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Thursday 10 October 2013

Jeudi 10 octobre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
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111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 October 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 octobre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRONIC PERSONAL HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS PERSONNELS SUR LA SANTÉ FIGURANT DANS UN DOSSIER DE SANTÉ ÉLECTRONIQUE

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Ms. Matthews, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 78, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to electronic health records / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne les dossiers de santé électroniques.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Milloy?

Hon. John Milloy: At the outset, I want to just point out that I'll be speaking only for a brief moment and then turning it over to the Minister of Health as well as the minister's parliamentary assistant, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham.

The bill, and I know the minister will go into some detail, obviously deals with the issue of electronic health records. I can certainly say, from my experience as an MPP, I have had the opportunity to work with local physicians, with hospitals, with health care providers and to attend numerous demonstrations of the strides that we are making in terms of electronic health records, in terms of the dollars that it's saving in making sure that we don't have to duplicate tests, but more importantly, the way in which it's benefiting patient care in that physicians and health care providers have access to a whole history, as I mentioned, of tests, of pharmaceuticals a person is taking, of their whole medical history, which helps them provide better care, faster care—and as I say, Mr. Speaker, you always have to look at the whole issue of efficiency and cost. It means that we don't duplicate tests, it means that we're able to make the best decisions at that moment and in the best interests of the patient.

So I look forward to the debate on this bill. I think it's a very important bill in establishing a framework around this very important headway that we're making in terms of health care. With that, I will turn it over to the Minister of Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise in the Legislature today to speak to the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2013, that I introduced on May 29, 2013. This legislation, if passed, would protect the personal health information of patients to ensure that their electronic health records can be safely and securely shared by health providers within a patient's circle of care. The proposed legislation would amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, known as PHIPA, the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

Until now, our existing privacy laws have done a great job of protecting patient privacy. But as technology progresses and we enable the sharing of electronic health records between health providers in a patient's circle of care, we need new rules in place to further safeguard patients' privacy. I think we can all agree that patients have a right to have their privacy protected when it comes to their personal health information. This includes the right to choose what information may be shared with other providers.

To give effect to these rights and support patient privacy, we need rigorous privacy rules in place for patient records. That's what these proposed amendments seek to achieve. They are as much about giving patients greater control over how and with whom their electronic medical histories are shared as they are about enabling providers to better work together on a shared system of electronic health.

Mr. Speaker, comprehensive consultations about this proposed legislation were held with more than 50 health system organizations, and the proposed legislation was developed in close collaboration with our health care partners, including eHealth Ontario, Ontario's nursing and medical associations, and our health professional regulatory colleges. But most importantly, we relied on the advice of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We could not have developed this important legislation without the crucial and valued input of her and her office. I am very pleased to say that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has expressed her full support for the proposed amendments on the grounds that they will support shared electronic health record development, while also protecting patients' personal privacy.

The proposed Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act would:

—establish privacy and security requirements for the shared electronic health record;

- clarify the authority under which health information custodians may collect, use and disclose personal health information in the electronic health record;
- establish a committee to advise the minister on electronic health record-related matters;
- establish rules protecting an individual's right to make a consent directive to mask their personal health information; and
- describe limited occasions for which consent overrides may be permissible.

These proposed amendments would, if passed, also seek to double the existing penalties for privacy violations for those responsible for handling personal health information.

The amendments to the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act, if passed, would allow prescribers to use electronic means to provide an instruction on a prescription, which will help enable electronic prescribing.

Mr. Speaker, technological advances have resulted in better quality care and have added greater value to our system through productivity gains. They have also reduced wait times, given providers better diagnostic tools that are saving lives and are helping patients better manage their own health and well-being.

Virtual health initiatives are eliminating the barrier of distance, increasing access to care, and electronic health records are enabling a more patient-centred system. Each day, more and more clinicians are able to share lab, diagnostic and other patient information through projects like hospital reporting systems, which allow community-based physicians to view reports on patients who have been discharged from hospital.

The Ontario laboratories information system, or OLIS, which collects information from the province's community, hospital and public health labs to create a centralized record of a patient's lab test results, can be accessed by authorized providers across the province. And the emergency neurosurgery image transfer system, or ENITS, is ensuring that head trauma patients and those with other neurological disorders, regardless of where they are in the province, have access to the guidance and expertise of a neurosurgeon 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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We're also advancing virtual health initiatives like telemedicine, which allows providers to use video conferencing and other advanced information and communication technologies to provide care to Ontario's widely dispersed population, and e-consultation, which will make it easier for providers to communicate with each other and with their patients.

Speaker, these amendments, if passed, would enable our government to fulfill our commitment to provide a safe and secure electronic health record for all the people of Ontario by 2015, while at the same time protecting the privacy of their personal health information. I'm pleased to say that we are on track to reach that goal. Our work will continue beyond 2015 to better support provincial transformation priorities, improve the quality and safety of patient care and leverage further efficiencies in the

health care system. Secure, shared electronic health records that protect the privacy of every patient's personal health information are a key driver of health system transformation. Electronic health records are known to improve the quality, safety and integration of patient care, as well as convenience for patients.

Electronic health records will also play an important role in community health links, which were created to provide better, more coordinated care to meet the needs of our most complex patients, many of them seniors. These are patients in our health care system who typically need the most from our health care spending. They use the system most frequently, yet their conditions aren't improving. In fact, these high users of the system, who account for around 5% of our patient population, consume more than two thirds of our health care dollars.

Community health links are a truly innovative model of care, one that will improve patient outcomes, first for our most complex patients, but eventually extended beyond that. Community health links are the next step in the transformation of Ontario's health system and flow naturally from other recent reforms. Health links strengthen the link between all of the health care providers in a given geographic area who are providing care to individuals with high needs.

That network of linked health care providers works as a team to collectively manage the needs of those patients with the greatest needs, in partnership with the patient, the family and the community, so they move smoothly through the system. In addition, health links can potentially have an enormous impact on our health care costs by making the care of multiple chronic patients, many of them seniors, more efficient as well as more effective. Health links will help us improve care and will lead to better use of taxpayer dollars.

The electronic sharing of information by health link partners will support better coordination and will bring better value by saving time and reducing duplication. Our community health links will seek to leverage provincial e-health initiatives to support more effective, high-quality care by enabling the consistent maintenance and sharing of a patient's record. They will enable effective, timely communication and collaboration within the patient's circle of care and between the provider and the patient, and they will enable the removal of physical barriers to care delivery through the virtualization of care.

Key to our efforts to support community health links with technology is the planned development of a care coordination tool which will meet the health links core business requirements for enabling care coordination.

Throughout the health care system, with the help of electronic health records, health care providers are able to make better clinical decisions by having complete and up-to-date patient information literally at their fingertips. The risk of negative drug events is being reduced thanks to more complete personal health information available to a provider for treatment. And the health care system itself, along with Ontario taxpayers, is benefiting through

evidence-based funding, planning, delivery and monitoring by the ministry.

In order for electronic health records to realize their full potential, a wide variety of complex health information systems must be connected to each other. Care providers must be able to electronically share patient data for patients to move seamlessly through various parts of the health care system, for example, from a checkup to a lab result to a hospital procedure to rehabilitation.

Ontario's health care system is highly complex and geographically widespread. We have the largest population of any province and the second-largest land area. There's no doubt that linking electronic health systems within the province will support efficient, timely and high-quality patient care.

Electronic health care is critical if we are to improve access to quality patient care and foster greater innovation across our province. It will help us transform our health care system from using mostly paper-based records to fast and efficient electronic sharing of data among authorized health care providers anywhere in the province. But being fast and efficient is only part of the picture. Electronic sharing of information must also be secure, and it must be designed in a way to protect the patient's privacy. Electronic health records contain information from a variety of health care providers, including lab results, medication history and information from the electronic medical records used by physicians and nurse practitioners.

Eventually, shared electronic health records will include data from hospital information systems, community care clinics and other providers as well; in other words, from all the health care settings and health care professionals involved in a person's circle of care. Over time, these electronic health records would be connected to each and every patient across Ontario. They would be their guide to their personal health and well-being, connecting all of their health providers under one system of care. The result will have a positive impact on health care delivery and on outcomes.

Over 10,000 Ontario providers, providing health care for two out of three Ontarians, have or are in the process of implementing electronic health records. We need to take the next step in integrating our health care system. We need to ensure that the personal health information of every patient is safe, secure and private. These proposed amendments would, if passed, support better information sharing and coordination among all the health care providers and organizations a patient may come into contact with, while protecting each patient's personal information. Better, more complete information, leads to better, more integrated and coordinated care so that no one falls through the cracks.

I want to thank Ontario's physicians, eHealth Ontario and everyone who has helped to make this progress possible. I also want to extend a special thank you again to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and her staff for their collaboration on this important bill.

Speaker, let me assure the members of this chamber, as well as each and every person in Ontario, that the pri-

vacy of everyone's personal health information is critically important to our government, which is why we need to move forward on these proposed amendments. I urge all members to support this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It gives me great pleasure to speak further to our government's proposed Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2013. I'd like to start off by setting the context for this proposed legislation.

The launch of our government's action plan for health care in January 2012 signaled the most radical transformation of the province's health care system since the introduction of medicare. When medicare was founded in the 1960s, acute conditions such as heart attack or injury and infectious disease were the primary health concerns of Canadians. As a result, health care systems across the country were designed to focus on acute, episodic care delivered by highly trained, dedicated doctors and nurses in hospitals.

Over the past several decades, the health care landscape has shifted dramatically. New technology, drugs and procedures have increased life expectancy and greatly improved patient care and safety. While those medical miracles have allowed people to live longer, our aging and growing population is increasingly putting pressure on the health care system. Now many people live with one or more complex chronic conditions and would prefer to remain in their homes and communities to receive appropriate care.

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As hospitals remain an essential part of the system, the level of care they provide is less than ideal for those living with chronic conditions. Moreover, the global financial meltdown in 2008 put Ontario's economy through a few very turbulent years, and the global situation remains uncertain to this day.

In the current constrained fiscal environment, health care spending can no longer be allowed to grow at the previous annual levels of 6% to 7%. If this rate of spending were to continue, government spending on health care would balloon to 70 cents per dollar a dozen years from now, leaving only 30 cents to be shared among four other public programs, including education. The challenge and the opportunity for Ontario is to build a quality health care system that meets people's needs at the right time and in the right place, a system that is accountable and financially sustainable.

There is strong consensus that the system needs to change and is ready, indeed eager, for reform. A transformed health care system requires much better integration of all sectors. There needs to be better links between primary care, the hospital and community- and home-based providers. That's where electronic health care comes in.

Much of the transformation in our health care sector requires the tremendous innovations in technology already in place, which includes virtual health initiatives

like telemedicine and the implementation of electronic health records for all the people of Ontario. Electronic health care is becoming an increasingly important tool and enabler for better access to quality patient care and health system integration across Ontario. A health care system built around paper-based records is transforming into one that allows fast, efficient and secure electronic data sharing among authorized health care providers, regardless of their location in the province.

A health care system based on electronic data sharing means better and more coordinated care for patients, which is especially vital for older Ontarians and those with chronic or complex conditions. Shared electronic health records, or EHRs, will allow laboratory results, medication histories, diagnostic images and patient information from electronic medical records to be shared between multiple health care providers within a patient's circle of care. The result will be improved quality, safety and integration of patient care. That's why investing in eHealth is such an important part of our government's action plan for health care and our commitment to provide Ontarians with the right care at the right time in the right place.

EHealth also serves as a vital part of ensuring that health care dollars are invested in the most efficient and effective manner possible. The action plan is the blueprint that will help Ontario realize its vision of being the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old.

With this shift, we are improving the quality of patient care, freeing up valuable acute care resources for those who need them most and increasing value for taxpayers' dollars. Higher quality care that is driven by evidence and delivered properly the first time is better for patients and better for taxpayers.

EHealth initiatives enable this health system modernization and lead to better, safer and more cost-effective care. To further this, the government has introduced legislation to ensure that this information is safe, secure and private.

Speaker, this proposed legislation is an important milestone. It shows how far we've come in implementing electronic health care for all Ontarians.

I will speak at greater length later in my remarks on eHealth Ontario's many accomplishments. But before we talk about where we are going, I think it's important to look over our shoulder at just how far we've come.

In 2007, only 770,000 Ontarians were benefiting from electronic medical records. Today, nearly 70% of all Ontarians have electronic medical records. That's about 9 million people in our province whose family doctors are able to call up their electronic medical records when they come in for an appointment or a checkup. In fact, more than 69% of primary care physicians and more than half of all specialists in communities across the province now use electronic medical records.

All of the province's 154 hospital systems and more than 9,400 community-based clinicians have made electronic medical records an integral part of their approach

to health care. Just to give perspective on the size of what we've achieved, that's more doctors in Ontario than all other Canadian provinces combined.

Over a quarter of a million hospital reports are now sent to doctors' electronic medical systems every month. What does this mean for patients? Well, it used to take 12 days to transfer hospital records by mail. Today, it takes 30 minutes. Not only does that reduce patient wait times, but it also aids with transitions in health care to help patients to avoid unnecessary hospital readmissions. In addition, the medication history of Ontario's seniors is now accessible to health care providers in all hospitals and emergency rooms, to ensure they get the proper care. Additionally, the Ontario laboratories information system is right now storing more than one billion lab results for 9.5 million Ontarians.

It is clear that electronic health care helps health professionals deliver the best care for their patients. But it also helps by connecting patients with health professionals across great distances. It quite literally brings care closer to home, which is particularly vital for Ontarians in rural and northern Ontario. There were 236,000 remote clinical consultations through the Ontario Telemedicine Network last year alone. And neurotrauma patients now have access to a neurosurgeon 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That's better and faster care for Ontarians in their greatest hour of need. And it's saving millions of dollars, helping to protect the sustainability of our health care system for future generations.

Clearly, Speaker, eHealth Ontario has made remarkable progress in bringing better care closer to patients. We have come a long way in just a few years. But now it's time to take the next step. That's why the government has introduced the proposed legislation before us today. This proposed legislation, if passed, would advance the health system transformation. It would help us realize better quality of care for patients, and better value for taxpayers. And it would ensure that our cherished health care system continues to be there for future generations of Ontarians. Most importantly, the legislative changes we propose would enable our government to move on with the next phase of developing an electronic health record, or EHR, for the people of Ontario by 2015. Without these legislative changes, the implementation of EHRs cannot proceed, and the full benefits of this technology will not be realized.

At the same time, we're absolutely committed to ensuring that the safety and security of electronic health records and the privacy of Ontario patients are protected. Ontarians agree that this is a critical element of implementing modern technological tools like electronic health records. Research has indicated that the Ontario public strongly supports EHRs. Ontarians agree that the use of EHR data for decision-making and planning by the ministry is a good use of health information and will result in better health care for those who need it and a more efficient health care system in Ontario. Ontarians can also see the positive impacts for health care providers and the health care system. They understand the potential benefits for themselves and their families.

Our research shows that the public does have some concerns about privacy. However, these concerns ranked lower than for other frequent online activities such as shopping, networking and banking. When asked about the extent of their concern around specific online services and personal privacy and security, Ontarians are most likely to be concerned about the privacy and security of social networking, followed by online banking, online shopping and then EHRs.

Fifty-five per cent of Ontarians were concerned or very concerned with their personal privacy and security with EHR services, compared to 57% with online shopping, 59% with online banking and 67% with social networking. I was gratified to learn that about 68% of Ontario residents surveyed probably or definitely think that the provincial government will ensure that appropriate measures are in place to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of personal health information contained in EHRs—a vote of confidence, clearly.

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This proposed legislation both satisfies the public's expectations and fulfills public trust. It's important to note that Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, commended our government for introducing these proposed amendments to Ontario's health privacy legislation, the Personal Health Information Protection Act, or PHIPA. As a former custodian of personal health information, wearing actually five hats, as commissioner of health services and medical officer of health for York region, the importance of protection of this information is of huge importance to me. Indeed, the commissioner has been advocating for a legislative framework to address the privacy and security issues associated with electronic health records for some time.

While PHIPA has served as a model for health privacy legislation across Canada and abroad since its introduction in 2004, it didn't adequately address the rights of individuals and the duties of health care providers in a shared electronic health record environment. According to the commissioner, "These amendments are necessary to foster public trust and confidence, as the health sector transitions from paper-based records to electronic health records."

The amendments to PHIPA will clarify the rights of Ontarians to limit the collection, use and disclosure of their personal health information in their electronic health record. It will be achieved through a variety of means, such as the application of consent directives to reflect the wishes of all patients. The amendments will also clarify the right of patients to access and request correction of their information and to find out who has accessed their health records. The amendments will also assure patients that only their authorized health care providers and those acting on their behalf may directly access personal health information in their electronic health record and will limit the purposes for which such information may be accessed. Additionally, there will be a requirement to log and monitor all accesses to electronic health records to help curtail any unauthorized collection, use and dis-

closure of personal health information, thus strengthening the safeguards.

The modernization of PHIPA will facilitate the introduction of electronic health records throughout the province. Such records have the potential to greatly improve diagnosis and treatment; to enhance patient safety; and to facilitate the coordination and integration of services—resulting in a more efficient and effective health system.

We deeply appreciate the contributions of the Information and Privacy Commissioner and her office in the development of this proposed legislation. I want to assure all the members of this House that our government will continue to work closely with her and the health care sector to ensure a smooth and seamless transition into the digital era, while strongly protecting the privacy of Ontarians and the confidentiality of their personal health information.

I'm pleased to say that with the help of eHealth Ontario our government has already made significant progress toward implementing elements of an electronic health record and toward moving related priorities forward. We are very proud of eHealth Ontario's accomplishments, and I'm pleased to outline them for you in greater detail.

First, I'd like to speak about the diagnostic imaging and picture archiving communications system, or DI and PACS. For the first time in the province's history, every hospital in Ontario is now able to produce and share filmless diagnostic images, including X-rays, CT scans, ultrasounds and MRIs, within their facilities, resulting in faster test results. Clinicians are able to make more timely and accurate diagnoses, and radiologists can access, read and report on digital images in an hour or less, rather than in 48 to 60 hours. For the patient, diagnostic imaging and picture archiving communications systems avoid duplication of tests and needless exposure to radiation. As DI and PACS are more fully integrated, test results can be accessible across the province.

Next, the drug profile viewer, or DPV, is saving lives in emergency departments every day. In every one of the province's emergency rooms, hospital wards, in-patient pharmacies and clinics, the individual drug profiles of Ontario's seniors can now be accessed by hospital staff. The viewer displays information for Ontario drug benefit and Trillium Drug Program recipients, who make up roughly 18% of the population of Ontario and account for 43% of all prescriptions written in the province.

The drug profile viewer allows the electronic sharing of medication information between authorized health care providers. DPV helps physicians to quickly identify the potential for harmful drug interactions or lethal combinations of drugs, saving lives every day.

I'd also like to speak about the Ontario Telemedicine Network. Ontario now has a globally recognized telemedicine network, with more than 1,600 sites across the province using the Ontario Telemedicine Network to deliver remote care to patients. The Telestroke program provides stroke patients in remote areas of the province with 24/7 access to life-saving emergency care that they

might not receive without this real-time, expert neurological assessment. Last year, OTN supported more than 236,000 clinical consultations.

The emergency neurosurgery image transfer system, or ENITS, is also helping to save lives. Brain CT scans of patients suffering head trauma are now transmitted and viewed within minutes by a 24/7 on-call neurosurgeon who consults with medical staff at any of Ontario's 97 acute care centres.

Instead of moving patients to neurosurgeons, neurosurgeons can access reliable, time-sensitive patient information remotely, enabling them to determine quickly if patients need to be transferred to receive acute care. Patients avoid unnecessary risky travel and are able to receive specialized care faster and closer to home. Families are saved from the trauma of having their loved one being physically moved away.

Transferring neurosurgery patients to other hospitals, particularly out of country, can cost as much as \$100,000 per transfer, and in the past, 49% of emergency neurosurgery consults were referred to neurosurgical units. In 2012-13, however, only 34% of these patients were transferred after an ENITS consultation, and, to date, this service has saved the Ontario health system tens of millions of dollars.

ENITS is managed through CritiCall Ontario, a 24/7 emergency referral service that uses sophisticated referral logic software to calculate the distance between the calling physician and potential sites that can provide the necessary expertise.

Next, let's look at the Ontario laboratories information system, also known as OLIS. OLIS collects information from the province's hospital community and public health labs to create a centralized record of a patient's lab test results that can be accessed by authorized practitioners across the province. Earlier last year, the first clinical use of OLIS was deployed at the Ottawa Hospital. We've heard from doctors there who have said that this technology has revolutionized their practice.

EHealth Ontario has been rolling OLIS data out to clinicians since then, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. OLIS has more than 1.25 billion individual test results in its database, representing 9.5 million Ontarians. For providers, this means information is at their fingertips within minutes or even seconds, helping them to make faster and more informed clinical decisions. Faster access to information means more time dedicated to patient care and less time spent on administrative paper chasing.

For our young patients and their families, the wait time for lab test results will be shorter, so treatment can start that much sooner. As for the health care system, it means fewer duplicate tests because the patient's lab test history will be right there for the health care providers to access, and there will be better integration of care between family providers and hospital providers. This initiative is part of our e-health strategy to put valuable patient lab data into the hands of clinicians throughout Ontario.

Lastly, let's talk about electronic medical records, EMRs. An EMR is the computer software physicians use

to electronically collect, manage and store a patient's medical data. It's the digital equivalent of the old paper files and charts that your doctor used to use and keep in an office cabinet.

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Over 10,000 providers providing health care to more than nine million Ontarians have or are in the process of implementing EMR systems. Approximately 69% of Ontario's primary care physicians are moving forward with an EMR. In fact, Ontario has the largest number of physicians using an EMR in Canada. The latest EMRs collect over 30 diabetes-related data elements, 25 chronic heart failure-related data elements, and more than 45 asthma, hypertension and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-related data elements.

Physician records are increasingly connected to regional health care institutions. Each month, more than 375,000 hospital reports, such as patient discharge summaries—which are critical to avoiding expensive hospital readmissions—are sent electronically to clinicians so patients can get better and timelier care from their primary care provider. Approximately 3,000 types of lab results are currently being accessed through EMRs.

Electronic medical records are more comprehensive and support access to Ontario laboratories information systems—the provincial database I mentioned earlier—that contain approximately 69% of community hospital and public health lab tests.

Speaker, my colleagues across the aisle may each have an EMR in their physician's office. That means details about the care they receive from a family doctor, specialist, nurse, dietitian or other health provider is captured electronically using EMR software. This makes it possible for all members of their health care team, like specialists, nurse practitioners, emergency rooms, home care and long-term-care homes, to share accurate, clear and concise information about their health care status.

For example, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the AOHC: All of these member sites which provide community-governed primary care to so many of the province's most vulnerable groups are installing electronic medical record systems so that 800 ordering clinicians, nurses and doctors can provide better care to their patients, including those who may not have a family physician. AOHC member sites include all of the province's community health centres and aboriginal health access centres, as well as several nurse practitioner-led clinics. EMRs help in managing chronic conditions and in preventing drug interactions. These are just some of our many e-health achievements, and I'm proud to highlight all the progress we've made in e-health.

Electronic health records, or EHRs, are the next stage of e-health. EHRs bring together an individual's health information from health care providers, like your family doctor or specialist, as well as other information like lab test results, prescription drug information and diagnostic images like X-rays, CT scans and MRIs. Our proposed legislation would support better information sharing and coordination, resulting in improved health care, particu-

larly for those with complex health care needs. For example, the diverse partners in a community health link, from hospitals to primary care providers to community care, would have appropriate access to patient health information, enabling greater collaboration and better care for their patients. Better, more complete information leads to more integrated and coordinated care so that no one falls through the cracks.

Speaker, let me assure the members of this chamber, as well as each and every person in Ontario, that the privacy of everyone's personal health information is critically important to our government. These proposed legislative amendments are part of our plan to protect privacy and security of personal health information in EHRs. I urge all members to support them so that we can keep our commitment to provide every Ontarian with an EHR by 2015.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am pleased to comment briefly on the remarks made by the Minister of Health and by the member from Oak Ridges–Markham with respect to Bill 78. I will be speaking on it further—I think I'm the next speaker in the lineup here—and will have some further comments.

But I think, overall, we have to take a look at this government's record on delivering eHealth, and I think that by all accounts it's been a pretty abysmal failure. That's not just us saying it. We've certainly heard from the Auditor General on that, who commented that up to \$2 billion has pretty much been wasted without a functioning electronic medical records system to show for it.

We don't really know where we are in the great scheme of things, but I would say the fact that this legislation, which sets up the basic framework for an electronic health records system, is only being passed now—surely you would think that this would have been done some years ago in order to be able to even develop the system. So it certainly begs the question of where we are in the development of the system overall, and I suspect we're still many years away from having a functioning system.

That is a great shame for a number of reasons, one of them being economically. We have all kinds of tests and medical procedures that have to be duplicated because health professionals aren't able to communicate in real time with each other, and so they have to duplicate them or else have people continue to carry around things like X-rays and so on. That shouldn't be happening in the province of Ontario, not at the state that we're at now.

But I think, more tellingly, there's a human component to this that we can't discount. I've heard from many, many people who have spouses with terminal illnesses that every time they go and see a different medical professional that they are involved with, they have to recount their story time and time again. This is very wearing on people, but it also means that every time they tell it, they get further away from what has happened. Information falls between the cracks. So it's really essential, both in

human and economic terms, that we get moving with this.

We will be supporting this legislation because it's essential for the framework, but whether this government gets this done or not, I'm not holding my breath.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's a pleasure to rise to speak about Bill 78, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to electronic health records.

We're going to be doing a lot of homework on this bill, Mr. Speaker; I need to tell you this. There are a lot of items that we need to go through in this bill to make sure that the integrity, the confidentiality and the sharing of information are going to be upheld, which is first and foremost the concern of constituents and people across the province. It's going to be a tedious process.

We're going to be looking at supporting this bill. However, we're going to be looking at having many discussions over the committee stage, because Ontarians expect more and they want more. I don't mean to throw stones across to this government, but essentially there has been some legislation that has come forward in this House in the past where, as we go through the discussions, issues are highlighted, but again they are not really dissected, they are not really analyzed, and we don't learn from the mistakes that we've done in the past.

This is something that is very concerning. We really need to look at making sure of the integrity and that the individuals across this province—because now we're going from a paper to an electronic copy, and there are a lot of discrepancies. There are a lot of red flags that raise in my mind right now that could happen through this entire process.

So we're going to analyze this, along with our colleague from Nickel Belt, our critic for health and long-term care, and we're going to be extremely diligent in holding this government to account in regard to how this act actually gets implemented.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm very pleased to add my comments in support of Bill 78, the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act.

Yes, indeed, as previous speakers have said, your personal information about your health—it's very important to be private and to be secure. But let me say to you, as a health care professional for part of my life, how it used to be. Okay?

So if you needed a consultation or if you needed to be transferred to another hospital or something like this, then they would take the paper file, they would print it, and they would send it by mail or send a nurse or a health care professional with the patient for the transfer. Sometimes the file was lost, and sometimes the file was left on the printing machine. This was not the perfect world, and it had been like this for a long time.

0950

Thanks to eHealth and all this system—because we hear all the negative part about eHealth—I have the

privilege to be a patient in a family health team where eHealth is there. When you need to see a specialist, you can go the next day, if it's possible, because then he can open his computer and he sees your file. He sees all your results and everything.

Yes, we need to be sure that all the information is kept confidential and that only people who need to see it will see it, but let's say we're not in the age of the stone. We have made a lot of progress, and this is the continuation of the improvement of health care in Ontario. I'm very pleased to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to listen to the important discussion this morning on eHealth. I think our critic, Christine Elliott, summed it up when she said, "How's it working today?" They've been at it for 10 years; it's an absolute disaster, on any measure at all.

I don't blame the minister personally. The parliamentary assistant—I have a lot of respect. She was a medical officer of health; she should probably be the Minister of Health, actually, and no disrespect at all.

Here's what I'm saying: They've had 10 years to get it right. Most of the world is automated. This province is completely mismanaged. I'm not even going to talk about the bill because I was the PA to health for about two or three years in this system and there should have been a lot of work done in the last 10 years, and nothing has happened.

Here's a good example right here. There's an article in the Toronto Star on October 3. It's entitled, "Fundraisers an Increasing Necessity for Sick Ontarians." This is a human story. Lisa Glennie spent some time in the hospital. "After she suffered her stroke, Glennie spent months in hospital receiving" rehab. "She still can't walk on her own, has difficulty talking" and it affects her memory. "Now the hospital wants her out and is charging her \$1,700 a month to stay," because she has nowhere to go. "Meanwhile, OHIP refuses to pay for Glennie's rehab sessions...." Sick and ignored: That's how it is in Ontario today. This isn't me; this is a Toronto Star article, October 3. That's a report card on how Ontario's health care system is working today.

I have constituents of mine who can't get the proper treatment—medication. They are spending half of the budget now, basically, on health care. I understand that the system is part of this—I, at one time, worked for IBM; I was a COBOL programmer. I get it. Why isn't it up and working today? It's shameful, the disregard that they have for Ontarians.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham, you have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly extremely disappointed at the comments by my colleagues the member for Whitby–Oshawa, the member for Durham—the two from the official opposition. I would have thought that after listening the last 45 minutes, you would have seen the incredible strides that we've made with electronic

medical records, which were detailed in so many different aspects.

In addition, the member for Durham doesn't seem to understand the meaning of the word "respect"; however, I'll leave that piece.

To the member for Algoma–Manitoulin: Yes, of course, we share your concerns around the protection of personal health information. I did mention in my remarks that I was a custodian of five different health records. I had to make sure, whenever there was a request for information from one of those five datasets, that we didn't confuse which dataset was which. There was a great deal of precision necessary for this because many patients actually appeared in all five datasets. This is an incredibly complicated issue in terms of the protection of privacy. It's now being done electronically. It certainly has been done in a very thoughtful way, and we have made real progress in a very complicated area. It's benefiting patients across the province.

To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Yes, indeed, I remember meeting her for the very first time when she was chair of the health committee in the region of Ottawa–Carleton many, many years ago. In her long experience as a nurse, she knows of what she speaks when it comes to patient care and personal health information security. I am so glad that, at least on this side of the House, we are absolutely committed to putting this legislation through.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to rise today to speak about Bill 78 on behalf of the PC caucus. Bill 78 is, of course, An Act to amend certain Acts with respect to electronic health records, commonly known as the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, or EPHIPA.

The acts that are affected by Bill 78 are the Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act, the Regulated Health Professions Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004. Of course, it is the latter act which is the most affected by Bill 78. I will be discussing these changes in due course, but first I would like to comment on the state of development of electronic medical records in Ontario generally. I think we really need to set the record straight here.

By all accounts, this Liberal government's handling of this file has been abysmal. Ontarians found out from the Auditor General about the stunning waste of up to two billion taxpayer dollars with little to show for it in terms of a fully functioning electronic medical records system. We have heard a lot today from the Minister of Health and the member for Oak Ridges–Markham about the amazing progress that has been made in the development of e-health, with nine million Ontarians having access to electronic medical records, but the fact of the matter is, that doesn't really mean very much.

All it means is that more physicians have digitized their records, so instead of having paper files, they now have their clients' or patients' medical records on a com-

puter. But the whole point of having an electronic medical record system is to have the health care providers that are involved in a patient's care, and increasingly people have more people involved than just their own family doctor, able to communicate with each other in real time. That is not even close to happening yet in Ontario, and that is a real tragedy.

There are numerous systems out there, all over the place. The government continues to fund new systems that don't connect to each other. We are years and years away from having a system that is actually going to work. That is a tragedy because so much money has been spent for so little, but it is a tragedy in human terms, too.

A functioning electronic health record could go a long way toward eliminating patient death through toxic drug interactions, which do happen in Ontario each and every year. Working electronic health records would also reduce the need for clients and patients to verbally recount their medical history to each health care provider they see. As I mentioned before, I've heard from terminally ill cancer patients, and they have told me how devastating it is to have to recount their personal history every time they see a different health care provider.

Even if you're prepared to ignore the human costs of not having electronic health records, it's hard to ignore the economic costs. Diagnostic tests and procedures often need to be repeated because results cannot be easily shared, and skilled health care practitioners are still required to take medical histories repeatedly and to use phone calls and faxes to communicate information. I've heard from numerous health care providers in the home care area, particularly nursing organizations, that routinely have to use fax machines to communicate information. I used to think that it was lawyers, like myself, who were dinosaurs in the digital age, but this is still happening in health care in Ontario. It's certainly not by choice, I can tell you that.

Time after time, in my capacity as health critic for the official opposition, I hear from health care providers, from doctors to nurses to pharmacists and many others, that it is essential that Ontario develop a functioning electronic health records system in order to transition to a 21st-century model of health care. Clearly, we need to get on with it, and I hope that with the passage of this act, if it does come to pass, this Liberal government will take this to heart and move forward, but I am certainly not going to hold my breath at this point.

Bill 78 deals with the protection of personal health information in the context of an electronic health record, so of course, it is essential before e-health can move forward. The question, however, is, why wasn't this essential component dealt with before now? Surely this is one of the most important building blocks in developing e-health, so shouldn't it have been developed years ago?

1000

The fact that these standards are only now being developed is quite troubling, and begs the question of where we are now in e-health development without having this basic framework in place. So that remains to be

seen. I hope we'll get that information soon, but that's a question for another day.

I'd like now to turn to Bill 78, but before I speak about the specific aspects of the bill I'd like to spend a few minutes discussing the history of health information privacy legislation in Ontario, and I hope that it will help to place Bill 78 in the appropriate context.

The concept of confidentiality with respect to health information is relatively new. Prior to 1977, it was relatively easy for insurance companies, investigation agencies, police and lawyers to obtain access to patients' medical records. I can certainly say that when I started off as a young lawyer many years ago this was the case, and it was just in the early years of my practice that this began to change—and I certainly would say for the better, because confidentiality of health information is absolutely essential for patients in our province.

In December 1977, the Ontario government, under Premier Bill Davis, appointed a commission headed by Mr. Justice Horace Krever to conduct an inquiry into the issue following allegations of police access to patient records in OHIP and health care facilities without obtaining their consent. There was, at that time, no overarching legislation for the protection of privacy and health information, and each health care facility was on its own in terms of developing its own policies and procedures. The commission began its work in April 1978. The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Confidentiality of Health Information was released in 1980, a three-volume, 1,626-page report—very comprehensive, and it contained a number of key elements that we still rely on today with our privacy legislation.

An excellent article on the history of health information privacy legislation in Ontario, written by Andrea Anna Guerin and Christian David Fortin in 2008, said this about the work of the Krever commission:

"The Krever report identifies for the first time the discrepancies in the practices of health care institutions, health care professionals and the ambiguity in the legislation governing privacy and health information. It also recognized that the implementation of legislation to provide a universal provincial framework for privacy and health information should not be so cumbersome to impede the effective and timely delivery of health care."

So it is important to recognize, as was noted, that there is a need to achieve a balance between the protection of an individual's health information versus the need for health professionals to access this information under certain circumstances.

In any event, the Ontario government then attempted to implement the essential recommendations of the Krever report. The Ministry of Health attempted to initiate reforms in June 1996 with its paper entitled *A Legal Framework for Health Information*. This was followed in 1997 with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*. Although it contained most of the essential elements necessary for protection of health information, it was not successful, nor was its successor act, *An Act respecting Personal Health Information and Related Matters*, in 2000. The work continued.

In 2002, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care released a draft document entitled *Privacy of Personal Information Act, 2002*, known as POPIA. We love these acronyms. It too failed to pass, and it was not until November 1, 2004, that Ontario passed the personal health information privacy act, known as PHIPA. PHIPA succeeded in providing an overarching framework for the protection of personal health information. It was met with approval by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, Dr. Ann Cavoukian.

In her submission to the Standing Committee on General Government on January 27, 2004—before the act was passed—the Information and Privacy Commissioner stated with respect to Bill 31, the Health Information Protection Act, “We are pleased that this government has moved promptly to introduce a comprehensive legal framework to protect personal health information. Our office has advocated the need for such legislation for many years. Members of the public, health care providers and other stakeholder groups have anticipated introduction of legislation of this nature since the Report of the Royal Commission on Confidentiality of Health Information in Ontario (the Krever commission report) in 1980.”

The commissioner then went on to say: “We also are pleased that this office has been identified as the oversight body for this legislation. This provides the public with a single point of contact for both public sector and health sector privacy matters. This will facilitate implementation of the legislation and minimize confusion on the part of the public.”

So, in essence, Mr. Speaker, health information and privacy legislation was long overdue in Ontario and, certainly, while we believe that PHIPA is far from perfect, particularly with mental health issues, there is at least a basic framework in place to protect an individual’s right to privacy with respect to their health records. Bill 78 is in many ways the next logical step to be taken in continuing to protect privacy. As we move to an electronic medical records system with multiple health care providers having access to individual medical records, it’s essential to establish a framework and protocols for the sharing of this information and to ensure that it is only used for prescribed purposes.

As was mentioned earlier, Bill 78 amends PHIPA in several key respects. First, section 34 of the act is amended to permit prescribed persons who are not health information custodians to collect and use health numbers for the purpose of creating or maintaining the electronic health record. Section 51 of the act is also amended to make part V of the act apply to a prescribed organization as if it were a health information custodian with respect to the specified records and as if the organization has custody or control of the records. Part V.1 adds a whole new section to deal with electronic health records because they weren’t contemplated in 2004 with the passage of PHIPA.

The Minister of Health is required to establish an advisory committee for the purpose of making recom-

mendations to the minister concerning specified matters related to the electronic health record and can make directives to a prescribed organization with respect to carrying out its responsibilities. The minister would be required to take the recommendations of the advisory committee and the Information and Privacy Commissioner into account before so directing a prescribed organization.

The effect of the above amendments would be to recognize that there will necessarily be an entity or organization that will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the electronic health record other than the original health care provider and to provide that the same rules that apply to the health care provider will also apply to the prescribed organization.

The rules around the use of this confidential information are specifically spelled out. Part V.1 prohibits the health information custodian from collecting personal health information from the electronic health record maintained by a prescribed organization except for the purpose of providing or assisting in the provision of health care to an individual or eliminating or reducing a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a person or group of persons where the health information custodian believes on reasonable grounds that the collection is necessary for this purpose. Individuals may withhold their consent to the collection or disclosure of his or her personal health information in the electronic health record, subject to certain exceptions. This directive can only be overridden if there would otherwise be a risk of serious bodily harm, if it was not possible to obtain consent in a timely manner or if there was a risk of potentially harmful medication interactions.

That, Mr. Speaker, is the essence of Bill 78. In her introduction of Bill 78, the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act, or EPHIPA, on May 29, the minister indicated that the Information and Privacy Commissioner had indicated her support for the bill. I subsequently wrote to the commissioner myself to obtain her view of Bill 78, and I would like to take this opportunity to read the letter which I received from Ms. Cavoukian in answer to my inquiry. I would like to take a few minutes to do that now, Mr. Speaker.

In her letter to me dated August 23, 2013, Ms. Cavoukian indicated: “I would first like to clarify the provisions in the bill related to ‘prescribed organizations.’ A ‘prescribed organization’ will not be appointed by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care but rather will be prescribed in a regulation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Section 55.12 of the bill requires that these regulations be subject to the public consultation requirements in section 74 of the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

“A ‘prescribed organization’ will also be required to comply with detailed requirements found in section 55.3 of the bill. These are similar to the requirements imposed on an entity currently responsible for creating or maintaining electronic health records in the province of Ontario under a regulation to the Personal Health Infor-

mation Protection Act. These detailed requirements include an obligation on the 'prescribed organization' to take reasonable steps to limit the personal health information it receives to that which is reasonably necessary for the purpose of creating or maintaining the electronic health record, and to perform privacy impact assessments and threat risk assessments in respect of each system that retrieves, processes or integrates personal health information in the electronic health record.

"The failure by a 'prescribed organization' to comply with these detailed requirements is subject to an investigation by my office and, if my office determines that the Personal Health Information Protection Act or its regulation have been contravened, my office has the power to issue an order which is enforceable as a judgment or order of the court.

"Section 55.3 of the bill also requires a 'prescribed organization' to have in place and comply with practices and procedures to protect the privacy of individuals whose personal health information it receives, and to maintain the confidentiality of that information. These practices and procedures must further be reviewed and approved by my office every three years. Over the past 10 years, we have developed a rigorous process for organizations whose practices and procedures must be reviewed by my office. Such organizations are required to implement policies, procedures, agreements and other documents that comply with a comprehensive manual, that my office developed (exceeding 100 pages) entitled the Manual for the Review and Approval of Prescribed Persons and Prescribed Entities. A similar manual is being developed for 'prescribed organizations.'

"With respect to the concern you raised in relation to third parties retained to assist 'prescribed organizations' in creating or maintaining the electronic health record, it should be noted that section 55.3 of the bill requires a 'prescribed organization' to ensure that employees and any other person acting on its behalf comply with the restrictions that apply to the 'prescribed organization,' detailed in section 55.3 of the bill. It also requires persons acting on behalf of a 'prescribed organization' to comply with the restrictions and conditions that are necessary to enable the 'prescribed organization' to comply with the requirements in section 55.3 of the bill. Once again, this is similar to the provisions that currently exist under the regulation to the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

"It should also be noted that a 'prescribed organization' is required to immediately notify me, in writing, if personal health information in the electronic health record has been viewed, handled, made available, released or otherwise dealt with by a 'prescribed organization' or a person acting on its behalf in a manner that contravenes the Personal Health Information Protection Act or its regulation.

"Finally, you requested my views about the bill more generally. I have been advocating for a legislative framework to address privacy and security issues associated with electronic health records for many years. While the

Personal Health Information Protection Act has served as a model for health privacy legislation across Canada and abroad since its introduction in 2004, it did not adequately address the rights of individuals and the duties and obligations of health care providers in a shared electronic health record environment.

"This bill will clarify the rights of Ontarians to limit the collection, use and disclosure of their personal health information for health care purposes in the shared electronic health record, to access and request a correction of their information and find out who has accessed their information. It will also set out the purposes for which personal health information may be collected, used or disclosed and require the auditing and monitoring of all accesses to prevent unauthorized collections, uses and disclosures. As a result, I welcome the introduction of this bill, which will serve to enhance the privacy of individuals while facilitating the efficient and effective delivery of health care services.

"This bill, if passed, will modernize the Personal Health Information Protection Act and facilitate the introduction of electronic health records in the province of Ontario, which already lags far behind other jurisdictions in Canada. Electronic health records have the potential"—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Excuse me. Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have two distinguished guests to recognize today. First of all, in the public gallery this morning is Winnifred Kisob, who is the mother of page Massoma Kisob, here to observe her daughter on her last day with us as a page. Please welcome her.

Finally, I'd like to introduce my overlapping member of Parliament, seated in the members' east gallery. I'd like members to recognize Mississauga–Streetsville member of Parliament Brad Butt, who is joining us today.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a real honour today to stand and recognize the federal member of Parliament for the riding of Durham, and my son, Erin O'Toole. Welcome to Queen's Park, Erin.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The one-liners write themselves, but I'm going to resist.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a delight to recognize a volunteer of ours from Parkdale–High Park, Amina Sheikh, in the members' gallery.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to recognize someone who is not here with us in body but is most definitely here with us in spirit, and that is the great author Alice Munro, who has just been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's my pleasure to introduce my friend from London West, Ali Chabar, to the Legislature today. Ali is a lifelong London resident. He has committed himself to serving the community. He is the past and current PC candidate for London West. Welcome, Ali.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's my pleasure to once again welcome the father of our page Gabrielle Le Donne, Mr. Dino Le Donne. Welcome again to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to welcome the proud parents of page Aly Muhammad from my great riding of Mississauga—Brampton South: Mrs. Nadia Mithani and Mr. Amin Mithani. They are in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to welcome for the first time to the Legislature my mom and dad, Ray and Sharon Smith from New Brunswick, who are here for Thanksgiving weekend. Also, my daughters for the first time are going to be taking in question period today: Payton and Reagan are there as well.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'd like to welcome a group from the Kenton Adult Learning Centre, up in the gallery, to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Chris Galloway all the way from Alberta—first time visiting Queen's Park.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to the Legislature Nancy Tomkins, president of the Denturist Association of Ontario, and Mr. Frank Ordorico, vice-president of the Denturist Association of Ontario. They are in the members' east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's my pleasure to welcome to the House the relatives of our great page from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Jasper Ross: his mother, Lisa Sizeland-Ross; his uncle Brett Sizeland; and friend Marie Mugahid. They are here in the west gallery. As well, I want to welcome the parents of my LA, Olga and Mauro Manfredi, the mother and father of Luca Manfredi, who works in my office.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: It is my pleasure today to introduce two Buddhist monks: Bhante Saranapala from the West End Buddhist Temple and Jue Qian from the Fo Guang Shan Temple. Both of them are here along with monks from 10 temples. We're having a Buddhist heritage day, and I invite everybody to rooms 228 and 230 after question period.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to welcome to the Legislature Mr. Rob Anderson, Mr. David Rae and Mr. David Gallagher, who are here to have a discussion with the Minister of Finance concerning some very important issues affecting their company, AIC.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to introduce three constituents from my riding of St. Paul's: Kathleen, Bob and Adam Garner, who are here to see Sean Garner, a page from my riding, serving as page captain on this last day for our pages.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Acting Premier. Earlier this morning, my colleagues and I sat through the justice committee with the Auditor General while the member from Mississauga—Streetsville decided that he would question the integrity and the professionalism of the Auditor General and her findings.

In that committee, the auditor confirmed that your decision surrounding the power plants and the cancellation were favourable to TCE and not to the taxpayer, that political interference from the Premier's office to make TCE whole hamstrung the OPA and cost us more money, that the OPA said that Napanee was not a good replacement location and that, as a result of that, your government spent an extra \$513 million for the relocation of the power plant—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —GTA.

We also know the government has known since December 2010 that the number was far greater than \$33 million.

You have proven inept. Will you resign?

Interjections.

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

Be seated, please. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As has been repeated many times in this House, the Premier is the one who wrote to the Auditor General to examine the Oakville relocation. We thank the auditor, and we accept her findings.

Speaker, I think, as has been said repeatedly in this House, this was a decision of this party, also the PC Party, also the NDP. It was something on which we had found common ground. This was a plant that had to be relocated.

I have to tell you, Speaker, as you know, the Auditor General has credited the Premier for taking action. She said, "I did have the opportunity to meet with the Premier ... it was good to hear that they are taking the report seriously and that they are taking ... actions and changing the way things are going to be done in the future."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That was a pretty good Richard Nixon impression, Speaker, but I can tell you something: The Auditor General earlier today confirmed that there was political interference by this government—not by the Progressive Conservative Party, not by the New Democrats, but by the Liberal Party of Ontario and the Liberal Party of Ontario alone.

Your Premier was the campaign chair of the last election. She signed the document that handed over all of the bargaining rights to TCE to make them "whole." Okay? That is quite significant, and it proves what the auditor also would say: that the cost taxpayers ended up

having had nothing more to do than your own political future.

She said that had you sited those plants somewhere else in the GTA, you would have saved the taxpayers \$513 million. She also said if we had waited it out, it would have cost us nothing at all.

My question, again, for this Deputy Premier: Will she resign?

Interjections.

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

1040

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, the answer to that question is “No,” but I can tell you what we will do, and that is that we will fix the system so that this does not happen again. There is widespread agreement that the original siting was not appropriate. That’s why we’re improving the siting of large energy infrastructure projects by implementing the recommendations of the OPA and the IESO. Communities will have a say right from the beginning. We will get the siting decisions right from the start, so this will not happen again.

We’re also introducing new rules that are limiting political staff involvement in commercial third-party transactions. I believe that the staff in the then Premier’s office acted in good faith, but we are acting on lessons learned.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If ever there was proof that it’s time to change the team that leads the province, it was that answer. It is that answer that proves that Tim Hudak and the Ontario Progressive Conservatives should assume this government, because we wouldn’t have done what they did. They created the OPA to remove political interference from energy decisions, and then they ignored the OPA.

It was the OPA who told your government that it wasn’t the appropriate location to go to Napanee. You ignored them. You cost us \$513 million more. You knew that if you did nothing, if you let it wait out, we wouldn’t have had to pay one red cent.

We have a motion of want of confidence on the order paper. I am asking you today, Deputy Premier: Will you call that for a confidence vote? Will you allow members of this assembly to debate that, and will you allow us to vote against this government and make sure that we can have an election for the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, I think it might be time for a walk down memory lane. I think the member opposite needs to be reminded of their record when it comes to energy. They might remember the attempt to privatize Hydro One; that led to a \$19.5-billion debt charge that Ontarians are still paying off to this day.

They might remember that their failed privatization caused electricity prices to rise a whopping 30%—

Interjections.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —that’s a 30% increase in 30 weeks. In 30 weeks, electricity prices went up 30% under their watch. They artificially capped prices, and that resulted in a \$1-billion additional figure being tacked on to the stranded debt.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Bad timing. The member from Renfrew will come to order and, to the government members, when an answer is being given, I need to hear it as well.

Wrap up, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton does not help himself either. Now he has been told.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: And if that’s not bad enough, they more than doubled the use of dirty coal.

TEACHERS

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is for the education minister. We all agree in this Legislature that education is vitally important to the future prosperity of this country.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration will come to order. Please.

Mr. Rob Leone: We agree that we have the best teachers, the most caring teachers and the hardest-working teachers right here in the province of Ontario. The only difference is, our party wants to see those teachers in front of the classroom, while it appears that the Premier would rather see some of our youngest teachers unemployed and at home.

The member from Nepean–Carleton has brought forward a thoughtful piece of legislation that brings parents, students and teachers together in support. It allows teachers to be hired based on their skill, ensuring that the best and the brightest are in front of the next generation of students. Parents support this bill, teachers support this bill, and students will benefit greatly from this bill.

Minister, will you support the bill and give Ontario teachers the respect that they deserve?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I’m very pleased to answer this question. First of all, let me make it perfectly clear that we have said to all our partners in the education sector that we are perfectly willing to work with them to find improvements to the regulation. We admit that there are some problems with this regulation.

But what we will not do, Speaker, is rip up collective agreements, unlike the folks opposite, who think that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham is dangerously close to being asked to withdraw.

Finish, please.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you, Speaker. We don’t have a white paper policy document that says to lay off 10,000 teachers to balance the books. They do.

We think that we have a collective agreement, and we agree that we need some improvements to this regulation.

In fact, I've just announced the appointment of some people to look into this, and I'd be happy to follow up within the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: What the minister is telling us is that she doesn't want the best teachers teaching our kids in our classrooms.

Let me tell you about Jason Trinh. Jason is a talented teacher with a master's degree in molecular biology. After filling in at two of Toronto's top high schools, he was honoured with the Premier's New Teacher of the Year award. He was also hand-picked to design a summer math camp and was so successful that he was credited for boosting grade 9 math scores.

But Jason can't find a job. He can't even get an interview because he sits 800th on a seniority list of more than 2,000 teachers. Under regulation 274, principals are forced to hire whatever names happen to be at the top of their seniority list.

Jason Trinh is the type of teacher we need in front of our classrooms. I would hope and would like to think that his award actually means something. Minister, why don't you think that our children deserve the best teachers in front of our classrooms?

Interjections.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Liz Sandals: You know, it's really interesting that they want to talk about the best teachers. We actually—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is now warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Liz Sandals: We actually happen to think that when school boards have hired people to be occasional teachers, when they've interviewed and hired people to be long-term occasional teachers, that that is in fact a pool of really great teachers. We think that school boards have been responsible in choosing long-term occasional teachers. Apparently, they don't.

But, Speaker, we are not ripping up collective agreements. We have a different approach about how to deal with unions than they do. We have said from the beginning, both the Premier and I, that we will—

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

Mr. Rob Leone: Minister, this is about fixing an unfortunate mistake to ensure fairness for teachers, and nothing else. I urge this government to support this bill and send it to committee so we can have an open conversation about what to do about this situation.

We know the NDP tried to shut down debate on this bill, as we know where their interests lie, and that's what we have come to expect from them. But being in govern-

ment means that you have to do what's best for the people of the province of Ontario, not just what's best for the special interests that helped get you elected.

We are on the side of parents. The PC caucus is on the side of principals, we are on the side of students and we are on the side of teachers. Why is the government, the NDP and the special interests the only ones left standing on the other side?

Support this member's bill. Repeal regulation 274. Let's get the best teachers in front of our students.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. 1050

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we'd better have a little bit of perspective here on recent history. We are the people who said, "We're not ripping up collective agreements. We're going to sit down with our partners. We're going to have some conversations and reach memorandums of understanding with each and every one of our partners." As a result of those conversations, working together, we have a school system this year that is calm and has extra-curriculars, and that is a result of working with people, not just saying, "We're going to rip up the collective agreement."

We will continue to work with people to look for solutions, but we're not laying people off, we're not ripping up collective agreements and we're not repealing regulation; we're working to improve it.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Auditor General said that the cabinet minute that the Premier signed on arbitration tied the OPA's hands. Why did the Premier tie the OPA's hands when it was dealing with TransCanada?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. The auditor said a number of things in her report. Included in that report was the following quote: "Making assumptions about future events and their effects involves considerable uncertainty. Accordingly, readers should be cautioned that while our estimates differ from estimates previously announced by the Ontario Power Authority (OPA), they will also likely differ from the actual costs and savings that will be known only in the future."

The people on the government side, including the OPA, throughout these conversations dealt in good faith. Any documents that were produced with respect to the negotiations were done in good faith. There were different perspectives on the facts; the auditor has referred to that. But we have accepted the auditor's report. The Premier has accepted it; I have accepted it. We've taken strong action to ensure that power plants are properly sited in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I guess the minister didn't like the question and didn't want to answer the question. The Premier signed a cabinet minute that tied the OPA's

hands. The Auditor General said there was nothing that gave the OPA any strength in their dealings with TransCanada. She signed a deal that took all the protections for Ontarians and cut them off at the knees. She sold us down the river. Why did the Premier sign this arbitration agreement? Did she not understand or did she not care?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: On October 7, 2010, the government publicly committed to relocating the Oakville plant and the OPA sent a termination letter to TransCanada Energy. The arbitration agreement reflected promises that had already been made in the OPA's termination letter to TCE on October 7, 2010. As per the Auditor General just this morning, the arbitration agreement just reiterated the original letter sent from the OPA to TransCanada.

Even MPP Peter Tabuns—I should say the member for Toronto—Danforth—agrees there was nothing extraordinary about this cabinet directive. On April 11, he said, “I don’t see it as a smoking gun. We knew that the cabinet was approving this process. So this does not surprise me.”

He’s reinventing history, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: There is no history to reinvent. The auditor said that when people sign deals, they should know what they mean. Did the Premier realize she signed a cabinet minute that left Ontarians guaranteeing profits for a private power company? Why would the Premier ask Ontarians to back up TransCanada and not themselves?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I believe the Auditor General also said at committee this morning that she had received a number of legal opinions. Those legal opinions indicated that had this been litigated, it would not have been in the interests of the province. The costs would likely have been higher. So there are different perspectives.

I read the quote from the Auditor General that said we should look at these facts cautiously and from different perspectives. She has been very objective, she’s been very fair, she’s been very neutral in her findings, particularly when she says that the arbitration agreement just reiterated the original letter sent from the OPA to TransCanada. Mr. Speaker, I believe that answers the question.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the Minister of Finance—to the Minister of Energy: The auditor is quite objective. She’s saying you guys wrestled yourselves to the ceiling. You took—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’m sorry, I do need clarification. You said two ministers. Energy? Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me do this all over again. It’s pretty clear what the auditor was saying this morning. She was saying that this government wrestled itself to the ceiling when it came to a settlement with TCE. You took the most expensive route in order to settle this thing where you could have got out for absolutely nothing.

The question is, why did the Premier, the current Premier today, sign a cabinet document back then that led to us having to pay these people over \$685 million?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I think he just asked the same question. It had to do with the Premier signing with respect to the arbitration agreement.

I want to repeat the answer. The arbitration agreement reflected promises that had already been made in the OPA’s termination letter to TransCanada Energy on October 7, 2010. The Auditor General this morning said that the agreement just reiterated the original letter sent from the OPA to TransCanada. As I said, the energy critic for the NDP said, “I don’t see a smoking gun.”

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The fact is your Premier, Kathleen Wynne, signed an arbitration agreement on behalf of cabinet. That is what led to the settlement. If the government had chosen to do nothing and allowed force majeure, or allowed that contract to end as it naturally would have in 2016, you would not have had to pay what you did.

I ask you again: How can you stand in this House today and say that you guys did what was best for the people of the province of Ontario when it came to the settlement of this contract?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a minute. I remind the member and all members to use either the title or their riding, please.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the question is directed to the activities of the Premier. This Premier, at the first opportunity, when she returned to the Legislature, reconvened the committee. Secondly, she directed all of her ministries—which had never been asked for before—to make documents available that were asked for by the committee. That resulted in well over 160,000 documents coming to the committee. The unprecedented offer from the Premier was to open up the documents and papers in the Premier’s office; I believe it was the first time in the history of this Parliament: 30,000 pages of documents from the Premier’s office.

She was open, she was transparent, she was upfront, she was honest and she showed tremendous leadership on this issue.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Some leadership. It cost us \$685 million.

The point is, your member from Mississauga—Streetsville this morning at committee was trying to say that the auditor based all of her findings on her assumptions. The auditor, being a very clever person, knowing her job, said that was not the fact. In fact, her findings are based on facts. So it’s clear that your Premier and you as Minister of Energy, along with the rest of this government, are trying to basically not accept what the auditor had to say.

Why are you fighting what the auditor had to say and trying to say that these are all assumptions when, in fact, they’re all fact?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In the premise of his question he said that this cost us a lot of money. It did: \$675 million.

The Premier accepted responsibility for that and apologized for that.

But I will say, Mr. Speaker, that that \$675 million should be compared to several other decisions that were taken several months ago. Number one: The decision to renegotiate the Samsung contract removed \$3.7 billion from the rate base, compared to this number. The decision to remove domestic content removed \$1.9 billion from the rate base. That's \$5.6 billion that we've taken out of the rate base, and that more than covers that number, but it doesn't excuse that number.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Acting Premier. I'm sure the next Liberal election campaign ad came to me last night after the bombshell that was dropped this week. It goes something like this: The eHealth scandal, \$2 billion; the Ornge scandal, hundreds of millions of dollars; the gas plants scandal, \$1.1 billion; the Pan Am Games, priceless. There are some things in life that money can't buy, but if you are a Liberal in Ontario, there's always the taxpayer.

1100

Minister, when are you going to stop making Ontario people pay for your scandals and your incompetence? Will you call the non-confidence motion? Get a mandate from the people of Ontario before you misappropriate any more of taxpayers' money.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I go, I'm going to caution everyone that if we're going to dangerously go down a slippery slope of trying to say something indirectly that you can't say directly, I'll nail it right away. So let's be very cautious, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I don't need any editorials.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, thank you, Speaker. The member opposite maybe wasn't around when his party was in power, so I think he needs to be reminded of some of the extraordinary legacy his party, when they were in power, left for the people of Ontario. The attempt to privatize Hydro One led to a \$19.5-billion—

Mr. John Yakabuski: We went to the people and we paid the price. End of story.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't need arm-chair quarterbacks. The member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Hydro One attempt to privatize cost Ontario taxpayers and ratepayers \$19.5 billion. We are still paying that off. Every time an Ontarian opens their hydro bill, they're paying for the follies of the PC Party. When they tried to privatize electricity, prices rose 30% in just 30 weeks. The record is crystal clear. To make it worse, some of us remember that they hid from the people of this province—

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Minister, let me tell you the difference between what you are talking about and what we're talking about here. You've clearly lost the moral authority to govern in Ontario. Your government misappropriated \$1.1 billion—and here's the key—for partisan, political purposes. You treated the Ontario taxpayer like they were your own slush fund, like they were your own ATM.

Just because the NDP is prepared to prop you up and just because the NDP will support that kind of behaviour doesn't mean we will here. Just because the NDP is prepared to let you throw good money after bad at the Pan Am Games—they haven't learned their lesson; we have. We won't let it continue.

Minister, you shouldn't be allowed to spend one more red cent in this province. Will you call a non-confidence motion? Let the Ontario taxpayer decide once and for all if they're going to support this corrupt government.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge will come to order. The member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek will come to order. And if he goes to his seat, I'll say it again.

Answer, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The testosterone here is a bit in overdrive, but let's try to reflect on the history of this province. When the PCs were in power, they hid a deficit from the people of this province of \$5.6 billion. You talk about moral authority. They sold the 407 at a fire sale price.

But more importantly for me, Speaker, under their watch, one third of students dropped out of high school before they completed it. We had the longest surgical wait times in the country. We've gone from the worst to the first. When it comes to high school dropout rates, our kids are thriving. People are coming from around the world to find out how Ontario transformed their education system in one short decade.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. The Premier has said over and over that mistakes were made; it's a shame about Oakville and Mississauga—and then you bungled the cost of the cancellation.

But an apology isn't much good if you turn around and do the same thing over again. Has the Premier learned those lessons, or is she currently repeating those same mistakes in St. Clair with the replacement for the Mississauga plant?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, reference is made to the Auditor General's report again, and I want to make reference to an Auditor General's report, but not the one that she just released. I want to talk about the public accounts that she released several weeks ago. The same

Auditor General confirmed that the public accounts for Ontario—for the first time in 12 years, the costs of provincial government declined, and we continue to be the only province that is bettering our deficit reduction targets. We have acted responsibly. We're continuing to act responsibly.

Mr. Speaker, if they're prepared to go to an election, let them start talking about their policy. Let them start talking about their leader, who in one week says he's going to cancel the wind contracts, and in the next week he says he's not going to cancel them. We don't know where he stands, Mr. Speaker, and I defy him—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It appears the minister isn't following this file.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister for Rural Affairs, come to order.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier said the government would start consulting before siting power plants, but Sarnia mayor Mike Bradley is quoted as saying, "This ... decision, we were not consulted on. They simply made the announcement, and we were told it was coming to Lambton county."

Local residents are starting to raise health issues. It's sort of like déjà vu all over again. The Premier seems to be making the same mistake—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton—Lawrence, you're not helping, and if you go to your seat, I'll tell you the same thing.

Finish, please.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Does the minister realize that apologies don't count for much if you keep making the same mistake over and over?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The critic for the NDP wants to get into the quote game. I have a few quotes.

Mayor Hazel McCallion: "We have been opposing this power plant since 2004."

Sarnia Observer: "Our area accepts and welcomes these kinds of projects."

Sarnia Observer re St. Clair township mayor: "I told the minister the community would view it as a very positive thing for us all." That's the mayor, Mr. Speaker.

"Local tradespeople are glad to learn a natural gas plant will be constructed at the" Lennox generating station.

"It's been a slow summer for us.... This is very good news." That's the Sarnia Observer.

Mr. Speaker—a unanimous vote on the part of the Napanee council, accepting the plant. We have two communities, Mississauga and Oakville, who are happy that these plants have been moved, and we have two willing host communities who are happy to have them.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. John Fraser: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. As you may be aware, today is World Mental Health Day. Mental health is a growing concern amongst our young people in my riding of Ottawa South, especially our post-secondary students. With psychiatric disorders comprising 16% of all identified disabilities at our post-secondary institutions, we cannot sit idly by. As exams and the essay season heat up, the parents in our communities want to be sure that their kids have the support they need to succeed.

Can the minister please tell the House what the government is doing to provide support for post-secondary students struggling with mental health issues?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member is right: This is an incredibly important issue. One in five Ontarians, which means one in five of our young students, experience some form of mental illness, such as anxiety, eating disorders, schizophrenia and depression, and 70% of mental illness is identified during the teenage years.

Imagine dealing not only with the stresses of day-to-day school life, not only with maybe being away from home for the first time in your life, but also having to deal with some form of mental illness.

We've rolled out a number of supports. In fact, our \$27-million youth mental health innovation fund has already announced over 20 new programs right across the province with our colleges and universities.

That's also why we recently announced our Good2Talk helpline, a free, confidential, anonymous service that offers professional counselling, mental health information and connections to local resources 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year—a very, very important service for our students.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

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Mr. John Fraser: It's great to hear that the province is tackling mental health and investing in programs that will help our young people get access to the help they need to succeed. It is especially important to hear that students will have access to the Good2Talk helpline 24 hours a day and seven days a week. We must do everything we can to support our young people in all the ways they need and deserve.

However, I've also heard that the government is investing in 10 projects across the province that will provide further on-campus assistance and mental health programs. Parents and students alike can agree that these programs are just as necessary in the east as they are in Toronto, and they would like to be assured that institutions across the province are being considered.

Speaker, through you to the minister, has the government committed to any of these projects at the post-secondary institutions in Ottawa?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think it's an excellent question. Absolutely, these projects are rolling out right across the province; I can assure the member of that. In fact, there have been two rounds, so far, of approval, so it's actually 20 projects: 10 announced last week and 10 announced in

the spring. A total of \$6.5 million so far has been invested.

One of my favourite projects, in fact, is at Carleton University, in partnership with the University of Ottawa, in the member's region, as well as in partnership with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board. Carleton University and its partners have received \$640,000 over two years to work with and identify students who are at risk at the high school level, and then provide wraparound support services as they transfer into university. It's a groundbreaking program. It's very innovative, and I think that what it's going to lead to is better results for those students, right through to ensuring that those students, if they do suffer from some form of mental illness, don't lose a school year or worse.

This is a program we're very excited about. I'd like to thank all members from all parties—because I know that they all support these kinds of initiatives—for their support, and I'd particularly like to thank our partners in the colleges and universities for the work they're doing to roll them out.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: It must have been a pretty good Pan Am party last night, so I guess my question is to the Deputy Premier. Minister, all those foreign dignitaries you treated this week to your \$500,000 parties want to know if they will be safe for the TO2015 games. Your current one-line budget item for essential services, at \$235 million, is supposed to include the total security costs, but here are some comparative security costs for the last few multinational sporting events: London, \$1.6 billion; Vancouver, \$1 billion; and Turin, \$1.4 billion.

Minister, I hope you're not depending on cutting corners by granting special police powers to security guards to save your budget and keep Ontarians safe. Minister, what is the exact amount of the total security plan for the Pan Am Games? The total amount.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. The member opposite has been apprised of the ongoing deliberations regarding budgeting of the Pan Am Games for the last two years. He's well aware, from the outset, as to what is taking place and how it is going to be costed. He knows fully well—and I put it in the budget; I've also put it in our first-quarter results—some of the issues we have with regard to transportation and security.

More importantly, what was really shameful was that the members opposite chose not to receive delegations from across South America, people who came to our country. We are displaying Canada at its best—and Ontario—and they chose to dismiss them and to neglect them. These are people who are coming to invest in our province. We're hosting the games that we would want all of the world to recognize. They chose not to support Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: It seems to me that the most investment is coming from the Ontario taxpayer, not from

the delegates that got paid thousands of dollars to fly here and be put up here in Toronto.

Several weeks ago, the TO2015 CEO met with our party leader and me, and, when pressed, he threw out another number about security: \$113 million for security. It wasn't clear if that was the total security budget embedded in the \$235 million for the essential services item, or if that is another one of your surprise budget items hidden off the Pan Am books somewhere. Either way, a Pan Am security source indicated that your security budget, whatever it is, has been well overblown already.

Your lack of planning is the biggest security risk to date, Minister. Have you buried extra money outside the games budget again, and how much exactly is the total security cost? Can you give me the number in the budget of the security costs—flat out, yes or no? Can you do it? What is it?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We have recognized the complexity of these games; that's why we're working in tandem with TO2015. It's also why we have taken the extra step to ensure that security is installed as necessary by hiring a number of security and other groups to support these games.

Let's also recognize the influx of the tremendous amount of tourism that's coming to this province, the 10,000 athletes and officials who are going to attend, the extraordinary amount of celebrations and enthusiasm and the pickup that is going to have for our province. It's tremendous.

More important than that is the legacy that is going to be created by all of the community centres, the athletes' villages, the athlete venues across southern Ontario for the benefit of future generations. They should be supporting that, Mr. Speaker. They should be standing for Ontario.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Acting Premier. I think it has been pretty well established that the Liberal government wasted over \$1 billion to guarantee the profits of a private gas company and to save a few seats around Mississauga and Oakville.

While they were doing that, they also decided to dump the ONTC infrastructure on which northerners rely. A year later, due to the united northern front, we've put a hold on that. But imagine our surprise when we come to find out that jobs that could be done in North Bay at the shops are still being outsourced to other countries, and our own shops aren't being allowed to bid.

Are private contracts, private companies, still more important to this government than good jobs in northern Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Orzietti: I appreciate the question from member opposite. The member opposite knows full well that the minister's advisory committee has been set up and recognizes that the status quo was no longer an op-

tion. I think everybody agrees with that, and they recognize that there needs to be a new plan to help strengthen transportation infrastructure in northern Ontario, something that has been an incredible challenge in this region. I want to assure the member opposite that we are committed to investing in transportation infrastructure in northern Ontario and in the region to ensure that northerners who need service and access to transportation get that service.

I'm working with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. He is very acutely aware of these challenges and these issues, and he will continue to work with the local community to ensure the most effective solution for the region.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, my question is to the Acting Premier. I think everyone is aware, especially northerners, that the minister's advisory committees are charged with the job of advising the minister of how to restructure and how to come up with a plan for the ONTC. I think we're all in agreement on that, but how can they come up with a plan when you tie the ONTC's hands and you don't allow them to bid on contracts to actually make money for the company?

You're spending money on lawyers—you're lawyering up—but you're not letting northerners actually try to rebuild their company. You are trying to save your reputations while we lose our jobs.

Hon. David Orazietti: The member knows full well that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is very committed to addressing this issue in a way that meets the objectives and the realities of northern transportation challenges, and is committed to working with these communities. That's why this advisory group was set up. So while the member opposite is making some claims, there is an advisory group that we're going to be taking our advice from and working with to ensure the most effective solution is reached in this area. This is an acknowledgment that everyone recognizes that the status quo is not an option in this area. There has been a significant financial loss in the area with respect to the operation of the ONTC, and we're going to continue to work with the communities to find the best result.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Minister, this week marks Small Business Month across Canada, and it's a chance to highlight small businesses and the hard-working people who run them.

There are many small businesses in my riding of York South–Weston, such as Cristina's Antiques, Caplan's Appliances and the Golden Wheat Bakery, just to name a few, who are small business owners who are working to make it work for themselves and working to create local jobs in Ontario.

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There is always great fulfillment in running a successful small business, and it coincides with the govern-

ment's commitment to creating the right business climate to attract and support business.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: How is our government supporting small businesses across Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thanks to the member from York South–Weston for her question. She's a great advocate for small businesses in her community as well as in Ontario.

We've recently introduced Bill 105, the Supporting Small Businesses Act which, if passed, will ensure that 60,000 small businesses will pay less employer health tax and will eliminate that tax all together for 12,000 small businesses right across the province.

We've made funding commitments of over \$88 million to support businesses through our two regional economic development funds. Our work to cut red tape has eliminated over 80,000 regulatory burdens in the last five years, savings of more than \$265 million for businesses in Ontario. Of course, we've permanently cut the small business corporate income tax rate from 5.5% to 4.5% and eliminated the small business deduction surtax.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Minister, for the update.

Small businesses contribute so much to Ontario's economy. They are important partners for Ontario. They help build vibrant and strong communities, communities such as the Portuguese, the Spanish, the Vietnamese, the Somali and the Italian community. All of these communities have a strong presence in my riding, and, obviously, I continue to actively participate as much as I can in them.

I continue to receive, although, many questions from constituents about jobs created by small businesses, as well as broader questions about job creation as a whole across our province. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please provide me with an answer to take back to these communities about what our government is doing to help small business create good, meaningful jobs in my riding and in the rest of the province?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member again for the follow-up question and the opportunity to speak to the employment component of this.

Mr. Speaker, small and medium-sized businesses represent over 99% of all businesses in our province, which means, of course, they are a highly significant source of employment for the people of Ontario. Communities across the province—rural, small-town and urban—benefit from these important jobs. As jobs minister, I know how important having a good, meaningful job is. Making it easier for small businesses to create jobs is an important element of the investments and supports we provide, supports like the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs, helping to bridge knowledge and experience to help entrepreneurs start new businesses, and our 57 small business enterprise centres right across the province helping to support small businesses and entrepreneurs as well.

We're also looking forward to the official launch of our youth jobs strategy in the coming weeks, which will obviously support young people and create more jobs.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. Member from Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: If I'd only known they cared.

Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, over the course of my time here and well before that, your government has been promising the residents of Thornhill and Vaughan a hospital. We have yet to see a hole in the ground, and the sign at the corner of Major Mackenzie and Jane is starting to look, well, tired and rusty and battered—sort of like your party.

Now, to further complicate matters, there appears to be a gaping hole in this story. Who has title to the 80 acres of land where the hospital is to be built? Both the city of Vaughan and a private corporation seem to have an interest.

My question is this: Does your ministry or the city of Vaughan hold clear title to construct a hospital on this 80-acre tract of land or have you left this or any part of it in the hands of a private corporation?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Vaughan is a growing, thriving community, and the people of Vaughan and Thornhill deserve a hospital, and we're going to deliver a hospital to the people of Vaughan.

I want to thank the member from Vaughan, who, since before he was elected to this Legislature, has been a tireless advocate of that new hospital. And in fairness, I want to thank the member from Thornhill, who also has stood up and supported this infrastructure project, even though the party, I'm afraid, does not support hospital infrastructure. But nonetheless, the member opposite I think should drive by the site. There is a new sign that went up this week, celebrating the site of the future hospital, and I am very pleased that the largest single health care investment ever in Vaughan is the \$49.7-million—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. And while her answer is finished, I want to be able to hear the rest of the answer, and the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is not helping.

Supplementary, please.

Mr. Peter Shurman: If only a sign could offer dialysis.

There are few things more important to a community than a hospital, and the residents of Thornhill and Vaughan are restless, Minister. For the past five years, Vaughan residents have been paying additional taxes to

the tune of \$16 million that have been collected since 2012, and yet no date to break ground or start construction. This is just wrong.

A previous health minister and a previous finance minister, in fact, turned taxpayer dollars over to a private corporation in aid of future hospital activities. Where did that go? There is a lack of clarity and a lack of transparency and oversight here, and we both know that.

Now it is unclear who the land belongs to. Minister, you know as well as I do that a hospital cannot be built on private land. So, Minister, please end the ambiguity. Who owns the land and when will the hospital be built?

Interjections.

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

I'm going to ask—because I wanted him to put the question, but I'm going to ask the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound not to heckle when he's asking the question.

Answer, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm feeling this might be a—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So now I'll stand up and tell the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound: You're warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ask the member from Halton about that.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm so happy to have this question, because I'm happy to assure the member opposite and the people of Vaughan that the construction is scheduled to begin in 2015. We are working with all partners to make sure we proceed with this site, and let's imagine what's going to be there, Speaker. We will have emergency and surgical services; operating rooms; acute, in-patient, intensive-care beds; diagnostic imaging; specialized ambulatory clinics.

The people of Vaughan deserve this hospital. The member from Vaughan has been a fearless advocate for this hospital. Construction will begin in 2015, and we're moving ahead.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Ms. Cindy Forster: This Liberal government is notorious for making bad bets and losing big. But it's easy to wager when you're not playing with your own money. When—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry, I need to ask the member to put the question—to who?

Ms. Cindy Forster: The Acting Premier.

I'll start again. This Liberal government is notorious for making bad bets and losing big, but it's easy to wager when you're not playing with your own money.

This week, the Auditor General confirmed that this government gambled away \$1 billion to save a few Liberal seats in Oakville and Mississauga. But by scrapping the racetrack slots in Fort Erie, you gambled with the

livelihoods of many people in Fort Erie and track communities across this province.

The Premier says she's sticking up for rural Ontario, but what is she doing to make sure the final race of the season isn't the last race in the 116-year history of the Fort Erie tracks?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, this government put in place a panel of three very distinguished former cabinet ministers of the province of Ontario: Mr. Snobelen, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Wilkinson. The Premier, over a month ago, issued a letter to the panel to come up with a five-year plan to make sure that horse racing in Ontario is sustainable and transparent, and to get fans to the tracks.

1130

We're moving forward with that plan. The plan is going to be complete in the next little while, and we'll have the opportunity to make sure that there's a horse racing industry in the province of Ontario, to be sustained into the future for the years to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: The Liberals have a bad habit of scheduling a press conference just before a long weekend. Let's hope it's no coincidence that the horse racing transition panel's report should finally come down tomorrow. The horse racing industry has been waiting for good news, for a change, from this government. If this government can blow \$1 billion on gas plants, surely it can spare some change for the horse racing industry.

When those people who rely on the horse racing industry sit down for turkey this weekend, will they be giving thanks or will they be worried about an uncertain future for horse racing in Ontario?

Hon. Jeff Leal: We've already made a lot of progress in the horse racing industry in the province of Ontario. We have committed up to \$180 million to support the industry over the next three years as it adapts to a smaller and more sustainable model.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker: John Snobelen, a former very distinguished member from that caucus over there who served in cabinet, said that the SART program wasn't transparent and wasn't sustainable. He has been the advocate for a new five-year plan in the province of Ontario to make sure we have horse racing on a sustainable basis for the years to come—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question?

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This past Monday was recognized as United Nations World Habitat Day. Countries and communities around the world highlighted the need for housing for the world's most vulnerable population. Though it might be tempting to look outside Canada's borders, the need for affordable housing exists right here in Ontario. I know that I have heard about this urgent need from all segments of my community, whether they are old or young, whether they are new to Ontario or have lived here for many generations, because at the end

of the day, my constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt, like every Ontarian, need and deserve a place they call home and take refuge from the world.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she please tell the House what our government is doing to invest in affordable housing to ensure every Ontarian is not left out in the cold?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank my colleague for this very timely question. I'd like to recognize the importance of World Habitat Day because we believe all Ontarians deserve to have a safe and secure place to call home. Having a place to call home is often the first step out of poverty. It's the first step to allow our most vulnerable a chance to recognize and realize new opportunities, allowing them a better quality of life.

That's why our government has invested \$3 billion in our affordable housing strategy since 2003. That \$3 billion is more than any previous government. This investment means that 263,000 existing units have been repaired or renovated and that 17,000 new affordable housing units have been created—new affordable housing such as 8 Chichester Place, where our government, along with our federal partners, invested over \$25 million to create 210 new units for low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Our government will continue to invest in affordable housing that will strengthen communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to thank the minister for her answers. I'm sure my constituents are pleased to hear that we are investing in housing and supporting vulnerable communities.

Though we have made significant investments in affordable housing, Toronto and communities across Ontario need stable, predictable funding for social and affordable housing. This need stretches across Canada. That is why Claude Dauphin, the president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, has called on the federal government—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, last time.

Ms. Soo Wong: —to take up their critical role alongside the provinces and municipalities to restore balance to Canada's housing system.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could she please explain to the House what our government is doing to ensure that we have a long-term partner in the federal government to ensure that Ontario cities and towns have the predictable housing funding that they need?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Investing in housing is a societal issue. It takes three levels of government—municipal, provincial and federal—at the table to solve this pressing issue. Although our government was encouraged by the decision of the federal government to extend its commitment to affordable housing in their budget, I am worried that the federal government's commitment to affordable housing will actually evaporate over the next 20 years.

That is why our government will closely watch the upcoming throne speech from our federal partners with a close eye to ensuring that they will live up to their moral

obligation to invest in more affordable social housing, because investing in affordable housing is investing in Ontario's infrastructure and its people. These investments pay dividends, creating jobs for Ontarians while continuing to provide housing for Ontario's most vulnerable for decades to come.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question today is for the Minister of Energy. On Tuesday, you were in my riding of Huron-Bruce to visit Bruce Power. In your travels, you had to have seen the 158 turbines already up in that community. By the way, yesterday, the Liberals' secret Samsung project near Kincardine was just approved.

Minister, you just blew \$1 billion on large energy projects in Oakville and Mississauga, because those communities didn't want them. Your Premier said you need to learn from past mistakes, but sadly, your government hasn't. The secret Samsung deal means that over and above the 158 turbines already up, another 90 turbines, 100 feet taller than the ones already in place, are going to be inflicted on unwilling host communities in the municipality of Kincardine and the county of Bruce.

Minister, can you explain to the residents of the Kincardine area why, right from the start, you are choosing to disrespect their unwilling stance?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are some people who are on the edge, and I can add others.

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I think the member is talking about existing wind contracts.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Maybe the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member is speaking about existing wind contracts. The leader of the Conservative Party, several weeks ago, said that he would respect existing wind contracts; that he wouldn't tamper with them. Then he went to the International Plowing Match and he said that it is open to change them, deal with them or amend them. We've learned that you don't cancel existing contracts, if nothing else. She is suggesting that we change existing binding contracts.

What is important is that we have had a renewable policy that has eliminated dirty coal-burning generation to virtually zero in this province, making this province healthier, and that party opposes it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, and I know the member will listen.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Minister, you know the truth always comes out, so why don't you just come out with your hands up and give it up before the AG completes a report on the multi-billion-dollar boondoggle this Liberal failed green energy scheme is going to be proven to be? Just come out now.

Samsung's Armow project alone is approved to generate 180 megawatts. This is translated into \$1.2 billion, just for those 180 megawatts, all for electricity Ontario doesn't need. You have a chance to do right here, Minister, but you and all of your caucus, if you continue to proceed—and even the NDP, for propping up your awful policies that are crippling Ontario—need to be ashamed. Your green energy plan is criminal. Once and for all, will you man up, admit that your scheme has failed and call an immediate moratorium on all wind projects?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I would like clarification from the Leader of the Opposition in view of the fact that they are asking for an election. Let them say whether they will cancel existing wind contracts. We have renewable energy in this province because that government—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Come out with your hands up, Bob. Cuff him!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton might not know this, but I don't have to wait for the clock to expire to have anyone leave. It could be at any time.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is that a challenge?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Then I would recommend to her not to say anything.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We've invested in clean, renewable energy in this province because that government increased dirty coal-burning generation, up to 25% of our total generation. We have reduced that to almost zero. The former Minister of Energy from that party over there, Mr. John Baird, is down in Washington taking credit for the fact that we have reduced coal in this country—meaning in this province. He is taking credit for the federal government on something we have done here. That Minister of Energy was increasing dirty coal-burning generation.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2012-13 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, entitled *Serving the Public*.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would also like to ask my friends to join me in celebrating and thanking our pages, as this is their last day.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank them for their very, very fine work.

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

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I ask the House to join me in welcoming a good friend of mine. Faisal Mirza is a leading criminal defence lawyer as well as an appellate lawyer. Please welcome him to Queen's Park.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd just like to point out to everyone that we're being joined in the members' east gallery by a former member of this House, Mario Racco, a former member for Thornhill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not stealing my thunder—but as is the tradition, the Speaker will introduce the former member from Thornhill, Mr. Mario Racco from the 38th Parliament. Welcome, Mr. Racco.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KITCHENER GIRLS' SOCCER

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, I'd like to commend the Kitchener Spirit 99A under-14 girls' team for their impressive win at the Ontario Cup last month. The girls showed incredible resolve to win the game in the closing moments, scoring twice in less than two minutes to secure the championship.

I would like to also commend the coaches for their fine work in preparing this team for its successful run: head coach Vince, general manager Joanne, and assistant coaches John and Karim. All deserve our appreciation for their hard work and determination to make this under-14 girls' team a champion one.

I would also like to mention the players—McKenna, Kirsten, Gabrielle, Olivia, Sayan, Christine, Bridget, Journey, Alexandra, Stephanie, Estevana, Krissia, Isabelle, Gabriella and Morgan—for their hard work and tenacity for sticking with the game to the very end and never giving up.

I had the opportunity last Thursday to take in a practice as the girls were preparing for the National Club Championships, and I saw the perseverance and the determination of those young girls. I also want to congratulate and thank their parents for sticking with them and showing that they're also supporting their hard work, both on the field and off it.

Of course, I'd like to wish them the best of luck in the National Club Championships Under 14 Cup now taking place in Lethbridge, Alberta. They have already won their first game yesterday, and they're well on their way to challenging for the national under-14 girls' title.

Go, Spirit girls, and good luck in the national championships.

GREENPEACE SHIP

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, Paul Ruzyski is a native of Port Colborne, Ontario. He's an honest and committed man. He's a sailor on the Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise. Along with Alexandre Paul of Quebec, he and 28 other people were recently arrested by Russian authorities for peaceful entry onto a Russian oil-drilling platform in Arctic waters—international waters. They are facing piracy charges.

Paul, Alexandre and their colleagues were trying to bring world attention to the threat of global warming and the huge risk to the Arctic from oil drilling. President Putin has publicly said that everyone knows no act of piracy occurred, yet his officials seem to be acting contrary to the President's directions.

I add my voice to that of millions and call on President Putin and Russian authorities to release Paul Ruzyski, Alexandre Paul and the others on bail and to drop these serious charges. I hope others will add their voices.

Russia is a great and powerful nation. These charges are not justified and Russia is great enough to abandon them.

EID AL-ADHA

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: On behalf of myself, the Liberal caucus and the entire government of Ontario and, indeed, all members of the Legislature, I'd like to wish all Muslims in Ontario and, indeed, all Ontarians, an Eid Mubarak celebration of the Eid festival.

The week of October 16 marks Eid al-Adha, a holiday celebrated by a billion-plus Muslims worldwide. This special occasion is a reminder to Muslims of Abraham's sacrifice of his son as an act of obedience to God. To celebrate this, Muslims across the province and the world come together in their communities for prayer, and will be sharing the delights and fruits of their hard labour by feasting with family—no doubt, overeating—with friends, neighbours and, most importantly, by giving to charity.

This is also the time when millions will be performing the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca, performing various rituals and asking for atonement.

This special holiday and its values are representative of the diversity that the Ontario Liberal Party stands for: togetherness based on shared values—"common ground," the phrase which you're all attempting to roll into the phrase "one Ontario."

Speaker, on behalf of the Liberal caucus, the government of Ontario, once again, happy Eid and Hajj season. Eid Mubarak.

ALICE MUNRO

Ms. Laurie Scott: I am so pleased to rise today, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative members, to extend our congratulations to Canadian author Alice Munro, who just this morning was named the winner of

the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature. Ms. Munro is the first Canadian woman and the 13th woman ever to receive this very prestigious award. She joins a long list of acclaimed authors who have shared in this honour since the Nobel Prize in Literature was created in 1901.

Originally from Wingham, Ontario—Ms. Munro’s work focuses on the lives, thoughts and feelings of women living in rural communities. Today, she has garnered the title “master of the contemporary short story.”

This announcement comes at an appropriate time, as October is Women’s History Month in Canada, a time to celebrate the achievements and impacts women have made in Canadian history.

Alice Munro’s literary works and the international recognition she has received are certainly something to be celebrated. Great literature is an art form that enriches our lives and our culture, and we are fortunate that so many exceptional authors call Canada home.

All members of the Ontario Legislature and Ontarians across the province, I’m sure, are very proud of Alice Munro’s outstanding achievement.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise to speak today about Ontario’s frail social safety net. People who are concerned about our social safety net and this government’s lack of action on poverty reduction are taking action. They will be out in numbers on the lawn of Queen’s Park on October 17, the United Nations day to eradicate poverty.

In fact, out on the lawn today, we have ISARC leading an interfaith prayer vigil challenging austerity and seeking dignity for all Ontarians.

The Stitching Our Own Social Safety Net campaign will unveil a collective art piece over 175 feet in length. The artwork has been stitched together using contributed art pieces from more than 500 individuals and groups across the province who share this concern.

Why is it that the government has the lowest social spending per capita of any province in Canada? Why did this government lower corporate taxes to among the lowest in North America? We need more money to pay for programs to lift people out of poverty. And why did the Liberal government cut crucial spending such as the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit?

The campaign to stitch our social safety net has five key demands:

- restore social assistance rates to the levels they were before the Harris government;
- raise the minimum wage to \$14 an hour;
- 1% of the Ontario budget to be spent on sustainable, safe, affordable and quality housing;
- fully funded dental services for all social assistance recipients and low-income workers; and
- lower tuition fees.

I absolutely agree and urge all members to support them, and to go out and pray along with ISARC.

ALICE MUNRO

Ms. Helena Jaczek: This morning, we received the delightful news that our fellow Ontarian, author Alice Munro, received the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature, making her the first Canadian and 13th woman to do so. The Nobel Prize adds to Ms. Munro’s long list of literary accomplishments, which include three Governor General’s Awards, two Giller Prizes and one Trillium award.

Known primarily as an author of short stories, she has often been referred to as one of the greatest contemporary writers of fiction, and as our generation’s Chekhov.

Born in the southwestern Ontario town of Wingham, Alice Munro has never forgotten her roots. Most of her stories take place in small towns like Wingham, and so her style of writing is known as southern Ontario gothic.

Having read many of her works, I can personally attest that her books capture the imagination of readers and speak to the reality of our great province, while her characters take the form of people that we meet and interact with each day.

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As this award has demonstrated, her works have been celebrated, not just in Ontario, but across the world. Her stories have been translated into almost 20 languages and offer the world an accurate, everlasting portrait of life in Ontario.

On behalf of all Ontarians, I would like to congratulate Alice Munro on receiving this prestigious award.

HIGHWAY FUNDING

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: When this government cancelled the Connecting Link Program, they did it suddenly, without warning, without consultation and without any concern for the impact on municipalities, especially small municipalities. Far too often, that’s the way this government operates; just ask anyone in the horse racing industry.

Connecting Link had existed since 1927. It acknowledged that the province should bear primary responsibility for the cost of maintaining provincial highways. It acknowledged that municipalities can’t pay for highways that serve traffic that is, for the most part, not local. I ask the Minister of Transportation, what does he think Toronto and Mississauga might say if he suddenly told them to start paying for the 401?

Over a year ago, I wrote to the Premier to convey the extreme disappointment of the municipalities I represent over the government’s unilateral decision to cancel the program. In response, multiple ministers of transportation have bragged about the government’s MIII program as if it were somehow a replacement for Connecting Link. It’s not, and the minister should admit it’s not.

This week, we learned of the government’s crass political decision to cancel two power plants in the GTA, which will cost a billion dollars. They blew a billion dollars to buy five Liberal seats and they scrapped Connecting Link, a program that cost a tiny fraction of that and a program that was working. It’s shameful, it’s

inexcusable and it's totally unacceptable to the people I represent.

DENTURISTS

Mr. Steven Del Duca: We are joined today by visitors from the Denturist Association of Ontario. Denturists across our province work hard every day to restore healthy smiles to Ontarians. The care that they provide not only helps to restore function to their patients, but also provides them with the confidence they need and deserve. But let's sink our teeth into the real issue here: An important component of providing quality care is ensuring correct fit. Most denturists fabricate, repair or adjust dentures in-house after seeing their patients chair-side.

Since 1974, denturists have been regulated health professionals like doctors, dentists, physiotherapists and pharmacists. When concerns were raised about their college's operations and finances, the Ministry of Health stepped in to ensure that the profession continued to be governed by a strong and responsible self-regulator. I am pleased to say that, with help from the profession, the college's turnaround has been remarkable and it has come a long way under its new leadership.

Healthy smiles are a critical component of a healthy lifestyle, and I know that folks in my community of Vaughan are happy to know that they can find these quality health care services close to home.

I want to take a moment to thank all denturists across Ontario for the remarkable work they do every day in our province.

If I could also add, with my remaining time on the clock, I believe today is the sixth anniversary for those elected to this particular Legislature back in 2007. So to all members on all sides of the House who were elected on this day six years ago, happy sixth anniversary.

LOW WATER LEVELS

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today on behalf of businesses, marinas and homeowners in my riding to reiterate concern over low water levels in Georgian Bay and the impact that continues to have on my constituents and people throughout Ontario. In May, I rose in the House to apprise the government of the urgency of the problems facing marinas and other small businesses along Georgian Bay. The following week, I met with the Minister of Natural Resources about this issue. It's now October, five months later, and what has the government done? Nothing. The town of Wasaga Beach is still waiting to hear back on a mere request for an environmental assessment to dredge the mouth of the Nottawasaga River. Once obtained, the EA will then take years to complete. By then, I can guarantee that the marine and tourism industries will be decimated. Why is this issue not a priority for this government?

Last month, at the request of Stop the Drop, I wrote to all the local service clubs along my part of Georgian Bay to ask them to get involved with the Stop the Drop

Mayors' Challenge and to produce an account of the impact of low water levels on their communities. Together, Stop the Drop and the mayors around Georgian Bay are reaching out to citizens and asking them to come forward and tell their stories with pictures illustrating the impact of low water levels and estimates of the costs that those citizens have had to bear. I encourage all members of the service clubs and everybody to get involved with this outstanding initiative to raise awareness on this very important issue, and I encourage this government to get working with our federal partners and, in the meantime, provide short-term relief for the many residences and businesses adversely affected by low water levels on the Great Lakes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. It is now time for reports by committees.

The member from Durham on a point of order.

Mr. John O'Toole: Speaker, earlier today the Minister of Energy made an announcement in the scrum about cutting \$10 billion from the funding of nuclear. It wasn't appropriate for the minister to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First, that's not a point of order. He can say what he needs to say out there. That's not an impact on the House itself.

It is reports by committees. Reports by committees?

A point of order, the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville.

VISITORS

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, I'd just like to take the opportunity to recognize two monks in the Legislature. They were part of the Buddhist heritage day, and their names are Monk Tenzin Lampa and Monk Galo Gala from the Karma Sonam Dargye Ling temple.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ENHANCING PATIENT CARE AND PHARMACY SAFETY (STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT) ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS AFIN D'AMÉLIORER LES SOINS AUX MALADES ET LA SÉCURITÉ DES PHARMACIES

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 117, An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 117, Loi visant à modifier certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements, Speaker.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 50 and 52 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? Carried.
Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee membership.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated February 20, 2013, the membership of the following committees, effective 12:01 a.m., October 11, is as follows:

The Standing Committee on Estimates: Laura Albanese, Mike Colle, Joe Dickson, Amrit Mangat, Steve Clark, Rob Leone, Jerry Ouellette, Taras Natyshak, Michael Prue;

The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Steven Del Duca, Kevin Flynn, Mitzie Hunter, Soo Wong, Victor Fedeli, Douglas Holyday, Monte McNaughton, Catherine Fife, Michael Prue;

The Standing Committee on General Government: Donna Cansfield, Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla, John Fraser, Michael Harris, Laurie Scott, Jeff Yurek, Sarah Campbell, Peggy Sattler;

The Standing Committee on Government Agencies: Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti, Rick Bartolucci, Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece, Lisa Thompson, Percy Hatfield, Monique Taylor;

The Standing Committee on Justice Policy: Bob Delaney, Steven Del Duca, Phil McNeely, Shafiq Qaadri, Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren, Rob Milligan, Teresa Armstrong, Jonah Schein;

The Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Lorenzo Berardinetti, Helena Jaczek, Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely, Toby Barrett, Norm Miller, Jerry Ouellette, France Gélinas, Jagmeet Singh;

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The Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills: Donna Cansfield, Dipika Damerla, John Fraser, Monte Kwinter, Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls, Bill Walker, Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof;

The Standing Committee on Social Policy: Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon, Helena Jaczek, Ted Chudleigh, Ernie Hardeman, Rod Jackson, Cheri DiNovo, Paul Miller; and

The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly: Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack, Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat, Garfield Dunlop, Lisa MacLeod, Todd Smith, Cindy Forster, Michael Mantha.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I believe the House has heard the motion. All in favour—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. I'm going to have to make that change, so let me sit down for a moment, please.

With the understanding of John O'Toole versus Jerry Ouellette in public accounts—

Mr. John O'Toole: He's on the first committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): He's on the first committee.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. Do we have agreement? Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The member from Simcoe—Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I seek unanimous consent for this House to sit next week; that notwithstanding standing order 6(a), the House shall meet on Tuesday, October 15, Wednesday, October 16 and Thursday, October 17, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe—Grey is seeking unanimous consent for sittings next week. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Motions? Motions?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm hearing heckling in the middle of motions.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

HOSPITAL PHARMACIES

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce legislation that, if passed, would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act to give the Ontario College of Pharmacists the necessary authority to license hospital pharmacies.

Before I go any further, Speaker, I would like to recognize the efforts of Suzanne McGurn, the assistant deputy minister for our health human resources strategy division, and her team. It is because of her hard work and dedication that I am able to bring this proposed legislation forward today. Thank you, Suzanne and your team.

Our government is taking action on our commitment to put into effect the recommendations made public by Dr. Jake Thiessen as a result of his review of Ontario's cancer drug system this past August.

You will recall that in March, Cancer Care Ontario advised us that two chemotherapy drugs used at four Ontario hospitals had been diluted. As a result, patients received a lower dose of drugs than was prescribed to treat their cancer. Mr. Speaker, when this happened, we made a promise to patients that we would do everything we can to ensure incidents like this would not happen again. My government took this incident very seriously, which is why we appointed Dr. Thiessen to get answers about how this happened and what needed to be done to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Dr. Thiessen's review highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed. Among them was a concern that medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies were not standardized across the province. Although the College of Pharmacists currently has the authority to inspect community pharmacies, they do not have the power to inspect hospital pharmacies, leaving that responsibility to the hospital itself.

Even though hospital pharmacies were not found to be the cause of the particular incident last March, out of an abundance of caution and in the interest of protecting patients, Dr. Thiessen recommended that the college also be empowered to inspect hospital premises. This would allow for a consistent standard and mandatory compliance of operations when they have the potential to put patients' safety at risk.

Our government has accepted all of the recommendations to improve the safety of Ontario's hospital drug supply system, and we are continuing to work closely with the college, hospitals, Health Canada and other health partners to implement them.

My ministry has established a task force composed of government and stakeholder representatives to oversee the implementation of 11 of the 12 recommendations. The 12th recommendation, related to the college's ability to license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's hospitals, is not currently covered under legislation; hence these proposed amendments.

First, we're proposing to amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, which is the statute that currently gives the college the authority to license and inspect pharmacies in the community. The act already sets out the necessary framework the college needs to perform inspections, provide quality assurance monitoring and enforce licensing requirements.

Second, our proposal would build in regulation-making powers for the government to extend the college's oversight of pharmacies in other settings, if that

need is identified in the future. This mechanism would facilitate potential expansion of the college's oversight without the need for further amendments to legislation.

Speaker, I would like to convey to this House and the people of our province that we've been working very closely with the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association on these amendments, and will continue to do so. Both organizations support the licensing proposal for hospital pharmacies and have expressed keen interest in working together to develop the necessary standards to enable the new licensing regime if legislative amendments are passed.

At the same time, I'm introducing additional amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act to strengthen oversight which seeks to better protect patients.

The chemotherapy underdosing incident and other situations have highlighted the importance of ensuring that health system entities, such as health regulatory colleges, are able to share information and coordinate responses in order to more effectively address future incidents that could pose risks to patients.

The public expects regulators and other health care entities to be able to work seamlessly together to improve their response where patient care may be compromised and so, today, I'm proposing to:

- (1) enable health regulatory colleges to more readily share information with public health authorities;
- (2) permit regulatory colleges to share information with the hospital where it was obtained by a college's investigator;
- (3) require a hospital or employer to report to regulatory colleges if a regulated health professional has voluntarily restricted his or her practice or privileges because of concerns regarding the member's conduct or practice;
- (4) allow the government to move more quickly to appoint a college supervisor in order to address any serious concerns regarding the quality of a college's governance and management; and
- (5) provide health regulatory colleges the flexibility to focus their investigation of complaints to those matters that could constitute professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity.

I would like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association for working with us so diligently over the years, and especially this past spring and summer. Together, we investigated what occurred in the chemotherapy underdosing incident and have proposed measures to ensure that something like this does not happen again.

These proposed amendments will go a long way towards reducing the possibility of such an incident occurring in the future. I only hope that the measures we are taking will provide patients and their families some level of comfort in knowing that steps are being taken to ensure an incident like this doesn't happen again.

With the help of health regulatory colleges, the proposed amendments will enable a more rapid and integrat-

ed response to any potential future incidents and will enhance communication among health care entities that are responsible for patient safety.

Speaker, I urge all members to support these proposed amendments.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: It is my pleasure today to rise to recognize October as Women's History Month.

I, too, would like to start by congratulating Alice Munro—we've heard it here today—on winning the Nobel Prize for literature today. Ms. Munro, of course, is well known for her short stories, which were often based in Ontario and focused on the experiences of women and girls in smaller communities. She is the first Canadian-based writer to receive this award. This is a tremendous achievement for her and ties in perfectly as we celebrate the accomplishments of all women today.

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Tomorrow is also International Day of the Girl, and I understand that Malala Yousafzai is a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. This young woman has been a courageous ambassador for the right of all girls to receive an education since she suffered a brutal attack last year. I wish her all the best of luck tomorrow and commend her on her tremendous bravery and advocacy.

I'm proud to celebrate today, and throughout this month, the steady progress women have made in Ontario. This is a time to thank the strong leadership from all corners of the province that made this progress possible.

I encourage everyone to view the new permanent exhibition, entitled "A Remarkable Assembly: Women at Queen's Park," at the east end of the main hallway. I'd like to thank the Clerk's office for honouring all the women who have contributed to this province's history: women like Agnes Macphail and Rae Luckock, who in 1943 were the first two female MPPs in Ontario.

I would also like to draw the House's attention to the historical timeline on the website of the Ontario Women's Directorate, which highlights key events that have made a difference in the lives of women in our province. This year, the Ontario Women's Directorate is marking 30 years as an influence in advancing women's equality in the province.

A few of the directorate's many achievements over the years are worth bringing to the attention of this House. In 1989, the directorate launched a series of advertisements that brought public attention to the issue of wife abuse in Ontario. Several years later, groundbreaking domestic and sexual violence action plans, released respectively in 2004 and 2011, engaged community partners to take action to end violence against women, and that progress continues today, with programs designed to increase the economic independence of Ontario women.

Under our new micro-lending program, more than 630 low-income women will receive business-readiness support and more than 170 women will receive a micro-loan to start their own businesses over the next two years.

This new program is in addition to the Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology initiative, which has provided thousands of women with specialized workplace training to help them find jobs and advance in their careers.

During Women's History Month, we also recognize Persons Day. History tells us that as recently as 84 years ago, I, as a woman, would not be standing in this House today. Fast forward to today, where women enjoy full voting rights and equality rights. Now I serve with 29 other extremely impressive female members who are making Ontario a better place to live for all.

I'm also very proud to acknowledge that I serve under the first female Premier in our province's history. That is a strong record of achievement, but we all know that challenges remain. One area we're focusing on this year is women in leadership. Women make up half of Ontario's workforce and more than half of our post-secondary graduates, but are still under-represented in leadership positions and on boards of directors. Women only account for 14.5% of board members of Canada's 500 largest companies by revenue. This is a figure that has hardly moved in the last decade.

We've asked the Ontario Securities Commission to undertake public consultations to see how we can encourage and support firms in increasing the representation of women in corporate leadership. These consultations are currently under way, and we look forward to receiving the findings and recommendations.

The theme for this year's 30th anniversary of the Ontario Women's Directorate is, "Celebrate, Remember, Look Forward." Let's celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of women in Ontario, let's remember women who were leaders and made our province what it is today and let's look forward to more progress for women.

This House has my commitment to continue to work towards equality for all Ontario girls and women.

I invite everyone to join me later this afternoon for our 30th anniversary—in committee rooms 228 and 230.

HOSPITAL PHARMACIES

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am pleased to respond very briefly to the statement made by the Minister of Health in introducing the Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety Act a few moments ago. This, of course, arose out of the tragic chemotherapy underdosing incident, and also out of a report rendered by Dr. Jake Thiessen, which contained a number of excellent recommendations.

This act follows up on recommendation number 12, which recommends and authorizes the Ontario College of Pharmacists to inspect and license hospital pharmacies. Currently, they only have the ability to do so with respect to community pharmacies, so I think this is an important step forward.

I literally have just come back from a briefing by ministry officials—and I would like to thank the Minister of Health for arranging that—so I can't comment in any

great detail. But I would certainly say that if there is anything that will improve and enhance Ontario's hospital drug supply system and enhance patient safety, that should be given very serious consideration, and anything that will prevent anything like the chemotherapy underdosing incident from happening again should certainly be supported.

The bill also goes a little bit further than Dr. Thiessen's original recommendations, in enabling a quick response to any potential future incidents, and also enables the Ontario College of Pharmacists and other health regulatory colleges to provide information to hospitals and public health authorities under specific circumstances.

I understand that the Ontario College of Pharmacists as well as the Ontario Hospital Association have had significant input to the crafting of this bill, and I certainly look forward to future discussions with them and with other stakeholders as we move forward to second reading of this bill.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment, Mr. Speaker.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today, on behalf of PC members, to acknowledge Women's History Month and the 30th anniversary of the Ontario Women's Directorate, as well as Persons Day, which falls in October—a lot of celebrations.

As you know, October is recognized as Women's History Month in Canada. During this month, we celebrate the contributions that women and girls have made to Canadian history and the lasting impacts these contributions have had on our lives today. Especially in the last few decades, Canadian women have made outstanding achievements in the fields of science, engineering, politics, business, athletics, medicine, education and more.

My own mother, Betty Scott, is up for the extraordinary business leader award for Kawartha Lakes, nominated with a lot of strong leaders from the Kawartha Lakes area. That's on October 24, so we'll see; at 85 years old, she may be able to receive the award for extraordinary business leader.

This year's theme for Women's History Month is "Canadian Women Pioneers: Inspiring change through ongoing leadership."

Women have broken through many barriers and pushed through glass ceilings to become leaders in every sector.

It was in 1983 that the Ontario Women's Directorate was established, under the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, and Robert Welch was appointed as Ontario's first-ever minister responsible for women's issues.

You might think it strange now, that the first minister responsible for women's issues was a man; however, in 1983, there were only seven women MPPs serving in the Ontario Legislature, less than 6% of the members at the

time. Today, I am proud to be part of the group of 30 women MPPs now making up 28% of the Legislature. We not only represent our constituents, but we also represent Ontario's 6.8 million women and girls.

Much has changed for women in Ontario since 1983—not just in terms of elected representatives—but still the struggle for equality has not yet ended in Ontario, and women deserve to have their concerns heard loud and clear.

As the critic for the Ontario Women's Directorate, I am pleased that this outlet has been able to bring these concerns to the fore for 30 years.

I am happy to have had the opportunity in the Legislature to speak on Women's History Month and the 30th anniversary of the Women's Directorate, and to say that we are all moving forward together.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I am happy to respond to the minister responsible for women's issues and to add, on behalf of the New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, our congratulations to the Ontario Women's Directorate, our acknowledgement of Women's History Month and, of course, of Persons Day as well.

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One of the things in that slogan from the Ontario Women's Directorate is about remembering. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I do remember. We women do remember that the achievements that we've made haven't really been with the help of government, and this administration has been no different.

Here's the reality of women's experience in the province today. First of all, on pay equity: This government has done absolutely nothing for pay equity. We currently make 28% less than men. In fact, I have a little motion on the order paper declaring April 9 to be Pay Equity Day because that's how long women have to work just to catch up to be even with men. Again, this government has done nothing on that.

Poverty follows women into retirement. Women 65 and over are twice as likely as men to be poor. Sixty percent of minimum wage earners are women. Seven out of 10 part-time workers are women.

By the way, it was our \$10 minimum wage campaign that forced the government to raise the minimum wage back in 2008, and five years later, the minimum wage is still the same. That's disgraceful because it affects women.

Victim Services Toronto: I've spoken about this agency so often in this House. They deal with women who have suffered abuse and who are escaping abuse. They're the largest in Ontario, and they haven't received a raise in 20 years. In 20 years, their funding has been flatlined, 10 years under this administration.

This government also cut the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit. That helps women escaping abuse to try to relocate to a new place. That funding has

been cut. That directly affects women. Without a replacement for that support, countless women have been trapped in abuse.

So yes, we remember, we women, and yes, we look forward—not to talk, but actually to action finally. We challenge this government: After 10 years, do something for women.

HOSPITAL PHARMACIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add a few words on the proposed legislation that was presented by the Minister of Health today: Enhancing Patient Care and Pharmacy Safety.

First, I will say that I'm quite happy that they recognize the value of oversight—because, basically, what this does, is it allows the College of Pharmacists to have oversight of hospital pharmacies. So I applaud that. This is something good. But it's kind of like we're looking in the rear-view mirror rather than looking ahead.

If you really want to make our health care system safer, even if we only focus on medications, there are so many other parts of the health care system that deal with medication but are not included in this bill. The first one that comes to mind, and it's one that we've had the chance of questioning Dr. Thiessen about, is the group purchasing organizations. We already know that there were 11 pharmacists who sat down and reviewed the requests for proposals from Medbuy, the group purchasing organization, and not one of them realized that the chemo drug had to be concentration-specific. This is not in the bill.

You look at where else in the health care system we handle drugs. Well, I can tell you that in the north, in small communities that I represent, sometimes the physician also dispenses—no oversight. In a lot of the communities that we represent in the north, we have nursing stations. Here again, they handle drugs—no oversight.

If you say that you recognize the value of oversight, please do more than looking in the rear-view mirror. Look ahead. Look at the rest of the health care system and bring that oversight there.

The second part of the legislation also has something that we would support, and it's the sharing of information. But here, the bill basically says that we will give regulation authority to do information sharing. I want more than that, Mr. Speaker. The intentions of the bill are great. Right now, if a college realizes that there's something wrong going on, and the public should know, the bar has been set so high that most of the time it's impossible. Let me read it. There has to be a serious risk of significant bodily harm to the person before they can share wrongful information that they know on a member of a health profession.

But all that the bill does is, it says a body will be created to make regulations. What will that regulation look like? Nobody knows. When will it come? Nobody knows.

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

Before we move to petitions, I would like to offer to all members here, and those who can hear this—to wish you Eid Mubarak and a happy Thanksgiving. Enjoy your week with your family. I know that all of you work real hard, so you'll be in your constituencies working hard, as you always do. I want to thank all the members and wish them a happy Thanksgiving.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Having said that, as I was just listening to you, happy Thanksgiving to you, sir.

I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship's eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or \$1,311.24;

"Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

"Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75;

"Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships;

"Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

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

"Please suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship's fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs."

This petition is signed by a great number of people from the great city of Woodstock in Oxford county, and I'm happy to present it on their behalf.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition, from people from all over Ontario, actually:

"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

"Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don't complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being

left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

"Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system";

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario "to expand the Ombudsman's mandate to include Ontario's long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors."

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Massoma to bring it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Scarborough residents north of Ontario Highway 401 and east of Don Mills are without a rapid transit option; and

"Whereas a strong transit system is critical for increasing economic development and tackling income disparity; and

"Whereas this geographical area continues to grow and the demand for strong rapid transit continues to increase; and

"Whereas Sheppard Avenue is a major artery for automobile traffic for commuters travelling from suburbs to downtown Toronto, and travelling from suburb to suburb; and

"Whereas ground-level rapid transit would increase traffic, restrict lanes for automobiles, and add further risk for pedestrians and commuters at dangerous intersections along Sheppard Avenue; and

"Whereas demands for underground rapid transit along Sheppard Avenue have been part of public discourse for over 50 years; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario previously approved a plan from the city of Toronto to extend the Sheppard subway line from Downsview to Scarborough Centre; and

"Whereas an extension to the Sheppard subway line will require contributions and co-operation from the city of Toronto, the province of Ontario and the government of Canada;

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

"To support the extension of the Sheppard subway line east to Scarborough Centre; and

"To call upon the government of Canada to contribute multi-year funding for the construction and operation of an extension to the Sheppard subway line."

I fully support the petition and I give it to page Peyton.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I'd first like to wish you a happy and beneficial Thanksgiving break.

My petition reads as follows:

"Whereas Cartwright High School is an important part of the Blackstock and area community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty," now Kathleen Wynne, "promised in the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools help to keep communities strong'; and

"Whereas schools in rural areas are community places; and

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"Whereas Cartwright students, families, friends and staff have created an effective learning experience that emphasizes a community atmosphere, individual attention and full participation by students in school activities; and

"Whereas the framework of rural schools is different from urban schools and therefore deserves to be governed by a rural school policy; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government"—now Wynne—"found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in communities such as Blackstock;

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

"That Dalton McGuinty"—now Kathleen Wynne—"and the Minister of Education support the Cartwright High School community and suspend plans to close Cartwright High School under the school board's accommodation review process," which has failed, "until the province develops a rural school policy that respects the value of smaller schools in rural communities of Ontario."

I'm pleased to sign it and support it, and present it to the table through Aly, one of the pages, on their last day.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the" entire "world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to give it to James and sign it, to be delivered to the table.

CASINOS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by more than 5,000 residents of York region and Toronto.

"Whereas five members of Vaughan council ... voted to have the OLG consider the city of Vaughan as a potential casino host, along the Spadina-York subway extension;

"Whereas four members of council ... voted against having the OLG consider the city of Vaughan as a potential casino host;

"Whereas the proposed casino will have serious negative impacts on (1) future use of the subway (2) Vaughan metropolitan centre development (3) parking (4) economic viability of local businesses (5) lowering property value (6) existing gambling host communities (7) addiction and mental health of Vaughan and GTA residents (8) crime (9) prostitution (10) national and international reputation of the city of Vaughan and much more;

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

"To instruct the OLG to remove the city of Vaughan from the list of potential casino hosts and inform the city of Vaughan that it is not in the best interest of the people of Vaughan and the people of Ontario to have a casino located within the Vaughan metropolitan centre and vicinities."

I will send this to the table through page Bridget.

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it deals with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and the need for a coordinated plan by the Ministry of Health. It reads as follows:

"Whereas more than 850,000 Ontarians live with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD (more than 70,000 in Central LHIN), and these numbers are climbing quickly; and

"Whereas COPD is one of the most costly chronic diseases in Ontario, currently responsible for 24% of emergency department visits and 24% of hospitalizations in this province; and

"Whereas respiratory rehabilitation is a Health Quality Ontario endorsed, evidence-based intervention that improves quality of life for people with COPD and other lung diseases while saving health care dollars; and

"Whereas due to lack of dedicated funding for lung health programs the respiratory rehabilitation program at Southlake Regional Health Centre—the only such program in Central LHIN—was recently cancelled;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and

Long-Term Care to urge Central LHIN—and all LHINs—to develop evidence-based plans to address COPD and other lung diseases that coordinate resources and care across all levels of the health care system; and further

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately work with stakeholders to develop a province-wide action plan for lung health to improve prevention, early diagnosis and patient outcomes, while maximizing the return on health care investment."

Speaker, I am pleased to affix my signature in support of the petition, and I'll give it to page Pratah to deliver to the table.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition coming from all over Ontario.

"Whereas many Ontarians need health care services at home and 6,100 people are currently on wait-lists for care;

"Whereas waiting for over 200 days for home care is unacceptable;

"Whereas eliminating the wait-lists won't require any new funding if the government caps hospital CEO salaries, finds administrative efficiencies in the local health integration networks (LHINs) and community care access centres (CCACs), standardizes procurement policies and streamlines administration costs;

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

"That a five-day home care guarantee is established and existing wait-lists eliminated so that Ontarians receive the care they need within a reasonable time frame."

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

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mrs. Julia Munro: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades;

"Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople;

"Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

"Whereas the latest policies from the Wynne government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

"To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers."

As I am in support of this, I have affixed my signature to give it to page Gabrielle.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective,” as well as cruel, “approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

Apparently, it’s the most popular assertion on the Liberals’ Common Ground website, so yay to all those people fighting DOLA.

I’m going to sign this on behalf of the over 1,000 dogs that have been euthanized in this province and give it to Kyle to be delivered to the table.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to eliminate the Drive Clean program.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it, and give it to page William on his last day.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Given that there’s only 59 seconds left on the clock, I have this very short petition:

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

To “take the unfair HST off of hydro and home heating bills.”

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

AIR QUALITY

Mrs. Julia Munro: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; and
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“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

I am pleased to affix my signature and give it to page Jasper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES TECHNIQUES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

Mr. McDonell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 61, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 / Projet de loi 61, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. I had the honour of being the PC critic for consumer services for just under two years, and part of my portfolio included

the Technical Standards and Safety Authority and its oversight of consumer safety in Ontario.

I have stated on many occasions my pride in Ontario's skilled workforce. Some of those talents are involved in managing the TSSA, whose board of directors and advisory councils combine industry knowledge in many areas, such as propane, elevators, amusement devices and upholstery.

It is fair to assume that our province should be at the forefront of adopting all that is new, innovative, efficient and safe. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, and certain rigidity factors that have been built into the TSSA could be to blame. This bill addresses some of them.

The many businesses that are regulated by the TSSA have one thing in common: They want to be safe, innovative and successful.

Many small businesses in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry provide stable and well-paying jobs for skilled local tradesmen, technicians and contractors.

The debate we are having here today is not theoretical. The TSSA and their policies touch the lives and livelihoods of many Ontarians, and it is our job to ensure that we maintain a strict consumer safety environment while allowing our job creators to succeed.

The TSSA carries out tens of thousands of inspections every year. These include routine inspections of current licence holders and initial inspections of new entrants into the market. This is done to ensure that Ontario's consumers enjoy safe products and services, and that workers can look forward to a rewarding day's work in a safe environment.

The key component of a universal safety framework is transparency. Every licence holder must be certain that he is being held to the same standards as everyone else. I have met with stakeholders who often shared the same story with me: When a TSSA inspector comes, they never know what to expect.

We live, work and compete in a global marketplace, and job creators are seeking the safest, most stable and easiest jurisdictions to set up shop. They have the right to know what criteria they are being measured against before beginning design and installation work. This is a minimum requirement, and it only makes sense.

This bill, when passed, will ensure that every prospective TSSA licence holder will be aware of both the publicly available technical standards for equipment and operations and any additional TSSA safety criteria applicable in Ontario. By passing this bill, we will ensure that everyone can focus on hiring skilled Ontarians and producing excellent-quality goods and services.

Without safety at work and at home, the economy suffers. In this chamber, we are all conscious of the importance of consumer confidence and a safe workplace. The TSSA is an essential partner for businesses and consumers alike in ensuring that this objective is attained day after day.

The TSSA carried out 56,000 inspections in 2011 alone, which encompassed more than a majority of their

licence holders. As I outlined earlier, stakeholders often feel they are being inspected just for the inspection's sake or just because they were in the area at the time. This shouldn't happen, especially since inspectors charge in excess of \$150 per hour and include travel time, which in my riding can add up to an additional two hours, or \$300, each way.

We all envision the TSSA as a partner with business to develop a comprehensive, proactive attitude to safety amongst all licence holders. In order to achieve this, however, we need the TSSA to create an incentive for good behaviour and have more room and resources to punish repeat and bad offenders. Thanks to Bill 61, this will finally be possible.

The minister will have the opportunity to issue regulations that create a self-inspection program for TSSA licence holders with good safety records. Rather than the frequent inspections we see today, good players in the industry will be able to report on the state of their equipment and premises in a standard manner, and the TSSA will audit such reports from time to time to ensure the integrity of the process. Because this program is implemented by regulation rather than legislation, the minister and industry can be flexible in its implementation, allowing for a trial period to ascertain the merits of such a collaborative approach.

This bill brings more certainty to stakeholders regarding TSSA inspection fees by capping their annual increase to the inflation rate. The TSSA operates on a cost-recovery basis, but we believe very firmly in this House that the agency must give known good business players extra financial breathing room by recovering a greater portion of the cost from the repeat offenders. This is why this bill also includes a measure that brings TSSA inspection fees in line with the private sector compensation for equivalently skilled technicians. Statistics Canada provides regular data on average pay by province and profession, and it would not be too difficult or complex for the minister to issue regulations equating professions with inspection needs. Wages in the private sector for qualified engineers and technicians who could perform TSSA-required inspections rarely exceed \$50 an hour. We have acknowledged the TSSA's concern regarding a potential sharp drop in income by making the cap double the average hourly salary for qualified technicians. I'm sure we will hear more input on this matter at committee. However, the end result of the consultation must be to strike a balance between the TSSA's need to assure its income and our businesses' ability to pay.

Consumers often do not notice the essential evidence of quality and safety of products and equipment in the form of a technical standard certification mark. These are highly sought-after markings that highlight the product's passing of rigorous testing and quality control. There isn't one world body to act as a clearing house for all standards; therefore, many nations and organizations develop their own, and international organizations compete for markets and recognition. One advantage of this arrangement is that some organizations, such as the Com-

pressed Gas Association, specialize in setting standards and guidelines in one industry, pooling their expertise and resources. Unfortunately, the TSSA will not recognize these standards for use in Ontario. Job creators and consumers suffer as a result.

In my riding, the inventor of a new welding torch was forced to remove the only installation of this equipment, which was saving a local business a significant amount of money due to increased efficiency and speed. The reason for this was merely a certification issue, since certain parts were certified as UL instead of cUL. These marks originate from the same reputable organization, Underwriters Laboratories. However, the TSSA does not have the ability to exercise its judgment and its common sense on the issue.

In Bill 61, we create a rapid, public and accountable process for industry stakeholders, including inventors, to present their case for recognizing any particular standard for use in Ontario. Stakeholders will be able to present their case exhaustively to a panel of qualified TSSA engineers, and they will be able to answer any and all questions the TSSA may have. The TSSA will also have to issue their decision within a reasonable and pre-determined time frame and publicly outline the reasons for reaching the decision in all cases, whether they approve or deny the stakeholders' request.

We believe on this side of the House that this will provide additional assurance to consumers and businesses alike that the TSSA is at the forefront of ensuring consumer safety in Canada. Only total transparency can underpin total confidence, and today's global economy demands nothing less.

1410

Bill 61 contains as a safeguard against a standards void such as the one that occurred in the grain dryer industry—my colleague from Perth–Wellington will be able to expound on this issue. When the Canadian Standards Association, the CSA, decided to retire a particular standard that most grain dryers were certified to, all operators were forced to undergo the TSSA's so-called field approval process. It is an expensive, time-consuming, one-off and inefficient way to deal with equipment used on a very large scale in Ontario.

In Bill 61, the TSSA is given extra powers to retain, at their discretion, whatever standards that were retired or ceased to exist for any reason. If this had existed before the grain dryer issue, the farming community would have been spared a huge headache while other standards bodies could have continued consultations on the new standard.

Many stakeholders have expressed a concern regarding the expertise and qualifications of the inspectors to carry out the TSSA's mandate. Bill 61 strengthens business confidence in the TSSA by ensuring that everyone who performs inspections in the agency has a minimum of two years' experience on the other side of the table; namely, as a licence holder. We have accommodated eventual concerns the TSSA may have with this requirement by delaying its implementation by two years, the exact experience required as a licence holder.

Ontario can take pride in its commitment to the safety of consumers and workers. The agency that enforces the Technical Standards and Safety Act, the TSSA, is administered by an experienced board of directors and could be a valuable partner to Ontario's business community. We need to change the focus to make sure that that partner can generate the safe, well-paying jobs we need to pay for the social and economic benefits we so strongly believe in, to allow us to compete around the world and return our economy to where it needs to be: as the economic engine of Confederation.

I have examples of the issues that our industries are experiencing today, and I want to relay a few. A small equipment job that was designed to be built by experienced, skilled engineers and tradesmen and only cost a few thousand dollars to design and build is tagged with a TSSA bill of over \$15,000 to gain approval. This results in just a few options. First, the business will either forgo the improvements because it can't afford or justify the cost. Secondly, he hires installers in our area from Quebec, and in our area they are not required or don't bother to register their project with the TSSA, so we forgo the safety process altogether. Either way, we lose. This is no way to run a business or a province.

Again, a major manufacturer in our region that produces equipment and torches that are used all over the world has given up on installing equipment in Ontario. First of all, equipment that has been approved and installed all over the US and in nine other provinces under the Compressed Gas Association standards is not recognized in Ontario. In his last installation, he was looking at a minimum cost of \$50,000 to gain approval, with no guarantees. He pulled his equipment out, not willing to risk his reputation with the manufacturer, and he no longer installs in Ontario.

Speaker, there are many examples of places where companies are forced to accept equipment that's old and second-rate because they can no longer afford to go through the process to bring in the newest innovations.

I look forward to hearing other people speak on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I begin, I'd like to introduce and welcome some guests who are in the members' west gallery: Melva and Charlotte Snowling, the daughter and great-granddaughter of former NDP MPP Mel Swart. I'd like the members to welcome them here.

Speaker, I'm pleased to join the debate today on Bill 61, presented by the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I believe he has put a lot of effort into the construct of the bill, the mechanics of the bill and the content. It's evident through his knowledge and the specifics he has pointed to in terms of the need to provide oversight, the need to ensure public safety, and also ensure that we facilitate growth in our business community and make sure we do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for them to follow the rules, stream-

line their operations and ensure public safety. I have had meetings in my riding and across the province about the nature of some of the issues within the TSSA and some of the constraints that small businesses, in particular, feel they are under when having to conform to the regulations built into the TSSA.

However, we have some trepidation about the intent of this bill. One of the biggest areas is the provision for self-inspection. The TSSA was created through the Harris government to take away the purview of inspection for areas within boiler and pressure vessels, operating elevating devices, amusement devices, ski lifts, fuels and upholstered and stuffed articles—among many others, I'm certain. It takes away that regulatory oversight that would have been built into government operations and puts it out to the industry. So it's industry self-regulation; it's a self-funding body, and we understand that. Nevertheless, we have some concerns about now taking that third-party independent self-regulation and delivering it to owner-operators who would be responsible for their own self-inspection. Regardless of how good you are, I think there is some inherent benefit in having a third party come and point out, potentially, some of the deficiencies and remedies that could happen in your workplace or facility that you might not have caught through self-regulation.

Again, you get into a pattern of continuously following the same process. You do it on a yearly or quarterly basis—whatever the prescription is. I don't know if it's built into the bill. But you could expect that an organization, following the rules of self-regulation and self-inspection, would eventually miss some things. That gives us great concern because we know that industries that self-regulate typically don't have the same impetus to really go above and beyond to ensure that their regulation and inspection is matching what the public needs.

All members would be aware of the Sunrise Propane incident in 2008, where a massive explosion occurred in Downsview. One person was killed, and later a firefighter died—the next day, I believe—as a result of exposure to the scene. That's one example of how there was not a sufficient amount of oversight or inspection, and it later came out that the TSSA even failed in their oversight. Even self-regulating third-party independent people can fail.

What we would like to see is certainly more government involvement in inspection, not only in the processes covered under the TSSA, but also working regulations and employment standards and health and safety. We have a massive lack of oversight when it comes to those basic functions. How, in fact, are we going to be able to ensure public safety through another layer of self-inspection? We certainly can't infuse confidence into the public by relinquishing that responsibility.

We also know that just recently the federal government has abandoned and abdicated their responsibilities when it comes to rail safety in this country. We only have to look as far as Lac-Mégantic, where a massive explosion killed dozens of people and created an environmental

nightmare for that town. It will cost tens of millions of dollars, if not hundreds of millions of dollars, to rebuild. Lives were destroyed because of a regulatory regime that relied on self-inspection.

I just don't think it's the path that we should be going down. I certainly want to identify areas where we can help and support small businesses conform to regulation and assist them in delivering safe and productive workplaces. But I certainly don't think that a *carte blanche* approach to self-regulation is the way to do that. Inevitably, it will fail, and we certainly need to sound the alarm in this chamber that that isn't a path we'd like to go down.

1420

I'm sharing my time, Mr. Speaker, with my honourable colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh, so I will do that now and cede the floor to him. I thank you very much, Speaker, for the time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I went to the Web page of the TSSA and I looked at their annual general meeting. Before the member for Pickering–Scarborough East, the minister of consumer affairs, got to the podium to speak, the outgoing chair of the TSSA said, “Because we're a safety organization, I want to point out the exits in case anything happens here this afternoon.” So just in case, if people on this side could go to the right, and people here could go to the left. I've handled all of the safety concerns for us this afternoon.

I did get a letter from the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and he has identified several issues about the TSSA's procedures that, in his opinion, require urgent attention. So I've tried to keep an open mind on it. I'm reminded of what Malcolm X once said about keeping an open mind, and that is, “Despite my firm convictions, I have always been a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds. I have always kept an open mind, a flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of the intelligent search for truth.”

In doing that and in doing some of my research on this, it seems to me that what may have prompted this private member's bill is a letter, as the member has already made reference to, from the owner of a small business who has been having a running battle with the TSSA. It's a welding company, one perhaps at the forefront of innovation in welding technology in Ontario, and a company with an impeccable safety record. They manufacture and sell products across Canada, but not in Ontario. They can sell across the country the products that they are making, but they can't sell them here in Ontario, and they can't do it because of the regulations imposed by the TSSA. So that is unfortunate.

It seems to me what may have prompted the bill, besides that, is that the technical standards often place, according to the owner of the company in this letter that I've seen, unjustified regulatory demands upon producers and operators of technical equipment. An example given

by this company is a welding torch that the TSSA insists on labelling a "burner," and for the components to be changed accordingly. This is a torch, but it has a component which meets a valid American technical standard that the TSSA refuses to acknowledge. This so-called bureaucratic hurdle being encountered by this one company, I believe, is what has prompted the change to the bill in front us, Bill 61, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act.

Speaker, I accept the need for public safety, and I agree with the Hollywood actor and former Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger, who has said, "Government's first duty and highest obligation is public safety." And I agree with Marcus Tullius Cicero, who is known by his belief that "The safety of the people shall be the highest law."

Speaker, I say we have to slow down a bit here and consider all of the ramifications and consequences of the bill being put forward by my friend from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. Unlike Ralph Waldo Emerson, who once said, "In skating over thin ice, our safety is in our speed," I don't think we have to go fast on this at all. I think we have to slow down and take our time with it.

As you know, we have a major problem in my part of the province with the girders on the Herb Gray Parkway. It's a big safety issue. These girders were built by a company that didn't have CSA certification. Some of the welders working on the project were not certified to the level that they were supposed to be, and this has created a major, major problem in the safety of those girders for many, many years to come.

I have safety on my mind these days, and the long-term safety of that massive road project. The expert panel says the girders are deficient. They weren't up to standards, and the question was, "Can they be fixed?" The answer was, "Perhaps." Well, I don't want to go with a "perhaps," and I don't want to go with a "perhaps, if we adopt this bill," our lives will be any safer. I'm not sure of that as yet.

I guess I agree with the American astronaut Alan Shepard when he said, "It's a very sobering feeling to be up in space and realize that one's safety factor was determined by the lowest bidder on a government contract." That should give us all pause for concern on this. I agree that we should look at safety in the future. I would hope that the member would try to mediate a resolution between the companies in his riding and the TSSA.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: First of all, I just want to take a moment to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving, and Eid Mubarak to all of my Muslim friends all across Ontario. Hopefully we'll all get a chance to gather with our friends and family and give thanks for some of the things that we have and that I strongly feel that at times we often take for granted.

I'm very happy to rise today to speak on Bill 61, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act. First of all, I would like to thank the member from

Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry for his interest in public safety and in the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, commonly known as TSSA.

The TSSA is responsible for administering and enforcing regulations under the Technical Standards and Safety Act to operations in the sectors of fuels, boiler and pressure vessels, elevating and amusement devices, and upholstering and stuffed articles. Many of these industries have direct impact on public safety, and the TSSA's prime concern, of course, is safety.

Bill 61 proposes to amend various sections of the Technical Standards and Safety Act. To my reading of this bill, the goal is to limit the TSSA's authority in some areas, while creating new responsibilities for the minister to intervene in TSSA operations. It also proposes to let some people who fall under the TSSA's authority conduct their own safety inspections.

I want to reiterate that our government is committed to a fair and balanced regulatory approach that ensures public safety and minimizes regulatory burden on Ontario businesses. At the outset, I would like to say that I will not be supporting this bill, because that test has not been met. Many of the proposed amendments in this bill will negatively impact public safety and, to make matters worse, they will result in higher costs to Ontario businesses.

Many of the provisions in the bill could increase the cost of doing business, especially for smaller, rural and northern operators. Our government is always open to new ideas to strengthen public safety and support a dynamic business climate in Ontario, but this bill does not do that.

While there are some good provisions in this bill, they should not be enshrined in legislation. The bill proposed will reduce flexibility, limit innovation and unnecessarily bring in the heavy hand of government to business operational issues. This is usually what the Conservatives are against in principle, so I must say that I'm surprised to hear that the member opposite has introduced such legislation.

As I mentioned previously, many of the amendments proposed will also negatively impact current practices and legislation that prioritizes public safety and reduces costs on business. Our government is committed to a fair and balanced approach that ensures public safety and minimizes the regulatory burden on Ontario businesses wherever possible. Our economic plan to drive jobs and growth supports a dynamic and innovative business climate that will ensure that businesses come to, invest in and help grow Ontario's economy. This bill will not support the plan to create jobs in Ontario.

The TSSA is what is known as a delegated administrative authority, most commonly known as a DAA. This model was, in fact, created and implemented when the Conservative government was in power. The Harris government introduced the DAA model in 1996. It was an integral part of their alternative service delivery agenda of the day. It was created to reduce red tape, to improve efficiency and effectiveness in operations, and to enhance public safety and consumer protection.

At the time, they were applauded for implementing such a groundbreaking idea, and as it turns out, the model is working relatively well and is delivering on most of its goals. So the question I ask myself is, why is the opposition flip-flopping on one of the very few things that they actually got right when they were in government?

1430

This bill proposes to bring many of the operational functions and decisions they wanted outside the government back into the hands of the bureaucracy—exactly what they say they want to avoid. Again, my question is, why the flip-flop? Why do they want to increase the regulatory burden on business and add cost?

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to talk a little bit about the TSSA. The TSSA operates on a cost-recovery basis and it is paid for by the entire industry. Not one dime of taxpayer money goes into their operations. It has cut red tape and reduced the regulatory burden on business. While there have been concerns and issues raised about the TSSA, they are continuing to work on addressing those issues. They have been making changes and are committed to continuing to work.

The thing that causes me the most concern is the provisions that call for self-inspection by business. There would be no direct oversight except by the minister through regulations, which is not effective in day-to-day management. These types of programs are generally put in place for unique or technically larger industries and businesses. Not only will this directly impact public safety, but it will be hurtful for smaller businesses as they may not have the financial or technical resources to meet the requirements. And the cost may, in fact, be higher under the proposed bill than current TSSA inspections.

I'm now going to go through a few of the specific provisions of this bill. Firstly, it seeks to establish a cap on hourly and flat rates charged for an inspection and to give the minister a role in setting the fees. A cap may sound like a good idea, but the TSSA operates on a cost-recovery basis. If the TSSA could no longer calibrate inspection fees to recover the inspection program costs, they would have to increase licence fees or reduce safety services or both. Also, giving operational control of fees to the minister goes against the DAA principle and puts the whole model at risk.

The bill also seeks to establish mandatory qualifications and years of experience for TSSA inspectors. The apparent intent of this is to require inspectors to have the same qualifications as contractors in the regulated sectors. But the fact is that inspection skills differ from the skills of a contractor. Under this provision, TSSA inspectors would need to obtain additional certifications, and costs will go up for this inspection program. It would also narrow the labour market and increase employment costs for all licensed businesses that require inspections.

These provisions would allow business to enrol in a self-inspection program established and governed by the minister through regulation. The apparent intent of the provision is to allow licensees to avoid TSSA inspections

and to manage their own inspections. If the member thinks that this will reduce inspection costs, then he is mistaken. Self-inspection programs are generally put in place for technically and corporately sophisticated industries and businesses. The thousands of small businesses that are regulated through the TSSA would not have the financial or technical resources to meet even the most minimal requirements of any self-inspection program that may maintain public safety. This idea could, in fact, be more costly than the current TSSA model.

Lastly, I want to talk about the provisions that would require the TSSA to share guidelines or checklists that an inspector uses to conduct initial or periodic inspections with business owners, as well as checklists for other inspections. This, unlike most of the other things in the bill, might be a good idea, but the reality is that a checklist would only be relevant for initial and periodic inspections. They are simply not relevant for other types of inspections.

That being said, this legislation is a heavy-handed way to deal with what is an administrative matter. I'm confident that the continued conversations with the TSSA leadership are a better way to deal with many of the concerns that have been raised in this bill than simply passing legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm very pleased to be able to speak today in favour of Bill 61, the Technical Standards and Safety Amendment Act, 2013. I congratulate my colleague the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for his direct action to curb some of the red tape facing Ontario business.

Since I was elected in 2012, I have received a surprising number of complaints about TSSA. We've heard about the TSSA too often making unreasonable, unrealistic, time-consuming and expensive demands on people who simply cannot afford it. Grain farmers know that all too well. Just last year, TSSA threatened grain farmers with dramatically higher costs to certify their grain dryers and burners when the CSA stated it would no longer certify them as they had in the past.

I wrote to the former and current Ministers of Agriculture and Food on this issue, as well as the Minister of Consumer Services. I met with local representatives of the Grain Farmers of Ontario. I asked questions in the House. Grain farmers took their message to the government. While we now have a reprieve from the CSA, the TSSA, under this government's authority, showed no inclination to respond to the issues that had been raised.

Grain farmers should never have had to face that kind of uncertainty. The Downie Street Bake House in Stratford is another example of TSSA red tape run amok. Alan Mailloux and Barbara McMahon run the Downie Street Bake House. Because of TSSA red tape, they had to abandon the high-quality used ovens they had purchased. The ovens were in very good condition. The ovens were safe. Yet the TSSA made unreasonable demands of this small business, even telling them to

bring the ovens' American manufacturers to visit Stratford to inspect these ovens. In the end, Alan and Barbara had to replace their perfectly good ovens with new, lower-grade ovens. That put them in \$20,000 worth of debt. We went to bat for the Bake House, but bureaucratic excuses were the only response we heard to the issues we raised.

The provincial government should be going out of its way to encourage small business and to reduce red tape and unnecessary costs. But the TSSA, at least in this case, did the opposite. What's worse, when we raised these concerns, the government refused to step in, refused to show leadership, refused to correct the problems.

I'm very supportive of my colleague's efforts to apply some common sense to the TSSA regulations. We need to make TSSA standards more flexible. We need to be able to reward responsible businesses while punishing repeat offenders. We need to avoid costly delays in approving equipment that has already been certified in other parts of North America. We need to cap the rate of inspection fees. And, of course, we need to avoid a repeat of the grain dryer experience so that CSA standards continue to apply in Ontario if they are retired without a successor. To be clear, we do need to ensure that our products are safe for the people who use them, but we need to do so in a way that is reasonable, justifiable and understandable. We need to pass Bill 61.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 61. I don't have much time, so I will do my best. I want to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for introducing the bill.

1440

While the intent of the bill is to update the TSSA standards with the aim of making Ontario's economy more competitive—and we all agree on supporting a dynamic business climate in our province—I wish to express my concerns in regard to the amendments to the current act that would allow businesses to participate in self-inspection programs.

Allow me to share my local perspective in this regard. In York South–Weston, the riding that I have the privilege to represent, industrial land use has existed alongside residential neighbourhoods for decades. The proximity of companies handling hazardous fuels, which are under the jurisdiction of the TSSA, has been a source of concern for my residents for decades.

I'll give you a few examples. For example, in 1986, in the old city of York, there was an explosion in an illegal taxicab repair shop that caused extensive damage to the surrounding area. It was a miracle that there were no deaths.

In January 2008, the explosion of a single fuel tank at a scrapyard in my riding caused the injury of a worker, and several nearby homes were damaged. This explosion was one of a series of repeated accidents that happened at that location. On that same site, there were six fires from 1996 to 2008.

Also, the northeast part of my riding was closely affected by the tragic Sunrise Propane explosion in August 2008.

Given the great deal of attention that the handling of volatile fuels brought to my riding, at that time I presented a motion in the House, which was passed unanimously, that meant to bring attention to a variety of issues in regard to volatile fuels, with the intention of increasing the safety of residential neighbourhoods and also of the operations of these places.

Safety is of utmost concern. Unfortunately, this bill doesn't contemplate that, and I won't be able to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It's my pleasure to rise this morning and join the debate around Bill 61, the Technical Standards and Safety Amendment Act, which looks to restore some balance and common sense to the mandate of the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, which enforces the act.

At the outset, I would like to commend my colleague the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for his attention to detail in this legislation. He has proven himself to be a very thorough and thoughtful debater on matters that come before him in this House, and this is a case in point, Speaker.

Bill 61 is a reasonable approach to a real problem, which is that, under this Liberal government, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority has become overgrown with red tape and bureaucracy. The authority has undergone mission creep, unfortunately becoming an organization that constricts and strangles businesses and stifles innovation.

Nobody disputes that the Technical Standards and Safety Act serves a purpose. It is important to remember, however, that the act must ultimately serve both businesses and consumers, balancing the interests of both while acting as a portal for technical standards and consumer safety.

The authority must be able to reward good businesses, punish repeat offenders and ensure broad awareness of its policies among both businesses and consumers.

Bill 61 would allow the minister to make regulations establishing a self-inspection program, subject to TSSA auditing, with the minister also determining eligibility and obligation under the program.

This would allow those businesses with spotless safety records to experience the benefit of that behaviour, which is to say that they earn the power of self-inspection. This would be a significant measure because the authority bills more than \$150 an hour in inspection fees. That's a premium that many small businesses cannot afford. As we know from inspections in other ministries, such as the province's slapstick Drive Clean inspection, these bills can quickly add up and go on far beyond reason.

In fact, Bill 61 would also halt the upward creep of these inspection fees and hold future increases to the rate of inflation. Among its many sensible measures, Bill 61

would also enhance transparency, increase accountability and improve user-friendliness.

There is a lot of good in this bill—certainly too much to do justice to in just a few minutes today. But I'm happy to support it. I look forward to getting it to committee, and I look forward to the ongoing debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? The member for Huron—Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm surprised that my colleagues in this House don't want to stand and speak to this—

Mr. Ted Arnott: They're all finished.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: They're all finished? Okay. Well, that leaves us with the opportunity to say much about my colleague from Glengarry-Russell-Dundas—I didn't get that in the right order, but I was very close.

Bill 61, the Technical Standards and Safety Amendment Act, is very, very timely. This bill that our member has put together shows that he's very well connected with constituents, not just in his own riding but across the entire province. I can tell you that in the riding of Huron—Bruce, on the other side of the province, the issues he raises and addresses through his bill resonate. Small business owners all over the province raise the same concerns repeatedly. This legislation begins to address the payroll burden and other significant problems left unaddressed in its original state.

Talking specifically about Bill 61, there are so many examples of what's wrong and why this bill is so important. Ontario dealers, people working in the agri-food industry, are facing higher costs to have burners needed in drying operations certified so that their counterparts in the US can move their parts to and from, across the border. In some cases, these burners being certified will cost the grain elevator or an individual farmer upwards of \$3,000.

I've also heard from small business owners who sell propane—they can be campgrounds, they can be convenience stores, they can be co-ops—and they're very clear that TSSA fees and inspections will force small dealers out of business. This is a blow to the countryside and to regions that depend on tourism and propane to generate revenue, and to operate, more importantly. That's why we have to stand up and do the right thing and support Bill 61. This is a very thoughtful bill based on a wealth of experience that my colleague has brought to the table. We need to do the right thing, respect the people and support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: It goes without saying that safety is everyone's concern and the TSSA can work with our businesses. There's no need to be frustrating them. We can see that Bill 61 would help the province better utilize our skilled workforce and be able to better compete with other innovation-driven economies.

Bill 61, the Technical Standards and Safety Amendment Act, is nonpartisan. It addresses the concerns of law-abiding businesses, contractors and tradespeople.

Our member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Jim McDonell, is an engineer. He has introduced this bill following extensive consultations. We know that the body that enforces the technical standards act, the TSSA, is administered, obviously, by an experienced board of directors and is in a position to be a valuable partner with Ontario's business community. The TSSA must work for both businesses and consumers, acting as a one-stop shop regarding standards and safety. It must also be in a position to reward those good businesses, punish the repeat offenders and ensure a broad awareness of its policies—again, amongst both business and the general public.

As MPP McDonell points out, there is equipment that's approved for use everywhere else in North America, but it cannot be used in Ontario because of some of these requirements. Inventors are finding it difficult to market their products in Ontario due to some of the inflexibilities that we've heard about this afternoon.

I'm also told that TSSA charges in excess of \$150 an hour in inspection fees. Again, many small businesses can't afford that. They are also dealing with other non-safety issues where it may or may not be necessary to tie up their time.

The bill has a number of proposals, as we've heard: capping the hourly fees, ensuring that inspectors are qualified, ensuring that those businesses that have an impeccable record aren't faced with the same inconveniences that we should be putting on repeat offenders.

1450

As my time wraps up, Speaker, I just want to reiterate that, for these reasons and other reasons we've heard this afternoon, I certainly support my colleague's private member's bill and encourage all members to do the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. It was interesting to hear the comments made by the members from Essex, Windsor—Tecumseh, Brampton West, Perth—Wellington, York—South Weston, Burlington and Huron—Bruce, and I appreciate the comments.

First of all, I want to say that this bill rewards people or companies that are following the rules and have a safety record. It also penalizes those that do not. They talked about the issue of Sunrise Propane. That was a case where the TSSA was very much involved but was somewhat restricted in what it could do. This bill would allow them to take stronger action against, as we say, the bad players. I think that some of the problems they thought might be there certainly aren't.

It's a competitive market out there, and there are many new and innovative products produced every day. If our businesses are going to be successful, they need access to them in a timely and inexpensive manner.

Ontario is a large market, and we have much to be proud of, but it's small when compared to the rest of the world. International manufacturers secure approvals of their new products based on the predictability and ease of the approval process and if the cost of it can be recouped from anticipated sales.

In Ontario's case, many won't bother with the aggravation, and their businesses lose out on these important innovations. For a smaller business to take on a product approval is a very tedious process—many times, beyond their capabilities. One major food processor in my riding announced the installation of two lines. After going through the process of the first one, it cancelled it and moved out of the province.

It's interesting: I had a discussion with a high-ranking member of the TSSA who called me to discuss the bill. He concurred with my findings on the negative impact to manufacturing and the need for change, and commented that the current culture within the TSSA makes change very difficult. Clearly, the TSSA sees the need for change itself.

Thank you for the discussion today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll deal with the vote at the end of private members' public business.

TRANSPARENCY IN MEMBERS'
EXPENSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE
EN MATIÈRE DES DÉPENSES
DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Fraser moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 108, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. John Fraser: Before I start, I'd like to say happy Thanksgiving to everyone here and to all of my constituents back home in Ottawa South, and Eid Mubarak as well—many Muslim constituents in Ottawa South.

I'm pleased to stand to speak today to the second reading of Bill 108, the Transparency in Members' Expenses Act. I feel very fortunate to be debating my first private member's bill in my fourth week in the Legislature, and I'm very grateful for the opportunity to do so. Over the last couple of weeks, I've had the opportunity to speak with many of you. I'd like to thank you for your interest, your questions and your candour.

The intent of this bill is to increase transparency in government, which we can all agree is a good thing. I'm not going to speak to the things that have occurred here, in Ottawa and elsewhere that have raised the public's concern and eroded trust. We know what they are. But before I do that, I want to underscore one principle that we should all keep in mind, and I know we already all keep it in mind; that is, as legislators, we need to lead by example. That means we need to live by the standards that we set for others.

The Transparency in Members' Expenses Act proposes the quarterly online posting of every payment to a

member for expenses covered by sections 64 and 67 of the Legislative Assembly Act.

These expenses would include allowances and costs related to transportation and travel, accommodation costs and any other costs incurred while the member is on the business of the assembly or in the performance of his or her duties.

The Board of Internal Economy would be responsible for posting these reports online through the Legislative Assembly website. The posted expenses would include an amount and an explanation. Posting would begin in the first quarter after the bill has received royal assent.

Expense disclosure is not something new. It's already happening in many jurisdictions. Seven provinces and the federal government all disclose members' expenses. In researching the bill, I discovered some of the following. The province of British Columbia posts members' capital city living expenses and travel expenses on a quarterly basis. The province of Alberta also posts members' expenses quarterly. In Newfoundland and Labrador, summaries of expenses paid to members are posted to the website maintained by the Office of the Speaker. In Nova Scotia, the Clerk of the management committee receives a monthly report of all expenses paid to individual members, and expenses are posted monthly. Manitoba has been posting members' expenses since 2010.

Major cities in Ontario, like Toronto and Ottawa, post mayors' and city councils' expenses online. In fact, the city of Ottawa also publishes theirs monthly.

Overseas, starting in 2010, the United Kingdom publishes the online detailed expenses of members bimonthly.

Even south of the border, they publish all reimbursed expenses for the House of Representatives on the Statement of Disbursements website.

Coming back to Canada, newly appointed Senator Doug Black, from Alberta, posts all his expenses, divided by category and broken down by specific item, every three months on his website. A former member of this Legislature, Senator Bob Runciman, has committed to doing exactly the same thing and is encouraging his colleagues to follow suit.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that online disclosure of elected representatives' expenses is not something new. The fact of the matter is, we are behind almost everyone else.

Coming back a little closer to home, there are members of this Legislature who post their year-end expenses on their websites, like the members from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and Nipissing. I post my expenses for travel, accommodation and hospitality monthly. I do this because it is a commitment I made to my constituents and one I will continue to do. I know from knocking on doors that it is important to people.

On our Common Ground initiative, our party's conversation with Ontarians, disclosure of members' expenses ranks fourth. Here are some of the comments you'll find there: "MPPs should be required to publicly list all of their expense claims." "If I was an MPP I

would want to post everything voluntarily and completely.” “I would have nothing to hide ... and being open about how I’m spending taxpayers’ funds would, I think, be appealing to those who might consider voting for me.” Then there’s this one: “Something that applies to all MPPs, not just cabinet ministers.” Now, I can’t be sure but I suspect that may have come from somewhere down here in the front two rows.

What this tells us is that this is something that’s important to the people who elect us. Here in Ontario, the Premier, members of cabinet and parliamentary assistants post their travel, accommodation and hospitality expenses online. We require ministry staff, senior public servants, executives and boards of agencies to post their expenses online. We also require this of senior executives and boards of our province’s hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, as we go forward, we’re going to require online disclosure for more people in organizations that we fund and support. It begs the question, how can we hold people to standards that we haven’t set for ourselves yet? What is central to today’s debate is exactly that.

1500

When the bill was drafted, I wanted to ensure that it was straightforward, reasonable and concise. I did this because I think the most important thing we can debate today is not the technical aspects of the bill; the most important thing we can debate today is: What standard, as a public body and as representatives of the people who elect us, do we want to hold ourselves to? I believe that posting our expenses online is the right thing to do.

I think that this is an important debate, I think it’s a discussion that we all need to have, and I would urge all members of this House to support Bill 108. I look forward to the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much to the member for bringing this bill. I am very much in favour of seeing this Legislature post certain expenses online. I agree, also, with your statement where you had said that we’re not here to discuss the technical aspects of your bill today; I agree with that, as well. Hopefully we’ll have a wonderful opportunity to debate the merits of the technical aspects when it’s in committee, and I look forward to that—for the opportunity to get this into committee so we can go through it.

I want to say that I believe that we should be open and transparent with our expenses. To that end, my expenses are posted online; they were when I was first elected here, in my first year; they have been in my second year. I like to post the expenses that are listed from the Legislative Assembly—the mailing that we get that shows us our annual expenses: salary, staffing, Toronto accommodations and all of those numbers. I like to post those numbers. I think it’s very important that we do that. It is public information. It’s available today. It takes a lot to get it, and I like the idea of each member posting those.

Again, discussing the technical merits of just how drilled down we want to get, we’ll look forward to doing at committee. I can also tell you that, in my seven years

as mayor of the city of North Bay, I did post my expenses online. Far greater—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I’m going to say something here, Speaker. I find something very offensive in what the member just said. I’m going to read something that his own Premier said on September 18. This is a quote from Premier Wynne. “I just want to say I really don’t believe that personal attack is necessary.” She also said, “I don’t believe that calling names and undermining people’s credibility or attempting to do that is necessary,” so I take exception to what that member had to say. I won’t point out which member it is; he knows who he is.

Speaker, I posted my expenses online, and I must tell you that I was the only mayor in Canada who had such a drilled-down level, but I will tell the member that it was a lot of work, and I don’t know that it’s practical here. You could go on my expenses as mayor and click on any day of the week and see who I had lunch with, see how much lunch cost if it was paid for by the taxpayer, and see how much the tip was. I have to tell you, it was a pile of work. I would never want to see us get to that level. The pendulum was way over here to say, “Do you know what? I really believe that you should be able to show that,” but the pendulum should be somewhere in the middle, with a level of expenses posted that makes sense, so the public can look at and understand what you’re spending taxpayers’ dollars on without having to drill down into a deep level.

Again, I say, congratulations to the member for bringing this bill forward. I think it’s timely. I think it’s important. I think it’s significant that we do that, and I look forward to a civil discussion without the snide comments from the member across the way in the future.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 108.

Let me start by recognizing the member from Ottawa South for bringing a thoughtful piece of legislation in front of this House.

I have known the member from Ottawa South for a long time. I’ve had great opportunities to work with him in Ottawa on many issues that are important to my community of Ottawa Centre and to our city of Ottawa. One thing I’ve always found quite striking about the member from Ottawa South is his diligence and his integrity. He always has a desire to make sure that we are serving our constituents well. I think it’s quite telling, Speaker, that the very first bill that he has brought forward since his election as the member of provincial Parliament for Ottawa South is around a key issue around integrity, around transparency of the manner in which we, all members of this House, treat taxpayers’ dollars. So I commend the member for Ottawa South for his hard work, and for bringing a piece of legislation that shines the light on how we, who are stewards of public funds, in

our personal capacity, in the execution of our duties to our constituents, deal with those dollars.

I am confident that every one of us use those dollars wisely for the sole purpose of serving our constituents, but I think we need to go a step further, as outlined in Bill 108; that is, we let our constituents know how those dollars are being spent. It's not too much of a stretch as to what's already happening. I think the member from Nipissing rightly mentioned that that information is already available. Perhaps version 1.0 of that information is already available, because it's produced at the end of the year in hard copy. We find them on our desks every year. All of us can go line by line and see how we have spent the global budget that is allocated to us to fulfill our duties as elected representatives.

It is not a difficult task, Speaker, to (1) make that information readily available, easily accessible to all Ontarians, especially to our respective constituents; but also (2), to provide that information in a format that is easy to access as well. Perhaps the best way to do that is putting it on the Internet. As the member from Ottawa South mentioned, that information already exists as it relates to ministers and parliamentary assistants. All that information is provided for line by line, quite detailed as to how the dollars have been spent. I think we should take that extra step, as has been proposed here in Bill 108, to do so as it relates to our constituency budgets as well. I think it does us a favour in ensuring transparency to our constituents so they are aware as to how we are serving them and the kinds of activities that we get engaged in, and ensuring that there is, obviously, absolute transparency.

Once again, congratulations to the member from Ottawa South for bringing this very important bill—and as a testimony of his character, as an individual. I want to again congratulate him on being elected as a representative and look forward to continuing working with him as we serve our great city of Ottawa.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's an honour to rise this afternoon and contribute to the discussion on Bill 108, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act. This is, as the member has already pointed out, not an overly complicated bill in theory, but it does warrant some serious discussion, and I'd like to take some time to explain why. I am going to drill down a bit, because there's specific reference to the Board of Internal Economy. I happen to be the Progressive Conservative member of the BOIE. There's one member from the NDP, one member from the Liberal backbench and one minister of the crown.

What this bill sets out to do is relatively simple. If enacted, Bill 108 would require the Board of Internal Economy, or BOIE, as we call it, to table quarterly reports in the Legislature on members' expenses and also ensure that those reports are posted online—as I said, a relatively straightforward goal.

1510

First off, Speaker, let me say that I support the intentions of the member from Ottawa South and the goals of Bill 108. Transparency is something that should be

strived for, and that is why I will be supporting Bill 108 this afternoon. One of the benefits that Bill 108 has is that it gives us a chance to have a conversation about processes and procedures that too often continue along without any revision or updating. Any time we can take a moment to look at how we're doing something, or how the government is doing something, assess it and ask, "Is there a way we can make it better? Is there a way we can make it more efficient? Is technology allowing us to do things differently?"—well, I think that with Bill 108, we have that opportunity.

Regarding Bill 108 specifically, I think we should focus on the second question I just posed, the one that deals with efficiency. In other words, if we can agree that more transparency is good, then can we also agree that Bill 108 proposes the best way to do it? This is where I think Bill 108 could benefit from some further study and amendment at the committee level. My reasoning is rooted in the Board of Internal Economy's makeup and its purpose.

As I said previously, the board is a body composed of four MPPs—representatives from each party and one from the cabinet—that is charged with overseeing the policies and guidelines of the Legislative Assembly. Notice I did not say "enforcement." So while I can understand why the member would think the onus should be on the BOIE to publish these reports, I do wonder if perhaps there is a better opportunity.

You see, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly already submits a report of all members' expenses annually to the assembly in June. In a nutshell, what happens is the financial services division prepares all the expenses in a report, then that report is delivered to the Speaker, and the Speaker tables it here in the assembly. So while technically, yes, the financial services division does fall under the purview of the BOIE, the BOIE itself does not publish those reports. These are the types of questions I think need to be asked when we consider Bill 108, and committee is the perfect place to get into those details.

For example, why would we compel the BOIE to table and publish quarterly reports when the Speaker will also then be tabling annual reports with the same information? That's why, while I commend the member for taking the initiative with Bill 108, I do think the bill needs some adjusting in terms of ensuring we are not creating need-less duplication.

In conclusion, processes are already in place that are designed to accomplish the goal the member is striving for. It happens, as you made reference, to ministers, parliamentary assistants and opposition leaders. I would like to suggest that that model could be expanded to all members of the Legislature, so rather than create entirely new ones that overlap those already established, I think we should take a second look at the existing framework to see if that's working and whether we can update that. This way, we could determine how to make any necessary changes that would ensure the processes are still achieving the desired result.

As I say, a little more detail, because I am a member of the BOIE—but certainly I support the intention behind

Bill 108 and congratulate the member from Ottawa South for bringing it forward for discussion this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to speak of this bill, and I want to preface my remarks with my own experience of now some 25 years in public life. In 25 years of public life, I have had to file a great many claims over the years for expenses I have incurred, either as a councillor, as a mayor or as an MPP.

I come from the point of view that you should never claim anything that you would use in your ordinary life. Therefore, when I go out to an event and I have dinner, I pay for the dinner. I don't ask the taxpayers of Ontario to pay for the dinner because, in my own view, I ought not to be claiming it. The same thing for taxis: I very seldom—and you can check the records going back all the years—have ever taken a taxicab. If I find that I need to go somewhere and cannot drive there myself, I take public transit, if I'm in Toronto, and do not claim for those tickets—by and large, generally. In terms of mileage, I do not claim for mileage because I don't think it's right for a person who earns the kind of salary we do as MPPs to claim mileage to and from home, although I know it's permissible to claim that. I think that most people who go to work—whether you work in a factory or a restaurant or a store, and you have to get yourself there by car—pay for their own mileage. I don't see why we should either.

As an MPP, I take the responsibility of filing my claim each and every month. It's generally a fairly small claim because I live in Toronto and I do not have an apartment. Those people who are from outside are entitled to an apartment if they're more than 40 miles away. I understand that, but I don't have that. My claim at the end of the year, when you look at it, is a relatively small claim vis-à-vis everyone else, or almost everyone else, in this room, partially because I do it and I don't claim and partially because I live in Toronto and I don't have a lot of expenses like people who have to take buses or trains or flights in to this place and go home each weekend and come back the following week. The expenses can be really extraordinary.

I'm always mindful of how things are published and how people are expected to account for it, because I know that it's not always fair how it is interpreted. I never forgot—and I was a relatively new MPP at the time; I think I was only here for about a year—when the expenditures came down after the end of the year, as they do. The press was all over then-member Howard Hampton, who was the leader of the New Democratic Party, because he had spent more than any other MPP in the entire place in terms of his travel expenses and other expenses. You know, nobody stopped to ask, why did he spend the most? It was patently obvious to everybody in the room, but not necessarily to the press and the public, who hounded him for days. It's because he lived in Kenora–Rainy River. He had to fly from Kenora–Rainy River, back and forth, not only every week but sometimes twice a week, to attend community functions, to

attend things because he was the leader of the party. He had to file for meals because he was never at home. And, my God, what happened with that.

This is what I'm worried about in this particular bill: not that the member's heart isn't in the right place, but it's how the information is going to be used and collected, and for what purpose.

We already submit all of those documents; I do it every month. Every year, without fail, the government of Ontario tables how much each and every one of us has spent and in which line items. It is possible for people to retrieve on those line items what the monies were spent on. What the member is asking for is that this be done quarterly, but he's also asking that it come with explanation and things that are going to be onerous.

I asked the hard-working person—I have one staff person. I know if you're on the government side and you're a parliamentary assistant or you've got some other perk, you might have more than one staff member—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay, Mr. Del Duca is showing me two. But I have one, and I asked her, "How much extra work is this going to provide to you?" It was onerous. When you have one person working for you and then you have to add all of these things together, it is onerous.

If the BOIE or the member's bill would say we'd all get an extra staff person to do this, or an extra few hours and pay for them to do this, I might say, "Maybe." But what is happening is that the onus is being put on members of Parliament, who I believe are all—every single one from every single party—honourable people who will not abuse the system.

As a matter of fact—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Cabinet is left out.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm going to get to that in a minute, that cabinet is left out.

As a matter of fact, I think that every single person in this place is honourable and will not abuse and has not abused the system. It is very difficult being in public life. It has been very difficult for me over the 25 years. That's why I'm so very careful in what I actually attempt to gain back from expenses. I do not want to see my expense claim on the front page of the Globe and Mail, the Star or the Toronto Sun, because if it is, obviously somebody has a problem with it. Over those 25 years, I've never had a single person do it, and there's a reason for that. There's a reason that all MPPs should learn from that as well.

You know, this bill is a little bit, to my mind, that of a new guy, a bright guy, a new MPP, coming forward and trying to make a little bit of a mark for himself by saying, "I am coming here to shake up this grand old institution of the Legislature of Ontario. I'm going to shine some light on how the expenses and expenditures are made by 107 honourable people," who, I want to say, are very closely monitored and watched by the staff of the Legislative Assembly.

1520

When I put in an expense claim—I think I've had two of them sent back to me in all the years where an item

was disallowed. You can fight that. You can explain what it is. Or you can, as I did, just simply say, "It's disallowed," accept it, swallow it and that's the end, because those are experts, and they tell us those things that can be expensed and those things that cannot.

I wonder, though—I wonder why cabinet ministers and others are not being included in this. These are people with huge staffs.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: They're already covered.

Mr. Michael Prue: Well, they're covered in a different way. They're covered in a different way, but not by this bill.

Maybe, as my friend said, if it's good enough that they do in another bill, then we should be in that bill. If they're not being covered adequately in the bill that covers them, then perhaps they should be included in this one.

But I don't see a division between one set of MPPs and another, depending on whether you're a cabinet minister, a parliamentary assistant or anything else. We are all, 107 of us, honourable people.

But I question why the government, or why this particular member, is bringing forward a bill like this, because heaven knows there have been expenses and claims brought to this Legislature that are horrendous, and this government seems singularly unwilling or unable to control them.

I'd just like to go through some of them for the last couple of years. These are some of the egregious ones, and I wonder why nothing is being done about this, why there's no bill about this. Perhaps he can explain in his two-minute rebuttal why there's no bill.

Ontario expense scandals:

The Pan Am Games executive Ian Troop earned \$477,000 last year. He had:

- \$8,561 for a Mexican hotel and cocktail party;
- \$837 on dinner for six TO2015 team members;
- 91 cents for parking.

Or perhaps how about Allen Vansen, senior VP of operations:

—\$27,000 to move from Vancouver to Toronto, including \$110 to transfer his pet.

Or how about Kathy Henderson:

—\$704.10 for hotel charges in Acapulco without a receipt.

Or how about Louise Lutgens:

- \$1,830 for a six-day car rental in Guadalajara;
- \$400 for a Telus BlackBerry cancellation fee;
- \$9.92 for laundry; and
- \$45 for a BlackBerry case.

Let's not forget Chris Mazza. We're still working on that one, and nothing appears—other than his being fired—of ever having been done about it:

—\$9,600 for four nights at the Paris Four Seasons Hotel;

—\$5,940 for five nights at the Copacabana Palace in Brazil;

—\$2,680 for a stay at the Fairmont Chateau hotel in Whistler;

—\$1,154 for limousines and alcoholic beverages;

—\$800 for avalanche ski training;

—\$725 for a night at the Park Plaza hotel;

—\$250 for a massage;

—\$58 for a lobster burger;

—\$77 for dinner with his girlfriend;

—\$15 for a shot of absinthe.

Interjection: Absinthe?

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes.

—\$1.50 for Tic Tacs; and

—75 cents for parking.

How about the OLG, Mr. Speaker? How about that?

The OLG executive spending:

—\$551,000 for a four-day annual gaming conference for 250 senior employees, not including travel;

—\$100,000 a year on sporting events to entertain retailers;

—\$41,519 to \$57,512 each for luxury cars for 26 OLG executives;

—\$3,600 for 22 cancelled hotel rooms during a Toronto sales meeting;

—\$7 for a pen refill; and

—\$1.12 for a cloth grocery bag.

How about the Niagara Parks Commission, which also reports to this government? From 2006 to 2009, Joel Noden charged \$395,000 in expenses, including:

—\$10,000 for a hotel stay in England—must have been one great hotel;

—\$1,800 at a nightclub; and

—\$200 for a liquor store tab.

How about health services? Sixteen hospitals—you know, this is also reporting to the government and nobody's watching it. One individual, a consultant with an annual salary of \$275,000, billed \$350 for a three-person dinner, including a \$215 bar tab, and \$500 for phone calls during a three-day stay at a \$400-per-night Chicago hotel. We got eHealth. I think I'm running out of time, but you all know about eHealth too.

So here it is: A member is trying to get 107 honourable people who, I swear, haven't made a false claim and who already obey the law and have their things reported once a year—he tries to make it four times a year. This government has systematically and totally ignored illegal, immoral expenses for all the government agencies that they staff with their friends. Something is very wrong here, and this bill is not going to fix it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I rise today with great pleasure to support the first private member's bill put forward by the member from Ottawa South. I want to commend him for his commitment to accountability and transparency.

I believe that all of us in elected office actually have a responsibility as stewards of public funds, and this bill proposes that we give our constituents online access to our expenses, thereby increasing the transparency of this Legislature and, ultimately, our own accountability. I believe putting this information online is the right thing to do, and I think that's where we're going ultimately.

This bill proposes that we lead by example and live by the rules of accountability that we create for others. Our government, in April 2010, began posting our expenses online, ministry by ministry, as part of our commitment to improving transparency and accountability in the use of public funds. So online posting of expenses is already happening in government, and it's happening in my ministry. Right now, anyone who is interested can log on to our expense claim website, browse by ministry and pull up a list of expenses that I and my staff have posted.

The public disclosure of expenses website provides information on the travel, meal and hospitality expense claims of cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, political staff, government appointees and senior management in the ministries. This information is also available in the form of an annual report on the use of public funds to the public accounts of Ontario.

I am more than happy to provide this information as a minister, so I don't see why I shouldn't do it as an MPP. What that means to our government is that it has opened up our books to the public and that our constituents have the ability to access more information than ever on how their money is being spent.

When I was a city councillor years ago in Brampton, it was not a common practice to provide this level of transparency and accountability to the public on how we spent their tax dollars. When we began posting ministerial expenses online, I thought this was an obvious step in the right direction. It's something that I encourage all jurisdictions, from our cities to our towns to this Legislature to the federal government, to continue doing.

We need to avoid the kinds of situations like the one I recently read about on the CBC news website. The article profiled a former Clerk from Canada's Senate and his experience with the senators' sense of entitlement, and the experience of the Nova Scotia Auditor General when he took a close look at the expenses of the MLAs of that province.

This bill being proposed by the MPP for Ottawa South is a practical tool in the toolbox of our government's effort to expand transparency. I am supportive of this bill, and I believe the member from Dufferin-Caledon offered some constructive advice on how to make it stronger when it arrives in committee, because I believe that all of the members in the House can provide good advice. At the end of the day, the 107 members in this Legislature are accountable to our electorate and to the people of Ontario.

At the end of the day, I support this Bill 104, and I believe that it is an initiative that will amend the Legislative Assembly Act in a positive way and provide accountability and transparency to all of our electorate. I think that's why we came to this House, to provide accountability and transparency on how public dollars are spent. I'm happy to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I wish I had an hour, but it turns out I don't. On the member's bill, I congratulate him. I

think it's certainly thoughtful, and a bit contentious as well, I suppose, by some measure. I think we're watching the wrong thing, actually, when it comes down to it, as was just described by the minister who spoke.

Also, I was very impressed with the member from Beaches-East York. The member there mentioned a litany of scandalous expenses. I don't think or intend to impugn that same charge against any member in the House here; that's for sure. However, the government has some worrying to do with respect to the Pan Am Games, which our member from Barrie has been talking about, and the scandalous spending at Ornge by Chris Mazza and others.

1530

I say in great deference and respect—here's the issue—that members themselves have many oversights imposed on them today, some of which I think are intrusive. I don't mean to be blaming any individuals, but having just done my disclosure statement with Lynn Morrison, for whom I have great respect, I think it's very intrusive. I'm not in cabinet. If I happen to have a few bank shares or other kinds of assets, what business is it of—I'm not going to be owning anything. I think that if you're in cabinet, if you're a member of the executive council, that's quite acceptable, because they're the people who actually make all the decisions. We are here basically representing our constituents.

I know the author of the bill was, I guess, really the executive assistant to the Premier, in terms of his constituency office. So he's fully aware of members' oversight.

Each year, we do our disclosure, but the Legislative Assembly, under the HR command—Nancy Marling is the executive officer there—has a list of everything we submit for expenses or to be reimbursed, and that's disclosed in our annual document each year; I believe it is in June. That's printed; it is available in public.

I'm going to go to some of my notes here: "Financial Services provides support to members of the Legislative Assembly ... offices, commissions and the parties." Most of this reporting mechanism is really organized under the rules of the Board of Internal Economy. On that board are represented the Liberals, the NDP and the Conservatives as members. It's chaired by the Speaker, I believe. That annual report could easily be put online, and I am in support of that.

I think this bill is a deflection from the abuses and scandals that are ongoing now. If it was that important to the minister who spoke, and to others, I myself would suspect that it should be a government bill. If they really want to put some teeth in it, make it a government bill.

With that, I'd like my colleague from Newmarket speak for a few minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I just want to say that I agree with this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I just want to congratulate my colleague from Ottawa South for bringing this forward so that we can have an enhanced discussion on this issue. I want to congratulate him.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: As it always is when I have the opportunity to rise in my place in this House and speak to various pieces of legislation or whatever might be coming before us for consideration, it is a pleasure for me to stand, in particular today, here this afternoon and begin by congratulating my colleague, one of our newest caucus members on this side and also my seatmate, as everyone can see and folks at home can see, the new member from Ottawa South—for bringing forward, I think, a very appropriate and very timely proposed piece of legislation that will help to shed some additional light and provide some additional transparency for residents in his community of Ottawa South, my community of Vaughan and, should it pass, as I believe it should, for people living right across Ontario.

I want to begin my remarks today by saying, as others in this House have said before me, to the new member from Ottawa South, congratulations on bringing forward a very important piece of proposed legislation, something that's long overdue here in this particular place. I want to congratulate him for having the courage to do so.

With respect to the bill itself, I've had the opportunity to be in the House this afternoon to listen to what members of both other parties and members of my own party have said regarding the bill. I am heartened and I'm encouraged for the first time in a long time to hear members of the official opposition making constructive comments about this particular legislation; to hear them support the notion, support the principle, provide some commentary and ask questions regarding certain technical aspects and what kind of workload might be required, how it should look, what format. That makes sense to me. But understanding very clearly from their comments so far this afternoon that they believe—those who have spoken and others—this is a bill that deserves support, this is a bill that should get to committee after today, is something that's very heartening.

Speaker, I will at least say, here in my place, that it's consistent with some of the other messaging that we've heard over the last number of months from that caucus, and I congratulate them. I so rarely have opportunity to congratulate members of the official opposition, given their past behaviour, Speaker, but today I want to commend them for having the understanding and for taking on the responsibility to stand alongside our member from Ottawa South on this important initiative.

Having said that, I listened with close interest to the member from Beaches–East York, who I believe also serves as the NDP's critic for the Ministry of Finance. I have to express, though I normally have a great deal of respect for that member, some extreme disappointment in some of the remarks that I heard today. That's mostly because he used his time today to dissemble and distract

and deflect away from what is at the heart of this particular piece of legislation. This is simply designed to provide the people who reside in his community of Beaches–East York and in my community of Vaughan and the community of Ottawa Centre and in Ottawa South, and in the rest—Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Don Valley East, Richmond Hill, Ottawa–Orléans, Niagara Falls and the rest of our communities across the of province of Ontario—with the degree of transparency and accountability about how we spend their money. That is one of the fundamental requests and expectations that the people of our communities, the people of Ontario, have for all of us.

I've said in other debates on other bills in this House that for the last 10 years there has been a fantastic evolution of this government, providing considerable improvements around fiscal transparency and accountability. This private member's bill, through this particular piece of legislation, Bill 108, is yet another step in that evolutionary process.

I am shocked to hear a member of the NDP caucus—in the 12 months that I've been here, I, along with everyone else on this side of the House, have had to listen to those members, be it at committee or be it here in this House, stand up time after time and preach, as only they can preach, about the requirements for accountability and transparency. And here today, those members, that member from Beaches–East York, his leadership and his colleagues, have the chance, for the first time in a long time, to not only talk the talk but walk the walk, and they have failed to do so in the remarks that we heard. I'm hoping that when this comes forward for a vote shortly, they will reconsider, they will stand up and they will support the member from Ottawa South with this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South, you have two minutes.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd just like to say thank you to all the members of the Legislature, everybody who spoke to it. I'd like to thank the member from Nipissing and the member from Dufferin–Caledon. I appreciate her remarks. I think anything that we can do to make the bill stronger is a good thing. I appreciate the remarks from the member from Durham. I do think, though, that we do have to set some standards for ourselves that we all agree on. I believe that's an important concept. I'd like to thank the member from Nepean–Carleton and the member from Newmarket–Aurora for their support.

I'd like to address the remarks from the member from Beaches–East York. I appreciate that he spoke to the bill. I want to say to him that there are jurisdictions across this country, like British Columbia, Manitoba and Alberta, who have members that come from great distances. I recognize that there are people on both sides of the House that have to travel and that incur a greater expense than the people who live in Toronto or me, who lives in Ottawa. Not for one moment is this bill about the people here. It's about how we all disclose ourselves and become transparent to the people who elect us. I want to

make that very clear. The bill includes all MPPs. That's what it includes. If the members opposite have suggestions about how to strengthen the bill, we can do at committee. What I'm asking you to do is to agree to the principle that we need to keep the standard ourselves that we set for other people.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

1540

FAIR HIRING TO SUPPORT TEACHERS,
PARENTS AND STUDENTS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PRATIQUES
D'ENGAGEMENT ÉQUITABLES
À L'APPUI DES ENSEIGNANTS,
DES PARENTS ET DES ÉLÈVES

Ms. MacLeod moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to hiring practices for teachers / Projet de loi 107, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne les pratiques d'engagement des enseignants.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus to bring fairness into our classrooms in Ontario. I would like to first start by acknowledging my time as education critic for the Ontario PCs. Over that period of time, I was able to learn a lot about our education system, and I want to thank all of those stakeholders who made me feel right at home throughout that entire process.

I would like to acknowledge the two cabinet ministers that I dealt with: Ms. Laurel Broten, who has left this place, as well as Minister Sandals, and my dear friend from the NDP, Peter Tabuns. It was wonderful to work with him, and I think I really gained a great appreciation not only for the education sector, but for how important the second-largest spending priority of government is in this assembly. It was remarkable.

Throughout that time, we dealt with two big, major pieces of legislation here, Bill 13 and Bill 14, which was anti-bullying legislation, and, secondly, Bill 115, which legislated agreements for collective bargaining in our education system to prevent strikes from our school system and provide a limited, yet important, wage freeze.

That is what brings me to this piece of legislation, which has been called for, effectively, by teachers, school boards, principals' associations and parents across Ontario. It is to repeal regulation 274. You'll recall, Speaker, that, although we supported Bill 115 and allowed the Liberals to pass those legislated agreements, we did oppose seniority-based hiring. At that time, the government removed it from the original piece of legislation, yet then snuck it in through a regulation.

That has created a problem for our school boards in terms of hiring for long-term occasional teachers. Many parents would contact me, and they would go on to contact me frequently, beginning last year, and as recently as this week, asking that it be overturned, so I thought that what I would do is put forward the Fair Hiring to Support Teachers, Parents and Students Act, 2013.

I'd like to acknowledge the hard work of Howard Goodman, who is a Toronto District School Board trustee, as well as Ramna Safeer and Jesse Waugh, two Toronto District School Board student trustees who are joining us here today in order for them to present their views on this very important issue.

Speaker, as you know, I've spoken many times about my little girl, Victoria, who's not so little anymore; she's growing up. She's eight years old. She thinks she's smarter than me, and likes to tell me what I do wrong—and sometimes what I do right. I obviously have a very vested interest in education as a parent. We all look at it, when our kids are in school, and how we think things should go.

I know that most parents across Ontario expect three things for their children when they go to school. They expect a safe environment. They want to make sure that when their kids go to school, they are going to be safe from harm; whether that's safe from a bully, safe from a predator or safe from an intruder on the school property, we want to make sure that they are safe.

We also want to make sure, secondly, that our students, our children, are learning, so that they are meeting those standards, that they are meeting our objectives for them, so that they are able to read and write and do math, that they are performing in the arts, that they are enjoying physical education and that they understand science. That is incredibly important to us, that there is a curriculum in Ontario that makes them strive to be the best that they can be, because we are going to be competing, particularly in the 21st century, against other nations who have a burning desire to ensure that their students are the best. We have to do that in this province as well.

Finally, every parent I know, including myself and my husband, wants to ensure that our children have the best teachers teaching in the front of that classroom. That means we want the teacher who wants to perform extracurricular activities. That means we want the teacher who is going to spend that extra time with a student in need. That means we want the teacher who is willing to go that extra mile in that school community, who may understand that school community a little bit better than anyone else. Unfortunately, with regulation 274, as well intentioned it may be for the Catholic education system to prevent nepotism, this actually prevents good teachers from being in front of the classroom because it chooses to have the most active, longest-serving union member in front of the classroom; not the best teacher, who should be there based on merit. I think that's wrong, and I'll be unapologetic in defending those teachers who should be in the front of the classroom, like Jason Trinh.

I heard from behind me a little giggle, and it was from my very good friend Rob Leone, who is now the Progress-

sive Conservative education critic. I'm very pleased for him. It's a senior promotion for him as a new member, and I think you're going to do extremely well, Rob.

Rob mentioned today in question period the issue—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to refer to other members by their title or their riding.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Certainly, Speaker. The problem is, I can't remember his riding at the moment.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Cambridge.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Okay; the member from Cambridge.

He mentioned the teacher who received the Premier's teachers' award. So he received the teacher of the year award. His name is Jason Trinh. He was hand-picked to design a summer math camp, credited with helping to boost grade 9 math scores. Because of regulation 274—and this is very well documented—Jason Trinh cannot find a job in the province of Ontario. Despite being the person the Premier of Ontario thinks is the best teacher, he can't get a job because of this regulation, which tells me there is something significantly wrong with regulation 274, which is why I think it needs to be repealed and replaced with a more suitable framework at the board level, working with the ministry, on how to deal with fair hiring.

I believe that the fallout from this current regulation has proved counterproductive to the government-stated goal of ensuring a higher-quality education for our students. When we don't place the needs of our students first and we, instead, place the union leadership first, we have a problem because we have lost sight at that very moment of why we have an education system in Ontario. I have argued many times in this assembly and many times outside of it that the number one priority for us in the education system is to educate students, not to pacify union leaders, which is what has become the stated end-game of this government.

I want to read into the record the Ontario Principals' Council's open letter. They actually say what I've just mentioned: "In our view, the fallout from this regulation has proved counterproductive to the government's stated goal of ensuring a high-quality education for our kids. When we don't place the needs of students first, we cannot ensure that the result will be a positive outcome for them."

Howard Goodman of the Toronto District School Board said that regulation 274 may violate boards' obligations to have a diverse workforce under the Human Rights Code.

Dean Ron Owston of York University's faculty of education said, "The diversity of our students has definitely grown, so if you're hiring teachers who graduated a few years ago and have been occasional teachers for a longer time, they may not be as diverse a group."

I have Pete Wyspianski, who is a teacher. He says, "I have been teaching in northern Ontario communities for years. Many ... teachers come to the north for a few years to gain teaching experience and the schools benefit from

their training and enthusiasm. Under this regulation, new teachers are disincentivized to teach in the north; they will have to start their teaching careers on the supply list of their desired school board in southern Ontario."

Another teacher, Quinton Kuschei, says, "'Seniority' is no measure of care of children, competence, professionalism, experience, commitment, ability" or "proficiency."

Then I hear a parent, Greg Synowicki: "My biggest concern is that by hiring based on seniority and not taking performance into account, you're creating the potential of not having the best teacher teaching your kid."

Finally, from Michael Barrett, the president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association—he said he has little faith in the discussions, and called the regulation "an absolute tragedy."

Speaker, I just want to point out that there are three major concerns I have with this based on what I've read into the record from these stakeholders and parents and principals and teachers. The first is, let's point out this northern and remote rural community issue. It is going to be very difficult to attract teachers into those teaching positions if you are going to strip them of seniority when they move board to board. We are going to have a real challenge in rural Ontario and remote communities, particularly up north, if we keep regulation 274.

1550

Secondly, one of the things I was very impressed with during my time as a critic of education was travelling through diverse communities, particularly in the GTA. On many of those occasions, we met with teachers or parents from very diverse communities. As stated in my previous remarks, from one of the quotes from Dean Ron Owston of York University, it is going to become increasingly more difficult to ensure that people who understand the school community and the diversity in that community are actually placed in that community if you are going to deal solely with seniority.

Third, and this I think bears repeating, is the fact that if a teacher in the Catholic education system wants to move to the public education system or they want to move elsewhere in the Catholic system, to another district, they will lose their seniority. That isn't fair. If the stated objective of the education ministry of Ontario is to make sure our students are learning at an above-average rate and that they can compete with people across the world once they graduate, what we should be doing is making sure the best teacher, not the longest-serving union activist, is in front of that class. I will be unapologetic, as I've stated. I think that is exactly why we should be here.

Now, I know the government is going to say that they have a table and they are discussing it, and that's fine. But the problem with that is very clearly this: They are acknowledging that regulation 274 is a challenge, they are acknowledging that it shouldn't have been there in the first place, and they are actually working backwards to try to come up with a suitable solution to the challenge they place on school boards, on principals and these

extraordinary teachers who are being refused positions in the teaching profession.

I'm here today because I think it's the wrong thing. I think it was the wrong move for the government. I have been consistent on this message for well over a year. I am here today with my passion and my enthusiasm and my heart in the right place, telling the government it's okay to admit you got this wrong. We would encourage you to support this legislation, and I look forward to a very spirited and important debate. But make no mistake: If we want the best students and the brightest students in the world, we have to have the best teachers in the world and in this province teaching in our classrooms.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would like to welcome the former member for Oakville South and Oakville in the 35th, 36th and 37th Parliaments, as well as the former Speaker in the 37th Parliament, sitting in our east gallery: Mr. Gary Carr.

Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to rise in support of my colleague from Nepean–Carleton. I'm quite curious to hear what both the NDP and Liberal caucuses have to say, given the fact they haven't stood up. I do expect there's going to be a battle to see who has the last say on this bill.

Nevertheless, I think the member from Nepean–Carleton has brought forth a worthy piece of legislation, worthy of consideration in this Legislature. I think we have to do our utmost to ensure that students and their parents are assured that the best teachers are teaching in our classrooms. I would say that Ontario is full of good teachers. Our teachers do amazing things each and every day.

What I also would say, in saying that, is that sometimes people's expertise, people's skills, may be better in some areas than in others. Every school has different needs. A school might have more need to have experts in math or different extracurricular activities, coaches in different sports, music teachers, and all the kinds of things I think students like in their schools and where they remember the fantastic teachers they've had.

All we're saying with this bill is that we want to make sure the principal has the tools necessary at their disposal to select the best person for that job, given the nuances and differences that exist in each school. This is about nothing more than ensuring that the best teachers are in the classrooms, to ensure that our parents know that when they send their kids to school, that experience is going to be unrivalled and that their children will come home with that enthusiasm to learn and talk about the great stories and the great memories they're making each and every day in our schools.

I know that earlier, in question period, I asked the Minister for Education about this issue, and she stated to the Legislature that they're speaking with their partners in education in terms of dealing with amending regulation 274, if it was in fact a mistake. But she never says who those partners in education are. I would hope that the government, in considering who their partners in

education are, doesn't forget that parents and their kids are partners in education and do have a willingness to talk about the mechanics of regulation 274.

We're not standing on the side of any particular special interest, Mr. Speaker. We just want to make sure that the teachers who are standing in front of our classroom each and every day—have an opportunity to learn from the very best person available to do that job. That's all it is. It's very simple. This isn't a Liberal bill, a PC bill or an NDP bill. It isn't pro-union or anti-union. This is about making sure our parents have the confidence that their students and their kids are being taught by the very best person for the job. I think that's what we need in the province of Ontario: the understanding that the person at the front of the class is selected for the job based on merit, a principle that has built this great province.

I remember very early on in my tenure as the MPP for Cambridge meeting with a group of Catholic principals who talked very persuasively, in my view, about this bill. They talked about how in their school they had a coach—and I can't remember if it was for volleyball or hockey, whatever the case. I think there was actually a couple who were coaching those teams as occasional teachers. What was happening was that when the semester was over, the contracts were up, the principals were forced to have different teachers, and the teachers that were coming in couldn't do that extracurricular activity. That meant the principal in that school either had to make the decision to add to his or her duties and run the sport or the extracurricular activity themselves or that that activity would be cancelled.

What we're suggesting, Mr. Speaker, is that each and every school has different challenges, different nuances, different items that they have to realize and have different categories and characteristics that they're looking for. Sometimes, in diverse communities, we have a desire to hire a teacher who could be a role model for students from that diverse community, but if we're simply making selections of teachers based on a seniority list, we ignore the fact that we could actually have a teacher who reflects the diversity of that school. Why wouldn't we want, at the end of the day, somebody who can be a role model for our students, as our teachers are each and every day, in our schools today, someone who comes from a particular religious or ethnic background, teaching in those schools?

At the end of the day, that is at the heart of what we're doing with this bill, Mr. Speaker. It speaks to what parents are asking for and what I think students want. They want the best person in the classroom, teaching our kids.

I know we talked about Jason Trinh earlier today, and the member from Nepean–Carleton did the same thing. The person who won the Premier's New Teacher of the Year Award—the Premier's New Teacher of the Year Award—is having a problem finding a job in the province of Ontario. I think that is one of the greatest travesties to our young people. Our young people who

have all the enthusiasm and would love to work here in the province of Ontario just simply can't find a job, even though they are the teacher of the year, the very people we want teaching our kids on a daily basis.

So we have a problem with regulation 274. We need to end the practice of seniority-based hiring and make sure that principals have the tools necessary to hire the best person for the job. That's all I'm asking for from this Legislature: to consider the merits of that conversation and to support the member from Nepean–Carleton in her bill. Let's get on with making sure that our kids are put on the strongest footing possible.

1600

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to stand today and debate Bill 107, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to hiring practices for teachers. I think it's important that I offer a bit more clarity about the existing regulation regarding fair hiring provisions in our school boards, and I'm also concerned the member opposite has actually not quite done her homework about the impact her bill would have on the education sector—but a bit more about that later.

I think we can all agree, everybody here, that we all want great teachers in our classrooms, and we do—we have them. But it's also important that our teachers can count on a fair, consistent and transparent hiring process, regardless of where they may work or want to work in the province. That's the overarching principle of why we brought in reg 274: to ensure that clear and consistent hiring practices existed in all school boards.

We think it's important that each board has a process that ensures applicants know what jobs are available and when through job postings. It's important for applicants to know who is eligible to apply for those jobs and what criteria will be used to fill those positions, and it's important for applicants to know why they were unsuccessful so they can apply that feedback for future available positions.

While these types of processes are common in most industries and certainly common in the Ontario public service, I think many people would be surprised to know that they were not happening in all school boards. In fact, school boards across the province had inconsistent hiring practices, with some not even posting jobs that might be available.

Our intention with reg 274 was to provide some level of consistency and transparency in hiring practices across the education sector. The regulation worked to ensure teaching candidates are chosen by school boards based on a number of criteria beyond just seniority.

However, I recognize that since we introduced this regulation, there have been some concerns raised by school boards, teacher federations and individual teachers about the impact of the regulation. We've never claimed the regulation was perfect, which is why we have made it clear from the beginning that we are willing to make changes to the regulation as long as teacher federations

and school board associations are supportive of the changes.

I also want to be clear that any changes that can be agreed to between the parties would need to maintain a consistent, transparent hiring practice. We believe the best way forward is to work together with our boards and teacher representatives to arrive at solutions that work for all the parties.

To encourage a collaborative approach, we have established a working group with the English public secondary school teachers, and we're finalizing a working group with the English public elementary school teachers. These working groups would include representatives from school boards and teacher federations, and we're open to amending the regulation to reflect any changes agreed to by the parties at these working groups.

We have also engaged a team of experts to gather input and discuss potential improvements to the regulation where all parties are supportive. I've asked the team, which is being led by Dr. Charles Ungerleider—who some of you may recognize as the former deputy minister of education from British Columbia—and Ruth Baumann, who is chair of Ontario's Curriculum Council and who does have a lot of past experience with the Ontario Teachers' Federation, to report back to me within the month on possible options. Two people who are highly qualified and deeply understand the education system are going to be working with us to help look for solutions.

I would urge any school board reps or any teachers to speak to their respective association or federation, as the case may be, so that we get as much input as possible.

In addition, the same team of experts will be going around and looking at what the actual impacts of the regulation are with respect to hiring in each board, because we know the way in which this regulation has been implemented actually varies significantly from board to board.

They will be gathering information about what are effective practices, what's working, what's not working, so that we can all work together to come to a consensus about what would be the best way to move as we go forward.

We certainly would welcome any input from the opposition about what they think an amended regulation would look like, because we're interested in what various people think about where this should go forward.

But we do need to work together, which is exactly why the answer is not what the member opposite is suggesting. She's suggesting that the regulation simply be repealed. We really don't think repealing is the answer, because we don't think that repealing the regulation is going to do what the member actually thinks.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You didn't do your homework. You didn't read the bill.

Hon. Liz Sandals: The regulation that is currently in place—

Interjection.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would suggest you might want to listen to this. The regulation that is currently in place

simply formalizes requirements that already exist in local collective agreements between federations and school boards; that is to say, even if you repeal the regulation, school boards would still be obligated to follow the underlying collective agreement, and the underlying collective agreement reflects the wording in the 2012 memorandum of understanding with the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association.

So if we repeal the regulation, as this bill requires, and in fact says we can't replace it with another regulation—

Mr. Grant Crack: Oh, she did read it.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, she did read it.

If we simply repeal this regulation, what we are actually left with is a collective agreement that essentially says the same thing.

In fact, if the member opposite were actually to research the language in the underlying collective agreement, she would find that, if anything, it is probably more restrictive than the regulation she is proposing we repeal. So not only do we think it's wrong to simply go around repealing; we don't even think that repealing does what the member expects it to do.

When she introduced the bill, I don't think that she thought repealing the regulation would leave her with a collective agreement that says exactly the same thing. I certainly don't think that the members of the public who say they're supporting this bill understand that the impact of repealing the regulation is to leave you with a collective agreement that says almost exactly the same thing. So the bill doesn't actually do what the member thinks it will.

Let's talk a little bit about some of the other things you would actually have to do to get to where the member wants to be. To actually get to where the member wants to be, which is to make the whole thing go away, you would have to rip up the collective agreements. I don't think that's what we want to do, because unlike the member opposite, we don't think that ripping up collective agreements and getting rid of teachers is the thing we want to do.

We do, I think, have a situation here where this is philosophically the wrong thing to do, but it's actually legally the wrong thing to do.

I will not be supporting this bill.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is my great pleasure today to rise and speak in support of the member from Nepean–Carleton's Bill 107, the Fair Hiring to Support Teachers, Parents and Students Act. Speaker, this is about the students. It's not about a seniority process that has been put in place.

1610

I think about, when I was listening to the Minister of Education reference the fact that they have a fair and transparent hiring process—fair hiring process? I question seniority when, in fact, we're looking and talking about having the best teachers in the classroom. She, by her own admission, did state that we think we all want

the best teachers in the classrooms for our students. So I believe she may have contradicted herself.

The member from Nepean–Carleton has been a tireless defender of students across Ontario as our former education critic. While her portfolio has changed, her commitment to students and teachers remains. We heard her passion, her commitment. We heard her heart; it's in the right place, because she wants to do the right thing. Speaker, I wish her the best as she sets her sights on our province's energy woes.

Bill 107 is sorely needed, as it would scrap the controversial regulation 274. This regulation prohibits school boards and principals from hiring the best and brightest students, forcing them instead to choose from those most senior in a local union. Yes, I said "local union." No, I'm not union-bashing. This isn't about that. This is about getting the right teachers for the students, doing what is right.

Seniority, while we recognize it is important, should not be the only criteria for hiring teachers. A more practical solution would be to allow school boards to implement a fair hiring policy.

Last week, we rejected, this Legislature turned down, Bill 101, which had to do with third party advertising, which was really all about transparency and democracy. Well, Speaker, Bill 107 is all about democracy, giving principals and school boards the decision, the right, to make and select the best teachers possible for our students.

An Ontario College of Teachers survey of 2011 graduates made a shocking discovery: This survey of the 2011 graduates found that one third were unable to find jobs in their field. This is a massive increase compared to just 3% in 2006. In fact, many new teachers today can't even find supply teaching jobs.

While I'm on that topic, I might as well suggest that right now, that particular policy—when a teacher retires, then suddenly that teacher, if they choose, can go on a supply teaching list. They're double-dipping. They're getting their pension—paid for by the public, the taxpayers—and now, all of a sudden, they're back in the classroom. And if they don't know what that subject is—for example, math—well, guess what the students have, Speaker? They have a spare. But that teacher still gets a lot of money.

So, Speaker, in conclusion, I just want to support and let you know that the member from Nepean–Carleton's bill—repeal this harmful regulation and make sure all our children have the best possible teachers at the head of their class

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm going to have to talk really fast now. I, again, would like to applaud my colleague Lisa MacLeod for bringing this good piece of legislation. It's all about fairness and ensuring that our children have the best teacher, the most qualified teacher, not the person who happens to have been around the longest on the union rolls. We need to ensure that we have the teachers

there that are going to inspire our children and give them the hope and the education that they need, because they are our truest and greatest asset.

We need to ensure that we have teaching professionals' mobility. We're concerned that that happens. Within a board, how do they move, or they won't be able to move within Ontario, because they're going to be more concerned about seniority than moving to somewhere where there may be need.

Speaker, we want the stability of teaching staff. We want them to ensure that they're staying in the profession, because some people are going to leave this profession if they aren't having an opportunity. I think Rob, my colleague from Cambridge, mentioned earlier that we have an award-winning teacher who is 800th on the seniority list. Are they going to leave the teaching profession? Are they going to leave Ontario, one of our brightest and best will go, and our children will suffer as a result?

Speaker, it's all about fairness. It's all about the children that we are here to serve, our greatest asset, and ensuring that they get the best education from the absolute best teacher, with nothing to do with how long they've been on the payroll.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to introduce Paul Elliott, who's the president of OSSTF, who's here joining us and listening to the debate; and also Paul Kossta, who's one of the executive officers. Welcome. It's good that you're here.

I really do appreciate some of the concerns that the member from Nepean–Carleton raises around this particular matter, but not all the concerns. Some of them, I believe, are quite incorrect. But one of the main concerns that I worry about as well is the fact that those who graduate, those who become teachers and go looking for work in that first year will find it difficult to find a job—this is true. That's something that I believe we have to look at; I understand that.

But all the other arguments made by many of the Conservative members who have spoken are completely wrong. When they say, for example, that we want the best person in the classroom—is there anyone here who doesn't want that? Is there anything in regulation 274 that prevents that from happening? I argue no. Most of you don't realize or know how that process works.

We all want the best person, teacher, in the classroom, because we worry about our kids and we want them to get the best education. Who doesn't? So when one of the members talks about a letter that she may have received where the person says that we don't take performance into account, that is absolutely wrong, because performance is part of what principals have to do under this regulation 274. They will have to do a performance review. When teachers go as long-term occasionals, they will get the experience, and there will be a review. Part of that experience allows the principal to know whether they're actually doing a good job or not. That's what it means to base it on performance.

Here's the other problemo, and it's a big problemo, and it's something that I think the government has appreciated, because—the Minister of Transportation used to be the minister of post-secondary education. We had a little exchange in the committee of estimates. It is true that the majority of members here don't realize how many graduate as teachers each and every year. Most ministers don't know it, and sometimes even the ministers who become ministers don't know it because they haven't had a chance to review their file long enough. But there are 11,000 people, young men and women, who graduate as teachers each and every year.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's 9,000.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It used to be 9,000. Now, Minister, you are new on the file, but it used to be 9,500, I thought. But when I asked the then minister of post-secondary education, the staff behind him had to give him a number, and the number they gave him was 11,000. I used to think it was 9,500; I was wrong. There are 11,000 who graduate as teachers each and every year, and do you know how many people we hire each and every year?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I think it's less than 3,000, but it would be good to see those numbers, because my suspicion is it's around 3,000 that we hire each and every year.

Think of that. We allow so many to get into the system under the guise or pretense that they're going to be hired as teachers, only to discover that, in the end, a little more than a third end up being hired. That means the other two thirds are looking for work in that profession and outside of that profession. It means they're desperately trying to get on a supply teachers list. Some get on; many will not get on. And you can't hire them all because there's no room for all the supply teachers, so some automatically will not get on that list. But you have to assume that, currently, boards are doing a good job of sorting out those who will be permanent teachers, those who will be long-term occasionals and those who will be occasional supply teachers on a daily basis; you have to assume that they're doing a good job of sorting those who are great and those who might not be that great.

But to say, as some of the Conservative members have said, that we're shutting out all the great potential teachers and leaving only those who have seniority who are not good is fundamentally mistaken and wrong. You can't do that. It's almost a dangerous thing to say. It's almost irresponsible to say.

1620

I advise members that they have to approach this with some care. I appreciate the concerns that some of you have raised, particularly around those who graduated and in the first year will have a difficult time getting into the system. That's a real issue, and I understand it. But to say that experienced teachers are not good is wrong.

What it says is that those people who graduate and can't find a permanent job desperately stay on as supply teachers for long-term occasional jobs or day-to-day jobs.

They'll be there for a couple of years, hoping the system will hire them eventually as permanent teachers. Many of those people are good. Many of those people end up getting long-term occasional jobs, and that's how we test them out. If principals feel that some of those fellows or women are not very good, well, they won't get the permanent jobs. The better ones will. Isn't that what we want? Isn't that what you want? That's what I want. It's what I think you want, and it's what I think parents want.

Let me read what Regulation 274 does. I appreciate the fact that only one teacher federation was negotiating with the province, and that was a little problem; there's no doubt about it. If the other federations were a part of it, we might have been able to get something better out of this regulation. But the government chose to only work with one federation, and in my humble view, that was a mistake.

By the way, when the minister says, "We don't break contracts"—please, it's almost embarrassing. Bill 115 is an embarrassment, and it's a contradiction of what you, Minister, said on this file.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Rosario, the social contract.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Jimmy, Minister of the Environment, you would have learned from Bob Rae, given that you've been here for so long. I'm assuming, given that Bob Rae is now a close friend of yours, that he would have talked to you about some of the problems we had around it. I would have felt, and I still think, that you would have learned from that experience and not come up with Bill 115.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Based on what you just said, based on what you just did, I'm sure that in caucus you must have said to the then Premier, "You can't do this." I'm sure you did—you, hopefully, and others. But maybe they didn't listen to you; I don't know.

Regulation 274 provisions: School boards must establish a roster of occasional teachers and a long-term occasional teachers list, and teachers are ranked on both lists based on seniority. An occasional teacher may apply for the LTO list—that's long-term occasional, by the way—once she has been on the roster for at least 10 months and has taught as an occasional teacher with the school board for at least 20 days during a 10-month period.

School boards must grant an interview for the LTO list to every occasional teacher on the roster who meets the conditions established in the regulations. Boards then determine, through interviews, which occasional teachers will be placed on the LTO list. Only occasional teachers on the LTO list who have completed a minimum of one LTO assignment at least four months long and have both the required qualifications and the highest seniority ranking can be considered for permanent positions.

When hiring for LTO and permanent positions, school boards must post the position on their website for at least five weekdays, and boards are required to interview five occasional teachers from the LTO list who have both the required qualifications and the highest seniority ranking.

This is not a bad thing. It's not so bad at all. They are required in a way that creates fairness and transparency for the hiring process, posting all of the long-term assignments and permanent positions so everyone is aware of available opportunities, with the same hiring procedures and evaluation criteria employed by all boards. It ensures that unsuccessful candidates get feedback after job interviews, which is something that I think you want, and boards are required to evaluate the performance of long-term occasional teachers and provide feedback to teachers.

All this, in my view, is not bad. It's not bad at all, with one proviso and one worry that I have that I realize is an issue. I understand that. But those who have been waiting for years and who have the experience and who are evaluated by principals based on that experience, not to give them an opportunity for those long-term occasional jobs and for those permanent jobs is wrong.

I have to say that I trust the ability of boards to do this well and to hire the best possible teachers so that students can get the best possible education. I believe that's what we've got and that's what we all want. Seniority equals experience. Experience is good. I would want a teacher who has had some experience teaching the children rather than someone fresh out of the faculty teaching my kids. I would want that experience. That is not a negative thing at all. It should be a positive thing that Tories and most Liberals, I would hope, would agree with.

What we have to deal with is the fact that we accept 11,000 students in our faculties, and they will not get a job. The government has the power to deal with that, and you are not dealing with that. That's the biggest problem.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We are so. Pay attention to your file.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I beg your pardon?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: He said they're cutting enrolment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You are not doing that. You are—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask all members to take their seats. There's like 25 conversations going on in here. I would love to hear the speaker. If I can request of the speaker that you speak through the Speaker and not have a dialogue across the way.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The government has the power to limit the number of teachers that go into faculties so that they have a better chance of getting into a teaching position. To allow so many to become teachers and not be able to get a job at the end of it is a travesty of justice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Once again, can I ask members to take their seats and keep the noise down.

The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, it has been, in my past, a privilege to have worked with the member for Nepean–Carleton on a number of different initiatives. Let me just

remind the House of some of the things that were said today on her bill. The member herself said that it's okay to admit that you got this wrong. Our colleague from Cambridge said that this is not a Conservative or a Liberal bill. Our good friend from Chatham–Kent–Essex told us all that this is about the students.

I happen to agree with all of those statements. In the spirit in which we practise as MPPs in this House, I'm here to offer a constructive comment that I think the member may need to take into account.

Let me quote from the bill. It says:

“Nepotism

“(1.2) The policy shall prohibit a board from deciding to assign or appoint a person to a position as a teacher if the board, in making the decision, accords greater weight to nepotism than to any other factor, such as the person's teaching qualifications.”

Now, I would like to take that and just do a slight rephrasing because the way I rephrase it—under the bill proposed by the member, this is legal. That would be to rephrase this same clause to read, “The policy shall allow a board to decide to assign or appoint a person to a position as a teacher if the board, in making the decision, accords equal weight to nepotism as to any other factor, such as the person's teaching qualifications.”

Now, this is not the member's intent. I am going to have to give her the benefit of the doubt. But it is surely the outcome. To put it another way, the conversation in the hall could go a bit like this: “So, J.B., the superintendent's daughter-in-law's relationship to you is about equal to the other candidate's qualifications and experience.” That means the daughter-in-law can get hired.

1630

Now the hard part is that that is indeed a fatal flaw in the bill as proposed, and I say this to the member as a fellow legislator.

Speaker, for reasons that are purely logical and having nothing to do with whatever underlying motivation the member may have, I can't support the bill. The reg overrides the bill, and if we repeal the reg, we get the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nepean–Carleton, you have two minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a real pleasure to wrap up debate on this very important piece of legislation. It is unfortunate that the Liberals and the New Democrats used their time to trip over each other to try and get the support of the Working Families Coalition while, on this side of the House, the Ontario Progressive Conservatives are standing up for students in classrooms across this great province.

I'd also like to point out that I felt so badly for the minister when she got up to speak about the bill, not having read it. It actually was quite embarrassing. But again, Speaker, this is a minister who forgot to read the curriculum and told Ontario parents that that's not her job. I'll tell you what her job is: It's to make sure that the best teachers in Ontario's classrooms are there, not because they've been the longest-serving in the union but because they have the best experience, they have the best

qualities, and they have the merit of being the best teacher there. That is why people like the Ontario Principals' Council, the school boards' associations of Ontario and two student trustees from the Toronto District School Board are here today: because they know this is the way forward.

I might also add that this is a government that brought in Bill 115. We supported it and said we do not want this type of hiring clause in that bill. What did they do? They snuck it in by regulation. Yet when they decided that they wanted to back away from Bill 115 to support their union friends, they left this offensive piece of regulation on the books. So if she wants to talk about repealing it and replacing it, that's our plan. Their plan is just to continue to give more to OSSTF and ETFO.

If I may, while I have 20 seconds left, I want to point out that teachers' unions across this province have said one thing to their members and another thing to this assembly. The teachers across this province support this bill, and I'm ashamed that the Liberal government refuses to accept that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES TECHNIQUES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 46, standing in the name of Mr. McDonell.

Mr. McDonell has moved second reading of Bill 61, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will deal with this vote at the end of private members' public business.

TRANSPARENCY IN MEMBERS' EXPENSES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE EN MATIÈRE DES DÉPENSES DES DÉPUTÉS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Fraser has moved second reading of Bill 108, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act.

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

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to put it to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee. Agreed? Agreed.

FAIR HIRING TO SUPPORT TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PRATIQUES D'ENGAGEMENT ÉQUITABLES À L'APPUI DES ENSEIGNANTS, DES PARENTS ET DES ÉLÈVES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to hiring practices for teachers.

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

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1635 to 1640.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND SAFETY AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES TECHNIQUES ET LA SÉCURITÉ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. McDonnell has moved second reading of Bill 61, An Act to amend the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	O'Toole, John
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Hardeman, Ernie	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Holyday, Douglas C.	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fraser, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Prue, Michael

Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit
Del Duca, Steven	Marchese, Rosario
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John

Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Schein, Jonah
Singh, Jagmeet
Taylor, Monique
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 27; the nays are 46.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can we open the doors up and let the members in?

FAIR HIRING TO SUPPORT TEACHERS, PARENTS AND STUDENTS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES PRATIQUES D'ENGAGEMENT ÉQUITABLES À L'APPUI DES ENSEIGNANTS, DES PARENTS ET DES ÉLÈVES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. MacLeod has moved second reading of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to hiring practices for teachers.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Klees, Frank	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	O'Toole, John
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Hardeman, Ernie	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Holyday, Douglas C.	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fraser, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Bisson, Gilles	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Prue, Michael
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	Marchese, Rosario	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 27; the nays are 46.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negated.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just for the record, was Mr. Bailey's vote counted?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sorry?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order: Was Mr. Bailey's vote counted?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Yes, Mr. Bailey did vote.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

If I could just have your attention for a second: I want to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving and a great constituency week.

How about a big hand for our pages?

Applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands adjourned until October 21 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1648.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Michael Harris, Rob Leone
Amrit Mangat, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Mitzie Hunter, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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la justice**

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Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
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Jonah Schein
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**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Bas Balkissoon, Steve Clark
Grant Crack, Vic Dhillon
Garfield Dunlop, Cindy Forster
Lisa MacLeod, Amrit Mangat
Michael Mantha
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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, Jerry J. Ouellette
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
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John Fraser, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
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**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Helena Jaczek, Jane McKenna
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial
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Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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