able to say that without putting it on the table.

The best thing would be a separate account, a true separate account.

Hon. Liz Sandals: It is a separate account.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, it's not a true separate account.

Another issue that I don't think too many people have touched on today is that it has to be effective. If you have X amount of dollars and you say, "Okay, we're going to create this program, and it has something to do with climate change, so therefore it's fundable," that's not proof that it's actually the most effective way to spend the money. There should be a way—and I'm sure someone has the energy and the brainpower to figure this out—to say, "This is the unit of carbon that we can eliminate per X amount of dollars, per \$1,000, and if it doesn't meet that criteria, it's not a good program." I haven't seen that, but something like that is vital for this to actually work, because that's the part about it being effective.

Paying for a subsidy on electric cars might not be the most effective way to spend the money. We don't know, because there has been no real calculation to show that X amount of dollars paid to subsidize electric cars is actually going to take out so many units of carbon. I haven't seen it in any other documentation. That's a big issue.

You're looking at me, Speaker. Are we—okay. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Continued from back cover

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Family Responsibility Office

Mr. Jeff Yurek..... 7867

Leamington ketchup

Mr. Taras Natyshak..... 7867

Lung health

Mr. Arthur Potts 7867

Hospital funding

Mr. Jim Wilson 7867

Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

Mr. John Vanthof 7868

Water fluoridation

Mr. Bob Delaney 7868

Long-term care

Mme France Gélinas 7868

Health care funding

Miss Monique Taylor 7869

Caregivers

Ms. Harinder Malhi..... 7869

Special-needs students

Mr. Jim McDonell..... 7869

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Jennifer K. French..... 7869

Ontario Retirement Pension Plan

Mrs. Cristina Martins 7869

Health care funding

Ms. Laurie Scott 7870

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), 2016, Bill 132, Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2016 sur le Plan d'action contre la violence et le harcèlement sexuels (en soutien aux survivants et en opposition à la violence et au harcèlement sexuels), projet de loi 132, Mme MacCharles

Hon. Tracy MacCharles 7870

Ms. Harinder Malhi..... 7871

Ms. Daiene Vernile 7873

Ms. Laurie Scott 7874

Mr. John Yakabuski 7875

Ms. Sylvia Jones..... 7876

Mr. Randy Hillier 7877

Ms. Peggy Sattler 7879

Third reading vote deferred..... 7884

Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016, Bill 172, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone, projet de loi 172, M. Murray

Mr. Bob Delaney 7884

Hon. Deborah Matthews 7885

Mr. Yvan Baker..... 7886

Mr. Randy Pettapiece 7887

Mr. Paul Miller..... 7887

Mrs. Laura Albanese 7887

Mr. Toby Barrett 7888

Mr. Bob Delaney 7888

Mr. Randy Pettapiece 7888

Mr. Paul Miller..... 7891

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri..... 7891

Mr. Robert Bailey..... 7892

Ms. Cindy Forster..... 7892

Mr. Randy Pettapiece 7892

Mr. Percy Hatfield..... 7892

Mr. Arthur Potts 7895

Mr. Jack MacLaren 7895

Mr. Paul Miller..... 7896

Hon. Liz Sandals 7896

Mr. Percy Hatfield..... 7896

Mr. Lou Rinaldi..... 7897

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde..... 7898

Hon. James J. Bradley 7898

Mr. Randy Pettapiece 7899

Ms. Cindy Forster..... 7900

Mr. Arthur Potts 7900

Mr. Robert Bailey..... 7900

Hon. James J. Bradley 7901

Mr. Jeff Yurek..... 7901

Mr. John Vanthof 7903

Ms. Eleanor McMahan..... 7904

Mr. Toby Barrett 7904

Mr. Percy Hatfield..... 7904

Mr. Jeff Yurek..... 7905

Mr. John Vanthof 7905

Second reading debate deemed adjourned 7906

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 7 March 2016 / Lundi 7 mars 2016

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Monte McNaughton	7853
Mr. Joe Dickson	7853
Mr. Robert Bailey	7853
Ms. Peggy Sattler	7853
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7853
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	7853
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	7853
Mme France Gélinas	7853
Hon. Glen R. Murray	7853

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Mental health services

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	7853
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7853

Climate change

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	7854
Hon. Deborah Matthews	7855
Hon. Glen R. Murray	7855

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7856
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7856

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	7856
Hon. Deborah Matthews	7856

Privatization of public assets

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	7857
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	7857

Special-needs students

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	7858
Hon. Liz Sandals	7858

Ontario budget

Mr. John Fraser	7858
Hon. Bill Mauro	7859

Mental health services

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	7859
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7859

Mental health services

Mr. Paul Miller.....	7860
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7860

Child and youth services

Mr. Chris Ballard	7860
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	7860

Ring of Fire

Mr. Norm Miller.....	7861
Hon. Michael Gravelle	7861

Domestic violence

Ms. Peggy Sattler	7862
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	7862

Ontario budget

Ms. Harinder Malhi	7862
Hon. Dipika Damerla	7862

Public transit

Mr. Michael Harris.....	7863
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	7863

Food safety

Mme France Gélinas	7864
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	7864

Decorum in chamber

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7864
-------------------------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7864
----------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Pharmacists

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	7864
---------------------	------

Animal protection

Ms. Cheri DiNovo	7865
------------------------	------

Member's newsletter

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	7865
------------------------	------

James Gillies

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7865
----------------------------	------

Camp Eagle Nest

Mme France Gélinas	7865
--------------------------	------

Western Mississauga

Mr. Bob Delaney	7866
-----------------------	------

Maple syrup

Mr. Monte McNaughton	7866
----------------------------	------

Royal Ottawa Inspiration Awards

Mr. John Fraser	7866
-----------------------	------

GO Transit

Mr. Granville Anderson	7866
------------------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover